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Comments and Announcements

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Comments and Announcements

The Swiss General Strike of 1918

Lukas F. Burckhardt, Bern

Dr. Lukas F. Burckhardt, who as Cultural Counselor of the Embassy of Switzerland reactivated the Swiss American Historical Society in 1963 in cooperation with the late Dr. Heinz K. Meier, Professor of History at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia, sent the following note concerning *Switzerland Under Siege* which he found otherwise to be welcome and on target:

On page 21 Jürg Stüssi writes:

“In Switzerland the pursuit of Lenin’s ideals took the form of a revolutionary strike starting on November 1918 one year after the October Revolution [in Russia]. This thinly veiled attempt to overthrow the established democratic order, however, was met by a determined Federal Government with the help of the militia.”

In reality the general strike was a purely Swiss matter and ended in a conciliatory manner. Robert Grimm, its leading figure, was one of the most bitter opponents of Lenin whom he opposed in important meetings in Zimmerwald and in Kiental.

The result of the strike was purely union-related. It led to the introduction of the 48-hour week which was agreed upon on the suggestion of Mr. Sulzer of Winterthur, the most important representative of the employers. An authoritative book is the study of Paul Schmid-Ammann, *Der Generalstreik von 1918*. Zürich: Morgarten-Verlag, 1968. I also refer to the book, which I translated from English into German, by Grimm’s son-in-law Adolf McCarthy, *Robert Grimm. Der schweizerische Revolutionär*. Bern: Francke Verlag, 1989.

The annexation of Austria by Hitler’s Germany on March 13, which Grimm had anticipated, led on March 21, 1938 to a solemn declaration of the Swiss Parliament, then presided over by Robert Grimm:

“All Swiss, regardless of language, religion, or party are determined to defend the inviolability of the fatherland against any aggressor to the last drop of blood.”

Lexington Remembered

Vol I (2000), by *Claudette Holliday*

Claudette Holliday, editor of the *Carolinian Scrivener & Antiquities* (1453 Corley Mill Road, Lexington, South Carolina, 29072) has published a collection of brief essays about "Lexington Yesterday" as they appeared in the *Lexington County Chronicle*. Several of them such as "New Windsor", "Christian Theus - Teacher and Minister", and "The Weberite Heresy" deal with Swiss immigrants and their activities in Lexington's environs.

Swiss and German Settlers of New Bern, North Carolina 1710

by Lewis Bunker Rohrbach, CG

Lewis Bunker Rohrbach, now spending a year of research in Switzerland, submitted the following "quick summary" of his forthcoming work:

A complete study, with brief historical background, of Christoph von Graffenried's colony which settled in New Bern, North Carolina in 1710.

Details on all three shiploads of passengers: both the 101 Swiss who came on one ship (no deaths, one birth) from Bern to Rotterdam by way of London, and the 600 Germans and 50 Swiss who came on two ships from London (over 325 deaths).

Brief account of the 56 Swiss Anabaptists who were sent along in 1710, under guard, but who got as far as Holland. None came to North Carolina. These data mostly from the Dutch archives, unpublished.

Information from all eleven letters written back to Switzerland in 1711.

An account, family by family, of all 145 families (out of roughly 165 total) I have been able to identify. Perhaps 20 or so families will never be identified, as all members died on the voyage. I have included 3 and 4 generation summaries of all families in North Carolina. Also, in a very few instances, data are included on Swiss ancestry back a few generations, from the Kirchenbücher [parish record books] in Switzerland.

Inclusion of new, verbatim transcriptions of the passenger lists of all 8 parties of the 15,000 German-speaking settlers who went to London in 1710, plus new verbatim transcriptions of the passenger lists of all 5 parties of those returned to Europe. None were published before in this form, but were alphabetized, abridged, and bastardized.

Inclusion of unpublished 1704 tax lists from Germany.

Inclusion of new, verbatim transcriptions of all passenger lists to Nova Scotia in the mid-18th century.

The reason that the New Bern, NC settlers have never been studied in detail before is that for the entire period 1710-1778 of Craven County, NC there is very little to work with. There are no birth records, no baptismal records, no marriage records, no death records, no Bible records (except a single birth record for an immigrant child), no public vital records, no cemetery records, no naturalization records, no pension records, no oaths of allegiance, no military records. There are only a very few tax records, only about half of the wills, half of the deeds, very few of estate records. Luckily about 70% of the Craven County court records 1710-1778 have survived and have been transcribed.

Fortunately suing each other and buying and selling real estate were already American passions, at least in Craven County. There are perhaps 20,000 entries which have survived and can be searched. Weynette Parks Haun did the transcriptions, and without her scholarly effort it would have been close to impossible to tackle the project. There are also various records available at the state level such as wills and the like.

In total, this is a 600-page book-within-a-book (including index). The entire work is titled *Even More Palatine Families: Swiss and German Immigrants to Eighteenth Century North America* and has been undertaken by Hank Jones and Lewis Bunker Rohrbach.

Expected publication date: Late 2001. The roughly first 1,000 pages are camera-ready and being indexed now.

There are perhaps half as many Americans descended from the 1710 Swiss and Germans of New Bern as are descended from the 1620 *Mayflower* because there were only 100 on the *Mayflower* and 750 people on the three ships in 1710.

Finally: This is part of Lewis Bunker Rohrbach's on-going project of documenting all 115,000 German-speaking settlers in North America 1607-1776. Work remains to be done on Mississippi, Louisiana, and some Pennsylvania and Maryland settlers and, of course, some others who had gone elsewhere, a total of some 1,000 persons.

Adapted from a personal communication
of Lewis Bunker Rohrbach, CG