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Gentlemen:

I recently noted your name and address when looking up another item of interest in a local library book (reference section) entitled: "How to Find Your Family Roots," a 1977 publication, authored by Beard-Demong.

I am a first-generation American of European parentage. My mother was Louise Henriette Lavanchy of Lutry, Canton de Vaud, born May 6, 1881, youngest daughter of Louis Aimé and Anna Lavanchy. Both were Lavanchy cousins, born Lavanchy. I do not know my grandparents' date of birth. Aimé was the son of an innkeeper. Anna was the daughter (there was one other child, a son) of a wealthy vigneron whose land adjoined the Château de Montagny. He leased the land and Château (empty) from a French nobleman. Because my maternal great-grandfather married again, after the death of his wife, his son and daughter (Anna) received nothing to speak of. This unfortunate state of affairs has plagued many in this direct line of Lavanchys. Hence 5 of the 7 children of Anna and Aimé came to America: Constant, Charles, Marie, Hélène and Louise. Marie became first in her field in this country, a millionaire in time, and succeeded in destroying financially, and two through death, the other four. A sad tale which does not bear on this inquiry. Elise remained behind in Lutry, and married.

The "Old Church" in Lutry bears many of the Lavanchy coats of arms. This church appears to have been a Lavanchy project in many restorations. Dated stained glass windows show such inscriptions as: "Nicholas - Fils de Thomas Lavanchy - 1, Avril 1535 - J-François E. Lavanchy (et) son épouse"-- (illegible in photo). This is the only legible photo I have of the windows. An English friend, on his yearly trip to Switzerland, this year will take photos of all the windows, all or most of which appear to have Lavanchy inscriptions. The three rosaces now all have Lavanchy coats of arms, in red and white (House of Savoy and thus Swiss colours). Originally, in an old description of the church, the three rose windows were composed of the arms of the town, the priory and the Lavanchy Family. Now all Lavanchy! Somewhat un-Swiss, such advertising, I might say.

The family is very Swiss indeed, and long in Vaud and Geneva as well. They are still there, prospering, while other
such old families as the titled Counts of Grandson (Vaud) have disappeared, fled to England and became the Grandissons during, I believe, the wars with Berne by Vaud...at which time the House of Savoy, practically owners of a greater Vaud, also lost ground.

I wonder not only about the origin of this family, is it French, Burgundian, or indigenous Celtic? The name would indicate a French connection. Also there is a reputed "Savoy Connection." Some member or members of the Lavanchys are reputed to have married into this then ruling House of Vaud. Perhaps some other family member in Switzerland has looked into this. But I do not personally know them, and hence have no idea of the results, if undertaken. An interesting thing about this family, about whom I have never read in French or Savoy history, is the fact that seven towns appear to be named after them, all to the east of Montreux-Villeneuve area. The Grandsons left one town, I believe. Also the Kiburgers and Hartmanns, "Counts and Great Lords of Thurgau." But why the Lavanchys seven?---

1. Lavanchy, Château d'Oex. Vaud 1719
2. Lavanchy, Ormont-Dessus. Vaud PT les Diablerets
3. Lavanchy, Villeneuve. Vaud 1082. PT Montbaron
4. Lavanchy-Poy. Ormont-Dessus Vd. 1603 P vers l'église
5. Le Lavanchy, Bex, Vaud. 1502. PT Les Plains sur Bex
6. La Lavanche, Ormont-Dessus Vd. 1110. PT vers l'église (Ormont)
7. Les Lavanches. Ollon. Vaud 1314

The last two named towns, thought the Consul in San Francisco, while enjoying a slightly different spelling, appeared to him to be of the same derivation. Could the naming of these towns, for example, indicate once-great land holdings, again due perhaps to marriage with Savoy? The name is not in the Who's Who of Switzerland. A German-Swiss I know from Zürich was good enough to look up the name in the books dealing with old families, namely, the "Regierungsfahung" and another series of books consisting of a few volumes dealing with prominent families which are not regierungsfahung because they do not reside in the various towns. I notice on my mother's birth certificate for use in this country, and also a testament from the Commune of Savigny, that in 1898 the Syndic of both Lutry and that of Savigny were Lavanchys. I do not know what a Syndic is, other than the dictionary description of Official Trustee, etc.

My interest in the origins of the Family are not for snobbish use, to be sure. I am living on Social Security, and due to health (dependent upon the Veterans Administration
facilities—Hospital and Clinics) and income, am now un-
fortunately a prisoner of this country. A particularly bad
series of investments landed me in my present position, so
that returning to Europe either for a visit or to live is
now quite out of the question.

I do recall in my better and younger days, that a
Compte de Clermont-Tonnerre, with whom I became friendly
on board ship, and who was extremely proud of the age of
his title, around 600 AD, strongly suggested looking into
the "Savoy-Connection." While it is of no use now, as out-
lined, such a connection, if verified, would connect one by
blood or marriage to virtually every noble house in Europe.
However, my outcome is no doubt that listing—the probably
"poorest Lavanchy," hence I have never sought out my pro-
perous and well-known cousins in Lutry, Lausanne, Geneva,
etc. whose activities are substantial in construction,
trucking, travel agencies, wine, cosmetics, etc. My com-
mand of French is very poor now, for at home we only spoke
English, for my father, born in Sweden, spoke only Swedish,
German and English. Too bad. I did speak French until I
was five, I am told, but refused to continue after that age,
when I was enrolled in kindergarten, because "other children
made fun of me." A pity, in retrospect. It was my University
minor, but through lack of actual practice abroad, it has
virtually vanished.

I have run all over the map with digressions, and
hope you will understand. Any information you can offer
me as to probable costs of looking into this family will be
appreciated. Were I able to return to Switzerland, and were
my command of French better, I no doubt could accomplish a
certain amount on my own. One American 4th cousin, both of
whose parents were born in French-speaking countries, and
who in turn was fluent, did check out the library (?) in
Lausanne and came up with a coat of arms which would be on
my paternal grandfather's side, as her grandfather was re-
lated to my grandfather. But all Lavanchys are related,
nevertheless, clearly. Many thanks for hearing me out.

Yours sincerely,

Carl J. Olson