



2-2021

ANNUAL REPORTS of the SWISS AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY October 2020: President's Report for 2020

Albert Winkler

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

Winkler, Albert (2021) "ANNUAL REPORTS of the SWISS AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY October 2020: President's Report for 2020," *Swiss American Historical Society Review*. Vol. 57 : No. 1 , Article 5.
Available at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/sahs_review/vol57/iss1/5

This Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at 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.

ANNUAL REPORTS of the SWISS AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

October 2020

The annual national meeting of the Swiss American Historical Society, originally scheduled for October 2020 in New Glarus, Wisconsin, has been cancelled owing to concerns about the Corona virus and pandemic. The pandemic is unusually virulent in the State of Wisconsin at the present time.

Nonetheless, on the following pages, you will find the usual national reports concerning the present state of the Society. President Albert Winkler will contact you all during the summer of 2021 in order to reschedule the next national meeting.

President's Report for 2020

By Albert Winkler

Greeting

It is a pleasure to greet everyone and to wish you good fortune in all that you do. I deeply appreciate your interest in and continued support for the Swiss American Historical Society.

Challenging times but great success

The recent COVID-19 outbreak has led to challenging times for everyone, and much has changed, but I'm very pleased to report that many functions of the SAHS have been stellar in 2020. Please note the following.

Cancellation of the annual meeting for October 2020

Concern over the situation with COVID-19 outbreak led me to cancel the annual meeting of the Society, which was scheduled to meet in New Glarus, Wisconsin. I watched the spread of the virus well into

the summer, and I feared that the pandemic would not abate to safe levels by October. I was doubly concerned because many of our members are advanced in years and fit the category of those at greatest risk. My action proved to be prescient because the virus hit very high levels in Wisconsin in October 2020 as well as in other parts of the country. Very unfortunately, this cancellation meant that few of us could meet in person to discuss relevant issues to the Society and to renew old friendships. I hope that many of us were able to keep in touch anyway over the phone, on emails, or by the use of social media.

Newsletters

I have sent out a few newsletters over the years, and they have met with great success. Many members have responded with great approval. These newsletters are clearly an important key to the continuing success of the Society.

***Swiss American Historical Society Review* available online**

I have long feared that much of the excellent scholarship in the *SAHS Review* going back decades might be lost because of the publication's small circulation and the fact few libraries keep copies. One of the most exciting advances for the Society in 2020 has been the recent effort to place past issues of the *SAHS Review* online, so they may be easily accessed by any interested parties and made available for many years to come. Brigham Young University has generously donated its time and resources to the effort, and I want to give that institution our special thanks. Overall, BYU has placed 278 discrete items from the *SAHS Review* onto its scholars archive thus making them available online. These items include front and back matter from various issues of the *SAHS Review*, but they also contain complete articles and copies of the publication.

Getting Access to the *SAHS Review* online

These materials from the *SAHS Review* may be easily accessed by going to Google, then to BYU ScholarsArchive, and then doing a search under *Swiss American Historical Society Review*. You may also search under title or author of any article of interest. Another way of accessing the materials is to go to the Swiss American Historical Society website and then to publications. These items are linked to the

BYU ScholarsArchive, and you may go to the article by clicking on the link. I would like to thank Dr. Richard Hacken for his invaluable work in getting these materials available online. I'm sure we all greatly appreciate all he does for the Society.

New Treasurer

Unfortunately, Heinz Bachman felt he was no longer able to continue to serve as the treasurer of the SAHS due to health problems, so he chose to step down from that position. Heinz's contributions to the Society have been extensive and cover many years, and he held numerous positions including president. I am sure that we are all grateful for his work, and we all wish him the very best. Fortunately for the Society, Frederic Behrens has accepted the assignment as treasurer of the SAHS. He has a strong financial background, and his credentials speak well of him. He will function as the interim treasurer until he can be formally nominated and approved at the general meeting of the Society in New York in October 2021.

Membership Secretary

Ernie Thurston continues to make essential contributions to the Society. Not only does he keep track of the membership, he also accepts dues and donations to the SAHS and forwards these funds to the appropriate bank in a timely manner. In addition, he mails out member renewal forms and prints off mailing addresses that are used to mail newsletters and announcements of the Society.

Swiss American Historical Society Website

One of the most important aspects of the Society's outreach program is its website. It started rather humbly, but it has been recently upgraded considerably. Dr. Richard Hacken has taken over the website in the last few years, and he has done excellent work with it. The website is very attractive, very informative, and easy to navigate. The membership of the Society had been in serious decline for many years, but the number has been holding steady in recent years. Much of the credit for this improved circumstance must go to Dr. Hacken.

Help to PBS: Great service from Robert Sherwood

In April 2020, Enrique Figueroa of Public Broadcasting (PBS)

contacted the Society with a request for information to help with their program “Finding Your Roots.” Mr. Figueroa needed to know more about the Swiss ancestry of one of their celebrities spotlighted on the program, and he asked us very specific questions relating to areas in Canton Bern, to Swiss immigration to the United States, and to Swiss settlement patterns and activities in Pennsylvania. Prof. Robert Sherwood has great expertise in those areas and his help was greatly appreciated. He took on the assignment and did remarkably well in giving Mr. Figueroa the precise information he needed, and Mr. Figueroa was very appreciative. Prof. Sherwood demonstrated the wealth of knowledge that makes the SAHS a valuable organization for the Swiss experience in North America.

Swiss American Historical Society Review for 2020:

One of the very best years ever

This year is easily among the very best for the *SAHS Review* ever in view of the number and quality of the articles published.

February 2020 SAHS Review

The *SAHS Review* continues to be the stellar aspect of the Society and to promote its goals of documenting the Swiss experience in Switzerland and also in other countries. In February 2020, the SAHS published one of the largest, at 182 pages, most comprehensive, and impressive issues of the *SAHS Review* ever.

Each of the seven articles in the February issue of the *SAHS Review* were noteworthy starting with Carlile, Callister and Galbraith’s article on Ernest Brog, who produced Swiss Cheese to Star Valley, Wyoming. Next came an article by Plinio Martini, which was translated by Dr. Richard Hacken, on the history of a Swiss Italian cemetery. Prof. Dwight Page then presented an article on the unrelenting search for the lost Ark of the Covenant and its current whereabouts, which included many nice illustrations in color. Hans Leuenberger published a fine article on Nicholas Leuenberger who was a big proponent of peace in Switzerland in 1653. Two excellent articles came out at the end, and they filled a large gap in our understanding of the Swiss in California. They include Tony Quinn’s article on the Italian Swiss immigration to the Bear Flag State and also Dr. Richard Hacken’s comprehensive history of the Swiss in California.

June 2020 *SAHS Review*

Prof. Dwight Page was the editor for the June 2020 issue of the *SAHS Review*, and he continued his excellent work on the Society's publications. This issue of the *SAHS Review* included two articles by Susanne Peter-Kubli dealing with emigration from Näfels in Canton Glarus to Canada and to the United States. Also, in the issue were articles by Alexandria Kedves on Teju Cole, C. Naseer Ahmad on Swiss Days at the Woodrow Wilson Center, and Fabian Braendle on Daniel Schmid who served in the Union Army during the Civil War. In addition, touching obituaries were presented by Peter Sehlinger concerning Sabine Jessner Sehlinger and by Monika Backmann concerning her own mother Ilse M. Bachmann.

November 2020 *SAHS Review*

The November issue of the *SAHS Review* continued the most impressive scholarship for the Society this year with another lengthy issue of 150 pages. Stephen P. Halbrook contributed a fine article about the famous Swiss Shooting Festival, while Prof. Robert Sherwood wrote an excellent article on the formative years of the Swiss Biathlon. The final article for the November *SAHS Review* was done by me, Albert Winkler, and it documented the Swiss military at the height of its power in 1499. Additionally, Prof. Sherwood provided book reviews to accompany the articles. Prof. Sherwood has been arranging book reviews for the *SAHS Review* for many years, and his work as always been excellent and much appreciated.

Book Published

Continuing this stunning year for publications, the SAHS published a translation of Hemman Hoffmann's *California, Nevada, and Mexico: the Travels of a Technical Student* which was originally published in German in 1871. Frederick Hale edited the work, wrote the introduction, and provided many valuable footnotes to help the reader better understand the text.

Future Book Projects

The SAHS is currently consulting with Heinrich Wirz to provide a translation for his excellent German language biography of

Henry Wirz, the famous commandant of Andersonville Prison, during the Civil War. The entire project will be presented at the annual meeting of the SAHS in New York in October 2021 for approval.

Membership Report

By *Ernie Thurston*

To: Members of the Swiss American Historical Society
 From: Ernie Thurston, Membership Secretary
 Subject: Annual Membership Report

IN BRIEF: We have 209 current members, a 2% decrease from the 214 reported last year at this time.

CURRENT MEMBERS BY TYPE AND COUNTRY:

<i>Membership Type</i>	<i>US/Canada</i>	<i>Switzerland/Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
Regular (\$50/yr.)	80	27	107
Student (\$25/yr.)	1	2	3
Institution (\$75/ yr.)	14	7	21
Life Members	43	7	50
Complimentary	<u>23</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>28</u>
	161	48	209

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES, 10/01/2019 to 9/30/2020

Members as of 10/01/2019	214
Plus: New Members Enrolled	8
Plus: Former Members (not "Current" last year who have Rejoined	0
Less: Dropped by Request or Decease	- 6
Less: Dropped for Non-Payment of Dues	<u>-7</u>
Current Members, 09/30/2020	209