From the Kansas Plains to the Kentucky Hills

Walter R. Wullschleger

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Walter R. Wullschleger:

From the Kansas Plains to the Kentucky Hills

The News Letters and Bulletin reached me today. I am delighted to have these fine periodicals. I had no idea that your fine society was in existence.

Of course, I shall be very happy to join with you, and to cooperate in any way I can, especially in contributing something to your fine Newsletter from time to time.

The biographical history of Abraham Blumer by Prof. Wm. T. Parsons is very interesting to me because of the reference to Huldrich Zwingli, both very precious subjects to me. I have always considered myself to be a Zwingli type of believer and have always rejoiced in his doctrinal beliefs, having read a good deal about him in my own self-teaching efforts.

I have De Aubigné's History of the Reformation in which appears the very simulated arguments between Luther and Zwingli in regard to the Lord's Supper. I always felt that Zwingli was the victor in that affair. He has ever been my champion.

Imagine my joy this past summer to have the privilege of spending 6 weeks in Switzerland! Ironically, it was a devout Roman Catholic who took me to the Zwingli memorial which stands on the very spot where Zwingli fell in battle! Tears of emotion still well up in my eyes as I relive the scene of standing before that memorial, moved to the point of profound, tearful homage to this hero of the Reformation in Switzerland. Of course, my RC friend did not share my feeling and I did not enter into argument with him....

I am proud of my Swiss heritage and since my visit to my parents' "Old Country" I rejoice continually in it all the more. It was so good that I could still speak the good old Schwiezer-Deutsche with them fluently which endeared them to me and made me many friends. I took over a thousand photos!

No doubt, I could write some interesting accounts of my own family life as a Swiss who became aware of life on the Kansas prairie. My new book will have my complete autobiography with many pictures in it to illustrate our family life experiences on the farm in Kansas. My only fear is that it might be boring to some, but I have taken great pains to not let that happen.
Since you have been so kind as to generously send me the Newsletter along with your interest, I will also send you my first book, *The Gold of That Land*, a deeply devotional book designed to lead devout Christians into frequent personal enjoyment of our glorious God and our Savior, Jesus Christ.

The first edition in 1976 was for 5000, of which I have retained 1000 for my own sale and gift ministry. I was a missionary pastor here in Ky. for 14 years after leaving the farm in Kansas. My wife and I came here in 1948 from the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago since Eastern Kentucky was a needy field for home missions. After 12 years of farming here in Ky. and rearing our family of four, we are now in retirement, but still active in good works.

At the risk of this being a boring letter, to you, I thought it excusable, since we are getting acquainted, to enclose some material on a hobby I have to keep me active in my retirement. Even wheelbarrows can be interesting, useful in many ways and sizes. The enclosed clippings, etc. will tell the story.

I might add that just in the last 30 days I have invented, designed and built a self-propelled, motorized single-wheel wheelbarrow after many years of wondering how it could be done. Since efforts to patent are in process I will not elaborate further, only to say that I continue to research the idea for improvements. This type of wheelbarrow shown in the photo now has a motor to do the work of pushing. Whether it will prove to be more than a novelty remains to be seen. At least the idea is unique for I have never seen or heard of a self-propelled common wheelbarrow, and many others say the same.

In all sincerity and with best wishes, Sincerely yours, Walter R. Wullschleger

Grüşset, Grüşset dir recht herzlich! I was delighted to have such a fine letter from you and I'll reply while the interest is still warm. You and I have much in common. Most of all we are Swiss, a heritage of which we can well be proud and of a nation highly esteemed the world over.

I enjoyed your Newsletter immensely. We have just had a great Honey Festival here in Jackson that attracted many thousands of people, 16,000, they say. Many Crafts booths displayed a wide range of Mountain Crafts items. Even I had a booth in which I displayed and sold my books and pictures of art. Also my motorized wheelbarrow that was quite a sensation to many who had never even thought of such a thing. I'm trying to find a manufacturing company that would produce it on a mass scale and offer it to the public market. I feel that it would find a ready sale the country over.
no pushing or lifting—just guiding. I feel a bit jubilant over being its inventor and designer, and I could even improve on it to make it even more attractive. The Swiss mind is inventive and resourceful. Some of our great thinkers have been the Swiss. I gave your Newsletter to a group of Swiss Mennonites who also had a booth at the festival. Its leader was a Stoltsfuss. He is one of a local church group headed by another Swiss Mennonite named Schwarzeruber (Black Grapes). These people have an egg farm in the county located on Turners Creek. Their eggs have a wide market and a good reputation—Turners Creek Eggs are famous. So we can see a good deal of Swiss influence here in these mountains of Appalachia. These people rejoiced in your Newsletter, since it named so many of their people. Now, my people, the Wullschlegers were Lutheran. It is said Switzerland is about 50% Protestant, the rest Catholic.

My FootPrints Ms is written in English, of course, presenting them a chore in translation for the Swiss readership. If you write to Benteli, urge them with the thought that a wide readership is patiently waiting for the book to come to America for its English speaking readership. It will find a good demand here, and many are anxious for it.

Yes, you may indeed quote anything I write. And I wish to join the SAHS. I am a member of the Wisconsin society now and receive its publication, the Swiss American.

Recounting, I was born in 1905. In 1908 my father took the family to the farm. Now in 1978 I have been a farmer for 70 years. I'm still producing food in both Kansas (on the original farm) and Kentucky where right now I could pick 50 bushels of green beans to sell at 8.00 per bu. I will be having a fall & winter crop of lettuce and mustard greens to sell too.

I will send you a brochure of our honey festival. I think you will like it. Call on me any time for any help I can give. And put me on your mailing list for everything.

Mit herzlich Grüße und viele Danke.

Walter Wullschleger

The Chuka, Chuka, Chuka of the Stack

(Chuka, Chuka, Chuka is the sound of the exhaust steam being released in the smoke stack of a steam engine when threshing wheat or other grain. Say it fast to get the idea.)

There's a sound upon the air,
That I'd like with you to share;
For it thrilled my heart to hear it
When it fell upon my ear in days of yore;
'Tis a sound a bit old-fashion'
Of that old steam engine thrashin'
And I'd like to just go back
And hear again the Chuka, Chuka, Chuka
Of the stack!
Of the stack!
Oh, that mighty Chuka, Chuka, Chuka
Of the stack!

In those harvest days of thrashin',
We'd rise up before the flashin'
Of the early mornin' risin' of the sun,
For the wheat fields were awaitin'
To get that engine activatin'
And another day of thrashin' now begun;
I can hear the boiler singing'
And the sizzlin' drops of water spick and spack
But the sound for which I'm longin'
Is the Chuka, Chuka, Chuka
Of the stack!
Of the stack!
Oh, the music of the Chuka, Chuka, Chuka
Of the stack!

Oh, those grand old days of thrashin'
When whole neighborhoods were dashin'
Here and yonder, gatherin' up the bright and golden straw
And tossin' bundles in the feeder
Like two rows of sheep a followerin' the leader
Disappearin' in the thrasher's greedy maw;
I can feel that engine rockin'
And hear the crank-pin faintly knockin'
But of all the sounds, the one to give me back
Is the undulatin' Chuka of the stack!
Of the stack!
Of the stack!
Oh, that loud and faithful barking
Of the stack!

Oh, those merry days of yore,
When we were so happy and so pore;
Yet were rich in things that money couldn't buy
And I get to kinda thinkin' of the way it was back then
When the harvesting was done by those hairy-chested men,
How they went to work a thrashin' with the hot sun in the sky
I can smell the coal a burnin'; see a flue a leakin' at the back
But nothing now a stoppin' the Chuka, Chuka, Chuka
Of the stack!
Of the stack!
Oh, that satisfyin', thrillin' music of the stack!

- Walter R. Wullschleger
(Dedicated to his brother, Ernest)
THE WOODMAN* Walter Wullschleger, in his workshop in the basement of his home on Highland Avenue, Jackson. Under construction is another original "Swiss Wheelbarrow" which seems far superior to the everyday iron ones. Wullschleger is producing these for sale in his home factory.

The Story of the Swiss Wheelbarrow

When my father came to America in 1881 from Switzerland, this country was just being transformed from a vast wilderness to a haven of happiness and opportunity for a multitude of new people. It was the world's last frontier. Our government beckoned with open arms for Europe's millions to come and help themselves to all they wanted. And they came! From England, Scotland, France, Germany, Italy, Switzerland and many other lands, scores of thousands came.

The Indians were being pushed back, the vast herds of buffalo were being slaughtered. Railroads were being built, cities and towns were springing up, homes, ranches, farms and businesses were being established.

Opportunity was everywhere. Freedom was unlimited. The world needed America and America needed the world.

My father and a brother who came with him were skilled carpenters. They found plenty of work, building homes and
stores all over the middle west. They first found work in Kansas, then went to Colorado and helped build a gold stamp-mill to crush gold bearing ore; then to Laramie, Wyoming, to build warehouses; to Wisconsin to build a large sawmill; to Nebraska to build huge cattle-feeding sheds and finally back to Kansas about 1895 to a town called Marysville where they settled down with their families. Here they built many beautiful homes both urban and rural, most of them still in use today.

About this time I came into the world, the last of seven children. My two brothers and four sisters composed our family.

In 1907, my father and uncle bought adjoining farms in Marshall County and moved their families to them in 1908.

One of the first things my father did on the farm was to make a good sturdy wheelbarrow just like the ones he saw and used in Switzerland. It was used every day to haul litter from the dairy-barn and feed to the hogs and cattle. I grew up with that wheelbarrow and used it all the 40 years I lived there on that Kansas farm.

A few years ago I decided I needed a wheelbarrow, so I built one just like the one we had in Kansas. Many who have seen it say they had never seen one just like it. Others have encouraged me to build several and offer them for sale. Now that I have retired from my farm, I have time for a new vocation, so I have decided to build wheelbarrows.

The Swiss wheelbarrow is built for both beauty and rugged service. Strong and sturdy for heavy work, yet nice enough to keep in the house like a piece of fine furniture. It has three wheels and will not mar or scuff the most beautiful floors. It has many uses in the house serving as an easy chair; a flower stand; a dry-sink, and even a toy-box or a book cabinet.

It even has the strange feature of pushing itself—if you raise the handles high! Built like a Swiss watch, it is the Cadillac of the Wheelbarrows!