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https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/sahs-review/vol50/iss1/15
The story of John August Sutter is an account of an ambitious individual who was motivated by opportunity, blinded by optimism and damned by destiny. John Sutter was trapped in an endless cycle of great triumph and failure throughout his life. As a Swiss immigrant to North America, Sutter was an influential figure in the history of the American Frontier, Mexican California, and the California Gold Rush. He was the quintessential foreign-born pioneer of the American West. Despite the antagonistic social, geographical, and legal forces, Sutter never lost his determination. Although he was one of the central agents in the start of the California Gold Rush, he was ultimately unable to capitalize on his findings. Ironically, the unearthing of gold at Sutter’s Mill was the origin of his tragic downfall. Nevertheless, his position is undisputable: he was a giant of the American West.

Johann Augustus Sutter’s birth on February 15, 1803, in Kandern, Germany, was the start of the extraordinary and unprecedented history of the American West. Born to Johann Jakob Sutter and his wife, Christine Wilhemine, John August Sutter (as he would be referred to in America) was blessed with incredible advantages, despite his modest upbringing. His childhood home was located above a paper mill his father operated. In this home, Sutter gained a passion for reading and writing through his literate and semi-educated mother, who was the daughter of a German pastor. From an early age, John Sutter learned of a universe beyond the mountain barriers of his hometown. He had a vision beyond Kandern’s social and physical confines. As a result of his mother’s persistence and his father’s encouragement, he surpassed the small-town mentality and Bernese Alps that sought to limit him.1

The military culture of Napoleon Bonaparte in Europe during Sutter’s formative years expanded his aspirations:

Some of my earliest memories are of Napoleon’s soldiers marching across the nearby bridges, as the French extended their hegemony over Switzerland, and the uniforms and the cavalry with their plumes, and the cannons firing—it was very exciting for a young man.  

Perhaps he dreamed of military grandeur, travelling the continent in search of adventure, power, and admiration. Regardless, he undoubtedly wanted more than Kandern had to offer. During his teenage years, Sutter discovered that the papermaking industry was not for him. Unlike other men in his circumstances, Sutter left his hometown to satisfy his quest for affluence and prosperity. He moved to Neuchâtel, Switzerland, where he pursued higher education. In 1819, after a year of enrollment at Neuchâtel, the young man used his father’s business connections to obtain an apprenticeship with Emanuel Thurneysen, a distinguished book printer, publisher, and distributor, in the city of Basel. 

As nothing more than a book clerk, Sutter benefited greatly. He was surrounded by a plethora of knowledge, although his job did not furnish luxuries he desired. When his apprenticeship was not renewed, he became incredibly poor and was forced to move multiple times before following a young woman to Burgdorf, Switzerland.

Annette Dubeld was a physically and fiscally attractive “aristocratic-looking” woman who lived with her wealthy, widowed mother. She assisted with the family bakery and restaurant in her hometown. For better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, she was united in Holy Matrimony in 1826 in Burgdorf to John Sutter, a handsome, sharply dressed, foreign-born grocery clerk. Merely hours after their wedding, Mr. and Mrs. Sutter gave birth to their first child, a son, named after his father.

Considering the circumstances in which Sutter found himself prior to his arrangement with Annette, he was much better off after their

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5 Dillon, Fools Gold: The Decline and Fall of Captain John Sutter of California, p. 22.
marriage. Under the monetary control of his mother-in-law, Frau Rosina Dubeld, John Sutter bought a home for his family, opened Johann Augustus Sutter & Company, a dry-goods and drapery shop, and worked extremely hard to provide for his family. Two years after his marriage, Sutter’s marital status and business ventures were in jeopardy. Sutter viewed this as an opportunity and joined the reserve corps for the Canton of Berne in 1828. As a member of the armed forces, Sutter received the recognition, respectability, and status he longed for. Likewise, he believed that his military acquaintances would help him in his business as well.

Ultimately, his military experience did not save the business or his marriage. His domestic life consisted of an overbearing mother-in-law, five children, and thousands of dollars of debt: “Sutter swore that he would never see the inside of a debtor’s cell. He had been in a jail of sorts for too long already.” After a warrant was put out for his arrest in 1834, John Sutter shocked the humble Swiss town and headed west over night. In his mind he was more than a dry-goods salesmen; he was heading to the New World.

With overwhelming debt and Sutter & Company’s collapse, the aspiring pioneer was determined to seek his fortunes elsewhere. He was heading to America. Sutter packed up his fine clothes, trading goods, and several books, leaving behind his debt, wife, and five children. He reached New York in 1834, although he feared that the width of the Atlantic was still within the reach of Swiss law, causing him to place his sights on the western frontier. During this period, the Missouri country was “a land of bright promise to the thousands of young men all over central Europe.” Sutter was the prototypical European entrepreneur to venture to Missouri: optimistic, ambitious, and cunning. When he arrived in Missouri, he worked as an innkeeper and merchant for several years, although he understood his occupations there to be temporary; he dreamed of establishing his own empire further west.

In 1835, Sutter joined a clan of German and French expatriates on an expedition to Santa Fe, New Mexico. Despite becoming ill on the

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7 Dillon, Fool’s Gold: The Decline and Fall of Captain John Sutter of California, p. 23.
10 Ibid., p. 7.
trip, Sutter managed to turn an admirable profit with very little investment. This mission served as his introduction to the West. Naturally, with his success, it inspired him to embark on further trading journeys. With the wine, mules, and money he earned, Sutter developed a larger-than-life persona: “the visionary frontier entrepreneur.” He became known as Captain Sutter, a reassuring Swiss officer who entertained many men and seduced many women. He promised the world to anyone who would lend him a dollar and his magnetic personality was irresistible to deny. His luck would run dry on many occasions, but as long as the West was filled with naïve, enthusiastic, and spirited young men, Sutter was in luck. While his trading enterprises brought him to New Mexico and elsewhere on the frontier, he was determined to get to where he perceived to be the promised land: California.

Three years later in 1838, Captain Sutter and several loyal followers were eager to reach the Golden State. At this time, Sutter joined a fur trapping party exploring the Pacific Northwest along the Columbia River. In October, he arrived at the Hudson’s Bay Company’s Pacific headquarters at Fort Vancouver and was well received by the community and the chief trader, James Douglas. Douglas was an educated man and an incredibly successful trader. Sutter respected and valued Douglas’s advice, as Douglas had persuaded Sutter not to cross the Siskiyou Mountains into the Sacramento Valley during the treacherous winter. Instead, Douglas suggested that Sutter board his company’s supply ship, the Columbia, and transfer once she reached the Sandwich Islands. The vessel left Fort Vancouver on November 11, 1838, and landed at Honolulu in early December.

When he arrived in Hawaii, Sutter was fortunate enough to meet Captain John Blinn. Sutter’s pleasant demeanor and positive outlook enticed Captain Blinn to allow Sutter to join his crew on the Clementine, a Russian trading ship bound for the Russian colony of New Archangel, Alaska. Sutter set sail on the Clementine and grew fond of the Russian social life, although his ambition to inhabit California was steadfast. On July 1, 1839, the Clementine and John Sutter shored in Yerba Buena, an

12 Dillon, Fool’s Gold: The Decline and Fall of Captain John Sutter of California, p. 29.
13 Hurtado, John Sutter: A Life on the North American Frontier, p. 23
14 Dillon, Fool’s Gold: The Decline and Fall of Captain John Sutter of California, p. 65.
15 Ibid., p. 66.
island in the San Francisco Bay. Sutter had finally reached California. Everything was about to change.

Upon his arrival, it became clear that Captain Sutter had not accurately assessed Californian law. He assumed that he would be able to claim land as his own and build his empire free of regulation. Four days after landing in the San Francisco Bay, Sutter met with Governor Alvarado to discuss his plans for settlement in California. In his typical persona, Sutter boldly stated to the governor that he wanted to be an empresario de colonizacion. Startled by his daring plans, Governor Alvarado could not immediately accept Sutter’s aspirations. However, the governor offered a proposal to Sutter: become a naturalized Mexican citizen and he would give Sutter a generous land grant. Mexican citizenship required residence in California for twelve months. Accepting the offer, Sutter spent the next year exploring the Sacramento Valley for desirable land.

On August 29, 1840, John Sutter became a Mexican citizen and was subsequently granted nearly fifty thousand acres of land from Governor Alvarado. Sutter accomplished what he had wanted. He had governmental power over a vast amount of land and absolute control over its civil, judicial, and military authority. Captain Sutter could now fulfill his dreams of establishing an empire.

With a mix of diplomacy and force, Sutter was able to disarm the Indians and use them to build his empire. When Captain Sutter first encountered the Indians, he greeted them unarmed. After they observed that Sutter and his exploration party did not want to harm them, Sutter “fired a salute, showing the Indians the effects of powder and ball. They did not care to have it tried on them.” Furthermore, Sutter paid the Indians an appropriate wage for their labor. He fed and clothed them, although he admitted, “sometimes they were in rags—it looked very bad to visitors.” Sutter used Native labor at his Fort in the Sacramento Valley and at his sawmill along the American River near Coloma. His dreams were made into reality because of the low labor costs.

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16 Hurtado, John Sutter; A Life on the North American Frontier, p. 55.
17 Ibid.
18 Ibid., p. 56.
20 Ibid.
Once established, Sutter’s Fort was a center for trade in Northern California. Its walls were built eighteen feet high and three feet thick, reminiscent of self-sufficient European castles and undoubtedly inspired by Sutter’s visit to Fort Vancouver. It was an important post because it was a strategic resting point for travel parties crossing the Sierra Mountains. It was a safe haven from the elements and a place to obtain travel necessities. For a period of seven years, from 1841 to 1848, Sutter’s Fort was a prosperous and crucial trading post in California. Sutter’s luck would soon run dry.

James Marshall found gold on January 28, 1848, at Sutter’s Mill in Coloma, yet Sutter was unable to capitalize on his discovery. Sutter’s mismanagement of the situation resulted in an unprecedented downfall. Within a year, thousands of Forty-niners flocked to California. Sutter’s employees quit in pursuit of gold; his Fort and Mill were pillaged and his livestock was stolen. Sutter was left with nothing, despite his efforts to seek recognition from the government, years later:

By this sudden discovery of the gold, all my great plans were destroyed. Had I succeeded for a few years before the gold was discovered, I would have been the richest citizen on the Pacific shore; but it had to be different. Instead of being rich, I am ruined, and the cause of it is the long delay of the United States Land Commission of the United States Courts, through the great influence of the squatter lawyers.²¹

He moved to Yuba City, California, in 1850 where he reunited with his wife and five educated children. In Yuba he lived a quiet life with his family, though his tribulations continued. In 1865, a disgruntled neighbor burned down his house, completely destroying his family’s possessions. Even after the end of his Californian empire and the destruction of his home, Sutter stayed optimistic. His optimism was ultimately shattered when he was denied reimbursement for his contributions in California. He would die two days after Congress denied his petition on June 18, 1880.

John Sutter is a fascinating individual in the history of the American West. He is more than simply a figure in time; he is a character who experienced a life reserved for tragic heroes. The study of Sutter’s life demands sympathy, but he is not to be pitied. Even though he fell on hard times, he also stumbled upon many great fortunes. Sutter was a charismatic person who created great opportunities. For instance, when he set sail for Hawaii in 1838 on the Columbia, he was fortunate enough to meet Captain John Blinn and board his vessel back to the mainland. This illustrates how Sutter created his own luck: both good and bad. Regardless, his optimism and desire to succeed are notable and were perfectly suited for Mexican California.

Throughout his life, Captain Sutter viewed failure as a stepping-stone, a chance to learn and accomplish greater things. For this reason, he should be saluted just as frequently as he is criticized. Sir Winston Churchill once said “success is the ability to go from one failure to another with no loss of enthusiasm.” Based on this definition, John Sutter was a complete success, despite the cycle of victory and defeat that plagued him until his death.

- University of San Diego
Exploring Life Paths: On Becoming an Interview Journalist

by Susann Bosshard-Kaelin

To give people a voice, a platform, and to roll out the red carpet for them . . .

. . . for ten years now that is my great passion; and I have been able to pursue it as a journalist and author for various projects in Switzerland as well as overseas. I invite you to explore the pursuit of life histories with me, or what is called oral history.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am truly honored to be given the opportunity to speak a second time at an annual meeting of the Swiss American Historical Society. The first time it was on October 20, 2009—four years ago in New York at the launching of Westward: Encounters with Swiss American Women. Now I am asked to talk about my work as an interview-journalist, and I thank President Fred Gillespie for his kind invitation.

My daughter Annina is present also—a special joy because she has taken the portrait pictures for several of my projects and accompanied me on my journeys not only as a competent photographer and expert in technical matters but also as a pleasant companion.

A dream becomes reality!

My great dream as a teenager: to become a speedy reporter, to travel around the globe, to encounter most different people, to chat with them, to learn about their lives, and to tell their story. It captivated me.
as a young girl already. But several years were to go by until I was able to find my way to it, to that dream job.

I completed my schooling as a public relations advisor and in comprehensive journalism in Switzerland and worked for years for Swiss Tourism. In 1984, I founded my One Woman Enterprise, had various PR mandates for example with Swatch and the newly founded Swiss Museum Pass. But for four years, I was above all housewife and mother. My husband and I became parents of two wonderful daughters, Annina and Catherina, and I very much enjoyed the time at home and the children’s growing up.

But writing remained fascinating and had its hold on me. And I soon realized that writing was a craft that demanded practice and training. Write, and write again and again, that was the line . . . especially if one wanted to be successful.

Diverse reports for newspapers and periodicals in Switzerland provided me with editorial experience, with numerous “finger exercises” over the decades . . . thus it didn’t seem wholly impossible anymore to tackle a book project. A coincidence led me to it, or perhaps the time was simply right.

The dream turned real, the writing of a book. But that it would take on such dimensions over the years and lead to the realization of several publications, that I didn’t imagine in my wildest dreams. It was truly accidental, the possibility of my publishing a first unusual book.

I drove from Einsiedeln, my hometown, to Zurich and heard on the radio of an imaginative journalist named Andrea Meade from Sarnen in Canton Obwalden. She had the idea to ask unknown older women in her Canton about their life stories and to publish them as a book.

I still remember it as if it were today. It had struck me like lightning: I will also realize such a book project for Canton Schwyz . . . the backward Canton in which women had little say! In which, however, there were many who had much to say!

I discussed the idea with my colleague, the psychologist Elena Hinsha von Hirsch. Soon we began with other eight authors to look for

I was wholly taken by exploring life histories by means of interviews. The women of Schwyz between the ages of 65 and 85 years were free to tell what they wanted. On our side, we merely constructed a general questionnaire. The talks were held in the familiar surroundings of the women, and quite often we would meet two or three times with the aged witnesses who would tell of life in their times. We taped the interviews, then transcribed them carefully, then shaped readable and enticing journalistic portraits out of the interview materials.
To be told their stories was engaging. And I myself learned much from the lives of these people. Most had been born between 1920 and 1935 and often told of their simple childhood and youthful years. Many of them did not have the possibility to learn a trade or pursue a profession, nor could they shape their lives as they wished. And in 1971 it meant for many tremendous progress that as Swiss women they could finally vote on the national level, not even to speak of the many technical innovations of the twentieth century. For young women—among them my two daughters—the life stories of these women were nearly unbelievable... important documents of a past epoch.

And I was aware, it was high time, a last chance: If those stories were not told and preserved today, they would be lost forever.

~ ~ ~ ~

Now a second coincidence happened. In the summer of 2006, I had the opportunity of doing several reports by traveling to America, more precisely to Indiana, among them also for the Neue Zürcher Zeitung. At that time, the oldest Benedictine monk in the world, Father Theodore Heck, lived in the monastery St. Meinrad near Louisville, Kentucky, an institution founded by Benedictine monks from Einsiedeln. I wanted to find out more about the 105-year old monk as well as about nearby Tell City on the Ohio, also founded by Swiss emigrants. With my late friend, the photographer Liliane Géraud, I traveled therefore to Chicago—I also had in my hand luggage the address of the Swiss historian Leo Schelbert who is knowledgeable about Swiss migration history.

Leo Schelbert and Susann Bosshard-Kaelin—first meeting at O’Hare Airport, Chicago, June 2006.
At our meeting in Chicago I told him about the *spruchreif* project and even that I had taken the page proofs with me to the United States since they were due at the publishers on my return. When I told him about some of the stories, he spontaneously said: “We need such a book about Swiss immigrant women in the United States!” Too little was known about the lives of immigrant women, also about those from Switzerland. Would it not be a challenging project for me?

I returned to Switzerland not only with the Indiana reports in hand but also the idea of doing a book about Swiss emigrant women. During 2006 and in early 2007, matters became concrete. Leo Schelbert assisted as mentor and friend, identified Swiss women in the United States as did others, and we looked for financing possibilities. In 2007, I journeyed for the first interviews to the United States, accompanied by my daughter Annina. Based in Evanston, Illinois, we then traveled through the land for the hour-long interviews and picture taking, then also the year after, while Leo and Virginia Schelbert took turns as chauffeurs.

To ask people to tell about their life is less than simple; it demands patience and empathy. And most persons say that their life was quite ordinary and without special significance, a comment made often. And each time I know that it is not the case—life stories are fascinating: each is different, unique, and one-of-a-kind.

I took my time with interviews; I could not rush the talks because it took time to gain the trust of my interview partners. Several of them had never told an unfamiliar person so much private detail, and for years they had not thought of their childhood and even forgotten about it. I would never urge women to talk about a topic . . . they told what they wanted to tell; that was always the foremost intent of my work! The fifteen portraits that I was allowed to do between 2007 and 2009 in Switzerland and in America, were all based on trust, honesty, and good humor.

*Being an intermediary*

The most challenging work doing the portraits always begins when an interview has been accomplished. It is then when the time-consuming and demanding task of transcribing begins. I put every spoken word on the computer—it might mean up to fifty pages per person, depending on how much had been told. Often this task demands five to seven workdays.
Only then am I able to sketch a story that is enjoyable to be read and worthy to become part of a book. It is important that a textual flow emerges, actually a textual melody... so that the story makes for good reading but remains nevertheless true in all its parts.

However, I add nothing to the text myself, only the people interviewed are talking—the stage is theirs, it is they who are to be given a voice. I am merely the intermediary—that is how I see my task.

Next the creation of the portraits demands much time, from one to two weeks, until a story fills some ten to twelve pages. It is less than simple to select from all that has been told and what I think would do justice to each of the persons. Certain matters have to be left out or need to be shortened, which I often regret. In writing up the stories, therefore, I need to make decisions—there is no other way.

My work in most of these projects is part of a race, the battle against forgetting. It is the task to give people a say who in a few years might not be heard of again. It also means to acquaint young people with life stories that today seem hardly believable... it is like a "Spurensuche," a search for traces.

A book accomplished from A to Z

In 2009, westwärts—Begegnungen mit Amerika Schweizerinnen was published in the eFeF-Verlag in Wettingen, Switzerland. For the external form of the book, I engaged the American-Swiss graphic artist Anna Taylor. She also oversaw the book’s production at the Einsiedeln print shop of a friend. Thus I had the opportunity to control every step of the way and to be part of deciding every detail from beginning to end. It was a unique challenge for which I am most grateful. I learned so much! Well received, a second edition of the book was required in 2010.

A ‘No’ to an interview-portrait

Those whose portrait I create on the basis of the interviews always receive the opportunity to review and approve its final form. It is a foremost condition that I tell to all who are willing to be interviewed. Small corrections
2009 SAHS Annual Meeting, Paroz Prize awarded Susann Bosshard-Kaelin, from right: Daniel Haener, Consulate General New York; Christoph Bubb, Ambassador and Consul General; Regula Bubb, Leo Schelbert, Susann Bosshard-Kaelin, Cath­

erina Bosshard, Rosa Schupbach, Annina Bosshard, Margot Ammann-Durrer, and Dr. Heinz Bachmann.

are usually requested. But in the context of westwärts, one person decided after reviewing the text that she didn’t want her story to be made public. It was a pity indeed—I regretted it much but respected the decision; the tape as well as the interview text were destroyed. I would never publish a portrait that had not been explicitly approved.

In 2010, the English version of westwärts was published by the Swiss American Historical Society with the title westward—Encounters with Swiss American Women, mainly in the translations of Marianne Burkhard and Leo Schelbert. The English version is out of print; the German edition is still available in Switzerland.

Annina Bosshard, photographer with her mother and Leo Schelbert.
Monastery Fahr

To give people a voice was also the purpose of the next project that I undertook in 2007 and could realize together with the photographer friend Liliane Géraud who, alas, has passed away far too early. It was a photo album devoted to seven portraits of people who were in close contact with the monastery Fahr at the outskirts of the city of Zurich. Again I had the privilege to enjoy intensive talks with those people and to integrate the seven encounters in book form. What emerged were textual pictures that gave a multifaceted look into the hidden world of Benedictines that is unknown to most. The oldest sister of the monastery named Regula, then approaching 95, mentioned that she never thought about whether she was satisfied with her life: "I live each day as it comes. And I enjoy what is and what I am just doing. . ."

Diakonissen—one more wholly different world

Yet again a new challenge came my way with the book about the Diakonissen of the Bethanien Werk in Zurich that is wholly unique. The book Unter der Haube (Under the Bonnet) offers 20 portraits of Diakonissen who tell of their touching lives. They are women who did not choose the traditional life of marriage, motherhood, and family. They went their own way and chose the life of a Diakonisse. What motivated them to choose such a path in the service of others? What drove those women of an Evangelical-Reformed persuasion to enter a community that bound them to a life of celibacy, poverty, and obedience? The book became more than the sum of impressive life stories. It became a socio-cultural documentary of a way of life that in a few years might be history.
I realized this book as a common effort together with Daniela Schwegler. She did ten portraits, I myself the other ten. The interviews gave me insight into a wholly new world. It was astonishing how varied the lives of those women were, although they initially declared that they had all experienced about the same. . . . Truly, the honesty and courage in telling their stories deeply touched and impressed me. With blunt openness, the women also told of bad and difficult experiences.

They gave an account of their times that gained my deep respect. To be content, even happy with little—to remain faithful to the path chosen, and not to become bitter: this is what nearly all the women stated and impressed me.

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People, people, and their stories . . . it became a central theme of my professional enterprise. With time, I gained much experience as to asking questions and interview-techniques. And from year to year, I liked this kind of work more and more.

https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/sahs_review/vol50/iss1/15
The world on a visit to Einsiedeln

In 2008, I started together with an acquaintance, Beatrice Künzi, a photographer from Einsiedeln, a long-term project that we did not want to rush. “Anything, but no haste or stress,” was our motto. We bought a small mobile home and often drove to Einsiedeln’s monastery plaza for years, at different times of day and night, in the summer heat, and in the icy winter cold. Einsiedeln’s monastery plaza is after St. Peter’s plaza in Rome the second largest in Europe. Here we met eighty-eight people from all over the world and portrayed them in word and picture—native people, passers-by, churchgoers, young and old, prominent people and tourists, women and men, children, even four-legged Miss Einsiedeln, the most beautiful cow of the village. “The world meets on Einsiedeln’s plaza.” Every person we portrayed granted us an hour—we wanted to create a careful image and a carefully done text.

“Why did you come to Einsiedeln? What do you think of the place? How do you see it?” Those interviewed answered such or similar questions. The talks were held in all kind of languages and I translated the answers given right away into German. People gave us their consent as to text and picture in the mobile home—and each received a Polaroid picture and could review the text right then and there.

The book Geschichten Gesichter—die Welt trifft sich auf dem Einsiedler Klosterplatz [Stories/Faces—the World Meets on Einsiedeln’s Klosterplatz] was published in April 2013 and was later complemented by an open-air exhibit on the plaza.

Pendant to westward

And, of course, Leo Schelbert and I, for a long time, had thought about a parallel work to westward on Swiss American women of the 20th century that would feature Swiss American men. Over the years, he had asked various Swiss to write an autobiographical sketch, six of which were then published in the SAHS Newsletter or Review. Given our previous harmonious collaboration, we decided in early 2011 that I would add several interview portraits to the autobiographies. The portraits would
Geschichten
Gesichter
Ausstellung 27. April – 29. September 2013


Carlos Jorge Almeida-Duarte
Pflästerer, Viseu, Portugal und Wetzikon

GeschichtenGesichter – Die Welt trifft sich
auf dem Einsiedler Klosterplatz
Die Journalistin Susanne Busshuld-Kühlin und die Fotografin Beatrice Künzli haben Menschen von nah und fern zu verschiedenen Tageszeiten, bei Schneesturm und in grösster Sommerhitze auf dem Klosterplatz in Bild und Text porträtiert.

cover mostly events from about mid-century on, while the autobiographies would also feature the century’s earlier part.

For me it was again a wonderful reason to travel to America and to encounter most different people. It was also quite a challenge because I never had such extensive and very personal talks with men. Would I be able to succeed? Would they trust me and talk about themselves? Would they tell a totally strange woman about their lives?

Today I can say, I am most grateful. The nine men I had the privilege to interview made it easy for me and trusted me. Magnificient! It was again a rewarding and fascinating task to conduct the long interviews for the book Emigrant Paths—Encounters with 20th Century Swiss Americans.

They told of their childhood and youth, of their learning and wandering years, of their emigration, of their joys and crises, there as well as here. They let me listen to their story in Comus, Maryland, as well as in Livermore and in Montrose, Aspen, Colorado. There will also be a shorter
German edition with the title *Nach Amerika. Lebensberichte von Schweizer Auswanderern*, to be published by the Limmat Verlag and available early next year. I am happy that also the project *Emigrant Paths/Nach Amerika* in collaboration with Leo Schelbert has come to fruition.

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People and their life stories—soon it will be ten years that I have devoted to the task—all an exciting and enriching task!

One occupational group that has been neglected for a long time: the Swiss farmwomen. Now they too have a voice—a platform—to spread out a red carpet. I am now compiling this work that will contain fourteen portraits of Swiss farmwomen between the ages of 25 to 85 years.

What unites them is that they all had attended the Bäuerinnen Schule, the school for farmwomen, of the monastery Fahr, a school so rich in tradition that it unfortunately closed permanently in the summer of 2013. There were no new entrants to the monastery—and without nuns as teachers the
school does not have the same attraction and background. It is a pity, but a reality.

Farm women from all regions in Switzerland and even one in Australia tell of their most varied and hard lives on the alp, in the valley, and on a banana farm in Queensland. I am impressed by the resourcefulness and energy of these Swiss farmwomen. What they accomplish day after day, often behind the scenes, is important and deserves to be shown and read about. There is, for instance, a woman who is spending the summer with her husband and four children on a remote alpine pasture, making cheese, and until last year had neither electricity nor a telephone. Or the farmwoman who besides helping her husband on the homestead takes care of the four children and in addition annually produces five tons of pasta. The book in German is scheduled to be published in the spring of 2014.

Thus, again I am pursuing with this newest book—featuring a piece of reality as well as recording experiences and memories that soon might be a thing of the past.

The school for farmwomen is history, and how farmwomen have worked yesterday and work today will again be much different tomorrow also in Switzerland.

And, of course, there are many stories behind the story of these book projects that all feature fascinating and interesting people. Connected with the interviews and the resulting portraits are wonderful journeys.
as well as encounters and experiences in foreign lands or in regions of Switzerland I did not know.

For instance, do you know where to find the “Alp Dreckloch” (Alp Dirty Hole)? And from there comes the smoky alpine cheese that is popular in various delicatessen stores in New York under the label “dirty hole cheese”?

Working as a journalist and author has extraordinarily rewarded me as a human being. Certainly, such work demands sensitivity and tact as well as perseverance and iron discipline when I am alone in the quiet study and put the conversations to paper until they have become useful stories for a book.

Without a doubt, what I was allowed to learn and experience from many different types of men and women has truly enriched my life. How much I learned from them—about life, the times, work, love, joy and hope, patience, sadness, the letting go, in short, about being. . . . Without those precious encounters and talks, I would not be what and who I am today.

- Translated by Leo Schelbert

Talk given at the Annual Meeting of the Swiss American Historical Society (SAHS) at the Swiss Embassy in Washington, October 12, 2013.

An alumna of the Monastery Fahr school for farm women with her son.
Exploring Swiss-American Deep Ancestry: 
A Personal Venture into Genetic Genealogy

by J. Edward de Steiguer

Introduction

This article presents my personal experience with genetic genealogy, that is, the use of DNA analysis—in this case Y-DNA analysis—to trace the deep ancestry of my Swiss-American male line. DNA analysis is used today for countless applications, from the exoneration of inmates on death row to determination of paternity, as well as genetic genealogy (Fitzpatrick and Yeiser 2005). Such DNA “fingerprinting” is relatively new having begun in 1984 with the pioneering work of Sir Alec Jefferys and his group at Leicester University. One of the first important genetic genealogical applications of DNA analysis was that by Dr. Michael Hammer of the University of Arizona who, in a series of articles published in Nature beginning in 1997, presented evidence that descendants of the Jewish priestly lines Cohan and Levi share a common set of DNA markers.

Genetic genealogy has recently experienced increased popularity among the lay public due largely to the influence of the National Geographic Genographic Project which began in April 2005. Estimates from 2007 stated that as many as 700,000 persons had their DNA tested by companies such as Family Tree DNA, Oxford Ancestors, and 23andMe, and that the millionth person would likely be tested by 2009 (Genetic Genealogist 2007). Moreover, genetic genealogy is a true cooperative effort between skilled scientists and the public.
My Historical Male Line

According to reliable historical records, my male line was of Swiss origin, Bernese to be specific (Lendorff 2012). This is also supported by family tradition. Our family was known in Bern as the “Black Steigers,” so-called because their coat of arms featured the image of a black ibex.

Our earliest known progenitor was Rudolf Steiger (1502-????) a tailor, who was born in either Stein-am-Rhein or Nieder-Neunborn, both cities found along the upper Rhine River in Switzerland (Steiger 1976). Rudolf Steiger relocated to Bern and was named a member of that city’s governing council in 1540. In addition to government service, the male members of the family, with few exceptions, were military officers in the foreign war service (Lendorff 2012). Following the 1798 invasion of Switzerland by the armies of Napoleon Bonaparte and the subsequent dissolution of the Ancien Régime, the Black Steiger descendants, after nearly 300 years in Bern (ca1540 to 1819), dispersed to Czarist Russia and America while some remained in Bern (Steiger 1976).

My great-great-great-grandfather, Johann Rudolf de Steiguer (1778-1834), was a captain in the Bernese foreign war service who was imprisoned for 18 months by the French following their invasion of Switzerland. In 1819 he emigrated from Bern to America with his family and other Swiss émigrés and settled...
on the frontier near Athens, Ohio. His father, Johann Rudolf von Steiger (1743-1805), had been an official of the Bernese governing council at the French-speaking town of Grandson where he adopted the Gallicized spelling “de Steiguer” for his surname. The only son of my immigrant great-great-great grandfather was Johann Rudolf de Steiguer (1805-1864); one of his sons was the American-born medical doctor Edward de Steiguer (1837-1893); and one of his sons was Emanuel de Steiguer (1880-1962) whose only son was my father, Joseph Emanuel de Steiguer (1911-1991).

The Genetic Record

In the hope of tracing the Black Steiger male line prior to ca1500, in June 2011, DNA bucal swabs were provided to the National Geographic Genographic Project. Analysis and interpretation of my Y-DNA data was conducted by Family Tree DNA (FTDNA) of Houston, Texas, the University of Arizona Research Genetics Laboratory, with further statistical analysis and interpretation by Professor Emeritus Kenneth Nordvedt (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kenneth_Nordvedt), genetic genealogist, co-Haplogroup administrator and advisor to FTDNA. Also, various genetic genealogical listservs and blogs provided additional assistance.

The purpose of the Genographic Project, which involves hundreds of thousands of participants as well as many scientists from around the world, is to build a global human DNA data base and, in the process, help trace human deep ancestry. Deep ancestry examines one’s ancient ancestral origins in terms of tens, hundreds, or thousands of generations. With DNA analysis, it is sometimes possible to determine within a few hundred kilometers the geographic location where a genetic mutation first appeared (November 2008). Also, it is possible to determine the age of that mutation, that is, approximately when in time it occurred (De Vries et al 2009). From such a DNA marker time-and-space determination it is possible to make an inference regarding the culture of one’s deep ancestors.

My Y-DNA, in theory, should describe the deep ancestry of all male Black Steigers past and present. The Y chromosome is passed with little change from father to son through generations and across millennia (Smolenyak and Turner 2004). It follows a fam-
ily’s surname, barring non-paternity events. Y-DNA, unlike most other chromosomes, does not recombine; instead it undergoes only occasional random (with respect to the location on a chromosome) changes, known as mutations, which occur during the process of meiosis when sperm are formed. Such mutations are harmless, affecting only the non-coding portion of the Y-DNA. However, they serve to forever “mark” males who are descended from a common ancestor and, thus are useful for establishing deep ancestry. Here, I will focus only upon my Y-DNA results from the last 8,000 or so years.

FTDNA determined that my Y-DNA haplogroup classification was I1 (i.e., “I-one”) which is characterized by a specific genetic SNP marker known as M253.3 Haplogroup I1 M253 is distinctly and definitely Scandinavian in origin; indeed, geneticist/author Bryan Sykes refers to this haplogroup as the “Clan of Wodan” in his best seller, Saxons, Vikings and Celts: The Genetic Roots of Britain and Ireland. I1 is often associated with the countries of Denmark, Norway, Sweden, western Finland, extreme northern Germany, the Netherlands, and, due to a historic pattern of Saxon and Viking invasions, Britain and Ireland.

According to FTDNA, the present-day persons with whom I share a distant common I1 M253 ancestor are located mostly in: Denmark, the Netherlands, Germany, England, Ireland, Scotland, Sweden, Norway, Iceland, Greenland, and Ukraine. In contrast, few are found in Switzerland. These modern-day genetic connections have logical, historical explanations. For example, the Scandinavian countries and northern Germany were the original home of the M253 descendants. The Netherlands, located adjacent to northern Germany, during medieval times was an important settling area for both Saxons and Vikings. England, of course, was invaded by the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes ca1450 CE and by the Normans in 1066 CE and again, along with Scotland and Ireland, by the Vikings between ca800-1,000 CE. Vikings also settled in Iceland, Greenland, Russia and Ukraine. The latter may seem curious; however, the invading Rus, or Varangian, people, who were Swedish Vikings, in the 9th century, lent their name to Russia and established a capital at Kiev, Ukraine.

My I1 result is atypical for a male of Swiss heritage. In Scandinavia and north Germany, I1 comprises a large portion, i.e., 25 to 40 percent, of the male population (Wiik 2008). However, in contrast, the
Exploring Swiss-American Deep Ancestry

**Occurrence of Haplogroup II (M253)**

principal continental European Y-DNA haplogroup, and that of Switzerland, is Haplogroup R1b which accounts for 40% to 50% of the male population; II is a much smaller component of the continental European male population.

When II M253 is found outside Scandinavia or extreme northern Germany, (e.g. in Britain) it is regarded as genetic evidence of an invader. Following is a map displaying the present-day geographic occurrence of Haplogroup II. The darker the area, the more II males are found. As one can see, Scandinavia (including Denmark), north Germany, the Netherlands, and portions of the British Isles (the latter being home to many II M253 invaders) are almost black indicating the great density of persons there of II genetic heritage.

My FTDNA report stated that the M253 marker would have been in north Germany and Denmark between 6,000 to 4,000 BCE, as part of the Ertebølle Culture or its successor the Funnelbeaker Culture (Trichterbecherkultur), the latter so-named because of the funnel-spouted pottery they made. The Funnelbeaker Culture was made up of Stone Age peoples, who lived in huts, fished, practiced agriculture and raised livestock. The region pictured below designated as “TRB” was the Funnelbeaker’s domain and includes Saxony (i.e., north Germany), Denmark and southern Sweden.

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1. [Source](https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/sahs_review/vol50/iss1/15)
With the waning of the Roman Empire, various Scando-north Germanic cultures began the *Völkerwanderung* (i.e. “people’s migration”), and thus dispersed 11 genes, among others, away from their homeland. The first migrants included tribes and cultures such as the Suebi, Cher­usci and the Chatti. They later included cultures such as the Angles, Saxons, Jutes, and even later the Vikings and their subculture, the Normans.

I had tests conducted on my Y-DNA to help determine a possible Black Steiger connection with one or more of these medieval cultures. Accordingly, my genetic short tandem repeat values (i.e. alleles), were placed into the Athey haplogroup predictor (http://www.hprg.com/hapest5/) thereby reaffirming with 100 percent probability that my haplogroup was 11 M253, and with 79 percent likelihood that I was a member of a related subclade (i.e., haplogroup subdivision) called Anglo-Saxon 1.

Next, I ran additional Y-DNA single nucleotide polymorphism (i.e. SNP) tests with FTDNA to confirm the Anglo-Saxon 1 result. The tests revealed a SNP marker known as L338 whose origin has been dat­ed to about 2,100 years before present (Nordvedt 2006). According to Professor Nordvedt, the presence of L338 conclusively indicates membership in subclade Anglo-Saxon 1 (AS1), thus supporting the Athey result. Nordvedt (2011) also estimated that the first L338 man lived in
northern Germany (probably Niedersachsen), and that his descendants, in large part, subsequently emigrated westward to the Netherlands. In this regard, Nordvedt (2011) wrote, “I1-AS1 is the bulk of L338+ and probably is the most Netherlands-oriented clade I have ever seen.” (Incidentally, another part of this L338 population, known as Anglo-Saxon 8, emigrated eastward to Pomerania.) Furthermore, Professor Nordvedt (2011) believes that, because of the era and geographic location, the AS1 subclade was almost purely Saxon (the Angles, a smaller population, were located farther to the north in the east-central portion of Denmark’s Jutland Peninsula on the coast of the Baltic Sea).

Rhine River Hypothesis

If my Steiger male ancestors were from the Netherlands and were Saxons, how might they have found their way to Switzerland? The Rhine River linking the Netherlands to Switzerland provides a hypothesis. During the Early Middle Ages, a Frisian trade emporium existed along the Rhine River near the North Sea at the town of Dorestad in the Netherlands (Lebecq 1992). From there, for several centuries, trade ships regularly moved 800 miles up the Rhine to its headwaters in what is now Switzerland. The majority of original Frisian males are believed to have been from Haplogroup R1b (Family Tree DNA undated). So how might I1 M253 have become associated with this historic Frisian trading route?

Bazelmans (2009) notes that, while the Frisians at one time occupied Friesland (i.e., northern Netherlands), by the 5th century they were subdued and expelled by Anglo-Saxons who came from what is now northern Germany. These invaders, at least in part, were composed of Haplogroup I1 M253. Weale et al (2002) also argues that they were, in fact, predominantly Saxon. Bazelmans stated that the newly arriving Saxons retained the name “Frisian” for their Netherlands culture, and thus the “Frisian trade” on the Rhine became in actuality a Saxon trade. Therefore, the “Frisian trade” was a possible means for relocating some Saxon Haplogroup I1M253 males to Switzerland (however, according to Weale et al, the majority of Friesland’s Saxons emigrated to England ca400-800 CE). As previously stated in this article, the earliest known progenitor of the Black Steigers, Rudolf Steiger (1502-????), lived along the upper Rhine River in Switzerland, and thus, while not
proof, we nevertheless have a hypothesis: the Frisian Trade Route was the means by which my forebearers arrived in Switzerland.

Conclusion

For five centuries, we have known the history of the Bernese Black Steigers; however, their story prior to 1500 was a complete enigma until the advent of DNA testing. Based upon my Y-DNA tests, it now appears as though the Steigers, before their arrival in Switzerland, were of Scandinavian origin and possibly of Saxon ancestry residing in the Netherlands during the Middle Ages. Of course, such DNA results must be assigned a degree of probability. In that regard, the Scandinavian origins are all but certain while the Saxon ancestry seems highly likely.

Genetic genealogy is an exciting new field of inquiry readily available even to complete novices. Several DNA testing companies offer their services online; also, there are DNA interest groups to assist in the process of analysis and discovery. My own experience with DNA testing has been extremely informative and personally rewarding; it is a valuable tool aiding my investigations in history and genealogy. As I have quipped to my fellow genetics buffs, “it’s the next best thing to a time machine.” My hope is to involve other Steiger males in this genetic quest. The science is advancing rapidly; there is much to learn.

- University of Arizona, Tucson

References


The Federal Charter of 1291 and the Founding of the Swiss State

by Albert Winkler

Most countries have a national holiday to celebrate their identity or independence, often symbolized by some heroic event or defining moment. Switzerland’s day of remembrance is August 1, which commemorates the creation of an alliance in 1291 when the states of Uri, Schwyz, and Nidwalden (part of Unterwalden) established a “perpetual league” by authorizing the “Federal Charter” or Bundesbrief. This pact was perhaps an early step toward the founding of the Swiss state, because it helped define the policies relating to sovereignty, internal affairs, mutual aid, and resistance to external threats. However, the document’s nature, authenticity, and actual significance in Swiss history remain unclear and subject to debate. This paper will examine this charter and discuss its historical importance.

The Federal Charter has long perplexed scholars who have tried to understand its structure, wording, and historical impact; many issues remain unresolved. Fortunately, in 1991, the seven-hundredth-anniversary celebration of the founding of the Swiss state spawned many important academic studies on the origins of the Swiss Confederation and the nature of the Federal Charter, greatly expanding our understanding of that document.¹

Bundesbrief has often been translated as “Federal Charter,” “Letter of Alliance,” “Letter of Union,” or “Covenant of 1291,” and it is best understood in the context of when it was created. In the thirteenth century, various communities that later formed part of the Swiss Confederation, including the “Forest States” or “Forest Cantons” (Waldstätte) of Uri, Schwyz, and Nidwalden, were defending themselves from external threats, including the Habsburg family, which were seeking to control them. While the people of these areas were largely free peasants, who often chose their own leaders, the Habsburgs still held judicial powers over them and could arbitrate or pass judgment on their activities, especially dealing with foreign relations.

A major step toward independence and self-rule for these communities was when the Hohenstaufen Emperors of Germany granted Uri and Schwyz charters of independence (Freibrief or Freiheitsbrief). Henry VII conferred this privilege on Uri in 1231, and Frederick II gave it to Schwyz in 1240. These endowments affirmed that the areas were under the authority of the Emperor (Reichsunmittelbar or Reichsfrei), making them independent from the local feudal powers (including the Habsburgs), but this sovereignty had to be defended, leaving many issues unresolved. Schwyz and the Habsburg family soon engaged in a lengthy contest over judicial authority, and the Habsburgs tried to assert control over Schwyz and the other Forest States through encirclement, including controlling trade.

From 1241 to 1244, Count Rudolf III von Habsburg constructed the castle of Neuhabburg on the shores of Lake Luzern on a prominence between Luzern and Küsnacht. This fortress bordered Schwyz
and controlled commerce between Lake Luzern and Lake Zug, threatening the trade of each Forest State. Count Rudolf IV, who later ruled as Rudolf I von Habsburg, King of the Holy Roman Empire (German Empire) from 1273 to 1291, also followed this policy. Wielding the combined power of the Habsburg faction and the imperial prerogatives, he extended his control over the approaches to the Forest States by acquiring dozens of towns, areas, monasteries, and courts through inheritance, purchase, and other means, effectively controlling access to the Forest States from the north, east, and west.

To face the threats of the era and ensure mutual aid and cooperation, the states that later formed parts of the Swiss Confederation made a number of treaties and agreements. An undated document, written perhaps between 1244 and 1252, mentions an agreement between Luzern and the towns of Buochs and Stans, both in Nidwalden. On August 28, 1247, Pope Innocent IV wrote a letter condemning an unspecified pact between Schwyz, Luzern, and Sarnen, a town in Obwalden (also a part of Unterwalden). The Holy Father was supporting a plea by Count Rudolf III von Habsburg, who claimed that he owned these areas, and the German noble feared these states were operating autonomously. Innocent criticized this agreement because the alliance aided Emperor Frederick II with whom the Pope was then at war.

The earliest alliance for mutual protection between Swiss states that can be dated is a pact between Fribourg (Freiburg im Üechtland) and Bern, signed on November 20, 1243. This alliance has many features similar to the Federal Charter of 1291, including a statement that the agreement renewed an earlier understanding. Since no text of this previous accord survives, it could have been made verbally. The nature

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6 Wilhelm P. Sidler, *Die Schlacht am Morgarten* (Zürich: Füssli, 1910), pp. 44, 48-54.


8 “Breve des Papstes Innocenz IV. gegen Schwyz, Sarnen und Luzern. Lyon 28 Augustus 1247” as cited in Oechsli, *Quellenbuch*, 43-4. This is a translation of the document from Latin into German.
of the alliance between Fribourg and Bern was “eternal,” and both cities agreed to avenge all wrongs done to the other, to provide mutual aid, and to protect each other’s independence, security, and rights of their citizens.9

The Forest States tried to maintain their autonomy in the face of King Rudolf I’s tightening grip over them, and they waited for an opportunity to resist Habsburg power more effectively. They anticipated Rudolf’s death because his heir, Albrecht I von Habsburg, would be weak until he could consolidate his new position.10 When Rudolf died on July 15, 1291, in Speyer, Germany, the Forest States were ready to act, and they soon created an alliance to set their relationship on a firm footing of mutual aid and cooperation. This was the famous Federal Charter of 1291.

As with any primary source, the best way to understand the Federal Charter is to examine its nature and content carefully. The text is seventeen lines long, written on a piece of parchment that is approximately 8.25 inches high (209 to 210 millimeters) and 12.6 inches wide (318 to 321 millimeters).11 The document is written in a gothic script that is somewhere between the writing employed in official sources and in composing books. The Federal Charter contains contractions, superscripts, shorthand signs, abbreviations, and dashes, common devices employed by scribes at the time. However, the scribe who actually penned the document and the area where he worked remain unknown because the handwriting and the abbreviations have no known parallels in any region.

The charter is written in Latin and includes 469 words that are composed of 2,288 letters, and 304 of these words have been short-

13 Hohlenstein, Urschwäizer Bundesbrief 1291, pp. 11-13.

14 The document has been reproduced many times in upgraded Latin and in various translations. For Latin and German see, Anton Castell, Die Bundesbriefe zu Schwyz: Volkstümliche Darstellung wichtiger Urkunden Eidgenössischer Früzeit (Einsiedeln: Benziger, 1969), 36-41. For a website with the original Latin and translations into English, French, Italian, Romanian, and German, see www.lexilogos.com/declaration/suisse_pacte_tableau.htm.
eral Charter directly, scholars often upgrade the Latin and use complete words.

The contents of the document may be briefly summarized. In view of the dangers of the time, each state agrees to aid the others in the face of all possible internal and external threats no matter what the expense is in people and goods. This pact renews the ancient form of the league which was also established by oath. The states agree to allow no foreign or unfree judges to have authority over them. But when disputes arise, the most prudent members of the alliance would adjudicate them, and all the members of the pact would support and uphold the judgments made. Murderers should be executed, and anyone damaging the possession of others must pay restitution. The stated agreements will “endure forever” (in perpetuum duraturis), and the document is dated 1291 “at the beginning of the month of August” (primo incipientem mense Augusto).

The Federal Charter is certainly no constitution that created a new state. It is simple and direct, and explains the nature of the alliance, but it has some aspects that have long puzzled historians. In fact, many of the questions are so perplexing that they may be unresolvable. The document seems to have been composed in haste, and internal evidence suggests that it was probably compiled from other sources that modern scholars have been unable to identify because they no longer exist. Pascal Ladner has written that the agreement seems to be pieced together from four sources. Two probably came from older documents, and two may have originated in Uri and Schwyz in 1291.15

A document in Latin was certainly not intended for the common people who could not understand that language, but rather for those who had the expertise to read it, and those persons have never been identified. The Latin in the letter is quite obscure, leaving the impression that the manuscript could have been a translation from a German original, and Léon Kern of the University of Lausanne has stated that there are grammatical errors in the Federal Charter: “This document has been written by a clumsy scribe who committed several errors.” Dr. Kern points out that eos is used on line three when eis should have been written. Likewise, noxite is found instead of noctis in line eleven, vallem or valles has been omitted before infra in line thirteen, dampnificatus

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is presented instead of damnficatus in line fourteen, and petitionem is found instead of petitionem in line sixteen.¹⁶

Most of the text is written in the objective form (indirect discourse), which means that the author wrote in third person. This is evident in the first line which reads, “Therefore, know all men that,” (Noverint igitur universi quod) or more to the point “they know” (Noverint). However, the phraseology shifts unexpectedly to the subjective voice (direct discourse), when the scribe writes in the first person plural. The sixth line states, “We have promised, we have established, and we have ordained” (promisimus, statuimus, ac ordinauimus). The seventh line reads, “our resident” (noster incola), but then on the same line, the wording returns

to the objective form, "he shall be" (fuerit), and the grammatical voice remains objective for the rest of the document.\(^\text{17}\)

While each participating state should have received its own copy of the agreement, only one now exists, and it is located in the Bundesbriefmuseum (Federal Charter Museum) in Schwyz. Uri’s copy may have been destroyed in the fire in Altdorf in 1799 during the Napoleonic Wars, but this remains uncertain. What appears to be a German translation of the Federal Charter is located in Stans in Nidwalden. Known as the “Nidwalden Copy” (Nidwalden Fassung), the date of the translation is unknown, but the nature of the script suggests that it was written near the year 1400.\(^\text{18}\)

The Federal Charter fails to state who was the common enemy threatening the Forest States. The statement that the agreement is made “regarding the malice of the age” (malician temporis attendentes) is vague. While the Habsburgs may have been that threat, they are nowhere mentioned. Much of the Federal Charter is confusing, and some of the terminology is hard to understand. What is meant exactly by the terms universitates and communitates remains unclear. They were unspecified corporate bodies, and they could have been villages, communities, or areas of various legal standings. Also, the word homines clearly refers to persons, but their precise social status is unknown; they could have been free peasants or those who owed various forms of feudal obligations.\(^\text{19}\)

At that time, cities and states placed official seals on documents, which validated them. For instance, the alliance between Zurich, Uri, and Schwyz on October 16, 1291, only two months after the Federal Charter, states that “our seal” upon the document attests its authenticity.\(^\text{20}\) Each of the three Forest States should have placed seals on the Charter. Uri’s insignia is correct, but the seal of Schwyz is missing, and the wax symbol for Nidwalden is erroneous. The phrase “among the mountains of the lower valley,” (Intramontanorum Vallis Inferioris), seems to refer to Nidwalden, but the seal on the item surprisingly


\(^{18}\) Sablonier, Gründungszeit ohne Eidgenossen, p. 163. In Sablonier’s opinion, the date for the Nidwalden Copy is uncertain.

\(^{19}\) Ibid., pp. 165-6.

belongs to Obwalden, an upper part of Unterwalden. Someone ignorant of the difference between the two states could have placed Obwalden’s seal on the document at a later date, an unlikely possibility, but the incorrect seal could mean that Nidwalden never formally sanctioned the source. Similarly, Schwyz’s seal could have been removed later, but the missing symbol could also mean that the state had second thoughts about the Charter and likewise did not authorize it. Also, it is curious that the first state mentioned in the text is Uri, but the first seal on the document (going from left to right) is the lost seal of Schwyz.

No contemporaneous account exists on the creation of the Federal Charter that includes how, why, and by whom the pact was negotiated. The men who made the agreement are not listed in the source, and the document is unsigned. A highly questionable claim presented centuries later states that Walter Furst, Arnold de Melchtal, and Werner Stauf-
facher were involved in forming an agreement, but the Federal Charter was not part of the oath these men supposedly took. The lack of names on the Charter is curious because the agreement between Zurich, Uri, and Schwyz on October 16, 1291, lists the fourteen men who made that alliance.

While the accord between Zurich, Uri, and Schwyz states that the alliance was negotiated in Zurich, the Federal Charter gives no location of its origins. Folklore indicates that swearing a pledge of loyalty, known as the Rütli Oath, occurred on the Rütli meadow above Lake Luzern, but the Federal Charter has nothing to do with that story. The known meeting places of the Forest States in the late Middle Ages include Schwyz, Stans (in Nidwalden), and Beckenried (also in Nidwalden). Any of these locations could have been used as gathering places when the Federal Charter was concluded.

The date on the document, “at the beginning of August” (incipiente mense augusto), which was interpreted as August 1 in the nineteenth century, is also strange because a more specific date would be expected on a document north of the Alps. Breaking the month into parts, such as “at the beginning” or “at the end,” were expressions in widespread use in manuscripts in Italy at that time, while the use of exact dates was more common in the areas associated with the German Empire including the Forest States. In view of all these problems, the authenticity of the document must be questioned. It could have been produced at a later time than stated, or it could simply be a forgery.

The question of medieval forgery is complicated. While many persons and states falsified documents to gain financial or political advantage or to cause mischief, many items that were copied after the date on the items contain accurate information. Often scribes copied sources because the originals became damaged and hard to read, and they made transcripts to preserve the desired knowledge. These newer replicas often contain reliable intelligence even though later forms of writing and more recent materials—such as ink and parchment—were used in making the copies. Frequently, the challenge for modern scholars is to decide which parts of documents are fabrications and which are authentic.

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22 Oechsli, Anfänge, p. 294.
As Professor Sablonier observes, “Every Medievalist knows that hundreds of surviving sources from the Middle Ages (especially those that grant privileges and establish fundamental relationships) have been forged or contain inauthentic parts that have been intermingled [with accurate materials] or been placed later [in the source].” While Dr. Sablonier never states that the Federal Charter is a fake, he suggests that its contents may have been created between 1320 and 1330, and he also indicates that the internal evidence in it makes 1309 as the most likely date for its composition. If so, the manuscript was probably given the date of 1291 to make it appear more noteworthy because it was older. Sablonier’s main argument is that the question of the authenticity of the Federal Charter “must be earnestly addressed” (ernsthaft gestellt werden muss).

The radiocarbon dating method is the most scientific and potentially the most accurate means of dating the parchment on which the Federal Charter was written. The approximate year of death for the goat or sheep from which the parchment was made can be identified by measuring the amount of radioactive carbon still in the hide. The document has been tested, and with a certainty of 68 percent, the parchment was produced between the years 1265 and 1295. At roughly 18 percent probability, 1280 is the most likely time of death, and there is an 85 percent chance that the material was created between 1252 and 1312. This date range is exactly what would be expected, but a later time frame is possible because of the 15 percent probability that the parchment dates from 1352 to 1385.

These conclusions mean that the parchment upon which the Federal Charter was written is clearly of late medieval origin, but the date of this material may differ from that of the source’s content. The parchment could have been clipped from another document written at the
appropriate time, and the text could have been added later. The fact that the manuscript has relatively narrow margins, especially on the right and left sides, could be evidence that the material was cut from another source and was the wrong size for its intended purpose. However, the strongest indication that the content of the Federal Charter dates no later than the fourteenth century is the existence of the Nidwalden Copy from roughly 1400.

The importance of the Federal Charter on medieval Swiss history was minimal because the manuscript was either ignored or forgotten almost as soon as it was written. On October 16, 1291, the states of Zürich, Uri, and Schwyz created a defensive alliance that was supposed to last for three years. This pact was curious because Nidwalden was not part of the agreement, and the accord makes no reference to the charter of early August 1291. If the Federal Charter was considered valid, then Nidwalden should have been party to the later alliance, and the earlier agreement should have been mentioned. Clearly the Forest States had created no tight alliance by 1300, and no forerunner to the modern Swiss nation existed at that time.\textsuperscript{28}

The Battle of Morgarten on November 15, 1315, was one of the most important events in forming the Swiss state. At that time, Uri, Schwyz, and Unterwalden (Nidwalden and Obwalden combined) met a Habsburg invasion and destroyed its army, thus maintaining their security and independence.\textsuperscript{29}

On December 9, 1315, shortly after the battle, the Forest States created the "Three States’ Pact" (\textit{Dreiländerbund}), the "Brunner Pact" (\textit{Brunner Bund oder Brunner Vertrag}), the "Brunner Letter" (\textit{Brunnener Brief}), or the "Morgarten Letter" (\textit{Morgartenbrief}). This source is written in German for all to understand, and it states for whom it was intended. "Therefore, we announce and disclose to the fellow countrymen of Uri, Schwyz, and Unterwalden to all those who read this letter or hear it read that" (\textit{Dar vmb so ku[i]nden vn[d] offene[n] wir die lant lu[i]te von Vre vo[n] Swits vn[d] von Vnd[er]walde[n] alle[n] die[n] die disen Brief lesen od[er] h[e]rent lesen daz).\textsuperscript{30} It refers to no earlier agree-

\textsuperscript{28} Sablonier "Das neue Bundesbriefmuseum" in \textit{Entstehung}, p. 170.
\textsuperscript{29} For the most complete account of the battle in English, see Albert Winkler, "The Battle of Morgarten: An Essential Incident in the Founding of the Swiss State," \textit{Swiss American Historical Society Review} 44, no. 3 (2008): pp. 3-25.
ments, including the Federal Charter, which could hardly have been the model for this alliance. The seals of Uri, Schwyz, and Unterwalden are affixed to it, and the Morgarten Letter is clearly authentic. The treaty bound the three states to cooperate on any military ventures, to aid one another in times of emergencies, to guarantee peace among the signers, and to assure cooperation on all matters dealing with foreign powers. Significantly, this accord would “remain eternally and continuously” (ewig und stete heliben) binding on the states, and it is still valid today. As such, it may be considered the founding document of the Swiss state. 31

In the following decades, new members joined the Three States’ Pact. Luzern joined in 1332, Zurich in 1351, both Zug and Glarus in 1352, and Bern in 1353. None of these pacts refer to the Federal Charter of 1291, but each treaty is a milestone in the development of the Swiss nation. 32 These states formed the “Eight Old Areas” (Acht Alte Orte), which was the political union that helped the Swiss Confederation to survive and to acquire new members in the fifteenth century.

Early historians of the Swiss Confederation also ignored the Federal Charter. Prominent among them is Aegidius Tschudi, who wrote the extensive “Swiss Chronicle” on which he was working as late as 1570. 33 Often called the Herodotus of Swiss history, Tschudi has been criticized for perpetuating myths of Swiss history including the stories of Wilhelm Tell’s revolt, the swearing of the Rütli Oath on November 8, 1307, and the attack on the nobles’ fortresses on January 1, 1308. However, Tschudi was thorough in his research, and his history includes at least 750 archival sources including official acts, charters, deeds, legislative and monastic records, and books of commemoration. 34 Curiously, he fails to use the Federal Charter. Either he did not know of its existence, which is unlikely, or he did not think it was authentic.

The Nidwalden Copy or German translation of the Federal Charter is first mentioned in the sources in 1616 because it helped resolve a controversy between Nidwalden and Obwalden, but the Latin version is not mentioned until the next century. An archival register in Schwyz first lists the document in 1724. Johann Heinrich Gieser, a scholar from Basel, “discovered” the item around 1758 or 1759, and he published it in 1760. While the Charter had become known, it had little immediate impact on the writing of Swiss history.

The eminent Swiss historian, Johannes von Müller, sometimes known as the Swiss Thucydides, pays little attention to the Federal Charter in his monumental “Histories of the Swiss Confederation.” In the first volume, initially issued in 1780, he published a translation of the item, but he downplayed its importance in a footnote. He identifies the source as “the oldest record of the Swiss Confederation” (die älteste

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Urkunde der Schweizerischen Eidgenossenschaft), but he also wonders how it could have escaped Tschudi’s “diligence” (Fleiß) in finding records. Müller assigns little significance to the document and indicates that there was nothing revolutionary in it when he asks, “What is [so] rebellious in these old Swiss agreements?” Following Tschudi’s lead, Müller chooses to give significance to the story of Wilhelm Tell and the supposed revolts of in 1307 and 1308.

Researchers first questioned the authenticity of Wilhelm Tell and the Rütli Oath in the eighteenth century, and pragmatic historians continued their attacks in the following century. Wilhelm Vischer and Ernst Ludwig Rochholz were among the prominent historians to argue that the stories of Tell and the Rütli Oath were folklore. This meant that the traditional dates for the founding of the Swiss state in 1307 and 1308 could not be valid, leaving the door open for another time to be suggested for the beginning of the nation.

In 1835 Professor Joseph Eutych Kopp argued that the Federal Charter was the oldest document in the formation of the Swiss Confederation when he wrote that August 1, 1291 had “won” as the starting point of the state. Other important historians were divided in their opinions on the Federal Charter including Johannes Dierauer and Karl Dändliker who both wrote impressive multi-volume histories of Switzerland late in the nineteenth century. Dierauer states in his first volume of the “History of the Swiss Confederation,” initially published in 1887, that the Federal Charter creates an “eternal pact” and “laid through this deed, the first foundation of the Swiss Confederation.”

Dändliker is more skeptical about the importance of the Federal Charter in the founding of the Swiss state in his “History of Switzerland” first published in 1884. He writes that the year 1291 is “uncertain” (unsicher) in its importance, but 1315 is “significant” (gesichert). He

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40 Kopp, Urkunden, 1: p. 3. See also Bresslau, “Die älteste Bündnis,” p. 4.
concludes that, “the battle at Morgarten and the eternal pact of Brunnen 1315 have authenticated the existence of the [Swiss] Confederation.”42

The Federal Charter of 1291 was elevated to the founding document of Switzerland not by a consensus of the Swiss people or of Swiss historians but by an act of government. The nineteenth century was an era of enhanced nationalism in many European states as they celebrated their identity through a national holiday. While many Swiss cities, regions, and cantons had local festivities, Switzerland was behind the times because it had no day for a national celebration. On November 5, 1889, the seven members of the Federal Council (Bundesrat) gave a mandate to the Departments of the Interior and of the Military to write a report on a national holiday. These agencies presented their report on November 21, stating that the Swiss Confederation began on August 1, 1291, with the Federal Charter. The Federal Council validated the report on December 14, 1889, also announcing that a national celebration would be held on August 1, 1891.43

Elevating the year 1291 to the founding date of the Swiss Confederation had certain advantages. Soon after accepting the report, the nation could have its six-hundred-year celebration in 1891 and would not have to wait until 1915 for a much better date. Not only would 1891 be an earlier date for a celebration, but there was just enough time to prepare for it. In addition, Bern would have its seven-hundred-year celebration for its founding in 1891, meaning that Bern and rest of Switzerland could share in each other’s festivities.

The Swiss press responded almost immediately to the mandated national holiday, and the newspapers disagreed on the need for the celebration. On December 27, 1889, the Thurgauer Wochen-Zeitung stated that the national observance was a good idea. The Winterthurer Landbote responded on January 5, 1890, and disagreed, affirming that in the “mind and consciousness” (Gemüt und Bewusstsein) of the Swiss people, August 1, 1291 did not exist as the date of the founding of the state. The Züricher Post expressed a similar opinion on January 19, 1890, affirming that it was somewhat surprised and astonished by the


message from the federal government elevating the status of the Federal Charter. The newspaper agreed that a national holiday was a good idea, but August 1, 1291, had no place in the mentality of the modern Swiss and was also completely unknown to 99 percent of former generations. Clearly, the Charter was an important source, but “we in no way know with certainty if it was the first [document] of its kind or was only a consequence of older alliances.”

The Swiss Federal Council used the power of the government to promote the Federal Charter of 1291 as the founding document of the Switzerland. Not only did the state promote the festivities of 1891, it also granted a prestigious commission to Professor Wilhelm Oechsli to write a scholarly book of commemoration supporting the national celebration. Clearly, Dr. Oechsli knew what was expected of him, but he was more than just a historian-for-hire who blindly followed the state-approved position. He states that other years were more important than 1291 in the founding of the Swiss nation: “We would, therefore, hardly go wrong if we set the founding of the three-states agreement, and with it the beginning of the Swiss Confederation, in the time frame from 1245 to 1252.”

More recently, Karl Meyer has expressed a similar opinion when he argues that the evidence suggests that historians look for a date of early alliances among the Forest States sometime between the years 1240 and 1252. However, the Swiss school system has supported August 1, 1291, as the founding date of the nation as a matter of patriotism and has taught the importance of that date to generations of Swiss, most of whom accept it without question.

Criticism from historians on the use of the Federal Charter as the founding document of the Swiss state has increased over the years. Scholars are still skeptical about the item’s content, authenticity, and importance in history, and the fact that the federal government elevated

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45 Oechsli, Anfänge, [v].

46 Ibid., 272. “Wir werden daher kaum fehlgehen, wenn wir die Entstehung des Dreiländerbundes und damit die Anfänge der Eidgenossenschaft in die Zeit von 1245 bis 1252 setzen.”

the status of the document for national festivities. As Professor Sablonier states, "the so-called founding of the Swiss Confederation in 1291, which was the occasion of great national anniversary celebrations first in 1891, then in 1941, and also again in 1991, is a figure of political discourse and not of historical argumentation."\textsuperscript{48} In view of all these problems and misgivings, the importance of the Federal Charter as the founding document of the Swiss Confederation must remain highly questionable.

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The Swiss and the Iranian Hostage Crisis

by Dwight Page

Like the Kennedy assassination and the events surrounding the terrorist attacks of 9/11 in New York, all the world remembers the Iranian Hostage Crisis. For 444 days—from November 4, 1979, until January 20, 1981, all good and decent people around the globe were shocked, appalled, and disgusted by the endless stories of abuse and contempt to which the innocent American hostages—employees of the legitimate Embassy of the United States in Iran—were subjected by the Iranian student terrorists. Until this event, diplomatic immunity had always been a sacred concept, respected by all nations. On the rare occasion when the diplomat’s sacred person was violated, swift punishment by the authorities of the host nation was sure to follow. We recall that when, during the Chinese Boxer Rebellion of 1900, the German ambassador to China was murdered outside the Imperial Palace and the Forbidden City in Peking, the Empress Cixi immediately ordered the decapitation of the malicious culprits who had been involved in this unfortunate incident. In addition, at that time, in order to appease the
Rightfully offended European and American Embassies in Peking, the Empress Cixi invited the numerous ambassadors from Europe and the United States then residing in Peking to the Imperial Court of China and, in the purest and most impeccable Oxfordian English, publicly apologized for this injury to international law. Such courteous behavior was the norm in the royal courts and the governments of the world of yesteryear, universally governed by the Law and Ethics, and by the wise teachings of the Christ, the wise teachings of the Koran or the wise teachings of the Buddha.

The recent film *Argo*, directed by Ben Affleck, has resurrected those unhappy events which transpired in Tehran during the fall of 1979 and throughout 1980. The film focuses upon the incident known as the Canadian Caper and traces the events leading to the rescue of six American diplomats who were hiding out at the residence of the Canadian Ambassador in Tehran, Ken Taylor, and at the residence of his colleague John Sheardown. The film has become extremely popular. Indeed, at the Academy Award presentations in February 2013, it won the award for Best Motion Picture of 2012.

The violation of the diplomatic immunity and sanctity of the American Embassy in Tehran in November 1979 was already deplorable and tragic enough. Unfortunately, this new film *Argo* has exacerbated the resentment surrounding the captivity of the American hostages in Iran by failing to properly acknowledge key players in the historical events leading to the release of those hostages on January 20, 1981. The film gives the erroneous impression that only the Canadians were involved in the efforts to help the beleaguered Americans. Indeed, early in the film, the CIA mastermind of the scheme to liberate the six trapped
Americans, Tony Mendez—played by Mr. Affleck—is briefed on developments by his CIA supervisor Jack O’Donnell. During the course of this briefing, Mr. O’Donnell explains that the six United States Embassy staff members had escaped the besieged American Embassy in Tehran on November 4, 1979, and had been given refuge by the Canadians. He thoughtlessly states: ‘Brits turned them away, Kiwis turned them away.”

Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, the Danes, the Swedes, the New Zealanders, and the British all gave freely of their time and contacts in order to try to rescue the six American hostages who had received asylum from the Canadians.

Naturally, the above-mentioned nations have been offended by the film makers’ perverse and incomprehensible distortion of history. Sir John Graham, now 86, who was Great Britain’s Ambassador to Iran at the time, said in a recent interview: “It is not the truth that they were turned away from the British Embassy. We gave them all help at the time. My immediate reaction on hearing about the claims of this film was one of outrage. I have since simmered down, but am still very distressed that the filmmakers should have got it so wrong. My concern is that this inaccurate account should not enter the mythology of the events in Tehran in November, 1979.”

Arthur Wyatt, 83, who was then the British chargé d’affaires in Tehran, said: “Hollywood’s record in this is certainly lacking in many cases. I’m disappointed to hear how we have been portrayed. . . The Americans who had escaped from their embassy first fetched up at our summer compound in northern Tehran, and I think that they stayed there for one night before moving on to the Canadians. If it had been discovered we were helping them, I can assure you we’d all have been for the high jump.” Mr. Wyatt, who served as a diplomat for forty-five years, was awarded the Companion of the Order of Saint Michael and Saint George for his work in Tehran, in recognition of the risks he took at the time.

In addition, the victims themselves—United States consular officer Robert Anders and the five colleagues who fled into hiding with him on November 4, 1979—have likewise expressed their profound regret that references to the helpfulness and thoughtfulness of so many nations in assisting them have been omitted in *Argo*.

Mr. Anders, now 87, recently told *The Sun Telegraph*: “It is absolutely incorrect, absolutely untrue [that the British and the New
Zealanders turned us away.] On the contrary, they made us very comfortable, the British were very helpful and they helped to move around to different places after that too... They put their lives on the line for us. We were all at risk. I hope no one in Britain will be offended by what's said in the film. The British were good to us and we're forever grateful.”

To be sure, to his credit, Ben Affleck, who also stars in the leading role, has admitted agonizing over taking such liberties with history but said that he had depicted events “as best I can, factually: I struggled with this long and hard, because it casts Britain and New Zealand in a way that is not totally fair,” he conceded. “But I was setting up a situation where you needed to get a sense that these six people had nowhere else to go. It does not mean to diminish anyone.”

Most significantly and most tragically, *Argo* makes only one slight reference to the tremendous and extensive amount of aid given by the Swiss during all phases of the Iranian Hostage Crisis: at the film’s conclusion the six American captives are air lifted out of the Tehran Airport to safety in Zurich by a Swiss American flight. The final scene of the film—a classic cliff hanger—shows the Iranian terrorists in jeeps gesticulating madly and pursuing the Swiss aircraft as it lifts off Iranian territory.

In fact, the Swiss government, more than any other, was from the beginning constantly involved in the efforts to secure a swift and honorable release of all the American hostages in Tehran. The author personally and vividly recalls that throughout the Iranian Hostage Crisis, the American news networks were continually reporting stories concerning the many Swiss efforts to free the hostages and to re-establish the lost entente between the United States and Iran.

Indeed, the principal objective of this article is to trace the various humanitarian and diplomatic acts of virtue engineered in those days on
behalf of the distraught hostages and the American people by our long­time friend and ally: the government of the Swiss Confederation.

However, in order that the reader will properly understand the obstacles facing the Swiss and the Americans in their efforts to release the hostages, it is first necessary to review the events leading up to the seizure of the American Embassy in Tehran on November 4, 1979. In February 1979, less than a year before the hostage crisis, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the Shah of Iran, had been overthrown in a revolution. For several decades prior to his deposition, the United States had allied with and supported the Shah. By the 1950s, the Shah was engaged in a power struggle with Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh, an immediate descendant of the previous monarchy, the Quajar dynasty. In 1953 the British and U.S. spy agencies helped Iranian royalists depose the government of Mosaddegh in a military coup d'état codenamed Opera-
tion Ajax, and helped the Shah to extend his power. Thereupon the Shah appointed himself an absolute monarch and ruled as such rather than as a constitutional monarch, his position before the 1953 crisis, with the aim of assuming complete control of the government and purging the disloyal. United States support and funding of the Shah continued after the coup, with the CIA training the government’s secret police, SAVAK. In the subsequent decades of the callous Cold War period, various economic, cultural and political issues united opposition against the Shah and led to his overthrow.

Months before the revolution on New Year’s Eve, December 31, 1977, American president Jimmy Carter further angered anti-Shah Iranians with a televised toast to the Shah, declaring how beloved the Shah was by his people. After the revolution culminated with the return of Ayatollah Ruholla Khomeini from France in February 1979, the embassy had been occupied and staff held hostage briefly. Rocks and bullets had broken enough of the embassy’s front-facing windows for them to be replaced with bulletproof glass. Its staff was reduced to just over 60 from a high of nearly 1,000 earlier in the decade.

The Carter administration attempted to mitigate anti-American feeling by finding a new relationship with the de facto Iranian government and continuing military cooperation in hopes that the situation would stabilize. However, on October 22, 1979, the United States permitted the Shah—who was ill with lymphoma—to enter New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center for medical treatment. The Department of State had discouraged the request, understanding the political delicacy of the situation, but after pressure from influential figures including former United States Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and Council on Foreign Relations chairman David Rockefeller, the Carter administration decided to grant the Shah’s request.

The Shah’s admission to the United States intensified Iranian revolutionaries’ anti-Americanism and spawned rumors of another U.S.-backed coup and reinstallation of the Shah. Revolutionary leader Ayatollah Ruholla Khomeini—who had been exiled by the Shah for fifteen years—heightened rhetoric against the “Great Satan,” the United States, talking of what he called evidence of American plotting. In addition to putting an end to what they believed was American sabotage against the revolution, the hostage takers hoped to depose the provisional revolutionary government of Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan, which they
believed was plotting to normalize relations with the United States and extinguish Islamic revolutionary ardor in Iran. Thus was set the stage for the Iranian Hostage Crisis.

Also, in order better to understand the developments in the wake of the seizure of the American Embassy on November 4, 1979, it is important that the reader understand the geographical location of the various hostages in the weeks following that event: the majority of the hostages remained within the American Embassy; three high-level officials—Bruce Laingen, Victor Tomseth and Mike Howland—were kept in seclusion at the Foreign Ministry; six of the hostages who had managed to escape the Embassy were being secretly housed at the home of the Canadian Ambassador Ken Taylor.

During the first couple of weeks after the takeover, the Iranian government reached the decision that thirteen hostages would be released. On November 19-20, 1979, the decision was made by American and European officials that these freed hostages would be taken to the United States Air Force hospital in Wiesbaden, Germany, for prompt medical care. The purpose of these medical visits was to ease the transition as hostages and families were reunited.

During this early period of the Iranian Hostage Crisis, a special relationship developed between American authorities and the government of Switzerland. Among the staff papers prepared in the early days of the crisis was the usual legal memorandum on appointing another government to look after United States interests if diplomatic relations were broken. It is a customary step when diplomatic relations are broken, for each government to appoint a “protecting power” to do its business in the other’s capital. Although relations between the United States and Iran were not broken till later, the Washington team during this early phase of the crisis developed close working and personal relationships with the Swiss that became central in later dealings with Tehran. The Swiss ambassador in Tehran, Erik Lang, and his colleagues in Bern and Washington, were thus gradually drawn into the crisis and would henceforward play crucial roles in its resolution.

When it was announced that the thirteen hostages would be released, the Swiss immediately offered an aircraft to fly them to Europe. They offered communication with Tehran through a channel beginning with the Swiss Ambassador to the United States, Raymond Probst, and his deputy, Franz Muheim, in Washington, going through Edouard Brun-
ner, the senior ministry official responsible for the Middle East in Berne, and Swiss Foreign Minister Pierre Aubert, and ending with Ambassador Erik Lang in Tehran. Increasingly, Lang became the bearer of sensitive American messages to key Iranians, a principal analyst of the political dynamics in Tehran, and an independent source of judgment on other negotiating channels. Probst would bring Lang’s thoughtful analytical messages to the Department of State in Washington, and when the State Department had replies, State Department officials would drive them to Ambassador Probst’s office late in the day, keeping him and his communicators at work well into the evening. Eventually, the following April, when the United States broke relations with Iran, Switzerland formally became the protecting power, but help far above and beyond the call of duty had by then already come to characterize the daily diplomatic relationship between the United States and the Swiss Confederation.¹

Two additional incidents further illustrate the close working relationship between the Swiss and the United States during this early phase of the Hostage Crisis, during the fall and winter of 1979-1980. First, the Swiss ambassador to Iran, Erik Lang, was secretly enlisted to carry sensitive information between the State Department and its chargé d’affaires in Tehran, Bruce Laingen, whom the reader will recall was being held hostage in the Foreign Ministry there.

Secondly, at this same time the Swiss were extremely helpful to one of the six Americans involved in the famed Canadian Caper, the subject of the recent award winning film Argo: they helped to hide an American agricultural attaché then residing in Tehran, named Henry Lee Schatz.²

Mr. Schatz worked out of a leased office in a building occupied by the Swedes, which happened to overlook the United States Embassy compound. The morning of November 4, 1979, he watched from his office window as the Iranian students poured through the main gate of the Embassy and scattered to the various buildings inside. Early in the afternoon, Bruce Laingen directed him by telephone to lock up his documents and leave the building. On his way out, he bumped into some


Swedish diplomats, who welcomed him into their offices to wait out the occupation. He remained that first night in the Swedish embassy.

The next day, November 5, 1979, the Swedes got word that Schatz’s name was on the occupiers’ list of wanted Americans. For his safety, they agreed to move him immediately to the apartment of Swiss consular officer Celia Lithander, where he ended up staying for over two weeks. Schatz kept in close telephone contact with the other five houseguests hiding out at the Canadian Embassy, in particular Joe Stafford, but for security reasons they never divulged to each other where they were hiding.

The morning of November 21, 1979, Ken Taylor got an unexpected call from Kaj Sundberg, Sweden’s Ambassador to Iran. He was calling to tell his Canadian counterpart that the American diplomat Mr. Schatz had been hiding at the home of his Swiss colleague. He was also calling Mr. Taylor to explain that Sweden and Switzerland could no longer harbor the young American, and that he must be moved.

The day after Kaj Sundberg told Ken Taylor about the hiding Schatz, November 22, 1979, Canadian diplomat John Sheardown appeared at Cecilia Lithander’s apartment building. Although the Swiss consular officer had obviously been informed of the decision, nobody had told Mr. Schatz that he was going to be moved, so Sheardown used the opportunity to play a practical joke on him. Without introducing himself, he escorted Schatz out of the building and ordered him brusquely into a waiting car. Schatz assumed that his mysterious driver was from the CIA, and imagined that he was about to be spirited out of Tehran. “I was pretty paranoid,” he later recalled. Only after they had been in the car for a while did Sheardown break a grin, introduce himself, and explain to the intimidated Schatz that he was to join his five American colleagues at his own home, where they would remain in hiding until the CIA figured a way to spirit them all safely out of Iran. The two had a good laugh, stopped at the Canadian Embassy to pick up some clothing for the other houseguests and then drove on to Sheardown’s house. There Schatz was reunited with his fellow diplomats Robert Anders, the Staffords, and the Lijeks. Through the benevolent intervention of the Swedes and the Swiss, he was the last of the fugitive American diplomats to be brought in from the cold.

Although Henry Lee Schatz was a key player in the Canadian Caper and in the events described in Argo, and although Mr. Schatz is obvi-
ously portrayed in the film, neither Ben Affleck nor his colleagues give the slightest hint that Mr. Schatz was given asylum by the Swedes and the Swiss. The movie *Argo* gives the misleading impression that the Staffords, the Lijeks, Robert Anders, and Henry Lee Schatz all made their way swiftly out of the American Embassy in Tehran on November 4, 1979, then wandered desperately through the streets of Tehran until they all arrived together at the home of the Canadian official, John Sheardown, where they were given shelter until the arrival of CIA agent Tony Mendez, who briefed them on his ingenious plan for their escape. The film script makes no mention whatsoever of the hospitality offered to Mr. Schatz by the Swedes or by the Swiss consular officer Cecilia Lithander.

This omission on the part of the filmmakers is incomprehensible and deplorable. It is a most grievous diplomatic *faux pas* which has obviously offended many people in both Sweden and Switzerland.

Early in the crisis, there was a great outpouring of help around the globe for the beleaguered hostages. Numerous private American academic specialists with expert knowledge of the Mideast were in touch with Iran daily or actually went to Tehran to talk with contacts there at high levels and to report informally to the crisis team in Washington.³

There was a feeling by the end of November 1979 that the United States needed to give more attention to how it would be possible to work with the Iranian political situation, but American anger at the Iranians still made it very tricky to take any step that would look as if we were “dealing with kidnappers.” The long honored principle of diplomatic immunity had been violated, and the international community considered this to be clearly unacceptable. The United States and Iran were addressing each other on different planes. Iranian rhetoric was revolutionary and religious, whereas American rhetoric was primarily legal and unaware of the profound distress and trauma to which the Iranian people had been subjected by the ousted Shah’s regime. The American government needed to bridge the gulf between the two nations while protecting the American people’s honor. In the days ahead the Swiss would prove to be the principal engineers of this bridge.

Bilateral Relations between the Swiss Confederation and Iran

It is easy to understand why the United States chose Switzerland as its mediator, negotiator and representative during the difficult days of the Iranian Hostage Crisis, for Switzerland has long enjoyed a special entente with Iran. Cordial relations between Switzerland and Iran go back to the seventeenth century, when Swiss clockmakers settled in the Persian Empire. Economic ties expanded in the nineteenth century, especially in the transport and banking sectors. Swiss archaeologists also participated in excavations in Persia. The two countries signed a goodwill and trade agreement in 1873 and a goodwill agreement and an agreement on establishment in 1934. Iranians began coming to Switzerland in the twentieth century as tourists, refugees and students, and Shah Muhammad Reza Pahlavi even did his studies at Le Rosey school near Rolle, completing his studies there in 1935.

Switzerland opened a consulate in Tehran in 1919, which it raised to embassy status in 1936. Because of its political neutrality, Switzerland has also represented the interests of a number of countries in Iran—including Italy (1946), Australia, Canada, Great Britain, Ireland and New Zealand (1952), South Africa (1952, 1979-1995) and Lebanon (1984). In addition, it has represented Iran's interests in relations with the Axis powers (1941-1946), in Israel (1958-1987), in Iraq (1971-1973) and in South Africa (1979-1994). Switzerland has represented the consular and diplomatic interests of the United States in Iran since 1980 and the interests of Iran in Egypt since 1979.

Iran and Switzerland have good bilateral relations. There are agreements between the two countries on air traffic (1954, 1972 and 2004), road and rail transport (1977), export risk guarantees (1966), protection of investments (1998) and double taxation (2002).

Beginning in 1984, victims of the Iran-Iraq War received medical treatment in Switzerland. After the severe earthquakes of 1997 and 2003, Switzerland helped to rebuild the infrastructure. Cooperation on the national level to prevent natural catastrophes was initiated in 2006. The two countries have been engaged in a human rights dialogue since 2003 and in discussions on migration since 2005.
Swiss Involvement in the Iranian Hostage Crisis
From the Camp David Summit Meeting of November 1979
Until the Release of the Hostages January 20, 1981

The Swiss began to play an even more prominent, vital and central role in the negotiations between the United States and Iran concerning the hostages at the time of the Camp David meeting of Friday, November 23, 1979. Attending this meeting were National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski; Secretary of State Cyrus Vance; Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, Harold Saunders; Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Dave Jones; Director of the CIA Admiral Stansfield Turner; and White House Press Secretary Jody Powell.

At Camp David, President Carter began his talk to his group of advisors by stressing that his first and major premise was that the United States had only a matter of weeks to resolve the crisis. We could not let the matter become protracted.

Next the President asked why we could not break diplomatic relations with Iran, close Iranian consulates in the United States, and expel most of its diplomats. The wise Cyrus Vance, although he sympathized with the President’s frustrations, argued sagaciously that maintaining what slim contacts we had with Iran might be the only avenue for a feasible solution. The President, respecting the Secretary of State’s expertise in such matters, acceded to his request: diplomatic ties with Iran would be maintained.

The President’s Board of Advisors then moved on to Khomeini’s latest threat of putting the hostages on trial and the Iranian students’ renewed threat of killing them if the United States took punitive military action. Both were alarming. The President had already made up his mind on how he would respond. If our people went on trial, the United States military would mine some or all of Iran’s ports. If even one hostage were harmed, the United States would bomb the Abadan refinery. But the advisors wondered how they could get this message to Khomeini with maximum effect? Thereupon Cyrus Vance suggested using the Swiss ambassador in Tehran, Erik Lang, for this purpose, as the Swiss were already representing us there. The President concurred, and it henceforward became official policy of the American government to rely upon the Swiss government as our official representative in Iran.⁴

The Camp David meeting ended that same Friday afternoon, and the advisory team was whisked via helicopter back to the White House lawn, where they dispersed, having decided not to meet on Saturday and Sunday. Thus, Days 21 and 22 would be the first without national security meetings since Day 2 of the crisis.

That afternoon, back at the office, Admiral Stansfield Turner briefed the CIA hostage team on what had come out of Camp David: the United States would use military force if the hostages were placed on trial or harmed, but the real hope for release was to find acceptable terms for a negotiated deal. The only terms the United States could see as acceptable were release of the hostages followed by a United Nations commission of investigation.

On Monday, November 26, Day 23 of the crisis, Cyrus Vance was informed that the unnamed Iranian envoy to New York had at first refused even to send these proposed terms back to Tehran. He thought them totally unacceptable. The envoy did relent and did send the terms to Tehran, but his attitude and Khomeini’s peremptory refusal to receive American envoys Ramsey Clark and William Miller left the State Department crisis team very skeptical about the prospects for negotiation. The gap between what was acceptable to the President and what Khomeini would agree to seemed immense. No one could see any signs that the State Department could close the gap either by pressure or persuasion.\(^5\)

At this difficult and delicate stage of the negotiations, Swiss mediation was especially crucial because the members of President Carter’s own advisory team were not working well together, and the confused President often vacillated between divergent and contradictory points of view. Thus was created an insidious Hamlet syndrome which was most detrimental to the effective resolution of the crisis. The Swiss fortunately compensated for this lack of internal unity and cohesion at the White House through their long and much appreciated experience in negotiating with and placating foreign powers.

The fundamental reason that the President’s advisors were not working well as a team was that Cyrus Vance was pushing in one direction and Zbig Brzezinski in another. Mr. Brzezinski, and most of his advisors, felt that this instance of hostage taking was so heinous that it had to be solved before the United States could discuss Iran’s perceived...
grievances. Cyrus Vance, on the other hand, believed in keeping the door open for Iran to engage us in reasonable and constructive discussions. The Iranians, after all, felt that they had a legitimate grievance and held the United States responsible for much of what they hated about the Shah’s regime. Mr. Vance felt that if the United States antagonized or humiliated the Iranians, it would take longer for them to deal with the United States, even through intermediaries. He wanted to apply whatever pressure we could through parties, like the United Nations and Switzerland, countries friendly to and respected by revolutionary Iran, or through world leaders who had an amicable rapport with Khomeini. As the conciliatory Secretary of State, he hoped not to drive more of a wedge between the United States and the Iranians; rather, he wanted to make them realize that the hostage issue could cause them harm by isolating Iran from the community of nations. Mr. Vance’s wise approach, which ultimately prevailed, required considerable patience, diplomatic skills and the constant and concerted vigilance and support of America’s Swiss representatives and allies in Tehran.

Swiss assistance to the United States became much more necessary when United States-Iran diplomatic relations were formally broken on April 6th, 1980. Shortly thereafter, on April 24, 1981, the Swiss government officially assumed the representation of American interest in Tehran via a special interests section of its embassy there. Since that time Iranian interests in the United States have been represented by the Iranian interests section of the Pakistani Embassy in Washington, D.C.

These Swiss professional diplomatic services were most welcome to the American government at this dreadful time. No nation in modern times had ever confronted such a problem as the United States now faced. Its diplomats were held hostage in a bitterly hostile and unpredictable country, with the approval and blessing of that nation’s putative leaders. Worse yet, the normal manner of resolving conflicts, dialogue between the two disputants, was no longer available to the Americans, because the only people with whom they had had previous experience and on whom they had counted in the event of any problems had suddenly left the government.

To compound the problem, while the leaders of the Iranian Revolution were all united in their allegiance to the Ayatollah, they were
deeply divided among themselves. On one side were the “occidentals”, President Bani-Sadr and Foreign Minister Sadegh Ghotbzadeh, and those aligned with them. On the other side were the religious groups who wished to discredit the “secularists” and take power themselves. Chaos such as that engendered by the hostage crisis precisely served the latter group’s interests.7

For these ultra-conservative and xenophobic clerics, the seizure of the hostages by the students had been tantamount to a gift from Allah. The students understood that. They supported their clergy and devoutly hoped that they would come to power so as to establish a true theocracy that would “purify” the Iranian revolution of any and all Western tendencies. Their support was undergirded by historical fact: it had been the clergy that had led the fight against foreign economic domination, be it British, Russian or American, for more than one hundred years.

On May 9, 1980, the Iranian students got their wish. That day the people of Iran, voting in parliamentary elections, gave their overwhelming approval to hard-line Islamic candidates. At last the Ayatollah and the religious leaders were in a position to gain effective control of the country—and they had used the hostages to do so.

On that same date, when the more liberal secular candidates for parliament were receiving a drubbing in Iran, the Swiss once again became central players in the drama of the Iranian Hostage Crisis, for on that precise historical date, the Iranian Foreign Minister Sadeg Ghotbzadeh was at the Hôtel Bellerive-au-Lac in Zurich with human rights activists Christian Bourguet and Héctor Villalón, trying, once again, to come up with a fruitful and mutually beneficial approaches to the crisis.

On the flight to Zurich, Ghotbzadeh had a guest, the Swiss Foreign Minister Pierre Aubert. “It’s important to keep talking and let time take care of everything,” he told Aubert. Aubert entirely agreed and guaranteed total Swiss support for Ghotbzadeh’s upcoming negotiations in Switzerland.

In Zurich, Foreign Minister Aubert kept his word, arranging to have representatives of the Swiss Foreign Office to join in the councils and deliberations on Iran. Their combined efforts came up with two expressions of the same idea: the first, an “Islamic initiative,” the

second, a “Socialist initiative.” The Islamic initiative envisioned the creation of a “front” of Islamic nations whose representatives would approach the Ayatollah with a plea that he invoke the tenets of the Koran calling for generosity, understanding and forgiveness. “There has to be forgiveness,” they would tell him. “The time has come to forgive and forget and release the hostages.” The Socialist initiative on the other hand, would enlist a group of progressive European leaders whose independence of either major political bloc might recommend them to the Iranians. These European Socialists, too, would attempt to persuade the Iranians to resolve the crisis in their own interest.8

The Islamic initiative got nowhere. The Socialist initiative did not fare much better. Felipe González, the leader of the Spanish Socialist Party, liked the idea, and he became even more enthusiastic when he discovered that other major European Socialist leaders had arrived independently at the same notion. In fact, West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, Austrian Chancellor Bruno Kreisky and former Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme had already gathered in Hamburg to discuss the matter. They had an active ally and soul mate in Tehran, Ali Reza Nobari, the governor of the Iranian Central Bank.

The European Socialist leaders who finally made the trip to Iran, González, Kreisky and Palme, managed to get through to the clerics, among them Ayatollah Mohammed Beheshti, the leader of the Islamic Republican Party, which had just taken control of the Iranian parliament. The European Socialists counseled Beheshti that putting the American hostages on trial would be the worst thing that the Iranians could possibly do.

Unfortunately, however, these visiting European Socialists found that the power structure in Iran was still so fragile, in spite of the recent elections, that the Iranians would not budge on their position, and no single leader in Iran would come forward to demand the release of the hostages.

A month later, Jimmy Carter would stop off in Madrid on his way home from an economic summit meeting in Venice. There would be much pomp and ceremony, but Carter’s most important visit in Madrid would be with González. Carter would take home a sober message: with the ongoing power struggle in Iran, nothing could be done im-

8Ibid., p. 249.
mediately to bring about the release of the hostages. One by one, the various initiatives were failing, and the back doors were closing.

On May 30, 1980, the efforts of the influential Egyptian journalist Mohammed Heikal as a mediator ended. That same day Heikal received another message from Harold Saunders via the same Egyptian courier whom the American diplomat had used several times before. “This is an opportunity for Heikal to go to Teheran while the new Parliament is forming,” Saunders optimistic message said. “He could contribute to a climate which could bring about the release of the hostages and suggest ways in which the United States might relate constructively to the political process in Teheran.”

Heikal refused. The best way for the American government to get its messages to the Iranians, now, he counseled, was through the Algerians and the Swiss.

Mohammed Heikal’s refusal and advice heralded the advent of a period of much more intensive Swiss involvement in the negotiations to free the hostages. Working with Algeria and the United States, the Swiss Confederation fervently sought an optimal resolution of the crisis.

Swiss aid during this final phase was characterized by an unusually high level of solicitude for the welfare of the hostages. Swiss Ambassador Fritz Lang, for example, constantly saw to their health and medical well being and was their benefactor on so many occasions.

Indeed, the very first person to greet the freed hostages when they boarded their flight home on January 20, 1981, was Ambassador Lang. Bruce Laingen recalls that when he boarded this humanitarian rescue flight in Tehran, he saw Ambassador Lang, who, with one of his staff, was meticulously recording the name of each and every one of the relieved American hostages as they appeared on board: the Swiss were determined not to leave the plane until they were absolutely sure that they had accounted for the presence of all the hostages. Thus, from the beginning until the end of the Iranian Hostage Crisis, Swiss help, concern and benevolence were exceedingly prominent and important.

Conclusion

The entire world knows that the long and arduous Iranian hostage crisis led to a formal agreement—the Algerian Accords of 1981—which

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*Ibid., p. 250.*
produced the release of the American hostages on Ronald Reagan’s Inauguration Day, January 20, 1981. The entire world also knows that the Swiss and the Algerians were deeply involved in the negotiations which generated that famous agreement.

And yet Switzerland’s participation in the dialogue between Iran and the West by no means ceased with the resolution of the Iranian hostage crisis in 1981. Switzerland remains to this day the principal means for Iran to have access to international business and diplomacy.

Although Switzerland and Iran have greatly reduced their bilateral economic cooperation since the United Nations Security Council took up Iran’s nuclear enrichment program in 2005, and although the Swiss government has been cooperating with the United States to freeze banking accounts and other financial assets belonging to individuals involved in the Iranian nuclear program, Switzerland has remained committed in recent decades to the restoration of the entente between the United States, the European Union and Iran.

The current chief Iranian negotiator is Mohammad-Javad Larijani, the secretary of the Iranian Human Rights Council, the director of the Institute for Studies in Theoretical Physics and Mathematics in Tehran, and an advisor to the supreme leader of Iran. Mohammad Larijani has plenty of experience in direct, bilateral negotiations with the United States. He goes back to the Reagan years, having met with Robert McFarlane in Iran in May 1986.

Mr. Larijani’s numerous recent negotiations with American and European officials concerning the controversial Iranian nuclear program have taken place most frequently in Switzerland. In addition, the Swiss government—our official diplomatic proxy for discussions with the Iranian government—has been active in these recent bilateral deliberations. The present Swiss Ambassador to Tehran, Livia Lev Agosti, spent several hours with a Khamenei aide shortly before the November 2012 elections, and a few days after Obama’s victory, Mohammad Larijani flew to Switzerland to meet with Foreign Minister Didier Burkhalter.

The Iranian-Swiss talks produced an outline of what an acceptable agreement between Iran and Europe and the United States might look like in 2014. Both sides were to make good-faith gestures at the outset. The Iranians promised to let the IAEA return to inspect Parchin, and they agreed to new talks with the so-called 5 + 1 (the United States,
Germany, France, England, China and Russia). The Iranians have delivered on both counts.

For their part, the Iranians have several demands, including easing sanctions. However, their number one requirement for an American gesture is right out of the historic playbook: hostage releases.

As incredible as it may seem, both Americans and Iranians are still in captivity. The Iranians insist on the return of the 48 “pilgrims” captured by the Free Syrian Army in Damascus in August 2013. These men are not pious tourists at all; their name is a misnomer. They are mostly from the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps, and their superiors in Tehran badly want them back, in no small part because some of them are senior officers who know a great deal about Iran’s global operations.

In exchange, the Iranians offer to release several Americans under arrest in Iran. The most recent American arrested there is Saeed Abedini, a pastor who reportedly converted to Christianity in the United States. The list includes a former Marine, perhaps a former FBI agent, and an elderly Iranian-American scholar. And there are others, whose names have not appeared in any account, whom the Iranians believe to be CIA agents.

Thus, ironically, in 2014 there is a new Iranian hostage crisis. This situation would seem to be an endless saga of international relations, and a permanent element of the East-West dialogue.

In Geneva on Sunday, November 24, 2013, the United States and Iran agreed to a halt on nuclear development for six months. In the wake of the Geneva talks, supervised by the Swiss diplomatic corps, the Vice President of Iran Masoumeh Ebtekar has stated optimistically that the United States and Iran could cooperate in the reduction of the proliferation of nuclear armaments, as well as in fostering world peace. Apparently a new day of international good will has dawned in Iran. There is light at the end of the seemingly infinite tunnel of East-West mediation and negotiation.

Given all these historical facts and revelations, it would seem that Ben Affleck owes more than an apology to the international community of diplomats for his grotesque omissions in his film Argo.

Mr. Affleck is to be commended for his sensitive appreciation of the genuine plight of the Iranian people on the eve of their revolution in 1979-1980. After all, when the Ayatollah Khomeini returned to Tehran...
from his exile in Paris on February 1, 1979, two million Iranians took to the streets in order to express their joy at the arrival of their supreme Holy Man and the fall of the Shah’s regime. Moreover, in the opening scenes of his film, Mr. Affleck provides an excellent and insightful summary of the historical reasons for the Iranian people’s distress and rage.

Hollywood often does remakes of its films, and directors, as they mature, often greatly improve their technical skill and competence, as well as their ethical sensitivity and their human understanding. It is certainly devoutly to be hoped that Ben Affleck will reconsider a remake of his motion picture *Argo*, and that in this new film he will pay proper respect for historical accuracy and for the many kind and compassionate acts of mercy toward the hostages shown by Denmark, Sweden, New Zealand, Canada, Great Britain, and most notably by the Swiss.

* - Bryan College
Book Reviews


For over four hundred years, Swiss mercenaries served with distinction in various European Armies. By the time of the French Revolution, several of France’s most effective regiments were Swiss. The infamous and unnecessary slaughter of the Royal Swiss Guard in August 1792, and subsequent disbanding of the Swiss Regiments ended the long standing relationship of the Swiss is French Royal service. However, the French revolutionary government quickly saw the advantage of enlisting these highly professional soldiers, and Swiss regiments were enlisted to fight for the new Republic. Beginning in 1793, the Swiss, individually at first, then in regiments re-entered French service.

Davin and Jouineau create a lavishly illustrated and concise monograph of the Swiss troops that served France from 1785 until 1815. The Swiss, the elite troops of the day, once formed the bodyguard for Louis XVI. Their discipline was well renowned, and on one occasion they permitted themselves to be slaughtered rather than disobey orders and fire on the Paris mob. Another unit, the famous Swiss “Red Division,” frequently assisted Napoleon’s forces during the First Empire, often taking heavy casualties in the process as they emerged victorious.

The authors use a generous amount of artwork to depict the changes in uniform that the Swiss regiments underwent in the time period covered by this slim volume. The entire has 49 illustrated plates, each which contain multiple examples of uniforms, flags and appropriate accoutrements. Representations for the four Swiss regiments who fought with the French are presented as well as the Valais battalion, the Neuchatel battalion, and pre-revolutionary Swiss regiments.

The text is well presented, although there are a few errors (and no accompanying errata) between some of the illustrations and the text. The most notable errors seem to be regarding the uniform colors during the transition from the Helvetian Half-Brigades between 1801 and 1803. This time period seems somewhat confused as the text lists one
color for one year and the plates show a different color for the same year. It is most likely an editing issue.

The authors do a credible job presenting a brief history of the Swiss regiments. The short summaries of the four line regiments and two battalions recruited from Switzerland include short battle histories, the names and ranks of various notables and the fate of these regiments, on several occasions there are passages such as “...it then shared the fate of the other regiments” (page 19). Unit organization and strengths are included as well the names of commanding officers. The synopsis provided by the authors is very useful for placing units with armies and campaigns; however, it is, by necessity, a brief synopsis. The book also provides a short reference to the end of the Swiss regiments. There are many other sources regarding the Swiss regiments, some of which are referenced in the books’ bibliography. The authors leave it to the reader to fill in the blanks regarding the detailed history of the Swiss service in the French army.

Ultimately, this book is about uniforms. The uniforms of the various Swiss units are presented in all their glittering glory. By and large the true value of this book is the detailed plates of uniforms, with descriptions, including the minutia that makes the Napoleonic era so colorful. The authors go to great lengths to provide details of buttons, piping, pompoms, lapels, etc. The beauty of this book is that it goes beyond the simple statement that the 1st Regiment wore red coats with yellow facings. The book also describes the years when major changes took place and the fact that not all soldiers within the regiments wore that same uniform. The authors gratefully noted places where discrepancies emerged between sources. A reference to the Neuchâtel Battalion wearing of “lapels and turnbacks with chamois (white in certain Alsatian Collections) piping” implies a certain level of confusion among historians on this issue. (page 53) One of the strongest aspects of the book is the authors’ work to clarify inconsistencies wherever possible. The book is a very useful guide. Any researcher and/or Napoleonic aficionado will want to add this book to his collection.

Kevin Cronin
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The author of these letters and journal was Henri de Buren (1825-1909), a Swiss aristocrat, botanist, agriculturalist, explorer and painter. The book’s present form resulted from editing, though the editor is a mystery. The title page lists August Cosentino as the editor, though in the text great great grandson Jean-Francois de Buren wrote that he had edited the volume. He claims to have edited only style and punctuation, a proposition that rings true when one immerses oneself in the content. Henri de Buren wrote the letters to his sisters, mother, father, aunt, and uncle, though he did not always make clear the recipient. The letters focused on the United States, Canada, Cuba, Mexico, Panama, and Peru. The journal discussed Cuba, Peru, and Brazil.

De Buren’s interest in the Americas appears to have stemmed from German naturalist and explorer Alexander von Humboldt’s works on the plants and animals of Latin America. In addition, de Buren was fascinated by his readings about the natives of the Americas. Arriving in Boston in 1852, de Buren lodged with Louis Agassiz, Swiss American ichthyologist, naturalist, and racist who may have been most responsible for launching what might be called “scientific racism,” however unscientific it was. One has the sense that de Buren had known Agassiz when the two had lived in Switzerland. He also visited Asa Gray, America’s foremost botanist and confidant of British naturalist Charles Darwin. Unlike Darwin, who would published a record of his travels, *The Voyage of the Beagle*, de Buren never did.

In leaving New England, de Buren ventured south to observe and gain an understanding of tobacco and rice planters at a time when slavery and plantation life was inextricably intertwined. Visiting these plantations, he judged the slaves as happy, well fed, strong, lazy, unintelligent, and incapable of self-governance. According to de Buren, whites did not force blacks to work to exhaustion. He described blacks in the context of slavery and servitude and had little to say about free blacks. Modern scholarship has overturned almost everything de Buren wrote about blacks. They were not lazy, stupid, well nourished, and incapable of regulating their own affairs. Whites often forced them to the point of exhaustion. De Buren did not understand blacks, he merely caricatured...
them. In effect, he was parroting the common ideas put forth by the slave owners themselves.

As with blacks, de Buren was not kind to the Amerindians and termed mulattoes as a “mean and cruel race” (page 62). He characterized the women of Latin America as lazy and insinuated that they were illiterate.

Throughout the Americas, de Buren noted that the flora was more diverse than in Europe. He perceived the United States as a land of rationality rather than faith, a curiosity given the importance of Christianity. De Buren faulted the greed of plutocrats for undermining the spirit of inquisitiveness. He appreciated the scope and diversity of U.S. agriculture. De Buren noted the dearth of wheat farms in New York without apparently realizing that wheat had migrated with the pioneers farther west. He imagined the United States as a land of upward mobility. Because three of his nine children were deaf and mute, de Buren toured U.S. institutions for the disabled, lauding their work.

In Mexico de Buren observed the cultivation of potatoes near sugarcane, a curiosity given that potatoes are a temperate crop whereas sugarcane can be grown only in the tropics and subtropics. De Buren provided an outsider’s insights about the Americas, but these too often dwell on the putative inferiority of non-Europeans, particularly blacks and Amerindians. In this context de Buren provided a kind of travelogue of imperialism and racism. He was conscious throughout of being a European aristocrat and deprecated everything that departed from social graces, refinement, and scientific inquiry. His work is full of information and opinions, if not always edifying. In his prejudices, de Buren was a creature of the 19th century. Although not as strident in his views as Agassiz, de Buren was scarcely more tolerant of minorities.

Christopher Cumo

Most people know simply that John Sutter owned the sawmill where gold was discovered in California in January, 1848, and little more. Albert L. Hurtado’s well-documented treatment of Sutter is, therefore, quite welcome. Sutter, Hurtado contends, embodied early California, so incomplete understanding of Sutter means that full comprehension of the history of California, the gold rush, and America is impossible. Hurtado’s analysis of Sutter is carefully balanced, capably assesses Sutter’s strengths and weaknesses, and probes Sutter’s importance to modern America. Are Sutter’s ways and means accepted and admired? Of course not, Hurtado assures, but Sutter and California are nevertheless “prime examples of the troubling and ambiguous history of western North America” (page 346). And thus Hurtado presents the dark heart of Sutter’s legacy. “Most Americans enjoy the benefits brought by frontier conquests even as they condemn them. This is not Sutter’s contradiction but our own. Until it is resolved, we will live uneasily with the past and with the memory of John A. Sutter” (page 346). Like Banquo’s ghost, apparently, Sutter will not down.

Throughout the monograph, Hurtado blends analysis of Sutter’s character flaws with the history of North America. Sutter, Hurtado explains, had constant problems with money and did not have a head for business. This had potentially important ramifications for Mexican California. When Sutter acquired Fort Ross from the Russians, he incurred tremendous debt and the Mexican government became concerned that the Russians would seize Sutter’s fort and land grant, New Helvetia, thus winning a stronghold in Northern California, and by so doing threaten Mexico. Fears of a Russian outpost in California never came to pass, but the episode indicates that Sutter was a major player in Mexican California. Beyond incurring massive debt, Sutter built a private army, interfered in Mexican political disputes, and attempted to carve himself an empire where he could rule with absolute authority, as the master of his domain. In keeping with this wish, Sutter extended his influence over the Indians, alternatively using force and diplomacy and relied heavily on enslaved Indian labor. Hurtado also contends that Sutter’s fondness of the bottle is a part of his character historians can-
not neglect. Drink clouded Sutter’s mind and judgment and made him easy prey for con men and scam artists. Sutter’s overindulgence meant that he made poor business decisions, squandered a fortune, signed over many of his lots in the new town of Sacramento to venal speculators and, in the process, helped shape post-independence California.

Hurtado, however, is concerned not only with the besotted and brutal side of Sutter, but also Sutter’s gentler side. By most accounts, Sutter had a deep and genuine concern for the immigrants who came to California. It was said that no man or woman who arrived in need at Sutter’s fort was turned away. Perhaps this was simply good business, but Hurtado informs readers that Sutter often sent supplies to stranded immigrants (most famously the Donner party). Hurtado’s book is important precisely because of the encompassing scope. Hurtado analyzes not only the immigrant who invented himself as a visionary frontier entrepreneur and the trader who did not have a head for business, but the gregarious charmer, the seeker of glory, and, in his elder years, the myth maker, who, in conversations with Hubert Howe Bancroft, refashioned the conquest of California in ways favorable to himself.

In such an excellent book, it is difficult to find problems, but one issue suggests itself. In the introduction, Hurtado comments that “I have looked for the roots of Sutter’s insecurity and tentatively locate it in his identity as an outsider . . . Sutter was never at home” (page xiv). This seems a bit problematic. If anything, Sutter seemed to make himself at home wherever he landed, whether in the United States or Mexico. Sutter fashioned himself as the consummate insider who worked with the Mexican government to secure a land grant, protected immigrants, and, in 1849, helped shape California’s constitution as a delegate to the constitutional convention. Might a better way to view Sutter be through the prism of cosmopolitanism? Sutter seems more the cosmopolitan, traveling from Switzerland to the United States to Hawaii, to Mexican California, and back to the United States, fully engaged with an international world, than an outsider. Quibble aside, Hurtado’s impressive scope, readable prose, and careful research merit wide circulation and will appeal to both a lay and scholarly audience.

Evan C. Rothera
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Historians have rarely challenged the image of British regulars as an oppressive military force in pre-1775 North America. Even those critical of the motives of colonial gentry or who posit that the American Revolution was just as much about local, in addition to foreign, rule remain largely silent on the redcoat character. Through a careful study of Britain’s Royal American Regiment, an almost four thousand man force that fought and served throughout North America and the Caribbean during the Seven Years War and after, Alexander Campbell presents an alternative portrait of the British infantry. He expands beyond a focus on the military exploits of the Regiment to explore their participation in, and contributions to, “the broader social, economic, demographic, religious, and civil framework of the first British Empire.”

From chronicling the wartime business activities of James Prevoost, the Swiss mercenary who originally proposed the idea of a mixed regiment of foreign Protestants and colonials, to discussing the myriad postwar civilian pursuits of the Royal Americans in the final chapter, including marriages to the daughters of both French-Canadian and British colonial gentry, Campbell aptly demonstrates that British soldiers were actively engaged in expanding and solidifying the British presence in North America beyond simply their martial feats.

Throughout the work, Campbell makes a number of important historiographical claims, arguing that the Royal Americans in fact developed amiable relationships with most Native American communities and were not, as is usually argued, at fault for Pontiac’s Rebellion in 1763, that the common Protestant rituals and military experience they shared with New England colonial auxiliary forces enhanced an identification with Britain among its colonial subjects, and that the thousand original recruits for the regiment, and hundreds more who joined later, who came from Germany, Switzerland, Scotland, and other Protestant nations played a role in expanding the conception of British identity.

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To be candid, the chapters on the battlefield experiences of the Royal American Regiment, also known as the 60th Regiment of Foot, and on daily life in the ranks of the British Army, while making some points about the expansive nature of the British redcoat experience, may be of interest primarily to military historians. Alternatively, the sections on relations with Native American communities and on the recruitment of the myriad Europeans and colonials who constituted the Regiment’s ranks are especially illustrative and important for Campbell’s larger themes of movement and diversity of experience and background. One significant addition could have been discussion of public memory regarding the Royal American Regiment. Campbell provides a thorough and concise description of the historiography on the Regiment and while some of these works certainly seem to indicate that later events, especially the American Revolution, influenced subsequent portrayals of pre-1775 British regulars, the discussion could have been enhanced. Specifically, Campbell mentions “anniversaries marking events like the founding of Pittsburgh or the battle at Bushy Run” as well as the “memorial plaques” that “local historical societies or fraternal organizations” set up concerning the Royal Americans. Since Campbell notes that these activities occurred after the first full history of the Regiment appeared in 1879, a final chapter on these events could possibly have shed light on what remembering the Seven Years War revealed beyond just praising the Regiment’s service, about late nineteenth century American conceptions both of self and of the nation’s history.

Overall, Campbell succeeds in his attempt to place the Royal American Regiment’s service within a broad Atlantic World framework. By exploring the diverse ethnic composition of the Regiment’s ranks, the variety of service locales, and the myriad commercial, cultural, diplomatic, humanitarian, and other activities of its numerous members, from the officers on down to those in the ranks, Campbell widens our view of the role and influence of British regulars in the Atlantic World. They did not simply drill and shoot, but expanded the British presence in North America and enhanced connections between continental Europe, Britain, and North America through their varied pursuits. While the numerous aspects of the Atlantic World experience that Campbell argues the Royal Americans engaged in or showcased are beyond the
scope of this review, especially important, in both Campbell’s work and in the larger Atlantic World framework, is the theme of migration. The sheer fact of recruiting large numbers of German and other European Protestant troops for duty in North America clearly fits this theme, but Campbell also emphasizes that other aspects of the Royal American experience, including the family members who followed some of these recruits and the later settlement schemes by a number of Royal American officers who sought to bring more European migrants to North America, indicated the important role in Atlantic World migration played by this specific unit. Campbell thus successfully argues that “the 60th Foot’s cast of disparate faces was remarkably active in the far-flung places and transnational spaces that constituted the eighteenth-century Atlantic World” and he helps capture the soldier as a sound analytical subject for Atlantic World historians.3

Kevin Grimm  
Beloit College

3 Ibid., p. 217

In the mid-nineteenth century, Jacob Grimm (he of fairytale fame) published a collection of medieval records of local law – the Weistümer. As with the Märchen, or fairytales, Grimm assumed that the Weistümer had been handed down orally prior to their transcription. He buttressed his claim from the introductory passages of the Weistümer, which required the peasants to memorize the laws and report on them from memory (the Kundschaften, or disposition records). Simon Teuscher’s work (originally published as Erzähltes Recht, Lokale Herrschaft, Verschriftlichung und Traditionsbildung im Spätmittelalter, 2007), examines the process by which law and the rights of lordship were codified and put into writing between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries in the Swiss midlands (bounded by Lake Geneva in the west, Zürich in the east, the Jura ranges to the north, and the Alpine foothills to the south). He discusses at length the relation between oral tradition and written law in medieval Switzerland, acknowledges Germanic historiography on the topic, and, perhaps unintentionally, provides commentary on the state of Grimm scholarship.

Teuscher wants to correct the misconception that learned (and written) law displaced legal (oral) custom. This is most certainly not the case; it is more correct to say that learned law developed organically from legal custom, and Teuscher demonstrates this process with regard to the rights and prerogatives of Lordship. He contends that the understanding of local law did not change because it was being recorded; rather, legal regulations were derived from oral traditions, which were understood as unalterable (perhaps because they could trace their origins back to earlier times, when oral traditions serve as codified law).

Teuscher poses three questions: How should we understand the unwritten law of the Middle Ages? How did less literate societies organize themselves during this period? And, how did these societies change as a result of legal textualization? He answers these questions by discussing the development of the Weistümer and Kundschaften (chapter 1), how the law was debated and implemented at the local level (chapter 2), the process of textualization (chapters 3 and 4), and how the documents
were put to use (chapter 5). As the backdrop for his argument, Teuscher asks his readers to consider the development of medieval institutions. As multi-tiered systems of officials developed, these individuals felt the need to document their respective rights of lordship. As territorial power grew, so did the need to integrate scattered oral legal orders into universally valid laws.

_Lords' Rights and Peasant Stories_ represents solid historical scholarship, yet Teuscher’s narrative and Grace’s translation are accessible to non-specialists interested in medieval Swiss history. Linguists researching the transition from oral to written artifacts in medieval Europe will also find much value in the book.

Wendell G. Johnson
Northern Illinois University

Many moons ago when I was still a dewy-eyed college student experiencing Smith College’s Junior Year Abroad Geneva program, the day we all waited for was *le jour du débarras*, the day of the storeroom. On this day, Smith students would enter a treasure trove of goodies left behind by previous students: pots and pans, blankets and pillows, lamps, French-English dictionaries with the plastic still on, skis, hiking boots, fondue pots and raclette makers. In that room was everything a student abroad in Switzerland could possibly want. What wasn’t there was what we really needed: a guide to the Swiss themselves. Sure, there were guidebooks to Switzerland revealing information about cozy hotels and museums, eclectic snippets of history and managing exchange rates. What those books did not explain were those truly confounding manners of the Swiss, local politics, how history related to daily practice. We needed to understand what made the Swiss tick. This is where Diccon’s Swiss Watching would have resolved our problems.

As Bewes observes, Switzerland is a real island in the heart of Europe. There is no other country with nine official names, four national languages, 7.5 million people but only 80 percent of them part of the ethnic majority. Switzerland is a land of particularism and yet, a microcosm of all that is Europe. Bewes observes that Switzerland is both what you see and its contradiction.

If your only knowledge of history and international law came from war films, you would at least know that the Geneva Conventions are good things . . . And after watching Steve McQueen trying to jump the border fence on a motorcycle or the Von Trapps walking over the hills, you’d also know that Switzerland is the safest place to be in wartime. But the world is not as simple as Hollywood. War and peace are not black and white, or in German *schwarz* and *weiss*; combine the two and you get Schweiz, the German for Switzerland. How apt for a country that lives in that grey area of armed neutrality, striving for peace but preparing for war.
Of course, the book decodes the obvious stereotypes about punctuality, chocolate, yodeling and cheese. For those in French-speaking Switzerland, some of the references will seem a bit odd. Bewes point of reference is clearly German-Switzerland as the dominant model.

This sometimes hilarious examination of Swiss life does some interesting things very well. First, it decodes practices of every day life and provides historic and cultural context for Swiss behaviors.

Nested in every chapter, there is a mini-guide to Swiss manners and practices. For example, no foreigner could know the Swiss custom of greeting properly at a party, introducing himself to each and every person and saying the name of each of the guests and bidding adieu in the opposite order. Bewes’ explanation is a perfect recipe for not insulting your hosts. The mini-guide on politics is less well-designed. Granted, Swiss voting practices are neither obvious nor easy to explain. Bewes does an admirable job of deciphering the rounds of votes, but leaves the reader still needing a scorecard. Comparisons are made to British experiences. Without a solid grounding in British ways, it might be hard to follow all of the chapters.

Bewes’ disdain for religion permeates the book. At times, his irreverent approach is illuminating, as it is when he discusses relationships between churches. Since wars of religion played such an important role in the forming of Switzerland, this insight is keen. Other times, he is condescending. The tone may be more appropriate for Continental tastes on secularism than for American readers and certainly, American classrooms.

Bewes does not shy from dealing with potentially hot, timely political topics, including the evolution of the Swiss banking industry. He returns frequently to economics, discussing the changing environment for the Gnomes of Basel to Holocaust Banking scandals. The section on the 2011 leaked data scandal where a cd passed to government officials threatened to catch thousands of people for tax evasion and secret bank accounts reads more like a Grisham novel than travel book.

This book was a fine read for a snowy afternoon when I longed for hiking, skiing and crafting a pot of fondue with friends. What was missing at my old table? Some Swiss! Perhaps if I had had this guide then, I might have known better how to make friends with them.

Robin A.
FIFTIETH SAHS ANNUAL MEETING

1. Invitation and Agenda

SWISS-AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Washington, D.C.

You are cordially invited to attend the

FIFTIETH SAHS ANNUAL MEETING

at the
Embassy of Switzerland
2900 Cathedral Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2013

PROGRAM

9:30 a.m.   Arrival and informal gathering, Coffee, Rolls
10:00 a.m.  Business Meeting
2:00 p.m.   Luncheon
30 p.m.     Jean-François de Buren: “The Journey of Henri de Büren”
2:30 p.m.   Susann Bosshard-Kaelin: “Exploring Life Paths: On Becoming an Interview Journalist”
3:00 p.m.   Afternoon Break with Light Refreshments
3:30 p.m.   Ron Duquette, Reenactor, “Albert Gallatin Discusses the Treaty of Ghent”
4:30 p.m.   Reception
5:00 p.m.   Departure

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FIFTIETH SAHS ANNUAL MEETING

October 12, 2013, Washington, D.C.

AGENDA

1. President’s Welcome and Call to Order

2. Reading and Approval of the Minutes of the New York Annual Meeting of 2012

3. President’s Report: Fred Gillespie

4. Nominating Committee Report: Rosa Schupbach

5. Membership Chair’s Report: Ernie Thurston

6. Treasurer’s Report: Heinz Bachmann

7. Swiss Vice President Report: Fred Jenny

8. SAHS Review Report: Dwight Page


10. Publicity Report: Brian Wages

11. Old Business

12. New Business

13. Announcements

14. Adjournment
2. Reports

Minutes of the Fiftieth Business Meeting of the

Fred Gillespie called the meeting to order and gave his opening welcome and remarks. He suggested that information be placed on the Society’s website to answer questions. They should put questions on a bulletin board on the website. President Gillespie read a letter about Leo Schelbert. There were no plans to do more work for Leo. Leo Schelbert, Editor Emeritus of the SAHS Review and a major scholar on the history of Switzerland and Swiss America, was in attendance. Dr. Schelbert announced that Mr. Gonzenbach had sent a donation of $1,000 to the SAHS. The July 2013 event in Switzerland was well organized by Fred Jenny, and he gave a tour of the capital buildings of Switzerland located in Bern. The minutes for the annual meeting in New York in October 2012 were placed in the February 2013 issue of the Review. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Rosa Schupbach stated that the meeting needed to re-elect the board of advisors for the years 2013 to 2016. Marianne Burkard OSB, Donald H. Tritt, Donald Hilty, Diana Larisgoitia, and Urs Peter Schelbert were elected unanimously. A new board needed to be elected for 2013 to 2016. Fred Gillespie was re-elected as president of the Society, and Rosa Schupbach was re-elected as Vice President. Fred Jenny was re-elected as vice president in Switzerland. Ernie Thurston was re-elected as membership secretary, Heinz Bachmann was re-elected as Treasurer, and Albert Winkler was re-elected as recording secretary. All elections were unanimous.

Ernie Thurston gave the Membership Report. Five new people joined this year, but 13 had not renewed membership, so there was a net loss of 8 members. Two new people joined as life members. Two former members died.

Phil Gelzer of Greensboro, North Carolina, suggested from the floor to have additional copies of the SAHS Review available for purchase. Questions included what the additional copies would cost in printing and postage. Albert Winkler volunteered to be the person holding extra copies. He would send copies to anyone who wished to buy them. It was suggested that the Society talk with the publisher of the Review, Lois Ann Mast, to print an extra 25
copies of each Review, to be sent to Book Editor Albert Winkler at Brigham Young University in Utah for the purpose of sale.

A suggestion was made from the floor that we need to do better outreach to get new members, and we need to be better at one-on-one contact. We need to make things more available for young members.

Fred Gillespie read a report from Fred Jenny on membership in Switzerland. There are less and less funds. He intends to plan another meeting in Switzerland.

The Financial Report was read by Heinz Bachmann. The Society is solvent. The membership of the Society is going down over time. Today’s luncheon at the Embassy should be free. A question was raised about the rather high costs (over $1,400) of last year’s Annual Meeting in New York. The treasurer promised to look into the matter and if necessary corrections would be made. A large outlay of administrative expenditures had been erroneously reported under “Meeting Costs.” The question of a financial audit was raised. No audit has been made for many years. A professional audit would cost several thousand dollars.

A report on the Swiss American Historical Society Review was made by Dwight Page. There will be a bibliography of Donald Tritt’s holdings at the library of the Swiss Society of North America in New Glarus, Wisconsin, in the November 2013 issue of the Review. There will be several articles in the February 2013 issue including an article on John Sutter in California, the Swiss role in the Iranian Hostage Crisis (1979-1981), and an article on the “Federal Charter” (Bundesbrief) of 1291 by Albert Winkler. The November 2014 issue will be overseen by Albert Winkler of Brigham Young University, and it will focus on Henry Wirz who was the commander of the infamous Andersonville prison during the Civil War. The February and June 2015 issues are open, and Dr. Page welcomes more material for them.

Albert Winkler gave the report on book publications. He praised the recent book published by Leo Schelbert and Susann Bosshard-Kälin. Dr. Winkler stated that the Society will honor the contract that Leo Schelbert made with Philip Wilson to publish his book on Arnold Guyot. In addition, the Society has a contract to publish Dwight Page’s book on the history of the Swiss in
Tennessee, tentatively scheduled to be published in the summer of 2015. After the publication of that book, the Society will consider other projects including Dwight Page’s translation of a book about Leo Lesquereux, suggested by Dr. Donald Tritt.

Fred Gillespie read Brian Wages’ Outreach Report. The suggestion to use the website to make membership payments by Paypal was accepted. This year Brian Wages contacted 1,100 professors presenting information on the Society. The report included the use of the website. In the last twelve months, the Society’s website was visited over 1,100 times, and a total of 4,600 pages of the website were viewed. The largest number of visits came from the United States, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

Professor Robert Sherwood stated that he has contacted graduate and undergraduate schools to inform students of a new prize for scholarship concerning Swiss and Swiss American History. The winner of this prize will be published in the Review. He asked what the name of the prize should be, and the name, “The Leo Schelbert Graduate and Undergraduate Prize” was unanimously approved by the Meeting. Professor Sherwood stated that he will personally promote and advertise the prize.

The Gonzenbach prize of $1,000 was approved unanimously. The Paroz Prize of $1,000 and 10 extra copies of the book were approved unanimously as well. Leo Schelbert said that he had already sent the 10 extra copies. The National Meeting approved unanimously to grant the above-mentioned $1,000 Gonzenbach Prize to Susann Bosshard-Kaelin and the above-mentioned $1,000 Paroz Prize to her daughter Annina in recognition of the enormous amount of work they had put into preparation of the recent book, *Emigrant Paths: Encounters with Twentieth Century Swiss Americans*.

Ernie Thurston circulated an old Swiss document, and he suggested that it be sent to the Swiss Center.

Robert Sherwood recommended that members look at the Swiss vital records online from the nineteenth century. These are available as a download on computers. It is a good place to get into primary sources. It comes from “family search indexing” online.
A question about the cost of recent books was raised. Masthof Press sells each of our books for $25, and the price of shipping is included. Therefore, those interested in purchasing any of the books in the SAHS Book Series should contact Lois Ann Mast at Masthof Press in Pennsylvania. The phone number for Masthof Press is: 610-286-0258. The mailing address for Masthof Press is: 219 Mill Road, Morgantown, PA 19543.

Thereupon, announcements were made from the floor. Erica Gees stated that the Treaty of Ghent, which ended the War of 1812, was signed in the Octagon Building in Washington. She pointed out that it was the only treaty that has never been broken. It was signed on February 16, 1815. She invited all the members of the Society to go to the Octagon House for a free tour after the meeting.

The next annual meeting of the Society will be in Philadelphia on Saturday, October 11, 2014 in the Friend’s Meeting Hall at 4th and Archer Streets. All members of the SAHS are encouraged to attend this meeting in this historic and fascinating city. The meeting will be held just a few blocks from the famed Independence Hall and the world famous Rodin Museum and Philadelphia Museum of Art. In addition, the Friend’s Meeting Hall is in the heart of the theatre and concert district of Philadelphia, and many concert halls and theatres are within easy walking distance of our meeting place. Finally, the President of the SAHS, Fred Gillespie, who resides in the Philadelphia area, urges us to remind you that the new Barnes Museum of Impressionist Art in Philadelphia holds important collections of both European and American paintings.
B. President’s Report

Good Morning and Welcome, everybody, to the 2013 Annual General Membership Meeting of the Swiss American Historical Society. I thank Ambassador Manuel Sager for allowing us to meet here today. We are grateful for his hospitality.

There are several items I’d like to talk about. As President I have received various requests for assistance concerning assorted issues. These include:

- The Chicago’s Field Museum is featuring an exhibit on George de Mestral, the inventor of Velcro. The museum would like a photograph of him with his dog.

- There is a Gallatin ceremony in New York City to commemorate his birthday. Could the SAHS help publicize the event?

- A business group in Austin, Texas, would like somebody to talk about Switzerland during a luncheon. Does SAHS have a member who could do this?

I do not want to email the membership every time I receive such a request. However, I will ask our webmaster to post the request on a “bulletin board” on our website for a limited time. I hope that this will facilitate people making connections.

Marianne Burkhard brought me up-to-date on the developments of Leo Schelbert’s Festschrift. The existence of this project had been kept under wraps since we feared that if Leo learned about it, he would strenuously object. My response to him would have been this “apology”: “Sorry, Leo. You’re part of history too, and we need to document it.” However, Marianne tells me that it became necessary to inform Leo of the project, and he actually did not object. So far there are about fifteen contributors. The book will touch on his teaching, university service, and of course his involvement with the SAHS, especially the Review and book series. After the editor, Wendy Everham, has the entire text, bids for publication will be sought. We anticipate a 2014 publication date.

Since we do not wish to unduly burden SAHS with this book, I contributed $100.00 to SAHS in the event that other funds could not be raised. I encourage others to join me.
In July, I travelled to Switzerland with my wife and daughter. I attended the annual social event in Bern, sponsored by the SAHS, Switzerland. We had a guided tour of the Federal Capitol and lunch by the famed bear pit. During the tour I asked our docent if the Swiss used the filibuster as it is used in the USA. She replied that it exists in theory but is not actually used. Another member of our group then explained that this was the difference between the USA and Switzerland. In Switzerland what matters is getting things to work. In the USA what matters is who wins! The entire day was splendidly organized by Fred Jenny.

In September I visited the Embassy of Switzerland for the Soirée Suisse. The Tell Award was given to Bertrand Piccard and André Borschberg “for their brilliant achievements as the founders of Solar Impulse, fearless visionaries in the field of innovation and outstanding ambassadors of Switzerland and its pioneering spirit.” They were able to fly across the USA by only using solar energy. They plan to circumnavigate the globe in 2015.
C. Elections, Nominating Committee Report
by Rosa Schupbach, Chairperson, Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee is made up of the following:

Heinz Bachmann
Leo Schelbert
And myself as Chairperson

Today we need to elect not only a new Class of 2013-2016 of the Board of Advisors but also a new Board for our Society which according to the By-Laws has to be elected every three years. The last Board election took place in 2010.

Let’s proceed first with the Board of Advisors. I am happy to report that all the members of the class of 2010-2013 have agreed to be nominated again.

Therefore, I propose that the following be re-elected for the class of 2013-2016. When your names are called, could you stand up. I believe with the exception of Marianne Burkhard, who lives in Illinois, and Urspter Schelbert, who lives in Switzerland, all are here:

Marianne Burkhard
Donald Hilty
Diana Larisgoitia
Urspter Schelbert
Donald Tritt

Are there any nominations from the floor? If not, the nominations are closed. I move that all those nominations be elected. Seconded? All those in favor say aye, any opposed? Therefore, the class of 2013-2016 is duly elected.

We shall now proceed to elect a new Board for the period 2013-2016. Everybody on the present Board agreed to serve again, so the slate reads as follows:

Fred Gillespie, President
Rosa Schupbach, Vice-President for the US
Fred Jenny, Vice President for Switzerland
Are there any nominations from the floor? If not, the nominations are closed. I move that all those nominated be elected. Seconded? All those in favor say aye, any opposed? Therefore, the Board for the period 2013-2016 is duly elected.

I have here the names of the other two Classes of the Board of Advisors, namely the Class of 2011-2014 and the Class of 2012-2015 which as a matter of record will be published in the Minutes of this Meeting in the February 2014 Review. I think there is no need to read them unless you would like me to read them:

Class of 2011-2014: Randall Gafner
Karl Niederer
Franz Portmann
Elisabeth Reimann
Paula Sherman

Class of 2012-2015: Susan Keller
H. Dwight Page
Kenneth Schelbert
David Sutton
Franz von Arx
D. Membership Report

by Ernie Thurston, Membership Secretary of the SAHS

To: Members of the Swiss American Historical Society
From: Ernie Thurston, Membership Secretary
Subject: Annual Membership Report
Date: September 30, 2013

IN BRIEF: We have 235 current members, a 3% decrease from the 243 reported last year at this time. We welcome two new LIFE members this year, Stephen T. Koella of Rockford, Tennessee, and Robert A. Elmer of Sun Prairie, Wisconsin. We are grateful to our life member Max Gonzenbach for a grant of $1,000 received just this week from the Gonzenbach Family Fund.

CURRENT MEMBERS BY TYPE AND COUNTRY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Membership Type</th>
<th>U.S./Canada</th>
<th>Switzerland/Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regular ($50/yr.)</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student ($25/yr.)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution ($75/yr.)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Life Members</td>
<td>44</td>
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<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complimentary</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>192</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
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</table>

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES, 10/01/2012 TO 09/30/2013

Members as of 10/01/2012 243
Plus: New Members Enrolled 5
Plus: Former Members (not “Current” last year)
  who have Rejoined 0
Less: Dropped by Request or Decease - 8
Less: Dropped for Non-Payment of Dues - 5

Current Members, 9/30/2013 235
**BREAKDOWN OF CURRENT MEMBERSHIP**

**BY COUNTRY AND STATE:**

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<th>State</th>
<th>Members</th>
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<td>CT</td>
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<tr>
<td>DC</td>
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<tr>
<td>DE</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>FL</td>
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<td>HI</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<td>WV</td>
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<td>BC, CANADA</td>
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<tr>
<td>ONT, CANADA</td>
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<tr>
<td>QB, CANADA</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>MALTA</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>SWITZERLAND</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
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</table>
E. Treasurer’s Report

by Heinz Bachmann, Treasurer of the SAHS

1. Consolidated Summary Accounts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>U.S. Chapter</th>
<th>Swiss Chapter</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Dues</td>
<td>$7,268</td>
<td>$2,706</td>
<td>$9,974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donations incl.</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Sales</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>761</td>
<td>761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Appreciation</td>
<td>7,348</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7,348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
<td>$15,766</td>
<td>$3,476</td>
<td>$19,242</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                      |              |               |             |
| **Expenses**         |              |               |             |
| Meetings/Events      | $1,434       | $86           | $1,520      |
| Donations            | -            | -             | -           |
| Administration/      | 340          | 684           | 1,024       |
| Postage/Fees         |              |               |             |
| SAHS Review          | 7,935        | -             | 7,935       |
| Publications (books) | 3,100        | -             | 3,100       |
| **Total Expenditures** | $12,809  | $770          | $13,579     |

|                      |              |               |             |
| **Net Result**       | $2,957       | $2,706        | $5,663      |

|                      |              |               |             |
| **Balances**         |              |               |             |
| Opening Balance, October 1, 2012 | $87,400  |
| Opening Balance, September 30, 2013 | $93,063  |

Net Result

$5,663

1) 0.92 SFr per $

https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/sahs_review/vol50/iss1/15
2. **Balance Sheets ($)**

**United States**

CLOSING BALANCE (as of September 30, 2013)

- Checking, First Bank & Trust of Evanston, Illinois: $19,434.90
- Savings, Vanguard STAR Fund: $62,038.29
- Recent Expenditures Awaiting Payment: -135.33

Total Assets: $81,337.86

OPENING BALANCE (as of October 1, 2012): $78,381.36

Net Change During FY 2012/2013: +2,956.50

**Switzerland**

*by Fred Jenny, Vice President, Switzerland*

PostFinance, Vereinskonto

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Conversion</th>
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<td>10,787.10</td>
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<tr>
<td>(as of September 30, 2013)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opening Balance</td>
<td>$9,019.46</td>
<td>8,297.90</td>
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<tr>
<td>(as of October 1, 2012)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net Change During FY 2012/2013</td>
<td>+2,705.65</td>
<td>+2,489.20</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Overall Net Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>During FY 2012/2013</td>
<td>+5,662.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dear Members of the Swiss American Historical Society:

I would have preferred to present my annual report directly to you also this time, but it is unfortunately not possible.

I must repeat what I stated already last time. In general, the Swiss Chapter is still doing relatively well. However, we suffer from the same reality in Switzerland as you do in the U.S.A. Membership is diminishing, and new members are difficult to enroll. Young Swiss are no longer interested in membership.

On July 24, I organized again an Annual Social event of the Swiss Chapter in the Swiss Capital Bern. After the usual ups and downs and delays, the attendance amounted to eleven persons: three Americans—including President Gillespie—and eight Swiss. Not all of them were members of the SAHS. Compared to last year’s very nice event, we enjoyed the shade on the terrace of the Restaurant ‘Brasserie’—next to the bear pit—where we had an excellent lunch. In spite of the only few SAHS members participating, I shall try to organize again a similar event somewhere in Switzerland next year.
G. Editor’s Report, SAHS Review

by Prof. Dwight Page

The rich variety and excellence of the contributions to the present February 2014 issue of the SAHS Review herald a veritable annus mirabilis of publications for the Swiss American Historical Society. In the upcoming November 2014 issue, and in commemoration of the sesquicentennial of the Civil War and the invasion of Georgia, Dr. Albert Winkler will create a major article dealing with the life of the Swiss American Confederate officer Henry Wirz, the commander of the Andersonville prison in Georgia. In that same issue we shall showcase the first of our student essays on Swiss and Swiss American history. This new project is being directed by Dr. Robert Sherwood, Professor of History at Georgia Military College and also our Editor of Book Reviews. This will be followed in the summer of 2015 by my own epic study of the history of the Swiss in Tennessee, details of which are provided in the report on our book series below.
H. Book Editor’s Report  
by Prof. Albert Winkler

I wish to begin this report by praising our recent book published by Dr. Leo Schelbert and Susann Bosshard-Kälin, entitled, *Emigrant Paths: Encounters with Twentieth Century Swiss Americans*. Additional copies of the book are available for purchase from Masthof Press. In addition, we have decided to honor the contract that Leo Schelbert made with Philip Wilson to publish his book on Arnold Guyot. Finally, the Society has entered a contract with Professor Dwight Page to publish his epic book on the history of the Swiss in Tennessee, which should appear during the summer of 2015. After the publication of that book, the Society will consider other projects including Dwight Page’s French/English translation of a book about Leo Lesquereux, a project being directed by Dr. Donald Tritt.
I hereby present the annual report on public relations and outreach on behalf of the Swiss American Historical Society. Concerning the Society Website, I wish to report that regular changes to the page have resulted in better communication with members and others interested in the Society. Since October 2012, there have been nearly 4,600 page views by over 1,100 visitors. The most common user is from the United States, with the second most common being from Switzerland, and the third most common being from the United Kingdom.

Since the last annual meeting in 2012, individualized email invitations were extended to nearly 1,100 university and college history instructors, at an average of five to ten per business day. This effort will continue through the remainder of this year into 2014.

Following an extensive rework of the Wikipedia entry for the Society, it was regularly edited throughout the year in order to preserve its focus. As appropriate, related material was updated on the "Swiss American" page of Wikipedia.

At this time I would like to make two proposals: First, I would like to propose that we provide a way to pay annual dues online via the Society website. Secondly, I would like to propose that we contact former Society members and extend a personal invitation to rejoin the Society.
THE LEO SCHELBERT PRIZE
IN SWISS/SWISS-AMERICAN HISTORY

The Swiss American Historical Society (SAHS) would like to announce a call for papers for the Leo Schelbert Prize in Swiss/Swiss American History. Each calendar year, the Swiss American Historical Society will award a prize to the best paper in one of two levels—Undergraduate, and Graduate. The topic for the paper is open as long as it fits into the larger mission of the SAHS, that being to increase the understanding of Swiss and Swiss-American History.

General Outlines for Submission:

1. The length should be as follows:
   a. Undergraduate – 10-20 pages
   b. Graduate—15-25 pages
2. All submissions need to be properly formatted and cited using either MLA or Chicago Manual Style.
3. Papers without citations will not be accepted for review.
4. Papers may not have been previously published.
5. Papers must be submitted by June 1, 2014, for consideration for the awards.
6. Submission must be in either Microsoft Word or PDF format.
7. Submissions must be in English.
8. Award recipients will be recognized at the annual Swiss American Historical Society Meeting as well as have their papers published in a future edition of the Swiss American Historical Society Review.

We welcome all participants. Please direct questions and submission to:
Robert Sherwood at rsherwoo@gmc.cc.ga.us
SAHS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Name: ________________________________________________

Address: ________________________________________________

City: ________________________________________________

Phone: ________________________________________________

Email: ________________________________________________

Dues:

___ Individual $50.00 per year
___ Institution $75.00 per year
___ Student $25.00 per year
___ Life Membership $500.00

Make check payable to: SAHS

Mail this form, with your check to:

Ernest Thurston Membership Secretary
65 Town Mountain Road
Asheville, NC 28804

Email: Eswisst@gmail.com (mail to: EswissT@gmail.com)

Membership in the Swiss American Historical Society is open to all. Each year, members will receive three copies of the Swiss American Historical Society Review, a personal copy of each book published by the Society, and an invitation to attend the national meeting of the Society, held consecutively in Philadelphia, New York, and Washington, D.C. At these annual meetings, members will have the opportunity to meet fellow Swiss Americans and scholars in the fields of Swiss and Swiss American studies and international relations. They may also establish new friendships and professional relationships.