



Swiss American Historical Society Review


Volume 43 | Number 2

Article 3

6-2007

Foreword

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/sahs_review

 Part of the [European History Commons](#), and the [European Languages and Societies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

(2007) "Foreword," *Swiss American Historical Society Review*. Vol. 43 : No. 2 , Article 3.

Available at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/sahs_review/vol43/iss2/3

This Front Matter is brought to you for free and open access by BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Swiss American Historical Society Review* by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.

Foreword

It is a pleasure to publish for this special issue of the *SAHS Review* a translation of Manfred Aregger's article "Familie Marbacher, Escholzmatt/Chicago" which appeared in 2003 in volume 68 of the *Blätter für Heimatkunde aus dem Entlebuch* and deals with the emigration of the extended Marbacher family, living on the Schwändlen farm of Escholzmatt in Canton Lucerne's Entlebuch district. The core of his study is a transcription of the letters written back home by Josef and Anton Marbacher. Josef, the oldest son of Anton Marbacher and of his spouse Anna Maria Vogel, called Marianna, was born in 1808 and emigrated around 1828 to the United States, first settling in Canajoharie on the Mohawk River in upstate New York, in 1831 moving west to Detroit, in 1836 to Chicago. In 1846 he was joined by his father Anton Marbacher, born in 1780, and his brother Johann, born in 1812, and his sister Katharina, born in 1816. In 1847 the rest of the family followed. It consisted of Anton's wife Anna Maria Marbacher-Vogel, born in 1778; their daughter Anna Krummenacher-Marbacher, born in 1810, Anna's husband Anton Krummenacher, born in 1797, and their four children; and Marbacher's daughter Elisabeth, born in 1823.

The letters of Josef and Anton Marbacher describe conditions of travel, their surroundings and circumstances, and they reveal an intense sense of family loyalty, but deal only occasionally with major issues of the times. The Marbacher family's emigration highlights the dimension of the migratory phenomenon that has been called chain migration. Josef Marbacher was the family's pioneer emigrant who chose a favorable area of settlement abroad where he was able to build a substantial economic base for the coming of the whole family as well as of other villagers. Although seriously, but at the same time but half-heartedly considering a return to Escholzmatt, political events in Canton Lucerne intervened. They were part of Switzerland's transformation between 1798 and 1848 from a Confederacy of independent states into a Confederation of semi-independent cantons tied to a central government. As a leader of the Catholic and staunchly anti-liberal cantons supporting the old order, Lucerne's liberal government was overthrown in 1840. The new leaders were fully committed to ecclesiastical preeminence and clerical leadership in civil society, symbolized by the government's invitation of the Jesuits to take charge of the cantonal institution of higher education.

Anton Marbacher, who had been firmly allied with the liberal cause, temporarily was forced to flee the canton and lost the public offices he held on the district level. When Josef Marbacher finally received news of the events, he returned unannounced to Escholzmatt to help organize his father's and brother's emigration in 1846, and of the rest of the family in 1847. While Josef's emigration had been driven by personal, partly unknown reasons, his father's move resulted from political considerations and naturally led to that of the whole family. Their emigration was greatly facilitated by the success, knowledge, and loyalty of Josef, the pioneer emigrant. Unfortunately the story breaks off with the arrival of the final family group in 1847 and only some dispersed hints have come to light.

The translation of Manfred Aregger's study is rather literal than literary and strives to reflect the unique style of the letter writers. Some footnotes needed only in the German text have been omitted, a few added, as well as some illustrations. The translator thanks Wendy Everham who has kindly reviewed the text; also Anton Kaufmann, President of the Historische Verein des Entlebuch, and Fritz Lötscher, business manager for the *Entlebuch Anzeiger*.

Leo Schelbert
Editor and Translator