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Two Early Nineteenth Century Overseas Emigrants From Näfels, Kanton Glarus, Switzerland:

Walter Marianus Hauser
and the Colony at Red River, Canada*

by *Susanne Peter-Kubli*

Walter Marianus Hauser (1777-1850) was a member of Näfels' elite society that had gained its wealth and prestige from the foreign military service of Swiss and occupied important public offices in the Canton. At the start of the nineteenth century, that group increasingly lost its importance. While its social prestige endured and its members such as the von Müller, von Bachmann, and von Hauser continued to use their titles of nobility, their economic base, that is highly paid officer positions in foreign military service, had disappeared.

Walter Hauser, son of a military officer and of a *Landammann*, the highest cantonal official, also tried his luck in foreign military service, but without success. For a time, he was a teacher in the town of Münchenbuchsee. In 1804, he had returned to Näfels and took over the southern half of the parental home, the *Hofstatt*, and managed the estate. He was intensely interested in agriculture, tried to promote it, and made experiments such as the planting of trees like the sweet chestnut. His ties with Conrad Escher helped him to gain the position of secretary at the Linth Enterprise.¹

* This is a translation of Chapter Three: "Das frühe 19. Jahrhundert—Ziele in Übersee" in Susanne Peter-Kubli's book *In Alle Herren Länder. Die Auswanderung aus Näfels, 1800-2000* (Herausgeber: Freunde der Geschichte von Näfels, 2019), 61-89.

¹ Christoph H. Brunner, *Glarner Geschichte*, 504 ss.



Walter Marianus Hauser. Portrait by Viktor Schneider, 1842. Source: Brunner, *Glarnen Geschichte in Geschichten*, 514.

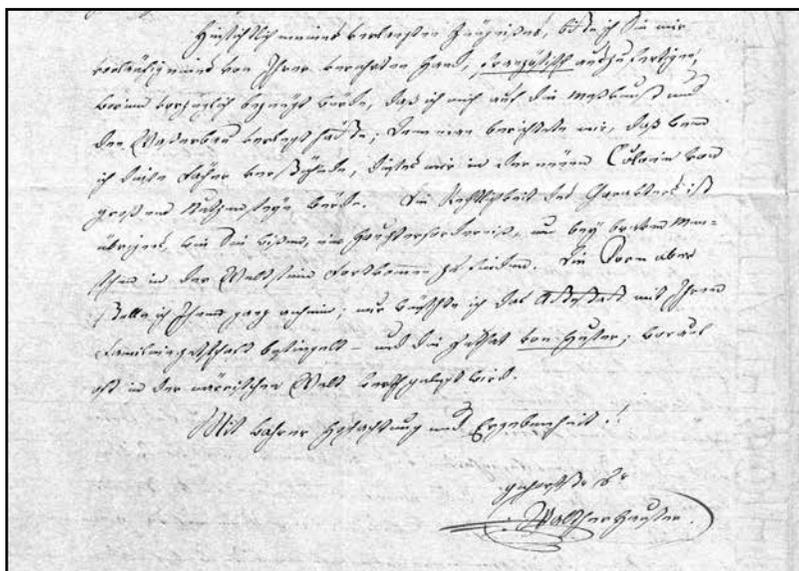
As farmer and Linth Secretary, Hauser could manage all right, but something appeared to be missing. When in 1820 an inquiry of Rudolf Gottlieb von May reached him, Walter Hauser, who had already considered emigration to Brazil, seized the opportunity. His employer Conrad Escher, however, thought that he would only advise a younger man to emigrate because the valley of Glarus offered few opportunities. “But at our age, when strength steadily diminishes, even for our tasks at home, I would say that

emigration is too foolhardy . . . stay in the beautiful, happy, if modest fatherland that at our age may not be replaced by anything.”²

Hauser, then age 44 years and a set gentleman in the view of the time, was not to relinquish his plan due to Escher’s well-meant advice. In his reply of March 15, 1821, he lists the reasons that led him to emigrate, and also touches on the hopes he has for the new homeland.

² *Rechenbuch*, copy Davatz, 58. Also: Thürer, *Collectanea*, booklet 80, 23: Letter of Conrad Escher, February 22, 1821. The excerpts from the then lost *Rechenbuch* seem to have been made by Jakob Gehring and were supplemented by Albert Müller. In the 1990s, they were copied on the suggestion of Conservator Jürg Davatz. In 2002, the original of the *Rechenbuch* was found again and given to the *Freulerpalast* where it is preserved under number 7378. See Brunner, *Glarnergeschichte*, 509. A copy of Davatz is available in the Archive of the “Freunde der Geschichte von Näfels.”

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Hauser's Request for a Testimonial in French and the Use of the Predicat "von Huser." Letter to Conrad Escher of March 5, 1821.

Source: Zentralbibliothek Zürich, FA Escher vG 162.111.

“The Linth could not have chosen a better advocate to discourage me from my decision, known to you already before, if it were not already irrevocable.” The death of two people on April 29, 1818, “who alone had made the burden of most unpleasant family conditions lighter,” had made him leave the fatherland forever.

He explained to Escher that he had spent a whole year preparing his emigration to Brazil, but something had always intervened. When he learned about a planned Swiss colony at the Red River in Canada, he took the opportunity:

“I did not care to whereto I would move, once I had decided to tear myself from my people forever. I signed up as a common colonist. Not long after that step, Captain von May of Utzendorf, the authorized agent of Count Selkirk, offered me the position of a leader of the first transport of colonists under most honorable and advantageous conditions, an offer which I accepted more for the calming of my relatives than on my own volition. The one imposed condition is, however, that I should return in 1822 to Switzerland again to report

reliably to the governments about the evolution of the new colony, and that thereby the new settlement might gain trust and advancement. In case heaven keeps me healthy, we will see each other after a very long journey truly quite soon, and should I then again decide to remain in the home valley, then my whole remaining time of my life shall be dedicated forever to the Linth, . . . from which alone to depart I find difficult.”

Further, he assures Escher that he would faithfully do his duty until the day of his departure that had been set for the end of April. He had also been on the lookout for a possible successor. Hauser recommended a Mr. Zwicky of Bilten for protocols and daily business.

In turn, Hauser asked von Escher to give him a corresponding recommendation that was to open doors across the Atlantic:

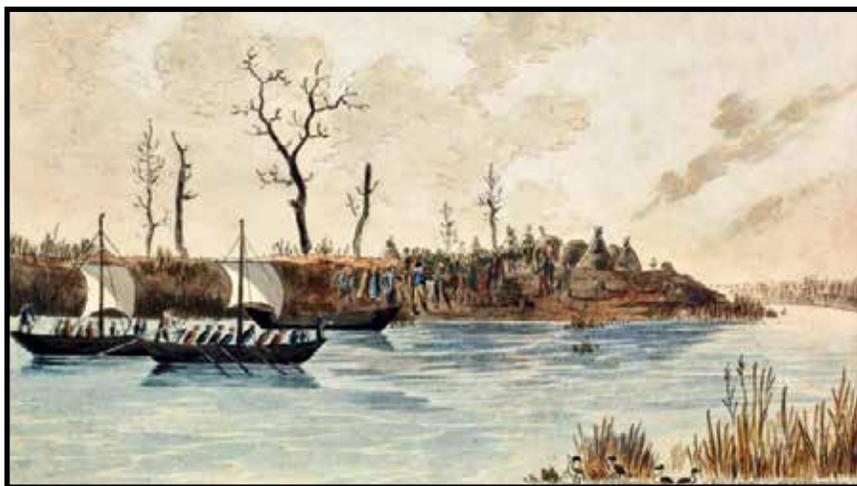
“As to the requested testimony, may I ask you to write one by your honored hand provisionally in *French* that would especially state that I have concentrated on the art of measuring and on hydraulic engineering; because I have been informed that if I were knowledgeable in these subjects, I would be of much use to the new colony. The quality of character is besides, as you know, a principal requirement to find one’s advancement among good people in the world. As to form, I put the matter wholly in your hands, but I merely wish that it be sealed by your family crest—and the addition **von Huser**; that in this foolish world means so much.”³

In this letter, Hauser points out that he had not lightly made the decision to emigrate. He now made his way into the New World as Walter “von Huser” and provided with a testimonial in French and marked by the Escher seal. He had also thought about a small reinsurance. Should he return, he would devote the rest of his life to the Linth Enterprise.

Lord Selkirk and the Colony at the Red River

In 1811, the Scottish Lord Thomas Selkirk (1771-1820) bought some 115,830 square miles from the Hudson Bay Company at the Red

³ Zentralbibliothek Zürich, FA Escher vG 162.11: “Letter of Walter Hauser to Conrad Escher” of March 5, 1821.



On November 1, 1821, the Swiss colonists finally reached the mouth of the Red River, where they are welcomed by the Saulteaux. Watercolor by Peter Rindisbacher. Source: Library and Archives, Canada.

River⁴ to settle Scottish small farmers there. The first Scottish settlers arrived the following year. Although the constant struggles between the two rival fur trade companies, the Hudson Bay Company and the Northwest Company, had been resolved, the region remained unstable, and from the start the settlement failed to have a strong and efficient administration. In 1816, Selkirk engaged former soldiers of the Regiment de Meuron,⁵ to have proven fighters at hand in case of the outbreak of new hostilities.

Rudolf von May (1778-1848) who was part of the “de Meurons,” as they are called in Canada, returned to Bern to get settlers in

⁴ In 1818, the territory situated south of the 49 parallel was apportioned to the American states of Minnesota and North Dakota, and the northern part to the Canadian provinces of Alberta and Manitoba.

⁵ Infantry Regiment under the command of Colonel Charles Daniel de Meuron (1738-1806) of Neuchâtel, that kept its name also after his death. It numbered several hundred Swiss soldiers. After service in Ceylon, Cape Town, on the Iberian Peninsula and Malta, the regiment was sent to Canada, and was dissolved after the War of 1812 between the United States and Great Britain. Part of the Swiss soldiers returned home, about 100 stayed in Canada, half of them settled at the Red River. See Jack M. Bumsted, *Thomas Scott's Body and Other Essays on Early Manitoba History* (Winnipeg, 2000), 58. On the de Meuron Regiment, see also Maurice Vallée, *Le Régiment Suisse de Meuron au Bas-Canada* (Drummondville, 2005).

Switzerland for the Red River Colony on behalf of Lord Selkirk. In 1820, he composed an advertising leaflet in French and German that was distributed in Cantons Bern, Geneva, Neuchâtel, and Vaud.⁶ Agent Stefan Herkules von Salis-Maienfeld (1877-1849), who was officially in charge of recruitment, also contacted Glarus at least by letter; but whether he did it also in person, is not documented. Soon he was to relinquish his position, and Walter Hauser took his place.⁷

Lord Selkirk died in 1820. His brother-in-law, the banker Andrew Colville (1779-1856) and legal guardian of the still under age heirs of Selkirk, became the governor of the Hudson Bay Company and director of the Red River Colony. Letters between von May and Colville show that prospects of the future were not as rosy as von May had presented them in his tract. Yet he asserted that all the data he had presented were true, and that “all the promises made to the colonists would be kept truly, faithfully and honestly. As truly as he, May, hoped to be saved, all he was sending to the Red River could expect to meet a future of contentment and happiness.”⁸

But after von May had been informed by the returning Bernese officer Friedrich von Graffenried⁹ that the settlement was not well situated, had insufficient forests to provide building materials, too few bison to provide the needed meat, and almost no tools, and further that the morale of the colonists already living there was not good, von May too came to doubt the undertaking. Being confronted by these objections, it was now Colville’s turn to play down all the difficulties, as for

⁶ *Kurze und wahre Übersicht aller Vortheile, welche ein Ansiedler in der Kolonie des Rothen Flusses, in Nordamerika gelegen, zu erwarten und zu geniessen hat.* A copy has been preserved at the University Library of Bern, MUE Laut 245.1.

⁷ Around 1930, Paul Thüerer could inspect the papers of Walter Hauser that at the time were in the possession of communal secretary Victor Hauser. In *Collectanea* 80 and 81, there are copies of several of letters from the Red River colony that contain valuable data about Hauser’s journey and the settlement.

⁸ Quoted after Thüerer, *Collectanea*, 81, pp. 22 ss.

⁹ “In June, many trees have no leaves, the potatoes are frozen in the ground, plus winter lasts for nine months in the colony, and for three months in the tropical heat with mosquito plagues.” Friedrich von Graffenried, “Sechs Jahre in Kanada 1813-1819,” in: *Jahresbericht der geographischen Gesellschaft von Bern*, 1890, 116 ss. Yet von May had written in his prospect that winter on the Red River “was like that of our mountain valleys and was lasting four to five months, yet summer is more beautiful, warmer and drier than ours”; von May, *Kurze und Wahre Übersicht*, 2.

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instance declaring that the needed wood could be cut upriver and then brought to the settlement.¹⁰

Despite these objections, von May, who was stationed in Bern, and Colville, who was living in England, came to an agreement and further promoted the undertaking. According to conditions listed in the advertisement, each colonist was to pay 10 *Louis d'or* in advance and 11 *Louis d'or* after five years of arrival in the colony, in addition to five percent interest.¹¹ In return, Selkirk's successor paid for the transport and board of the settlers from Rotterdam to Hudson Bay and from there in river boats to the colony, where according to the advertisement 300 families had already settled. The new arrivals would be housed there in already-built dwellings, and in part also receive victuals for the first winter. Each family would further receive 100 *arpents*, that is 84.5 acres, of freely chosen land at a moderate price.

Departure and Journey

On May 10, 1821, the first transport of some 170 emigrants was ready to depart Kaiseraugst, a town located at the Swiss border in Canton Aargau. They were accompanied by Rudolf von May to Dordrecht in the Netherlands as well as by Walter Hauser, who was to serve as leader and observer, to take note of all experiences of the journey as well as of the first months in the colony, and to forward the report to England and Bern. Hauser himself mentions in a letter to Escher that he was to return the following year to Switzerland, to organize a second transport, and to accompany the settlers to the colony. In case he should also settle in the colony, he would also receive 100 *arpents*, that is, about 84.5 acres.¹²

The group, consisting mainly of families and individual people from Canton Bern and French-speaking Switzerland, traveled on boats down the Rhine River to Dordrecht where they made their last purchas-

¹⁰ Bumstead, 62.

¹¹ See von May, *ibid.*, 7: Each passenger, women and men, above age 16 had to pay 21 *Louis d'or* children between ages 10 and 16 years, paid 15, and of these 7 in cash; and children between ages 2 and 10 years, paid 11.

¹² One *arpent* equals 0.4 hectares.



The Wellington before departure from the Port of Dordrecht, May 30, 1821. Watercolor by Peter Rindisbacher. Source: Library and Archives, Canada.

es and boarded the three-master *Wellington* to sail to the Hudson Bay. Hauser kept a diary, made sketches, and sent extensive periodic reports. Apparently, only excerpts made by Thürer as well as the 100+ page ledger called *Rechenbuch* seem to have survived; the latter contains data pertaining to the Red River Colony, especially Hauser's varied expenses.

There were two people among the colonists whose reports provide insight about their lives during the crossing and during the Red River settlement's first years. Rudolf Wyss returned after a few years to Switzerland where he published the story of his Canada venture. The other was 15-year-old Peter Rindisbacher,¹³ who proved himself as an

¹³ Peter Rindisbacher (1806-1834) went with his parents and siblings to the Red River colony. He made numerous sketches and paintings about the journey, the Red River colony and later his stay in the U.S. The family moved to Wisconsin in 1826. Peter settled in St. Louis. See Alvin M. Josephy Jr., *The Artist was a Young Man. The Life Story of Peter Rindisbacher* (Fort Worth, Texas: Amon Carter Museum, 1970); Fred Lindegger, *Bruder des Roten Mannes. Das abenteuerliche Leben und einmalige Werk des Indianermalers Peter Rindisbacher (1806-1834)* (Solothurn: Aare Verlag, 1983).

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accomplished draftsman already on the *Wellington*, and also later as an prominent artist who painted indigenous people and life on the frontier during his stay in Canada and his life in the United States.

Before Rudolf von May returned to Bern, he was provided with written confirmation from some of the settlers¹⁴ that all was in the best of order as to the travel provisions. He also wrote in detail to the Hudson Bay Company, announced the arrival of settlers, and explained the task that had been given Walter Hauser as a “Commissarii.”

“This letter as well as a detailed list of the party and a set of copies of the printed and stamped engagements of the Settlers will be delivered by Mr. De Huser, a Gentleman of the highest respectability, of excellent character, & many talents, who by Mr. Colville’s orders goes out as Commissarii to govern and conduct the settlers to Red River, he is a particular friend of mine, and I take the liberty to recommend him most particularly to your notice. [. . .] he is to be kept free of expenses according to the Bank of a gentleman, he is to stay the winter at Red River, the next Spring he is to be sent down to Hudson’s Bay, have free passage provided for him to England, from where Mr. Colville will send him to Switzerland, where he is to publish a general report of the State of the Settlement.”¹⁵

In case Hauser’s report was positive, von May was hoping that also several hundred well-to-do settlers would decide to emigrate to Canada. In 1823, Hauser would accompany the second group to the colony and get settled there himself. Von May further requested that Hauser would be treated courteously and be given the management of the colonists since they were already quite fond of him.

Once the *Wellington* had left the port of Dordrecht on May 30, it sailed along the Dutch coast. Once in the open sea, most colonists suffered from seasickness. “From there on,” Wyss wrote, “we moved, rather creeped, like drunks, and nobody was able to offer the other a

¹⁴ The thank you note appeared June 21, 1821, in the *Schweizer Bote* and, according to Bumstead, 69, also in the *Berner Wochenblatt* of June 30, 1821.

¹⁵ National Archives Canada MG 19, E 5, Vol. 2, 431s, English version of the letter of Rudolf von May, dated May 24, 1821. The original was possibly in French in which von May was proficient.

helpful hand. But the sailors who were not stricken by this malady helped us in our misery in any way they could.”¹⁶ Difficulties derived from the bad drinking water and the strongly salted meat further increased thirst. Passing the northern coast of Scotland, the Orkneys as well as the island of Pomona and Greenland, the boat reached the Hudson Bay after 12 weeks. Now the *Wellington* was accompanied by two boats of the British Navy, the *HMS Prince of Wales* and the *HMS Ed-dison*.

At its entrance, the emigrants encountered ice for the first time that greatly slowed moving on. It also meant some distraction and entertainment as passengers could reach one of the other boats on foot thus allowing mutual visits. The captains of the three ships, furthermore, as well as Walter Hauser, went on a chase of ice bears, but with little success as Rudolf Wyss observes in his account.¹⁷ At the beginning of September, Walter Hauser himself looked back in detail and described moments that revealed fear and terror:

Walter Hauser’s Report to Rudolf May

*York Fort in the Hudson Bay, 3rd day of September 1821*¹⁸

I am using the first moments of my less urgent tasks to send you the promised report about our journey and the state of the colonists. Our ocean voyage lasted 12 weeks, that is just as long as I had already calculated it at Dordrecht, but I wasn’t believed. We made the 1,700 hours from Dordrecht to the Hudson Straits in four weeks. However, we had such good wind that we often made five hours for several days.¹⁹ We saw the first ice on June 26. At the island called Resolution²⁰ that lies at the entrance of the straits, we encountered so much

¹⁶ Rudolf N. Wyss, *Reise nach dem Rothen Flusse in Nord-Amerika, dortiger Aufenthalt und Rückkehr ins Vaterland* (Bern 1825), 9.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁸ Thüerer, *Collectanea* 81, 44 ss. Thüerer was not sure whether the addressee was Colville or von May; it was probably the latter.

¹⁹ One *Knoten* equals one sea mile per hour. By good wind, the *Wellington* made about five sea miles per hour or 9.26 kilometers.

²⁰ Uninhabited island southeast of Baffin Island.



Meeting of the boats in the Hudson Bay. The piles of ice allowed mutual visits. Water Color of Peter Rindisbacher. Source: Library and Archives, Canada.

of it that our captain found it advisable to await the arrival of the two company boats, the *Prince Wallis* and *Edison*, that were to have joined us at the Scottish coast. A first peril threatened us at this region that seemed to have been transformed into unforeseeable fields of ice and where one fog seemed to rival another to make our journey to the Hudson Bay more difficult. Around midnight of June 29, the top of an iceberg that was towering high above the water, crashed like an avalanche onto our boat. Luckily, most of it had been thawing, and it broke up with a shattering roar on the deck and without creating any damage. After this event, I established a ship's watch among our colonists and kept myself each night a four-hour watch until we arrived at the coast of the Hudson Bay. It would be too much to tell you all about our stay on the ice and to present you the whole content of my diary. All significant circumstances in addition to the drawings, I will place before you on my return to Europe.

After a stay of 16 days in the region of the perilous island of Resolution, we finally discovered with great relief the mast of the two company boats. On July 15, their Captains Davedson and Bell anchored besides us. The same day we also saw not far from us the two discovery

boats of Captain Parry²¹ who is similarly known in Germany and who has wintered during last year 150 hours before the mouth of the Copper River, until now the most northern stream. It is a most rare view to see five three-masters together in this ice region. From now on we sailed with company boats, and every evening anchored together in the ice. The previous cold did not diminish even in early July that was already causing chilblains. But becoming used to them made them bearable. Our boats were now in the region of Upper de Savage,²² where we barely avoided perishing at one of the false islands. The next day our boat and the *Edison* clashed twice. Ours lost a cross bar of the deck mast.

The arrival of an unusual number of Eskimo boats was certainly less dangerous than the cliff islands we had just left behind. But the intrusiveness of the savages could only be scared away by blind shots. A day later, the *Prince [of Wales]* met with disaster. It was towards three o'clock in the morning on July 23 when David Monier²³ who had relieved me from the watch, saw a large iceberg rushing toward that ship that was anchored barely nine *Faden* [17 meters] from us. Immediately, Monier screamed for the crew. There was no answer. A few minutes later, we saw sailors in shirts jumping into the water. The iceberg, the mass of which was as hard as granite, had smashed into the *Prince's* side wall.

As I inspected the tear at the right side of the ship, it was about ten feet long and five feet broad. It was barely above the water. A good part of the load was now brought over to the *Wellington* which consequently sank two feet deeper into the water than it had at departure from Dordrecht. Captain Davedson rewarded the help of the colonists with rum, good zwieback, and fish. We had barely completed our transfer, when the next day about 3:00 in the morning the emergency cries of our sailors called us all on deck. The first sight was an ice mass larger than our boat that stood barely two *Faden* length [3.77 meters] on the ship's left side. Every moment we expected the demo-

²¹ Reference to "HMS Hecla" and "HMS Fury." Sir William Edward Parry (1790-1855), an English navy officer, explored the northwest passage. In 1819, he was near Baffin Island and Lancaster Sound.

²² Upper Savage Islands on the Hudson Street.

²³ David Monnier, a colonist from Canton Neuchatel.

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lition of our boat. But this time too, our dear God visibly protected us, because there was not the least wind. The outstanding presence of mind of our captain, together with our efforts fearful of death, made it possible to escape once more this greatest threat during our whole journey.

Our journey continued through an unusual amount of ice, the repeated hard hits of which seriously damaged our ship. We also passed through constant fog that prevented us from recognizing our companions until we reached the island of Mannsfield²⁴ where Captain Bell with the *Edison* departed from us and steered northeast toward the Company's Moose Fort. We had now spent more than one month on the 200-hour long stretch of the straits. We finally spotted the coast of the Hudson Bay on August 16, and threw anchor two hours from Fort York.²⁵

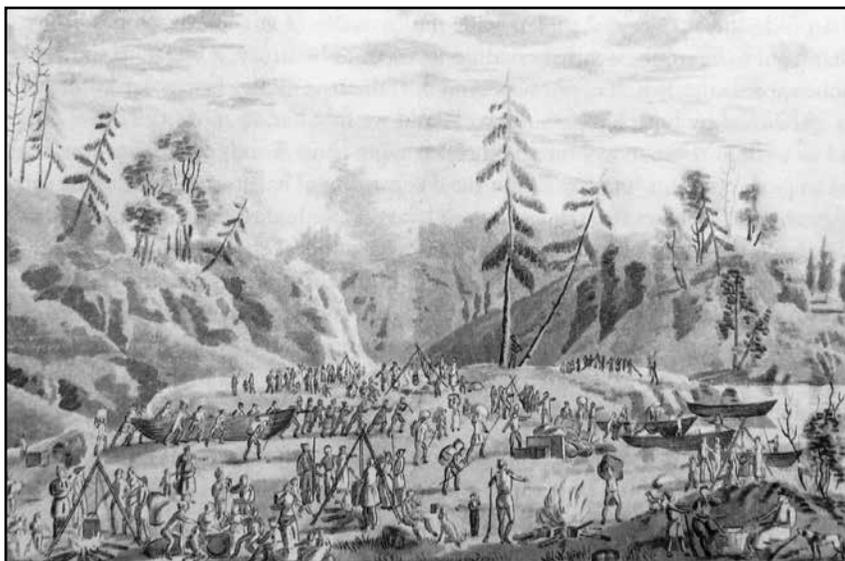
On August 23, we finally disembarked since we were previously prevented due to the fog and unpleasant wind. At that moment, it was 12 weeks that had passed since our departure from Dordrecht. The exquisite human kindness, care, and skill of Captain James Fullbister, who made this voyage for the first time, as well as of the other two ship officers Combien & Jokuson will not be forgotten. We are leaving our good leaders with them. Similar thanks are also due to Dr. Todd. It is our strongest wish that this noble man will accompany us to the Red River. By the efforts of this Mr. Governor, four boats with 76 colonists could leave for their destinations already the first of this month.

Three days after their departure, I received the news that the boat in which the Rindlisbacher families²⁶ and [??] were traveling had sprung a leak, and they were forced to leave many items of their baggage. I was informed at the same time that this year's water level was unusually low, and less than half our baggage could be taken along.²⁷ Therefore, I required the baggage for each boat to be diminished by 100 hundredweights [50 kilos] and made arrangements to preserve the

²⁴ Mansfield at the entrance to the Hudson Bay.

²⁵ Fort York or York Factory was a trading post established at the Hayes River in the late seventeenth century.

²⁶ Sources give the name as Rindlisbacher, but the family name is Rindisbacher.



In order to circumvent the rapids, the settlers were required to carry their boats over land. Water Color by Peter Rindisbacher, October 1821.

Source: de Courten, p. 25.

rest in the local warehouse where it could be fetched the next year. My departure with the remaining five boats will occur, I hope, tomorrow, and we will, according to minimal calculation, make the 370 hours in 33 days, arriving at Fort Douglas about mid-October.

I conclude my condensed faithful travel description with the repeated remark that you will receive a circumstantial report after my return to Europe. It remains that I write something about our colonists. I could fill several pages with their characterization and the resulting deeds, should I find time for it—only the most needed though as a guideline for the future. Those colonists whom I got to know right at the beginning as good and honest people, have remained so until now. Several who appeared as good, however, have shown themselves not very advantageous during our journey. The Rindlisbacher, Richard, Zimmermann, Wyss, Flot[r]on, widower Aeberli, and Widower Fournier families behaved excellently. While still on the ship, Ligier had already planned to move to the United States and was recruiting Girard, Schirmer, Robert, Longchamps, and Gilbert. Upon our arrival

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at York Fort, he behaved so badly that Mr. Harry found it necessary to hand over this disturber of the peace with his family to Captain Fullbister who, for a compensation of 20 *doubloons*, let him go on land without cost not far from Quebec, where he was free to go wherever he wanted. Girard paid for his folly by death which he suffered due to his bestial drunkenness to which a gang of Canadian villains had seduced him already the day after his arrival in York Fort. I let him be interred the Christian way and inventory taken of his belongings. The available money of 100 francs together with the few belongings, I handed over to our governor, and his papers are in my custody.

Wyss from Bern was sick most of the time during the ocean voyage because of the debauchery of his weakened body. If he continues in his habits, his money will not last him any further than the Red River.

Piaget's body, too, will soon move to decay. He has consumption to the highest degree. I did not miss out at having him cared for so that he may quietly await his dissolution at York Fort. Lamblet will take care of him.

The Ebersol boy died from tooth illness already on June 24, as well as a newborn boy of Jonas Jorise Guinand.²⁸ This demise has been replaced by the birth of two boys that belong to carpenter Weiss.²⁹

Hope for a further increase of the colony derives from pairs married by Mr. (Chaplain) John West in York Fort: Alfred Quinche with Marie Monnier, Julien Lusier with Margreth Grimm, and Jean David Tissot with Salome Knechtli. Katharina Bünzli, however, has given up her marriage intent with Ludwig Engel and has kept herself a free heart.

Only a few of our people were free of seasickness. Myself and Peter Rindlisbacher may count themselves among the latter, and my health is better than ever. But the salted food is hard on the children.

²⁷ According to the prospect, 11, each adult was allowed 150 pounds of baggage free of charge; those ages 10 to 16 were allowed 40 to 80 pounds, and those ages two to 10 years old were allowed 15 to 30 pounds.

²⁸ See Antoine de Courten, *The Swiss Emigration to the Red River Settlement in 1821 and Its Subsequent Exodus to the United States* (Victoria B.C., 2009), 107.

²⁹ Hans Weiss from Baden, Germany.

It was a great disadvantage that no flour and better bread were distributed. As good as the other articles of victuals had been, so bad was the zwieback, full of mixed-in bran with mold in several pieces. In the rations that had been mentioned, 10 pounds of beef had been noted, but merely five pounds for 12 persons were distributed. Most of our colonists missed clothing and beds, neither did they get soap for washing. This resulted in a hardy supply of lice.

Altogether, the supply for future emigrants demands many items of which our people had not thought to bring. The conditions, together with bringing morally good people, who above all need to be provided with a good clergyman, is the main requirement. Without these indispensable items, the colony would only experience damage. [. . .] I take the liberty of submitting my wish to you rather to wait to send a second transport. The move into a land from which one will return, but with difficulty, is one of the most important events of life. It requires, therefore, the [most] possible care of the leader, should it correspond to the given demands.

If I had foreseen the difficulties of my assignment, of which I am now clear, I would never have assumed this mission. The only thing that supported me until now in my position is the excellent honorable treatment that I have been awarded everywhere; it reconciles me with my new vocation and that fills my heart with warmest thanks.

I am closing this letter that I had started already five days ago and could only finish today. Should I die on my return journey that my contract demands, my mind will leave its cloak with the knowledge to have faithfully done the task given me as it behooves a man of honor. But should it be God's will to guide me happily to Switzerland, count on the unchanged attitudes with which I have left you, and with which I have the honor to sign your devoted servant

W.v.H.

Hauser essentially played the role of an observer and seldomly acted as a leader, yet he was acknowledged as such by his contemporaries. The Englishman Nicholas Garry in the service of the Hudson Bay Company describes a divine service in his diary:

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“Sunday Sept. 2nd [. . .] Divine Service at 11 by the Rev. West. All the Swiss Settlers, who are (with the Exception of seven) Calvinists, attended, and all the Officers and Servants of the Company, nearly 200 People. [. . .] Mr. De Husser, though a Catholic, was present, showing a tolerant Mind and excellent Judgement.”³⁰

Garry greatly appreciated that the Catholic Hauser attended this service while the other Catholic, Governor Alexander McDonnell, stayed away. When Walter Hauser left Fort York with the second transport some days later, Garry was sorry to see him leave, and thereby suffer the loss of a short but most valuable acquaintance:

“Mr. De Husser accompanied the Colonists and I do not in my Life ever recollect in so short an Acquaintance to have regretted so much a Departure, and to this Regret was added much Anxiety for him in the Certainty of his Sufferings; for with his feeling and excellent Heart the Misery of his Countrymen will be a constant Source of Heart Bleeding and painful Feelings. [. . .] He appears to be a Gentleman admirably fitted for the Situation, a Countenance that bespeaks honourable Feelings and a most enlightened Mind, a Nobleman and related to William Tells Family, whose Costume he wears, which is most becoming.”³¹

Garry was much impressed by Hauser’s knowledge, his education and multilingualism (German, French, Italian), his definiteness in dealing with the colonists, his force of persuasion, and also his kindness of heart.³²

Arrival and the First Winter

Hauser, who had written his report on September 21 in Fort York, had the worst yet to come ahead of him or, as his compatriot

³⁰ “Diary of Nicholas Garry, Deputy-Governor of the Hudson Bay Company from 1822-1835: “A Detailed Narrative of His Travels in the Northwest Territories of British North America in 1821,” in: *Royal Society of Canada* (1900), 157: https://archive.org/details/cihm_06955.

³¹ Hauser’s specially made clothing included: A *caput* in dark brown, a mantle with collar, a cap, waistcoat and bustle pants as well as a felt hat, a beret, and black gloves of chamois leather. Whether he was related to William Tell would require verification. See *Rechenbuch*, copy Davatz, 61, and Brunner. *Glärner Geschichte*, 508.

³² Garry, “Narrative.”

Rudolf Wyss observed: “Now the true misery got started.”³³ There was a three-week trip upward along the Nelson River which turned into torture due to the low water level requiring the boats to often be dragged over stones. Also, much baggage had to be left behind that later was missed. Nicholas Garry who witnessed this upriver trek of the colonists felt sorry for their fate. Because the river boat had no roofs, all passengers were exposed without protection to both the wind and the rain. Garry reproached von May for choosing the colonists more in view of numbers than on the basis of their fitness as future colonists.³⁴

Finally on November 1, the colonists arrived at the mouth of the Red River and, as Hauser had observed in his *Rechenbuch*, made a journey of no less than 4,836 English miles.³⁵ The timing was most unfortunate. Winter was ready to arrive. Although in his letter of February 24, Colville had informed the governor of Fort Douglas about the arrival of the Swiss colonists, the letter had been sent to Montreal and from there had been sent by land and water to Fort Douglas where it arrived only a few days before the colonists.³⁶ Therefore, there was not sufficient time to provide the promised food and lodging. To make matters worse, swarms of locusts had destroyed the harvests the previous two years so that the Scottish colonists and the “de Meurons” were barely able to provide for themselves. They could only accommodate some of the new arrivals. Interestingly, it was families with daughters who especially found a welcome. It was only a few weeks later that a sizable group of Swiss women married the former soldiers. At times, it was possible to exchange meat for other items from the indigenous people living in the region. About 65 people, mostly younger ones in good health, moved further south to Fort Pembina where they lived for the winter.

Available sources do not specify where Walter Hauser spent the winter, but he as well as Wyss tell of colonists whose toes or fingers

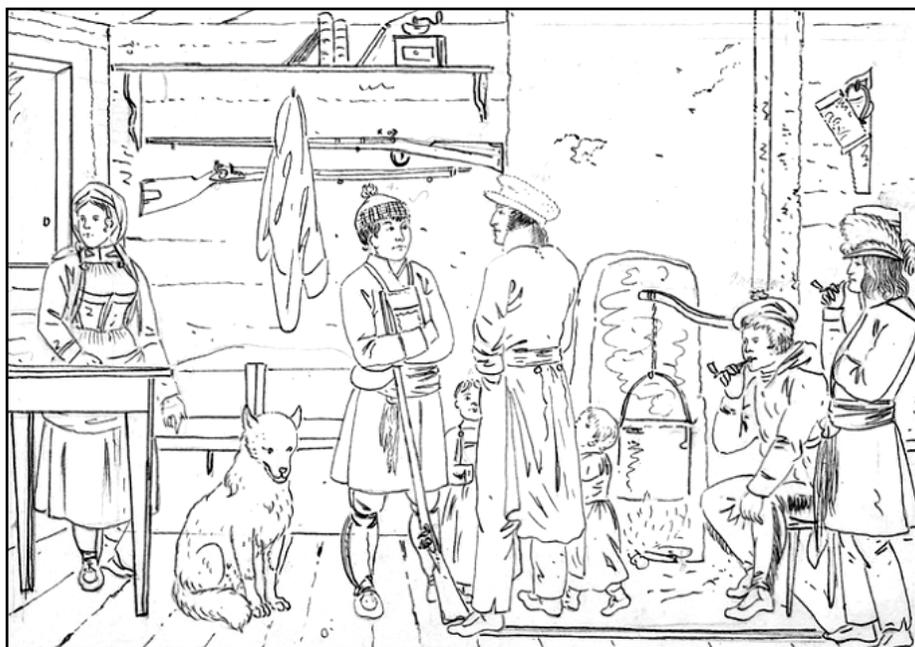
³³ Wyss, *Journey*, 18.

³⁴ Garry, “Narrative,” 162. Garry’s accusation was justified. Already in 1818, von May had borrowed 6,000 *livres* from his relatives to create an *établissement* in Canada—the reason he demanded an additional head tax from each colonist. In the following years, he was unable even to pay the interest on the loan. Perhaps to avoid the creditors, von May remained abroad in places such as Paris, Dresden Vienna, and Vichy. Burgerbibliothek Bern, mss h.h. XXXVI 40 (13-26).

³⁵ Museum des Landes Glarus (MLG), Freuler Palast, sign. 7328: *Rechenbuch*, Original, 457.

³⁶ Bumsted, 67.

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The interior of the colonists' house sketched by Peter Rindisbacher. It is possible that based on the Bernese dress of the woman that Rindisbacher drew his own family. The uniform coats point to previous members of the "de Meurons." Source: de Courten, 37.

became frozen. The Swiss colonists survived the winter only with the assistance of the Scottish colonists, the "de Meurons," and the indigenous people.

"Finally, the snow began to melt and vanish," Hauser reports, "and the women went to gather acorns and rosehips from the wild rose bushes, and by using buffalo fat, they were able, to prepare a nourishing if not quite tasty dish."³⁷ At the beginning of May 1822, the colonists who had stayed for the winter at Fort Douglas met with those who returned from Fort Pembina and attempted to break ground using unsatisfactory tools, and sowed the little seed they had. But instead of a zest for action, discontent and frustration was dominant among the Swiss. On the advice of "Commissairs Monsieur de Huser" 19 of the

³⁷ *Rechenbuch*, Copy Davatz, 64 s.

colonists signed a petition with the Governor of Fort Douglas. They pointed out the lack of building wood and cattle, and declared that they would establish a Swiss village upriver near Fort Pembina in order to assist each other.³⁸

A few weeks later, a second petition followed on July 8 that Hauser had written himself. It was addressed this time to John Halkett, executor of Lord Selkirk's testament. The mood among the Swiss had further deteriorated. As they pointed out at the beginning, not only had they trusted the promises of von May and his prospect, but the Swiss authorities had believed them and, therefore, de May permitted to recruit them. But now they had arrived in a region that did not offer a successful future, and they wished to leave the colony and migrate south to the United States. They asked for boats, navigators, and interpreters and, above all, that the baggage of the colonists that was still in Fort York be sent to them: "Gentlemen, we also ask that you would be concerned that our packets still at York Fort and Fort Rock [Rock Depot] will be sent to us as soon as possible as had been promised by the Governor. On behalf of de Flotron, Monnier, Richner, Rothenbühler, and Symon in the name of the Swiss colonists listed below. Gauthier de Huser."³⁹

Walter Hauser not only carefully inspected the land and its economic possibilities. Thürer's *Collectanea* also contained a list of colonists that likely Hauser had compiled. In his assessment of the settlers, some were unsuited to be colonists. For example, watchmakers had the wrong profession while others had character deficits.⁴⁰ On July 21, 1822, there were 154 of the original 173 colonists settled at the Red River, based on the list. Some had passed away or had preferred to move south to the United States. Of those who remained, 53% hailed from Canton Bern, 33% from Canton Neuchatel, 2% each from Cantons Geneva and Vaud, and 10% from Germany.

As for occupation, 26% were farmers or vintners; 16% artisans such as carpenters, joiners, turners, and mechanics; 16% were watch-

³⁸ Copy of the petition in French in Thürer, *Collectanea* 81, 27.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 28 ss.

⁴⁰ According to Bumsted, fewer than 60% of the colonists came up to Hauser's expectation as to their moral and character traits.

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makers; 9% in the health professions such as physicians, apothecaries, veterinarians, and midwives; while others were merchants, teachers, weavers, saddlers, smiths, bakers, or tanners.

In his response to the petition submitted to him, Halkett politely pointed out to the Swiss that he had seen von May's prospect only some days ago, and that the heirs could not be held responsible for the "exaggerated and simple minded data of that gentleman." Leaving the colony, furthermore, was not possible because at that date many colonists were in debt. He promised to take care of the baggage. As to the promised, but still not delivered, cattle he gave the assurance that a further transport of cattle was on the way from the United States, since two efforts during the last two years had been unsuccessful (in that both herds had perished on the way).⁴² During the following years, colonists continued moving south. In 1826, some 250 Swiss and "de Meurons" left the Red River settlement, after heavy storms and inundations had destroyed their homes.⁴³

Hauser's Return to Switzerland

Walter Hauser left the colony in the summer of 1822 and returned to Europe. He reached London about October 22 where Colville paid him 20 *liv. sterling* (some 500 *francs*). Serious illness delayed his immediate further journey and required further expenses. In November, Hauser reached Paris where he again spent several weeks and sent Colville a detailed accounting as well as an exhaustive report about the Red River settlement.⁴⁴ Hauser reached Bern on January 5, 1823, where he immediately met Rudolf von May and gave him a report. The latter was upset by the "miserable situation of the poor Swiss Colony at the Red River that I had described as inevitable."⁴⁵ But he

⁴¹ Courten, 113, is uncertain whether the list was done by Hauser or had been commissioned by him. According to Thürer, *Collectanea* 81, 51, also the papers of Hauser contained such a list but without attributions concerning character.

⁴² *Collectanea*, *ibid.*, 30 ss.

⁴³ Bumsted, 76: "As a case study in what could go wrong with an early, well-financed settlement venture to the Canadian prairies, the story of the Swiss and Red River is hard to beat."

⁴⁴ *Rechenbuch*, original, 459; copy of Davatz, 66.

thought that he was not responsible for the outstanding bill and told Hauser once more to approach Colville. The latter declared that he was prepared for a compensation of 420 francs (while Hauser had requested 2,452 francs) under the condition that Hauser would forgo any further demands.⁴⁶

According to the agreement, Walter Hauser was to have assembled a further group of emigrants on his return to Switzerland. The colonists had given him letters that he brought to Neuchatel and St. Imier. “The expectation of those who had remained in Switzerland about the new-found luck of their relatives and friends now in America was so great that I could have gathered a second transport of a few thousand persons of both sexes, had I hidden the truth that the letters that I brought along faithfully contained which, however, people did not want to believe at most places. I was only able with much difficulty to heal the poor blinded people of the valleys of La Chaux-de-Fonds and St. Imier of their delusion. My final delightful success is now the most comforting reassurance, and has reconciled me with the unspeakable sufferings of this American journey, as well as with the English hard-heartedness.”⁴⁷

Hauser was especially rankled by the “English,” actually Colville’s, hard-heartedness who readily paid an annual tax of 50 *Liv. Sterling* for his hunting dogs, while only offering the “miserable price” of 17 *Liv.* to him, who had faced “three times mortal danger” and suffered because of his through and through “gnawed away health.”⁴⁸

Hauser was clueless how he should master his future life. Therefore, he joyfully accepted Conrad Escher’s offer to employ him again as Linth secretary. But he was not to meet his employer and friend Conrad Escher again. Escher died March 9, 1823. At the end of April, Hauser left Bern, where he had “taken lodging at a colonist’s mother,” and returned at the beginning of May to Näfels.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ *Rechenbuch*, *ibid.*, 458.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 459; Davatz, 68.

⁴⁷ Davatz, *ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Rechenbuch*, Original, 460.

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He was elected to the school board of the commune as well as to other offices.⁵⁰ In 1828, at age 50, he married Josephine Emilia Müller who was 22 years his junior. Walter Hauser died in 1850, and thus had survived his Red River adventure by 27 years.

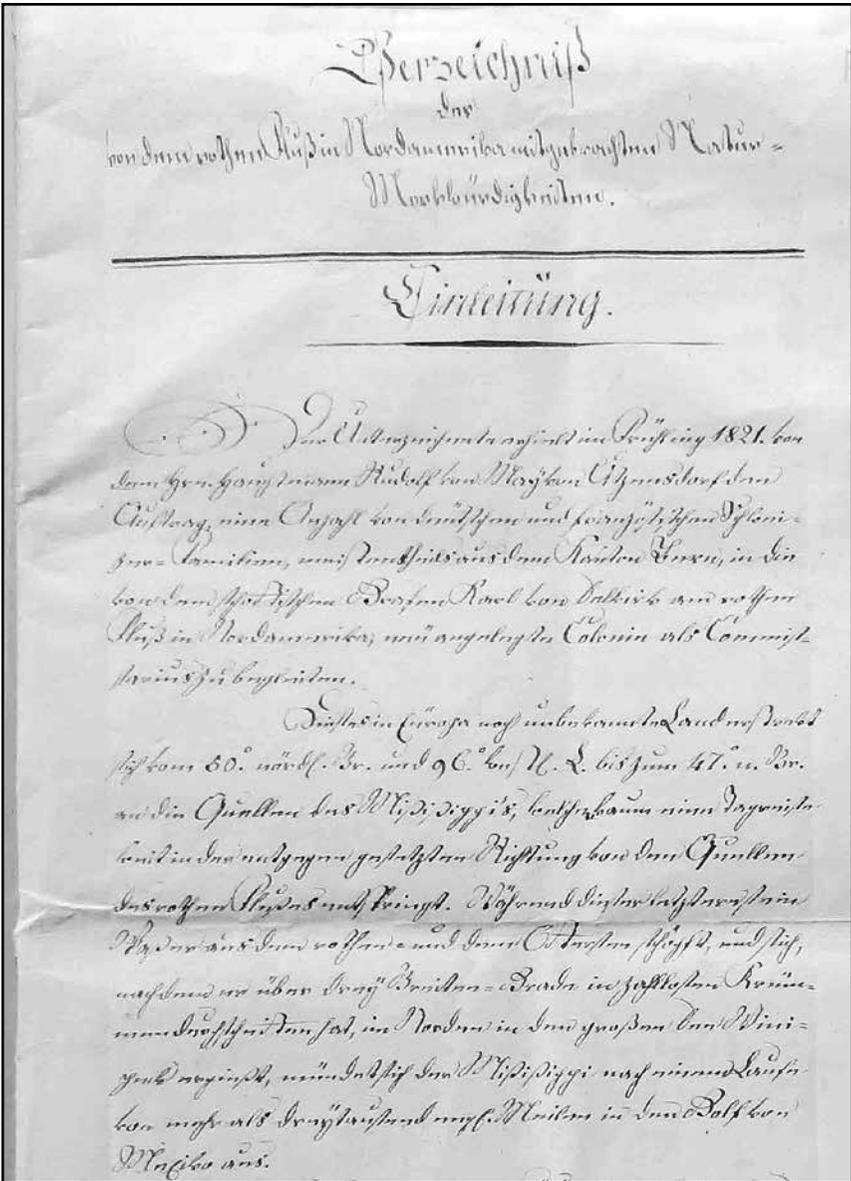
Hauser's Legacy

In the winter of 1822/23 when Walter Hauser returned to Switzerland, he not only brought letters back to Switzerland, but his baggage also contained a significant number of "American memorabilia." A list that he had made in Bern in 1823 offers details about origin, material, form, and usage of the 23 items listed below, and even information about their owners. In the introduction, he explains his motivation as a collector:

"Given the unexpected misery that heavily burdened us until my return voyage, I found enough comfort in scientific observations, yet less time to register all objects of interest as to natural history that are so plentiful in all respects in this very remarkable land. What I have gathered in this regard will in time be made known to the public, as I herewith present to friends of natural history an explanatory list of those Indian memorabilia that were collected with much difficulty.

1. Earth from the Red River
2. Two buffalo skins tanned the Indian way
3. A pair of horns from a young male buffalo
4. A horn from a buffalo cow
5. A skin from a black bear
6. An Indian horse saddle used on trips and the buffalo hunt
7. The dried skin of a "Störfish"
8. A "Calumet," an American Indian peace pipe
9. Two American Indian tobacco or separation pipes
10. A common American Indian stem without a head of a tobacco pipe
11. Necklace of an Indian warrior of the Sautoux conqueror nation residing on the Red River

⁵⁰ Hauser served as police commissioner, was a member of the communal council, the inspection court, member of the Klosterschule council, bread-weigher of Näfels' communal assembly; see *Rechenbuch*, Davatz Copy, 74.



Hauser's Verzeichniß [List] der amerikanischen Merkwürdigkeiten, April 26, 1823. Source: Burgerbibliothek Bern.

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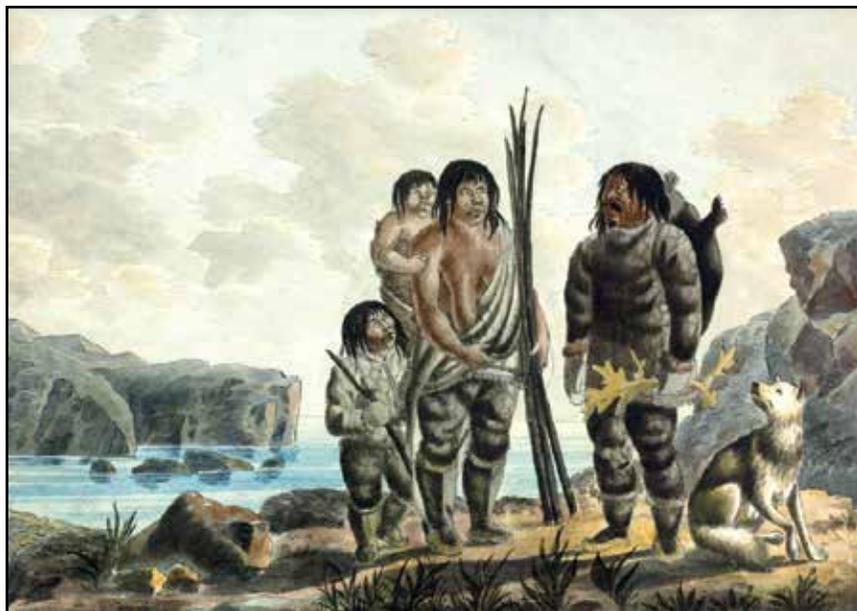
12. Bows, arrows, and quiver of the North American People of the Sautoux
13. Bows, arrows, and quiver of the North American People of the Sioux
14. Javelin of the Sioux
15. A pair of American Indian summer shoes, worn by colonists at the Red River
16. A pair of American Indian winter shoes, worn by colonists at the Red River
17. A pair of hunting pants of Elk skin
18. A winter collar of buffalo fur
19. A winter belt of buffalo fur
20. Birch bark form Lake Winipeck [Winnipeg] from which Canots [*Kanus*] are made
21. Sand from Lake Winipeck
22. Small sea weed basket of the Eskimo of Labrador
23. Diverse buffalo wool of the 1., 2., and 3. class.”⁵¹

For each of these items, Hauser gives a more or less detailed description that also shows how this Glarnese perceived indigenous people. Under number 13, he writes this about the Sioux:

“The Sioux Indians, the previous original inhabitants of the Red River and therefore the mortal Enemies of the Sautoux, and no friends of the colony, are a beautiful kind of people with large expressive eyes covered by long eyelashes and as well by long black hair flapping far down their back, and they are of a defiant manner. More warlike than the Sautoux, despite their high stature they still have like the former the flaw of small limbs that gives especially younger Indians a womanish look.

With them, too, feather ornaments demand a commonly shared appreciation. Their coloring, being more varied than that of the Sautoux, consists of a deep red over the whole body that, by the way, as to whiteness nears that of Europeans. Around the eyes many of them are tattooed white. Besides the scalping knife, they usually carry bow and arrow that not only look much better than those of the Sautoux, and with them they also shoot farther. The Sioux speak

⁵¹ They are also called Salteaux or Ojibwe and their language belonged to the Algonquin groups. About 1800, they were settled on Lake Superior and Lake Winnipeg. For the native peoples of the northern Western Hemisphere, see Bruce Trigger, ed., *Handbook of the North American Indians* (Washington, D.C., 1978), 604 ss, 743 s, and 768.



Inuit family drawn from nature by Peter Rindisbacher, 1821.

their wholly own language that is totally incomprehensible to the former, and due to the use of its many vowel sounds is very melodious. Their leaders enjoy an outstanding prestige among the peoples and their order of war caused my admiration.”⁵²

Hauser searched for the familiar in the foreign, for similarities with Europeans, and stressed, not merely in passing, the “large big eyes” and the white color of the skin. With the Inuit of Labrador, he discovered little similarity and renders, therefore, a harsh judgment:

“The Eskimos on Labrador are small diminutive people of a dark complexion and faces without a spirited expression, with tightly hanging down black hair greased with train oil and snow white teeth. Among the many savages that I saw I discovered as a rarity but one older man with a stubbly beard around mouth and chin.

⁵² Burgerbibliothek Bern, Mss.h.h XVII.276 (1): “Verzeichnis der von dem rothen Fluss in Nordamerika mitgebrachten Natur-Merkwürdigkeiten, erstellt am April 26, 1823, von Walther Hauser von Näfels,” p. 8.

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Hauser purchased from this man the basket of dried seaweed mentioned above in No. 22. He continues:

“The female sex is like the men remarkable for its ugliness that is heightened by the women’s loose dropping breasts and at times bluely tattooed eyes. Their dress is almost like that of the men; their hoods, in which they carry their children, are much larger and round.”

Hauser shows an open mind as to practical matters. Although he finds their appearance less than attractive, he admires the agility with which the Inuit steer their narrow canoes that are made of fish bones and sealskin. They have “a small double oar that has on each end the form of a longish shovel, and at its rim is covered with bones and driven through the waves and the ice; they row in turn on one, then on the other side of the canoe.”⁵³ Hauser was also impressed by their attire such as the watertight legwear and their boots made of sealskin. When he realized advantages over European clothing, he did not hesitate to purchase it as, for instance, exchanging his *Bauschhosen* with pants made of elk skin.

“Among the many kinds of stags on the Red River, the elk animal *Alces* is remarkable by its horse-like height and broad antlers. Its meat is dense and good; the tongue is a true treat. Its wide skin surpasses any other deerskin in quality, that of the buffalo not excepted, and it is therefore sought after mainly for shoes and trousers. The trousers I had brought along I wore like the other colonists during my stay at the Red River and on my return journey to Europe.”⁵⁴

A note in Hauser’s *Rechenbuch* of July 28, 1830, indicates that the Bernese officer “Lieutenant Frey of Veltheim” had been involved in the transport of those items to Switzerland and for his expenses as to Hauser’s “American Memorabilia” was paid 37 *florin*, 43 *shilling*, and 5 batzen by Fridolin Josef Landolt.⁵⁵ The list given above is today in the Burgerbibliothek in Bern. It is, unfortunately, not clear, however, where the items have ended up.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 13 s.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁵⁵ *Rechenbuch*, Original, 198. Waagmeister Landolt of Näfels served as the courier.

Commissioned Superior Officer Karl Jodokus von Müller and the “Plantage Suisse à Ilhios en Brésil”

Karl Jodokus (Jost) Müller was born 1789 in Näfels and originated from the same social class as Walter Hauser. Since his older brother was paid to work in the English military, the younger Jodokus also chose the same path. Schooled only in rudimentary fashion, he moved to England at age 16. Here he attended officers' school in Lymington,⁵⁶ but was transferred the following spring to Gibraltar where he was to join the von Roll Regiment of which his brother was already a member.⁵⁷

After ten adventurous years in which he experienced battles in Egypt, captivity, enslavement, being ransomed, and a return to his regiment, Jodokus Müller left his military career and returned to Näfels. Because he was a member of a prominent family of Näfels, his military career was now followed by a civilian political one. He was elected to the cantonal council, a position, however, that he disliked:

“. . . because I realized that it was nearly impossible to convey to the top officials a better spirit. Everywhere I encountered a small-minded self-interested spirit and a decline of the leading families.”

After the turbulent war experiences abroad, life in the paternal house in Näfels was to him, as he writes in his *Lebensschicksale*, rather like life in a monastery.⁵⁸ Following the advice of an uncle, Müller unsuccessfully applied for the position of a federal military secretary.

Remaining unmarried with few ties keeping him in the homeland, he thought of finding a compatible occupation abroad. He un-

⁵⁶ An important seaport in Hampshire, and also an important military station at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

⁵⁷ A Swiss regiment owned by Ludwig Robert von Roll (1750-1813) was in English service in the Mediterranean, and dissolved in 1816.

⁵⁸ “Die Lebensgeschichte des Obersten Karl Jodokus von Müller. Von ihm selbst erzählt.” Typoskript, 17. The original has been lost. According to Thüerer, *Collectanea*, Heft 168, 25, the original had been last with Müller's niece Ida von Müller an der Letz in Schwyz. A copy made by her is in the possession of Georg Müller-Harder. A second copy was made by Paul Thüerer in *Collectanea*, *Nachträge*, 33 ss. In 1952, it was published verbatim in SJW-Heft, 442, with the title “In fremden Diensten.”

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In Fremden Diensten.

Source: SJW-Heft

No. 442, 1952.

dertook several trips through Switzerland and met several sons of patricians who, like him, had been in the foreign military service, but were more or less unable to find suitable positions and looking for new challenges. Without further ado, four of them⁵⁹ decided to emigrate to Brazil and establish a plantation there, but sources about that enterprise are sparse. There were two 1821 entries in the journal *Der Erzähler*

⁵⁹ The *Erzähler* mentions only three former military people as does Müller's obituary in the *Neue Glarner Nachrichten* of February 14, 1865. The copy mentions four: Müller, May, Frank, and Wild. Their first names have been listed as in the version of the *Glarner Volksblatt* August 31 to September 20, 1954. From where Müller-Landolt got this information is uncertain. The Burgerbibliothek Bern certifies Rudolf von May (1787-1843) and Gabriel Wild (1789-1878). The latter had been a colonel in Dutch service and is listed in the *Bürgerbuch* of 1869 as a previous plantation owner in Brazil. On a note attached to the *Lebensschicksale*, the names Rusillon and Fischer are also mentioned.

[*The Narrator*], and the above-mentioned life story written by Jodokus von Müller, that allow at least in a general way to describe the founding and evolution of the project.

Jodokus reports:

“I grasped all the more readily the opportunity to escape my unsatisfactory situation as I hoped to find in the rich still underdeveloped land a congenial occupation and thereby elevate our family. In the solitary situation of my present life, I had studied the conditions of that land and gained data from numerous books. I also thought that working in agriculture was for me most suitable.

Grandfather General and my brother Nikolaus approved my plan and assured me of a monetary contribution. In a few weeks, the society named “Plantage Suisse a Ilhos en Brésil” was formed.

The preparations for our departure already revealed the immense difficulties that were involved in the founding of a plantation in a tropical land: artisans had to be hired, tools of all kinds acquired, home appliances purchased because in the to be opened region such necessary items were not available. But we were young and full of energy. Having participated in the angry wars of the last decades, we were unafraid of any dangers.⁶⁰ The commercial firm de Meuron of Lissabon, that possibly also had a branch in Rio de Janeiro, made the purchase of 500 hectares possible.”⁶¹

The group also included Schüpbach, a Bernese carpenter, and his family. They all embarked on September 30, 1820 at Vlissingen.⁶²

The journal *Erzähler* reports on April 27, 1821:

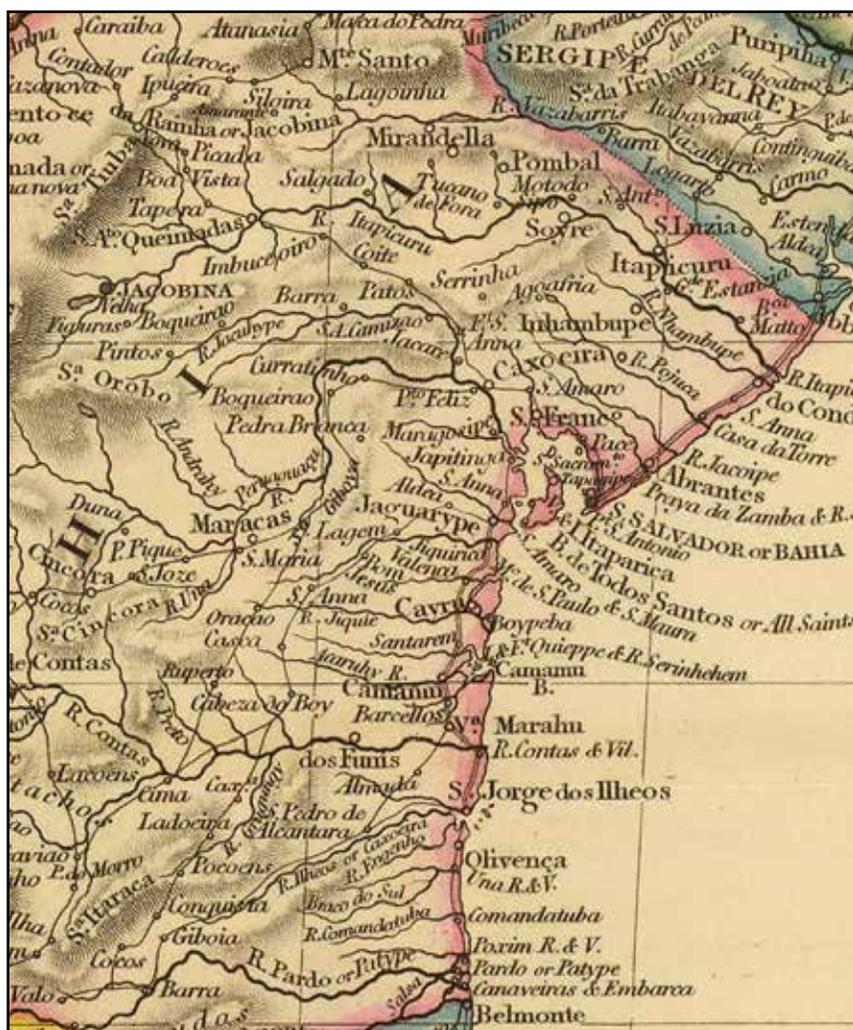
“Towards the end of the last year, three former military men of Bern and Glarus landed in Bahia who for a start want to pursue agriculture with native people and, if successful, to build an even more solid base for a colony.”⁶³

⁶⁰ From von Müller’s *Lebensschicksale*, 18 ss.

⁶¹ *Glerner Volksblatt*, August 31 to September 20, 1954.

⁶² Southwestern port city in the Netherlands.

⁶³ *Der Erzähler*, a political journal of St. Gallen from 1806 to 1852, No. 17, dated April 27, 1821. It had been founded by Karl Müller-Friedberg who also edited it until 1831. It is possible that Jodokus Müller sent his reports for publication from Brazil to his relative in St. Gallen. See <https://www.e-newspaperarchives.ch>.



The east coast of the Federal State of Bahia. West of S. Jorge dos Ilheos are the two parallel Engenho and Cachoeira Rivers. Source: 1832 Map done by John Arrowsmith, David Rumsey, Historical Map Collection, available on the Internet.

On July 13, 1821:

“... The three friends have executed their common project with good support and not without significant capital. . .

... They embarked on a kind of sponade [?] for the district Ilheos (small islands) that as to size gives only a little way to that of Switzerland. The town of Ilheos is inhabited by 2000

whites, blacks, and mulattoes and is compared to our villages a miserable place, but as to market and connections with Bahia some 40 hours distant not without importance. After some searching around, the three finally found suitable lands:

They purchased two earlier already inhabited fertile and for coffee plantations well suited stretches of land that also had areas planted with Cocos trees along the Engenho River, near the Taip, possibly half an hour long, and called St. Trinitade and Joao Domingo. The purchase price and fees for the change of hands rose to 363,000 *Reis* (960 *Reis* equals six French francs).⁶⁴ For a start, they purchased only seven negroes, among them two women; the cost was 16,000 *Reis* per head. They accomplished the cutting of trees with the help of Indians who are better for this work. They hope on the basis of several examples that their toil will not remain unrewarded.”⁶⁵

As Jodokus reports:

“The plantation covered an area of several hundred miles. It stretched from a navigable stream, the Cocharica, that empties into the ocean not far from the city Santos. Farther west it bordered the Jpirango [Ipiranga] River, the Red River of the Indians. It was situated in a hot, though not unhealthy climate. We started work with incredible effort. With the help of a Bernese named Schüpbach, a carpenter, and with purchased black slaves, we established the needed buildings, cleared the primeval forest, and planted small coffee trees that we had first rooted in pots. By the sixth year, all had wonderfully grown and a magnificent plantation of 30,000 Mocca bushes had emerged.

We also planted beans that were a desired trade article, and established a cotton plantation. We had already made plans on how we could process cotton in the country itself. We built a saw mill at the Itahi River (Rio Itahe) which rushes from the mountains with a rapid descent to the Cocharica and which was destined for the processing of the wonderful wood of the primeval forest. After the coffee had been har-

⁶⁴ The price for a slave was about 1,000 French *francs*. In comparison: In France, a smith earned 2 *francs* and a factory worker earned 1.50 *francs*. One liter of milk was 13 cents; a kilo of bread, 30 cents; see Paul Paillat, “Les salaires et la condition ouvrière en France a l’aube du machinisme (1815-1830),” *Revue économique* (1951), 769 and 773.

⁶⁵ *Der Erzähler*, No. 28, July 13, 1821.

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vested, it had to be dried. For that purpose, the fruits were put on the terreiros, on surfaces covered by granite plates, and exposed to the heat of the sun. Then the harvest was brought to the Cocharica and shipped to the mills where the fruit was freed of its shell and browned in order to be sent from there into the world.

I may state that we had done great work in a short time. All would have been great if the Topayos Indians—the Diablos de la Selvas or the forest devils—would not have bothered and damaged us. Unfortunately, Wild and I became ill with malaria that we had acquired in the hot humid climate of Santos. After we spent considerable time in the La Misericordia Hospital in Rio, we had to return home. To this day, the malady has still not totally left me. Under these circumstances, we decided to sell the plantation to a Dutch firm. Because of the climate, the place would not have been suited as a place of settlement for the people of my village. The invested capital of 70,000 fl. [*florin*] tripled within a few years. Thus our work has still been worthwhile.”⁶⁶

Karl Jodokus Müller returned to Näfels in 1828. He was living with the family of his brother Nikolaus in the house at the Letz and served his home commune in various offices.⁶⁷

~ *Translated by Leo Schelbert*

⁶⁶ *Lebensschicksale*, 19-21. See also the enlarged version of J. Müller-Landolt in *Glarner Volksblatt*, August 31 to September 20, 1954.

⁶⁷ See Jodokus Müller’s detailed obituary in the *Neue Glarner Zeitung* of February 14, 1865.



Ships leaving the Le Havre, France, harbor in 1856/57. Source: Gustave le Gray photo, 1856/57; www.risdmuseum.org.