



11-2012

Werner Rothweiler, Magdener Familien 1600-1875 und ihre Stammbaume

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Recommended Citation

Schelbert, Leo Professor Emeritus (2012) "Werner Rothweiler, Magdener Familien 1600-1875 und ihre Stammbaume," *Swiss American Historical Society Review*. Vol. 48 : No. 3 , Article 9.

Available at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/sahs_review/vol48/iss3/9

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Werner Rothweiler, *Magdener Familien 1600–1875 und ihre Stammbäume*. Magden, [Kt. Aargau]: Sparn Druck+Verlag, 2011.

This large-size and attractively crafted book is the result of impressive and expert genealogical research undertaken by Werner Rothweiler, a retired chemist. The work deals with the agricultural village Magden located in the Fricktal that had been part of Upper Austria until 1803 when it became part of the Swiss Canton Aargau. On 24 January 2004, 1200 years to the day when the first known document concerning Magden was dated, the author presented to the people of Magden a history of their village. His new book complements that work and is in the form of a “microhistorical demography” a study of Magden’s 65 family units that are featured since 1600 in the parish books, that is in the registers of baptisms, marriages, and deaths; they include no less than “a total of 1670 individual families and some 6570 children”(5).

The author divided the study into six units. The first (1–145) offers the genealogical trees of the families for the years 1600–1875 and is followed by a listing of the bailiffs and of the jurors of the court at Magden (147). The third unit features the village’s historical demography for the years 1611–1875 (149–175) and is followed by a list of emigrants (177–185), then of soldiers in foreign service (187–192). The book concludes with a detailed description of the ecclesiastical records of the village.

In Part One the 65 family trees of the people of Magden are given that serve those involved in genealogical research and are presented in lucidly arranged charts. Besides the purely genealogical data, however, the author has also added suggestive comments that sometimes an entry provides. For Anton Bürgi, for instance, born 1810, we read: “Son Albert, born 1867 from a second marriage, emigrated 1888 to California. In the same year he, together with Martin Obrist and Matthä Müller, sends a letter with two dollars included from Sacramento to the Magdener sharpshooter comrades. On 13 March 1892 he is with others the founder of the Helvetia Society.” Albert marries, has two daughters, works as a brewer, but loses his occupation because on 16 January 1920 Prohibition, that is the banning of all alcohol consumption, sets in. Albert Bürgi then finds employment in a department store and does also some work for the Swiss Consulate in San Francisco relating to Sacramento. He dies 20 May 1940 (p. 15).

Other comments relate to the origin of people from outside of Magden or Switzerland or give a pastor's comment, as for instance for Anton Kaufmann. He is labeled "inhonestus iuvenis," a dishonest young man, and his seventeen years older wife Verena Oberst is characterized as being "impudica," improper (p. 53). (Such comments by a clerical chronicler must however be treated with caution in that they derive at times from personal dislikes.) The author also comments about individual family units; he points out for instance that the "Lützelschwab are one of the largest family groups. Between 1611 and 1875 there were 119 [Lützelschwab] families and 517 births" (61). As to an individual family, in the genealogical tree of the Lützelschwab –1.2 there is this entry on Johann Baptist Lützelschwab born 1824: "(4 children: 1 married son, 2 sons who died before age 18, 1 married daughter). In 1865 he emigrated with wife and 3 children to the USA. On the Bremen boat *Energie* from Antwerp to New York, arrival 3 August 1865. First settled near St. Louis, Missouri, then in Granite City, Illinois, north of St. Louis where he was a respected farmer. From 1892 until his death in 1916 he was living on the farm of his son Jacob in Millstadt 5 miles south of [East] St. Louis" (64).

The chapter titled "Historische Demografie Magdens 1611–1875" (149–175) offers a concise analysis of the data and was previously published in *Jahrbuch: Familienforschung Schweiz*. Vol. 37 (2010): 17–56. Themes such as age at first marriage, childlessness, number of children, infant mortality, life expectancy, family size, emigration and its impact on population size, are explored with expert precision as they are reflected in the genealogical charts. The chapter thus provides an overview of Magden's socio-demographic traits. The author observes that 6 of the 65 family groups represented half of the village's population and he analyzed those six groups most extensively. A fourth chapter that lists emigrants for the years 1781–1880 (pp. 177–185) gives the year of departure, the family name of the husbands, their first name, year of birth, the name of their spouses (with year of birth if known), the names and birth-year of the children, and the emigrants' destination. Unfortunately the sources provide information about the latter mostly only in general terms with terms such as "Algeria" or "America". Chapter Five deals with the Magden soldiers in foreign service (pp. 187–182). It lists 22 individuals between married man Caspar Hauss, born ca. 1585 who was in Austrian service in the Thirty Years War, and the single

Jacob Eugen Lützelshwab, born 1825, who had deserted his regiment and died imprisoned in Rome in 1855. For the non-initiated also the last chapter of the book is of great value since it describes Magden's ecclesiastical records (195–203), the basis of the data presented, and they are typical also for other parishes.

Werner Rothweiler's study thus offers a wealth of professionally analyzed and lucidly presented genealogical and demographic data that give documented insight into the history of a village of the Fricktal. For those not specialized in genealogy or demography but interested in pursuing such fields, the book may serve as a valuable primer since the work is a model of research, analysis, and presentation.

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