Honorable Ancestors

Margot Ammann Durrer

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Available at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/sahs_review/vol42/iss2/3

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HONORABLE ANCESTORS,
Stories of the Swiss Family Ammann

On my twenty-eighth birthday, I was given a copy of a book entitled Die Familie Ammann von Schaffhausen, with the above dedication by my father. Published in 1949, the book was written by the historian and archivist Ernst Ruedi. It is a carefully researched volume of our lineage from the first documented member, Hans Ammann in 1449, and concluding with those members born before 1950. By some fortuitous events, records of our family during those five hundred years have been preserved.

Gratitude goes to Ernst Rüedi, for his conscientious research and sourcing of family records. Besides the individual life sketches in the book, he introduces a background history of Schaffhausen, a bit of heraldic history, the Guilds, watch making, currency, treatment of Jews and other subjects all pertaining to our family, but also reflecting the history of those times.

Our family is indebted to Bernhardt Ammann, who was the prime mover behind the archival research and writing of Ernst Ruedi. He writes: "The desire to acquaint the members of the Schaffhausen Ammann family and their descendants with the history of their ancestors led to the research, writing and publication of this history. May the good accomplishments of the ancestors be an inspiration for the descendants and may the failures serve as warning. May each in his own way do honor to his lineage. To accomplish greatness is not of primary importance; rather more important is to fulfill one's duty and do good
in the close circle of family and field of work, since the happiness and success of our fatherland have their roots in the family.”

The original archival study is written in German, thus the book has remained closed for members of our family who do not speak German. In the course of several years, I translated the entire book into English. What a magnificent surprise to find this book to be a treasure trove of fascinating information! What a collection of family stories we have, representing a smorgasbord of occupations and accomplishments from political leaders, artists, craftsmen, members of all professional and business fields, adventurers, scientists; and represented in many parts of the world. Certainly there are a few skeletons in our family closet, but the rest lived out their lives as “decent, staunch citizens”.

In this booklet, I retell the stories of a few members of our tribe that I find the most fascinating. In trying to flesh out their life sketches, I go beyond the limits of the faithful archivist and indulge in a bit of fantasy, but try not to stray outside of the line of probability. Some interesting stories found in obituaries of our parents’ generation have been added. The family tree in the original German text lists only those members of the family that had at least one male child that reached adulthood. For the English translation, the archivist, Lewis Bunker Rohrbach has patiently assigned numbers to all family members, male or female, under the Modern Modified Register System. This system is used here for the family tree. The presentation in the form of leaves is merely a fantasy of mine to enhance the effect of a “tree”. With so many same-name ancestors, the “tree” may help to place the members in their proper century.

Every family has stories, but these stories need to be recorded and preserved and exposed to the light, otherwise they drift away. Putting a face onto history stimulates interest and that, after all, creates a purpose to the telling of these tales.

Margot Ammann Durrer
Durrer: Honorable Ancestors
Shaded leaves represent members described in text and listed below

1. Hans, d. ca. 1516, ropemaker, m. Maria Salome Stokar
2. Hans, d. 1531, ropemaker
3. Hans, d. 1565, ropemaker, m. Anna Clauser v. Zurich
10. Samuel, 1547-1620, pastor of Hallau, m. Judita Rüeger
33. Johann Conrad, 1579-1629, pastor of Hallau, m. Blandina Burgauer
34. Samuel, ca.1581-1622, Danzig seal-cutter,
47. Hans Heinrich, 1607-1669, Bailiff of Neunhaus, m. Anna Koch
61. Samuel, 1636 -? Innkeeper of the Raven, m.I Maria Seiler, m.II Elisabetha Bayel
64. Johannes, 1640-1702, city physician, m. Dorothea Ziegler
94. Johann Konrad, 1669-1724, teacher of deaf-mute, m. Maria Birris
127. Johann Heinrich, 1701-1751, watch maker, m. Anna Maria Trippel
146. Hans Jacob, 1699-1777, tradesman, m. Catharina Rauschenaback
179. Johannes, 1707-1740, botanist, prof. in St. Petersburg, m. Elisabetha Schumacher
216. Johann Heinrich, 1722-1794, banker, merchant, m. Anna Maria Oschwald
217. Johann Conrad, 1724-1811, physician, fossil collector, m. Anna Marg. Gestefeld
237. Johann Heinrich, 1743-1820, owner of Crown Inn, m. Dorothea Harder
283. Johann Heinrich, 1774-1847, owner of Crown Inn, m. Anna Maria Wischer
323. August, 1807-1870, owner of Crown Inn, m. Friederika Gottleibe Rehfuss
298. Johann Jacob, 1816-1864, missioner to India, m. Elisabetha Susanna Schalch
305. Johann Heinrich, 1820-1867, lawyer, Senator, m. Maria Dorothea Oschlin
342. Emanuel Christian, manufacturer, m. Emalie Rosa Labhardt
358. Paul Albert 1860-1629, lawyer, Senator, m. Bertha v. Ziegler
374. Othmar Hermann, 1879-1965, bridge builder, m. I. Lilly Wehrli, II.Klara Noetzli
History makes a family, a family makes history

The story of the Ammann family of Schaffhausen sketches a cross section of the history of that town from the middle of the 15th century into the end of the 20th. Likewise, the events of history as they played out in Schaffhausen during those times very much shaped the history of the Ammann family.

The Switzerland of today was then a confederation of the three “Lake Cantons” (the equivalent of the thirteen original states of the United States.) Gradually other cantons joined this Confederation. By 1501, the city of Schaffhausen and the outlying districts had formed into a canton and became the 12th to be added to the Confederation.

The origin of the city itself dates back to the year 1045, when “Scafhusun”, under control of the German Emperor Heinrich III, was given permission to mint some coins. In the words of the historian Ernst Ruedi, “The right to mint money, with the right to trade – one without the other is unthinkable – already marks the establishment of a city. A capital, a church, the market place, all in the main center; and if we think of the surrounding wall, and the watch tower that undoubtedly were soon created, we have a picture of a medieval city in all respects.”

This freedom was lost when the city came under Austrian rule for 85 years. In the middle of the 15th Century, around the time that the first recorded ancestor Hans Ammann lived, Schaffhausen consisted of a city and several loosely joined outlying districts. It was just beginning to gain its independence from domination of the Austrian Empire. Because the noblemen and citizens of Schaffhausen had fought so loyally for the Austrians in several important battles, the Duke of Austria allowed the city considerable freedom of self-government. By 1415 it had gained complete independence. In the course of several centuries it expanded to become a canton comprised of the city and ten surrounding districts.

Center of city and main gateway to Guild house
Several epidemics of bubonic plague, the Reformation, the Napoleonic wars, the Industrial Revolution and World War I and II were major events on the continent of Europe that greatly affected Schaffhausen’s history and in interesting ways played a role in the history of the Ammann family as well.

Today Schaffhausen is a modern, industrial city. The wall around the city no longer exists, and only two of the nine towers remain.

The old part of the city still retains its medieval appearance with the narrow streets and decorative fountains in small, open squares. The old burgher houses built in Romanesque style with their medieval tile roofs and characteristic oriel windows are crowded together in rows.

The tower of the Schaffhausen Münster, a historic monastic church consecrated in 1104, is still standing in the Old Town, with the picturesque cloister surrounding the former cemetery for the noble “Junker” families. Interred in a crypt within the Münster lies Count Eberhard von Nellenburg, who obtained permission from Kaiser Heinrich III in 1045 for Schaffhausen to mint its own coins. Next to the Münster tower is the All Saints Museum, which was a monastery before the Reformation. This museum houses a collection of Swiss paintings and art work of the last 500 years as well as a display of Schaffhausen military history and a restored Gothic chapel. Next door to the Museum are the Halls of Modern Art, in what originally was a worsted yarn factory.

Members of the Ammann family of Schaffhausen are now scattered all over the world. One can hope that their stories and those of their children will be added to those of the past as a continuing record for generations to come.

**The role of the Guilds**

In Schaffhausen the political structure was determined by the Guilds and in other Swiss cities, the patrician aristocracy held the political leadership. In a few districts the citizens (male members) voted directly by a show of hands in a “Landesgemeinde” in the town square.

Already by 1411, twelve guilds had been formed in Schaffhausen and a system of representation for government had been organized. From each guild, the guild master and six elected members became members of the legislative branch, the “Gross Rat” or Grand Council. From these 84 members of the
Grand Council, 24 members were recruited for the executive branch, the “Klein Rat”. The mayor presided over both branches.

When Hans Ammann, a rope maker, joined a trade guild in 1449, it had moved from a rented hall used for political and social gatherings to a house purchased in 1423 in the upper part of the city on a street named Rueden. The members of the guild became known as the “Merchants of Rueden”, and gradually the guild became known as the “Ruedenzunft” (Rueden Guild).

The history of the Ruedenzunft illustrates what an important role it played in the public careers of many of the Ammann tribe members. Membership gave access to political representation and trade standards of the members’ craft. Male members of each generation of the Ammann family were automatically represented in the Ruedenzunft, sitting in on the meetings with lively discussions (and perhaps drinking parties, with the members quaffing beer from silver cups). Some members of the family were elected by the guild for political posts such as representatives in the city council – or as appointments in governing posts (bailiff), county judge, director of the “Alms House”, or as a city physician.

The twelve guilds each had a separate charter, with general regulations for accepting new members, punishments for minor infringements and similar matters. Members in the Ruedenzunft were originally in occupations of trades, but descendants of original members who changed their occupations were allowed to stay with the trade’s guild. A roster of the Rueden Guild in 1535 included the following: rope makers, goldsmiths, painters, glass blowers, maker of bags and purses, bell makers, lathe turners, salesmen of small goods and “also tavern keepers”. Others who renounced the membership inherited from their fathers and transferred to another guild, had only to pay one half of the usual admission fee. An employer paid a fee to the guild if he were given an apprentice from the guild, or had been ordered to take one.

Political matters were primarily dealt with in the general meetings of all the guilds and questions dealing specifically with work were handled in the meetings of members from each particular occupation. Rules and regulations were made to establish codes of behavior and to protect members from outside infringements of their trades. However, not all meetings were concerned with business matters. In the first records of the Ruedenzunft (1376/77), the meetinghouse was referred to as “The Drinking Hall of the Tradesmen”. Notes of a meeting in 1380 stated, “the merchants and their apprentices touched beakers in their hall.” A Hall Butler or “Steuben Diener” was elected by the members to manage the meetings and enforce the regulations. “At the ringing of the Munot Bells – the Munot is the famous tower and fortress of Schaffhausen, – he notified all participants to break up their meeting. With a strong hand he interrupted many fights in a time when one was quick to use the fist – and even the knife.” (From description by the archivist Ernst Rüedi).

Membership dues were originally very low but were gradually increased to meet additional expenses for new projects. In 1535 a new member was still
paying 8 Gulden for admission to the guild, and by 1610 the fee had already been increased to 80 Gulden. Later, considerably more supplementary dues were added. Minutes of the meeting of the Guild in 1535 stated that the Guild Master and the Representatives each received a “quarter” of the best country wine. The Guild Master also received 2 Shilling and the Hall Butler one Shilling. Besides fees for new members, another source of income for the guild were fines for infringements on rules of the guild, such as cheating in quality of merchandise. For example, one rope maker was fined for using “old ropes or adding junk into the rope”. The highest fine, 10 Shillings were collected for working on Sunday. “Bad mouthing” was assessed 4 Shillings. A list of imposed fines had to be reported to the city Council.

The treasure room of the Allerheiligen Museum in Schaffhausen contains a collection of silver beakers and platters of different sizes and decorations belonging to the guild. These are remaining from a collection that was started in 1568 as a voluntary donation of the guild master and the six senators in an effort to supplement the cash income of the guild and one that would be independent of the fluctuations of the gold standard. Each had donated a silver beaker worth 6 Gulden. Following this generous gesture, it was decided that henceforth every member newly elected to an official post would have to donate such a beaker. Also, any member who received a post “worthy of registering” would likewise have to make a donation. Finally, new members were required to donate silver pieces. The “Donation Book” of the year 1570 records the entrance fee for a new member to be: “1 silver beaker for 6 Gulden with a table setting of 1 dozen pewter plates, 1 dozen wooden plates, 2 salt boxes, 1 table ring and 1 dozen tablecloths.”

By the 1700s this silver treasure had greatly increased and helped to finance the huge construction project for the meeting hall, which was badly in need of repairs and more space. The Ruedenzunft purchased the upper story of the house next to their hall, the lower part of which they already owned. This house and the guildhall were then completely torn down and a new, large Guild House was erected on the space of the two courtyards. Building was started in 1780, and completed 3 years later, at a cost of 33,634 Gulden. This magnificent new building was designed predominantly in the classical Empire style: the product of arduous planning and considerable expense. One can well picture the feeling of pride, and relief, when members held their first meeting in their new building, on “Candlemas” day of 1783. (Candlemas was a feast celebrated on February 2nd, commemorating the Purification of the Virgin Mary: so called because candles for the altar or other sacred uses were blessed on that day.)

The political importance of the guilds in the various cantons had diminished by 1799. During the time of French occupation of Switzerland, Napoleon imposed a new Constitution of the Confederation that created a central national government. In 1847, political privileges of the guilds were
abolished in Schaffhausen, ending an era of social as well as political life of the guilds.

The scenery on the stage has been set. Now various characters in the Ammann family of Schaffhausen will be introduced as they play out their individual roles in the drama of history of that city.

Schaffhausen from the south, around 1640; drawings by Hans Heinrich Ammann

The family line hangs by a rope

The first recorded member of the Ammann family was a rope maker. It seems appropriate that the family stories start with this ancestor from the 15th century who was engaged in making a tool of great importance for Homo Sapiens as far back as the time of hunting and gathering. By joining a trade guild in Schaffhausen, the “Ruedenzunft”, Hans Ammann brought the family into history. The year was 1469, a time when Switzerland was not yet fully formed as a nation. It was 23 years before Christopher Columbus set out to discover America.

Around that time the first Bible to be printed by machine had run through Gutenberg’s press (1456). Most records from that era were still being hand written; many have become lost, destroyed or misplaced. There is no recorded date of Hans for his birth, marriage or death. However, the registry of the Ruedenzunft Guild for 1469 carries the signature of Hans Ammann. From this, one can assume that he was born sometime before 1449, (20 years of age was minimum age requirement for a guild membership, as well as Schaffhausen citizenship). Since membership was automatically transmitted from father to son, the guild registry is a primary source of reference of the family line.
However, except for her name, there are no records of his wife, Verena Kappeler. Only one son was recorded, and only his date of death was given. Rope making was indeed an important occupation, demanding skill and reliability. For tying, pulling, hanging and holding together, ropes were involved in practically every human activity. It was a time before plastics, and elastics and wires. How else could one draw water from a well or secure a bundle of hay? Besides the numerous uses in the household or workplace, one cannot imagine how a ship or a horse-drawn carriage could function without a myriad of ropes. The method of making ropes existed for centuries, only changing with the introduction of machinery in the 19th century.

Probably Hans learned his trade as an apprentice before joining the trade union, starting his own business and settling down in Schaffhausen. One can picture him outside of his workshop, walking back and forth on the long “ropewalk”, spinning and twisting the strands of fiber into one continuous “cable”. The primary material used was hemp, (cannabis). Yes, the same plant from which marijuana is extracted.

Some years after joining the Guild, he purchased a house in a prestigious part of the city. So the business of rope making must have been going well. An excerpt from the text of the contract for his purchase of the house in 1477 states: “On this day Hans Ammann and his wife Verena purchased from the mayor and senator Erhard Seiler and his wife Adelheid their house, courtyard and property near the main gate between the Tradesmen Pub and the Nunangesterin house, with the exception of the room that is for the use of the Trade guild, for the amount of 100 Pfund Haller.” The purchase included “the tools pertaining to rope making.”

In later years, an accident occurred during renovations. Portions of the house had collapsed, trapping a maid and a child. Miraculously, both were removed from the wreckage, unharmed. From then on, the house was called “Zur Dankbarkeit”, which means “In Gratitude”. The house remained in the family for around 100 years. It was torn down in 1780, as well as the old Guild Hall next door, in order to construct the new large Guild Hall of the Ruedenzunft, which still today is a magnificent building.

In 1501, the cantons of Schaffhausen and Basel became the ninth and tenth cantons to join the Swiss Confederation. One wonders whether this made a difference in the life of Hans, who would have been about 52 years old at that time.
His son, Hans #2 followed in the same occupation of rope maker and continued to live in the house of “In Gratitude”. His life was cut short by a sad fate of fortune. The Reformation fueled by the preaching of Martin Luther, was spreading throughout Europe. In Zurich, Huldrych Zwingli, as a secular priest, was also preaching against the supposed decadence of the clergy and traffic in indulgences, and encouraged guidance directly from the words of the Bible rather than from Rome. Although under the influence of Luther, Zwingli went further, preaching against serfdom and feudal obligation, a tender point for the peasants who were chafing under the old customs. Schaffhausen at that time was still under domination of catholic Austria. The Cathedral of St. Johann was directed from Rome, monks were residing in the All Saints cloister.

Zwingli’s opposition to the hiring of mercenaries won his support from the guilds, which were loosing laborers to the heavy traffic of soldiers. And indeed, in Schaffhausen, these guilds, through their representatives in the city council, carried considerable influence in public affairs. Religion became a vital public affair, to be regulated by the local government of each district. Long and serious debates raged in the meeting halls of Schaffhausen, until finally, in 1529, the governing council voted in favor of accepting the new persuasion. As a representative from his guild to the council, Hans was one of the members to cast his vote, little realizing that in this, he had sealed his fate. Barely two years later, the Protestants in Zurich were being attacked by a contingency from the Catholic cantons and Hans Ammann was part of the division from Schaffhausen conscripted to assist in defending them.

Huldrych Zwingli, leader of the reformation in Zurich, was killed in the battle at Kappel. The Catholics were victorious, with a loss of at least 800 men for the Reformed. Hans was one of the sixty-three of his townsmen who lost their lives in this religious struggle. His birth date is not known, nor his date of marriage. The registry of his guild made no comment on his death; his name was merely scratched out for the year 1531. His widow and five sons survived him.

The birth date of his son, Hans #3, is also not recorded. He was registered in the same profession of his father and grandfather, and records of his high tax payments bear evidence to his considerable wealth. Even before his father’s untimely death, he was living in his own house, named “At the Dove”, and located in the center of the city near that of his father and grandfather. Later, this prosperous ancestor bought two other houses and a vineyard. He had inherited the honor given to his father as “Keeper of the Main Gate” of the city. Besides his occupation as rope maker, he functioned as a judge in charge of regulating laws of debt to the city and matters such as disputes between employer and employee concerning salaries, discharge, and working conditions. He also was one of the six representatives from the Guild to the Senate.
He undoubtedly was quite a colorful character. In later years he ran into financial troubles. Several times he came in conflict with the authorities and also was penalized for borrowing money from Jews (which was illegal at that time). His ventures and misadventures are described under “Minutiae”.

By all accounts, rope making required great skill and the finished products were of demand for industry, on the farm, and in the household. Records and accounts of the Hans ancestors of three generations leave one with the impression that it was a lucrative occupation, and also one that afforded prestige and political connections. In the next generation, Samuel was the only male of four siblings, and with him the Ammann line widened onto a new vista.

**Sammy goes to College**

It was time for the family to move onward and upward. Although tradesmen by profession, by their prosperity and involvement in politics and public posts one can assume that they were well accepted in the social world of Schaffhausen. The next rung in the ladder of upward mobility was entry into the enlightened arena of education.

This was accomplished by a member of the fourth generation. Samuel #10, the only son of Hans #3, was the first Ammann on record to gain a higher education. At that time, theology was the study of choice for sons of prominent families. Already at the age of 15, Samuel had received a scholarship under the jurisdiction of the Church for study in a “Latin school”. From there he became a student of theology in Strasbourg, France.

For further education, he and several other students were instructed to transfer to Wittenberg, Germany, which was the city of Luther and Melanchthon. The students refused to transfer, Samuel giving his reasons to the scholarship committee: “When I consider the weakness of my stomach and my weak, stupid body, that easily falls into all sorts of illnesses...The air and the food are against good health, as one in Wittenberg lives mostly from ham and beer.” This revolt of the scholarship students did not sit well with their sponsors, and because of the “lazy, cold origins and unbelievable resistance”, their stipendium was cut off for a year and half. The scholarship was then resumed with the stipulation that Samuel would serve as a pastor upon completion of his studies. By a series of good fortune, he finally was assigned a pastorate in the beautiful town of Hallau in the Klettgau, a district of Schaffhausen.
Samuel was assigned to the mountain church of St. Moritz in Hallau, a district of the city of Schaffhausen. This church is still in existence. The sketch evokes a pastoral scene. Presumably, the parsonage is the small building to the right of the church. The vineyard shown in the foreground is a typical scene of most rural churches. Surrounding hillsides, so well exposed to the sun, are ideal for the growing of grapes. In all probability these vineyards had been property of the Catholic diocese and after the Reformation were managed by the city magistrates.

Life in the parsonage was indeed frugal. Of his twelve children, eight survived to adulthood. After 20 years he asked for an increase in his stipend, as he was “no longer able to supply the necessities for his children”. An additional “8 Muss corn”, was granted to him, but with the explanation that “this was just for him and not for each and every pastor”. What a contrast this was from a childhood spent in his father’s home where, one can assume, the comforts of life were in abundance. One visualizes Samuel patiently plodding along the dirt roads around the countryside, visiting members of his congregation. With hardly enough to feed his family, the luxury of a horse would probably have been out of the question.

Samuel was described as “one who performed his duties faithfully”. In 1612 he was given six Gulden “for his outstanding sacrifices during the Pestilence of 1611 in visiting the sick, comforting them and preparing them for death.” Pestilence, Pest or Plague, and Black Death are terms somewhat interchangeably applied to extremely infectious diseases with high mortality that ravaged Europe way into the 18th Century. A discussion on this horror with its enormous effect on the history of Europe is given at the end of these family stories, under “Minutiae”. An epidemic of the plague was particularly severe in Switzerland in the years 1611 and 1612. In Schaffhausen, a city of 6,000 inhabitants, the disease felled 2,500. These were hard times indeed.
Samuel’s own personal tragedy was the death of his wife of 35 years, herself a victim of the plague. He survived his wife by nine years, having served his parish for 40 years. One of his sons, Johann Conrad, followed his father in studying theology, eventually becoming Pastor at the same church in Hallau where Samuel had spent his childhood. The other son, carrying the same name as his father Samuel, became a distinguished die cutter, practicing his profession in far-away Danzig.

Samuel’s son, Johann Conrad #33 was born a few days before his father moved into the parsonage at Hallau. He spent his childhood there by that lovely hillside church. At the age of 16, he received a scholarship from the City Council, supervised by the Church Committee of Scholarships. It consisted of a yearly stipend of eight Gulden, the equivalent of a Louis d’or, This would be about the equivalent of the monthly earning of a day laborer at that time. Even for those days, this seems a paltry allowance. How could he manage food, clothing and housing as well as paying for his education on that meager stipend? Certainly there would not have been much financial help from his father, who was always appealing for a higher salary just to feed his large family of twelve children.

Like his father, Johann Conrad chose to study theology. What other choice would he have had, when he was depending on the Church Scholarship Committee for his stipend? His pursued his pre-university studies in Strassburg, which was certainly a cultural change for a boy of 16. He probably had never even ventured out of Schaffhausen to Zurich or Bern, let alone to a “foreign country”. One imagines that his eager anticipation for the new life ahead of him was mixed with sadness as he left family and familiar surroundings behind, knowing that he would not be returning until the completion of his education. Imagination conjures up the sight of an eager, yet anxious lad, clutching his modest bundle of belongings – an extra shirt for Sunday, a quill for writing, perhaps a Bible, – undergoing a long coach ride over bumpy territory.

Ah, but there was that glorious ancient highway of nature, the Rhine River. This famous and important river of Europe starts as melted snow and ice originating high in the Alps of Switzerland and after flowing 820 miles ends in the North Sea. At Schaffhausen, the river breaks into the famous, majestic waterfalls. Both Johann Conrad, and his father before him, probably made their way on that romantic route, boarding a boat below the falls in Schaffhausen, perhaps transferring to a larger boat at Basel and then finally embarking at the shore of the famous city of Strassburg. After his studies there, Johann Conrad went on to the University of Heidelberg, Germany and then the University of Helborn, Germany. In all, he had ten years of study, whereas the usual preparation for theology required only six years. After doing well in his final exams in “language, art and theology” the scholarship board declared him “fit for school and church duty.” He was now twenty-six years old.
After several years as pastor in several towns, married and with children, he was summoned to Hallau to fill the vacancy left by the death of his father. So J.C. returned to the idyllic countryside of his childhood. He, too, struggled to support his family with the same meager salary as his father. It was said that he often sat at the weaving wheel to help make clothing for the family. Tragically, his life was cut short at the age of 50. After serving only nine years and three months as parson, he had fallen victim to the plague. His wife had preceded him in death by one month, and in the course of that same year, nine of his children also died “of the plague”. The entire family, with exception of one son, Hans Heinrich #6, had been wiped out by an epidemic that had raged furiously through the countryside in 1629.

A chilling record of the tragedy that this epidemic brought to one family is graphically shown on the genealogical listing:

Johann Conrad Ammann, born 17 Dec. 1579, d. 18 Oct 1629 of the plague Wife,
Blandina Burgauer, born 2 Sept 1584, d. 20 Sept 1629 of the plague

Children:
Johann Heinrich, born 15 Nov 1607 (sole survivor, died 1669)
Juditha born 11 Nov 1610, died c.1629 of the plague
Samuel b.23 Dec 1611, died c1629 of the plague
Barbara born 18 Nov. 1613, died c1629 of the plague
Samuel born 3 Aug 1615, died c1629 of the plague
Child born c 1618, died c1629 of the plague
Child, born c 1620, died c1629 of the plague
Child, born c 1623, died c1629 of the plague

A touching memorial to the two pastors, father and son, as well as their wives and children exists in an Epitaph on a gravestone which still exists today in the graveyard of the St. Moritz Mountain Church in Hallau:

Here in God’s acre lies buried the pious, honorable and well-educated gentleman, Samuel Ammann, who served this church with pure teaching and a blessed life for 40 years and 2 months, after living for 35 years with his honorable and virtuous wife, Juditha Ruegerin, who returned to God in 1611, on the 27th Hornung, is buried here, with her 10 children. Likewise, Hans Conrad Ammann, who followed his father in this pastorate and as such served for 9 years 6 months with diligence and endeavor, died on Oct. 18,1626 at the age of 50 – having lived a blessed marriage for 23 years with his honorable and virtuous wife Blandina Burgowerin who also died in Sept. 20, 1629 at the age of 45, and who is also buried here with her 7 children.

This has been erected here in Christian honor and duty for them by the son and grandson of these same, Johan Heinrich Ammann, Guild Master and Senator of the Council of Schaffhausen, presently Bailiff of the City and Neunkirch government in the year 1668. May the gracious
God award a joyous entrance into eternal life and award us with a god-fearing heart, and a holy hour of death. Amen.

The family acquires a coat of arms

A coat of arms! This brings the vision of heraldry, of knights in armor, jostling for their fair damsels. The custom originated as a source of identification on shields and flags of the knights in tournaments and in war. The standard format of the coat of arms consists of a nameplate of three parts: the shield itself, the design or ornamentation on the shield representing some symbolic connection to the bearer of the shield; and standard decorations framing the top of the shield, resembling ribbons or feathers.

The age of chivalry passed and already by the 14th century, private citizens were beginning to adopt a coat of arms as a means of distinction and identification, following the standard format. Modifications of this are used today by replacing the shield with trademarks or logos, appearing as identification of clubs, corporations, nations or states on stationary and signposts, as well as on bath towels and T-shirts. For private families, it has become obsolete. At the most, decorative arrangements of the family’s initials are used.

Its very obsoleteness makes the Ammann coat of arms of greater interest. The elaborate story behind it starts with a family ancestor, Samuel Ammann. Of the 12 children born to Samuel Ammann #10, the pastor of Hallau, only
two survived to adulthood: Hans Conrad #33 and Samuel, the seal cutter, (not appearing on the family tree as he had no son to carry on the "blood line"). Samuel, like his brother, spent his childhood in the parsonage of his father. There is no record of where he trained for his profession as a seal cutter, medal artist and engraver. He practiced in Danzig and became known for his beautiful coins. Reputedly, he excelled in die-cutting, an art that found many uses for seals on documents and letters and on plates and other works, as well as for making coins for keepsakes.

The Ammann family already had a coat of arms, however the mayor of Danzig awarded the seal cutter a far more elaborate one in recognition of his professional accomplishments and services to the city. This was given in the form of a document with grandiose inscription extolling his artistry, and carrying a detailed description of the new Coat of Arms. With a magnifying glass, one may see the proposed design painted on the document in standard heraldic form, surrounded by ornate decorations. Since Samuel had no male heirs, official permission for the Ammann family to use that coat of arm was then passed on to Hans Heinrich Ammann #47, the forefather of all of the Schaffhause Ammanns living today. This document now hangs in a vitrine in the Cross Room of the Allerheiligen Museum in Schaffhausen.

Although Johann Speiman von der Speie was mayor of a protestant city, Pope Clemens VIII awarded him the title of Count Palatine and knighted him. These honorary titles were bestowed upon him by the Pope as thanks for the favor that Spieman had done for Italy in earlier years when, as a merchant, he traveled from the Baltic Sea to Italy with a fleet of ships carrying grain to help a famine stricken area of Italy. He also refers to himself as Mayor of Danzig in Prussia, although it was not until later that Prussia occupied Danzig for 14 years.

The inscription on the document is as follows:

Virtue and art are so highly estimated and preserved from all sides, that they have brought honor to those who have accomplished them thru heroic courage, understanding and long experience. From this, all nobility and other dignitaries and those bearing titles of honor have their source. In this same vein, I, Johann Spieemann von der Speie, though the Grace of Pope Clemens the Eighth, Count Palatine and Knight, as present Mayor of Danzig in Prussia felt it worthy to improve the coat of arms of the honorable and artistically talented Samuel Ammann of Schaffhausen from Switzerland, because of the applied industry and excellence in the art of carving coat of arms. I have ordered and awarded this in the following way:

"That from now on he may use two silver keys lying cross-wise on a blue shield: over these two keys is a golden four-cornered cross, and below the keys, a black triangle with a white diamond point. This triangle will rest on a green hill of three peaks, beautifully decorated with flowers filling the lower corner of the shield. Above the shield is a clearly visible
helmet with a crown, and on the crown stands a man with a long suit, yellow on the right side and black on the left, with a Bohemian cap whose upper part is blue with a white cuff: the left hand by his side and the right hand raised, holding a bunch of silver keys. The feathers on the right side are black and yellow, and white and blue on the left, as can be seen in the illustration. The cross represents sadness, the obligatory trait of all Christians, in contrast to the keys. He who abides by this with understanding will mature, flourish and earn the crown of life. With the embellishment of his coat of arms, Samuel Ammann will be encouraged to further advance artistry and skill, which will not only bring nourishment and wealth to him but also further honors.

All of this I give him by God's Will, so that besides God's Grace and the protection of the holy angels, he will gain the favor, encouragement and support of high persons for his betterment and acceptance, to make it possible for him to enjoy and enhance his life. To this confirmation and guarantee of freedom, I place my Palatinat Seal in Danzig, on the seven and twentieth day of the month of May in the one thousand six hundred and fourteenth year after the birth of Christ, our Lord and Savior, after the new, corrected calendar.”

Johan Speiman
In his own hand
Translation of beginning of letter of Rosa Labhardt Ammann to her grandchild in America, son of Othmar Ammann:

My dear Jurg!

What is this drawing that grandmother has made for you? See, it is the coat of arms of both of your grandparents. The piece, carved out of ivory, lies in front of me. If I would be as clever in drawing as the artist is in carving, I would be famous; but now you have to take it as it is. The ancestors of the Ammanns were government officials and they carry the city keys in their hands, and a measuring stick. The Labhardts were farmers; they worked in the fields and are shown holding the blades of scythes in their hands, decorated by the star of fortune for a good harvest. If you come next year to visit your grandmother, she will show you the piece and you will make a drawing of it that will please your grandfather. Grandmother has a lot of thing that will delight you, but you must be sure to come next year.... By that time you will be a big boy and I shall have to look up to you.....
Politics and Public Welfare

The first member of the family with a political career was Hans Heinrich Ammann #47. This son of a country pastor diligently climbed the political ladder, finally reaching the highly desirable life-long post of Baillif of Neunkirch.

Hans Heinrich had grown up in the lovely countryside parish of Hallau. His mother and father died within a month of each other, victims of the bubonic plague, which also claimed his seven siblings. Thus at the age of 22 he was the sole survivor of his family and as dramatically expressed by the archivist Rüedi, “the family lineage hung by a thread”. Then his wife, Anna Koch, “blessed” him with 12 children. Remarkably, five of their sons reached adulthood; four of them in turn have continued the line up to the present day.

He trained as a die cutter, the same as his uncle, Samuel Ammann of Danzig. There is no record of where he served his apprenticeship but perhaps his early training led him to other parts of Europe. This might explain why he was spared from the fate of his parents and siblings, who all succumbed to the plague. The first official sighting of Hans Heinrich is in the Registration Book of the Rueden Trade Guild. Although a craftsman, as a descendent of Hans Ammann #1, he automatically became a member of the family’s trade guild. This afforded him entrance to the political world of Schaffhausen.

Through the Guild, he was elected a representative of the city council. The council made public office appointments, thus membership afforded a very accommodating link in his ambition for a political career in Schaffhausen. He must have inspired confidence with the assigning committee, as he received the highly desirable position of mayor of the “Paradies District”, which formerly belonged to a catholic cloister and was then taken over by the city after the Reformation.

During that time he also held the important post of master of the “Spendamt”, a public institution of caring for the poor and needy. This was social welfare, 17th Century style. Every Thursday, Hans Heinrich stood in the courtyard of the hospice, supervising the dispensing of food and money. He was then appointed “Münzmeister”, master of the mint, a post carrying great responsibility. At that time each city was minting its own coinage. As a professional die cutter, he was well suited for the post, however he ran into complications that are discussed under “Minutiae”.

The next rung on the ladder was advancement to district judge, again an appointment made by the city council. This judgeship was a tribunal that dealt with most of the disputed violations at that time, as well as libel suits and cases of abuse. After two years of service as district judge, the Rueden Guild elected him to be their Guildmaster. This automatically placed him in the minor council of the Schaffhausen government, a most important political post.
Under the rules of the Ruedenzunft, a member was expected to make a voluntary donation of silver “in gratitude” for appointment to a new post. In the course of his political career, H.H. had made several impressive donations, which were carefully recorded in the guild’s “Donation Book”. When elected to the Paradies and Scholarship Office in 1637, he donated “a heavily gold-plated platter weighing 13 Lot” and in 1648 when elected to the grand council he gave additional beakers. In 1655, upon being appointed as Officer of Charity, he brought a gold-plated “Reiff bowl” weighing 12 Lot, and in 1663 he declared his gratitude for election to the minor council with a donation of two large bowls of 32 Lot. Although Schaffhausen had its own currency in coins, payment in kind was still in practice. It begs the question as to how H.H. paid for the purchase of all those gold platters and bowls.

From a childhood, living in the small pastorate next to the little church on the hill, Hans Heinrich was now to spend the last years of his life in a castle. Possibly his application for that country post in Neunkirch was determined by the connection of his father and grandfather with Hallau, a neighboring district. It was a post of great importance, and carried much authority. He was responsible for all legal and church matters as well as jurisdiction of the other districts. A full time scribe was assigned to him. The archivist, Ernst Rüedi, describes the customary ritual which was performed at an inauguration of a new bailiff: “In the vicinity of his castle, the new Bailiff of Neunkirch was being presented to his subjects and for their part, they had to take an oath of loyalty. After a banquet at the castle, the company went to Hallau in the afternoon where the same ceremony was enacted for the remaining citizens of the dominion. Wrapped in his yellow and gold judge’s cape, the bailiff stepped into the special area for officials, reminded his subjects to obey the Will of God and promised that their present rights would be respected. And remain unaltered. Then the scribe stood in the center of the ring of the assembled citizens and read the text of the oath.

Hans Heinrich is certainly the poster boy of the Ammann tribe. The painting of his portrait was made when he was 40 years old, just beginning his career in politics. His velvet jacket with fancy buttons and white ruffled collar give the impression of a “gentleman”. His portly figure and piercing expression portray the personality of a leader. In his hands and on the table in
front of him are the tools of the die cutter. Of his five sons, two became artists, one a goldsmith, one a physician, one an apothecary and one an Innkeeper. Little is known of his wife, Anna Koch, except that “she gave him 12 children” and preceded him in death by two years. The beautiful epitaph, which he dedicated to her memory, stands in the gallery of the church of his childhood in Hallau.

Besides active involvement in political posts, several members of the Ammann family were involved in public welfare, either on a voluntary basis or as part or fulltime social welfare workers. One is impressed by the sense of social responsibility that existed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, conducted privately or by the church or government. As mentioned earlier, Hans Heinrich #47 started his political career as master of the “Spendamt” in 1652-1658. This public institution covered a large area divided into twenty districts. Food and allowance money was given out every Thursday to those without means. Two ministers from the Ammann family assumed responsibility for management of the “Hospice on the Steps”, a school and orphanage which was originally founded and managed in 1708 by a public minded citizen of Schaffhausen, J.C. Hurter.

Johann Jacob Ammann #265, although a confectioner by profession, also served as city senator. The council appointed him financial advisor for the
Alms House ("Seelhaus") that provided support for beggars, care for sick traveling pilgrims, handicraft apprentices and poor beggar children. "The treasury of the Alms House was enriched daily by gifts of rich people". The Department of Charity provided the necessary bread; the Allerheiligen Cloister supplied wine. This institution was actually the forerunner of the city hospice that was founded in 1848 with funds from the Alms House. In his post as Senator, John Jacob was responsible for the "Poverty Report" and sat in on the Orphanage Committee, the Market Control Committee and the Committee of Finance. He was referred to as the "Market and Square Man".

The remarkable business career of Johann Jacob Ammann #279 is discussed under the section on the family’s outstanding members in that field as well as his political career as judge, senator, Guild master and Marriage lawyer. He deserves mentioning here for his important contribution to the social welfare of Schaffhausen during extremely hard times. Napoleon’s dominance of Switzerland from 1798 to 1807 had left the country extremely impoverished and recovery was slow. The situation was worsened by a famine in 1816. J.J. was a founding member of the Welfare Society that was formed. This fund was the oldest monetary institution in the canton and remained the only one for a century. It was established as a public house of lending “to eliminate the atrocious usury by the converted and unconverted Jews who, to a large degree brought the needy ones to a debt and thereby led to the ruin of many a family.” The undertaking was originally a patriotic service, with no interest charge, and of good will in the first years. Later, one adjusted to the needs of the time and thus established a fund similar to a Savings and Loan bank, as we know it today. J.J. also offered his business advice as one of the directors of the city’s Social Welfare Department.

Several members of the Ammann family served posts as physicians, judges or legal authorities. However, this jumps ahead of the story. Lawyers and doctors of the family are assembled separately.

**Religion in the Ammann family**

After the pastors Samuel and Hans Conrad Ammann, (father and son), the next generation branched out into fields of art, medicine and commerce. Then came a revival of representatives into theology. In all, to date, the family has ten members who devoted their lives to service in the field of religion down through the centuries, to Guido Ammann (1884-1965), who became the much-loved pastor of the town Thayngen in the canton of Schaffhausen.

Hans Heinrich #72 reverted back to the field of theology, following the footsteps of his two ancestors who tended their flocks in the pastorate of Hallau in the late 16th and 17th century. He, too, received a scholarship from the City Council of Schaffhausen to study abroad. For the first year he received a stipend of 80 Gulden, a tenfold increase from that of Samuel, one hundred years earlier, and for each of the next three years, 100 Gulden, with
the stipulation that “when his time abroad comes to an end, that he report to the mayor to determine where he should be assigned and to receive advice, in accordance to the legal vows which he had obediently given to the assembled school council.” When he completed his four years, in the second half of the 17th Century, Schaffhausen did not have enough posts to accommodate the many theology graduate students. To help them along while waiting for an opening, they were given a so-called “Expectant’s income”. They were required to give assistance to the ministers by conducting various routine functions such as Vespers and funeral services at the Cathedral. Also, they were to help “the old gentlemen” at any time in case of an emergency. Hans Heinrich then finally received a parish of his own.

The 18th Century produced several ministers in the family. Johannes #95 also went abroad for his education on a scholarship from the City Council. His education and career were in remarkable contrast to those of his forefathers of the 17th Century, who had served in the idyllic country parsonage in Hallau. He completed his studies at an exceptionally young age. “Since he displayed an extraordinary knowledge of languages as well as in matters of theology, he will receive summa cum laude applausa in the number of worthy servants of the Word of God”. During his career as minister, he received several posts as pastor, but mainly distinguished himself in teaching Hebrew and Greek at the pre-college school in Schaffhausen and finally rose to the position of member of the “Triumvirate”, a college that existed since 1536, and to which the three highest clergymen of the city belonged. From 1720 to 1740 as a member of the Committee of Examinations of candidates for pastor, his extensive education in theology must have served him well.

The son of Johannes #95, Johann Conrad #166, also studied theology and then entered the ministry with the official post as deacon at the Cathedral. Like his father, he pursued an academic career of teaching at the College in Schaffhausen. It was stated “he not only taught Greek to every student at the College but also, in secrecy, introduced the Hebrew language.” This interest in teaching Hebrew probably stemmed back to the desire to study the Bible in its original language. Of interest is that this had to be introduced “in secrecy.”

In the 19th century, Johann Jacob #298, son of the confectioner, Johann Jacob #265, sought a different route to work in the field of theology, thereby returning to the profession of his forefathers. After completion of his schooling, Johann Jacob became an apprentice to a local fabric merchant, yet he always clung to a wish to become a missionary. With the help of well-known church members, and above all, the spiritual Anabaptist David Spleiss, who recommended him as a candidate for the Mission, he finally obtained the permission of his parents. Generously, the fabric merchant to whom he was apprenticed released him from his apprenticeship without any penalty!

Following an education in the Mission House in Basel and a three-month stay in England, in February 1840 he boarded a sailboat; his destination: Bombay, India. At that time, the Suez Canal was not yet in existence and ships
to India faced the long arduous trip around the tip of Africa by the Cape of Good Hope. Having been forced back twice by terrible storms, the company finally set foot on the soil of India after four months on the ocean. Johann Jacob must have spent anxious hours and days and weeks, hanging on by his faith and diligent reading of the Bible. Now he was to face a new land, a hard climate and strange people. His wife, daughter of a well-known minister, J.J. Schalch, followed him to India: indeed a courageous act. All six of their children were born in India.

Johann Jacob performed his missionary work on the Malabar Coast, south of Bombay, an area inhabited by the Tulus. Upon his arrival to the country he attended the local public school to learn the native language. He even became proficient enough to be able to translate the New Testament into the Tulu language. This must have been a formidable task, as the language, a combination of Sanskrit and Dravidian, was difficult enough to speak, but even more so to write. As he struggled to translate the Bible he was totally unaware of the fate that would fall upon that Holy Text. His wife also learned the local language and helped her husband in his work, especially devoting herself to the women in the area, teaching them handwork. Although he had amassed a congregation of more than 900 members after twenty years of practice, the church had its enemies. An unfortunate incident occurred in 1856. The roof of the church was set on fire by a burning arrow shot by a person hostile to the mission. The building, which also served as living and sleeping quarters for the missionary and his family, was brought to rubble and ashes. Besides all his possessions, the flames had claimed the manuscript of his Bible translation. What a tragic loss this must have been.

After 21 years of service, he obtained a leave of absence to Switzerland. Two years later he returned to India, and shortly after arrival he contracted dysentery, which led to his death in 1864.

The tradition was continued in the twentieth century by the missionary’s grandson, Emanuel Guido #377. After his education in Basel, he was assigned a parsonage in the cantons of Argau and Thurgau, and then finally, in Thayingen, near Schaffhausen, where he served for nineteen years. So the pattern had run full cycle from pastors, to theologian mentors, to foreign missionary and then back to a pastor. Emanuel Guido was the only Ammann in his generation and the generation before and after him to choose the profession of theology. Seemingly the family has branched out into fields of art, science or business. It will be interesting to see what will emerge in future generations.

Artists, Craftsmen and a Watchmaker

Samuel Ammann, who acquired the present Coat of Arms for the Ammanns of Schaffhausen, was perhaps the most famous of the artists in the
family. His father and older brother were both pastors but he chose seal and die cutting for his profession. What brought him so far away from Schaffhausen to spend his adult lifetime in Danzig, a busy port town on the Baltic Sea? Records show that he had an illegitimate daughter by Adelheid Burkhard of Büsingen, then part of Canton Schaffhausen, when he was 19 years old. This may have been a reason for his move to Danzig.

How was Samuel able to establish himself in this important city? Apparently he developed good friendships and connections to the influential circles in the city and his seals became very much in demand. At that time, and still today, seals served the very important function of authenticating official documents. The artistry needed for seal cutting lends itself well for the metal work of stamping coins for currency and also for official gifts and commemorations. An article from a Danzig newspaper, the Danziger Neuesten Nachrichten of March 20, 1929 wrote: “Especially beautiful are the gold coins that were struck for gifts as keepsakes that Ammann created in 1613 and 1614 — true artistry with carefully worked details. The first medal that showed a view of the city originated from him. As the top artist of medal artistry, he was allowed to put his initials on his stamp. Apparently his skill was highly regarded and he was not treated as an ordinary die-cutter, in that he was a distinguished man. Thus, they allowed him to work on the King’s medals and to produce the Bombay coins. Evidently he had many students, as the names of other artists were written on coins next to his initials.”

The official document presented to him by the mayor of Danzig, confirming the authenticity of the embellishment of the Ammann coat of arms, expresses in rather elaborate praise the great esteem held for him as an artist and as a person.

Hans Heinrich #47, following in his uncle Samuel’s footsteps as a seal cutter, plied his trade in Schaffhausen before becoming involved in his political career. He was also talented as a painter. A sketch that he had produced showing a view of the city is an accurate image of how Schaffhausen appeared in the 17th Century. A portrait of him painted in 1647, before his appointment as mint master and Bailiff of Neunkirch, gives the impression that already then as a seal cutter, surrounded by the instruments of his profession, he presented himself as a very important person! Three of his sons were also involved in the field of art, two becoming glass painters. The third son served a goldsmith apprenticeship in the city of Nürnberg, which was noted for its skilled handcrafting. He then returned to Schaffhausen, where he practiced as goldsmith and also as seal-engraver. His nephew, in turn, served a goldsmith apprenticeship in Nürnberg, where he then settled and practiced his craft. Further down the line, a generation later, another Ammann was famous as an etcher.

In an age before photography, one can appreciate the role played by artists of portraits and landscapes. Also, all jewelry and ornamentation had to be handcrafted. Lest one is led to conclude that all the Schaffhausen Ammanns
produced art of outstanding quality, the works of one member, Johannes Ammann #158, an etcher, were described in the Swiss Artists’ Lexicon as “rather mediocre”.

Johann Heinrich #127 (1701-1751), “the small watchmaker”, is one of the few members of the Ammann family that practiced in the field of watchmaking. He was the son of a minister, one of 14 siblings, six of whom died in childhood. One knows little of his life. Since watch making is so strongly equated with matters “Swiss”, Johann Heinrich serves well for a discussion of this interesting subject.

Mechanical watches originally functioned as timekeepers, more accurate and reliable than the sundial or sand clock. Gradually they also became items of decoration, bringing watchmakers into the league of artists. Also, it was discovered that jewels, especially rubies and sapphires, were excellent for use as bearings in watches.

Mechanical clocks, forerunners of watches, first appeared in the 16th Century. They were largely works of the locksmith. Since these appeared in public places, usually on towers, they were called “tower clocks”. As these clocks became more sophisticated, the production was taken over by a group of skilled artists called “large clockmakers”. Later, mobile clocks for the home and finally clocks for the pocket and wrist were called “watches”. The artists making these were called “small clockmakers”. Johann Heinrich belonged to this latter group who, at that time, would have learned their trade through an apprenticeship and then probably had their own business, even working from home. Further discussion of the watch industry in Switzerland is added under “Minutiae”.

Perhaps some of the artistic talent has been introduced into the gene bar of the Ammann tribe by the marriage of Emanuel Christian #342, son of the missionary to India, to Emilie Rosa Labhardt, daughter of the lithographer Emanuel Labhardt, known for his beautiful landscape paintings. Certainly one can appreciate a strong sense of artistic expression and concern for the aesthetic appearance in the structural designs of the majestic bridges of another member of the tribe, Emalie Rosa’s son, Othmar. Who knows how it may resurface in future generations.

**Innkeepers, Merchants and Industrialists**

Samuel Ammann #61, the second son of the Neunkirch bailiff, is the oldest member of the tribe to carry on the line directly down to the present. He was a substitute at the Chancery court of the Council and later was assigned a judiciary position. Besides his public posts, he turned his talents to a business enterprise. In 1670, he bought an inn in Schaffhausen called “The Black Horse”, which was later renamed “The Raven”. It became known as one of the best inns of the city, especially popular because of its large stables.
Stables? In the city? This would have been the equivalent of today’s hotel with a parking garage. It conjures up the vision of travelers arriving on horseback or with a horse-driven coach, stopping overnight for lodging. Upon Samuel’s death, his younger son took over the management of the Inn and even made an addition to it. The management was continued by the third generation but finally by the end of the 19th Century it had to be closed. Times had changed. An inn in the city was no longer appropriate. Travel by horse and buggy had faded into memory.

A century later, another trio of father, son and grandson became owners and managers of a hotel. A charming view of this hotel is shown in a reproduction in the archival book of “The Ammann Family of Schaffhausen”. The doorman is standing by the main entrance, welcoming the newly arrived coach. Horses are drinking from the fountain at the open square, people are bustling about in the square, and guests are peering out of the front windows of the hotel.

This hotel, “The Crown”, had a long and interesting history. It was the first hotel in Schaffhausen and already mentioned in 1487 as the “grandest Inn of all.” Names of famous foreign visitors were signed on the registry: Montaigne, Beza, Alexander I of Russia, Napoleon III. The famous German poet Goethe was a guest at the Crown when he honored the city with a visit on his second time in Switzerland. Being on the course of the old carriage route for foreign traffic between Eastern and Western Europe, the famous “Crown Inn” saw many guests of high post, (not always welcome, especially during the time of the Napoleonic Wars and the overthrow of Napoleon in 1814). The rooms were occupied by the ruling Princes Alexander I of Russia, Franz I of Austria and Friedrich Wilhelm III from Prussia as their troops marched through in 1813/1814.

Johann Heinrich Ammann #237, a tradesman by profession, active in politics as senator, district judge and finally as guild master, acquired the Crown in 1780. He had purchased it from the original owner for 14,000 Gulden, plus 3,000 Gulden for the furnishings. His son, Johann Heinrich #283 took over managing and ownership of the hotel during a period of severe economic depression following the Napoleonic Wars. In spite of that, he was
courageous enough to enlarge the hotel. He bought the adjacent house “By the Golden Elk” and joined it with the “Crown”, which then earned the reputation of being the most admired and spacious hotel in Switzerland. In spite of the enlargements, it was still necessary to rent rooms in the neighborhood to accommodate all the guests. In 1847, at the death of his father, August Ammann #323 took over the management. He had the honor to serve dinner to General Henry Dufour, Chief of the Swiss Army, as a guest of the city when he came to inspect the northern frontier. When August retired and sold the hotel, its reputation continued for some time and then finally faced bankruptcy in 1883. Trains had replaced horses and new routes between the East and West were established that no longer came through the cities of the old carriage route. How changes in modes of transportation alter the patterns of civilization. One thinks of the history of the old “silk route”.

The spotlight for the Ammann family’s success in the business world in the 18th Century shines on a father and son, Hans Jacob #146 and Johann Heinrich #216. Views of their respective houses, “At the Zoo” and “On Zieglerburg” are both representative of the magnificence of patrician houses of that era. Hans Jacob had purchased his house for the sum of 16,000 Gulden (around 15,000 Louis d’or). For his house with the water fountain in front, the son paid 13,500 Gulden. The grand facade of the house represents a good example of the classical Schaffhausen rococo style. With such an impressive exterior, one would expect the interior to follow in character, with furniture and decorations to be evidence of the international trading of its housemaster.

At the height of his career, the father, Hans Jacob, was running a prosperous trading business that was known throughout Europe. His connections reached to Vienna, Berlin, Copenhagen, Amsterdam, Paris, London, Bordeaux, Le Havre, Rotterdam, Hamburg and other port towns that dealt in overseas trading of such products as tobacco, coffee, tea and indigo. Wine was a popular item. The trade of metal, particularly iron and steel, was exchanged for material and wool. It takes quite a stretch of the mind to
visualize the complications of transporting these products to and from such distant parts of the world by carriage, barge, and ship.

The carefully kept accounts of the trading house of Hans Jacob Ammann are preserved in the Cantonal archives. The listing itself invokes a picture of the hustle and bustle of a carefully managed, successful business with a staff of competent accountants, secretaries, managers, and errand boys: Two large official books (1762-76) as well as 4 equally large folio volumes covering the time from 1748 until 1779, with interruptions; one copy book of 1773/74, that included current correspondence; four books of exchange letters out of the time from 1764 until 1780; correspondence from the year 1754; various accounting books; a volume on the Zurzacher Trades Fair of 1756/57, among others.

Besides this prosperous business, Hans Jacob served as judge, and a member of the Senate. Later he was elected to be a member of the House of Representatives, and a Guild Master. His career also included the post of Judge of Marriage Court, described below under “Minutiae”. One might say that he was a “Jacob of all trades.”

Hans Jacob’s son, Johann Heinrich #216, was also a merchant, carrying his trade into foreign countries. Through his connections with Austrian royalty, he received a coat of arms and carried the title “von Ammann”. Besides trading, he served as a banker and also was appointed as “Supervisor of Salt”, a position of great responsibility. This latter post draws attention to the fact that salt was then considered a precious commodity, and regarded as royal property of Austria. One wonders how and where it was kept and how it was doled out to the consumers. Today we can freely pick up a box of salt from the shelf of the local grocery store.

Participation in the field of business started in the late 18th Century and has remained a popular choice since then. Emanuel Christian #342, second son of the missionary, was born in India, and at the age of seven was sent to the mission school in Basel and then to an agricultural school in Zurich. It was his father’s dream for him to become a plantation owner in India. After graduation, he became an overseer on the estate of a knight in Posen, Poland. When his mother returned to Schaffhausen from India after the death of his father, he left Poland to be near her and established himself in Feuerthalen, a small town on the Rhine River, across from Schaffhausen, with the firm that was building the first sewing machines and bicycles. It was there that he met Emalie Rosa, the daughter of the landscape artist Emanuel Labhardt. After 5 years of working in various enterprises with his two brothers in Berlin, he returned to marry her. Together they started a business of manufacturing and selling straw and felt hats, conducted right from their house. The business gradually expanded into a factory. A large clientele for the hats was acquired in Switzerland but the hats were also being exported to large European cities and to lands overseas. For his large staff, Emanuel was an exemplary employer, concerned for their good working conditions, organizing boat
excursions and theatre productions for the families, and establishing a sickness pension fund for them.

Entrepreneurship is a trait that turns up in the Ammann family from the time of the “patriarchs”, Hans #1, #2 and #3. By the middle of the 20th Century, about twenty percent of the members have been engaged in fields of industry. It will take a passage of time before more family stories of the next generation can be added to this chapter.

**There are doctors in the house, and some lawyers**

From the 17th Century onward, every generation had at least one physician represented in the Ammann family. Apothecary was also popular, and often the physician and pharmacist served hand in hand, or sometimes the physician performed the function of both, as well as the supervision of public health. Most of them probably faithfully tended to their patients as best they could without antibiotics, sonograms and heart transplants. They witnessed the terrors of the plague and the rigors of childbirth. A few broke the mold by establishing themselves in foreign countries: Prussia, Shanghai, St. Petersburg, and Berlin. Some distinguished themselves as professors or scientists. One was renowned for his collection of fossils, and another for his collection of herbs.

![Image of Dr. Johannes Ammann and Dorothy Zeigler](image.png)

**Dr. Johannes Ammann, city physician, and Dorothy Zeigler, his wife, 1640-1704**

Johannes #64, one of the six sons of the Bailiff of Neunhaus became the first in the family line to receive a degree in medicine. He had received a prize of 12 Louis d’or (132 Gulden) for his thesis on “The Treatment of Pleurisy” given to him by the Council of Schaffhausen. Two years later, he wrote a treatise, dedicated to the mayor and senator of Schaffhausen, titled, “Unusual treatise and thorough report on the pestilence”. For this he was rewarded by
the city council with a yearly allowance of "31 saum of wine 5 mutt grain, 6 klafter firewood." Apparently the city was encouraging outstanding accomplishments of its citizens, albeit in terms of wine, grain and firewood. This brings to mind that coins had not yet been used for universal currency back in the 17th century. One can only wonder whether the city owned the vineyards, wheat field and woods, or whether these products were obtained from citizens as payments for taxes.

Johannes was appointed a city physician, a post that he shared with another physician. They managed the Department of Health, which was responsible for admission of "incurables" to the city hospice, examination of all the surgeons ("wound physicians") applying for practice in the city or suburbs, and also in charge of the pharmacies. Besides his function as city physician he taught at the Schaffhausen "College of the Humanities", a pre-college institution, teaching Greek, Physics and Hebrew. Johannes and his wife had 12 children, of whom a daughter and four sons lived to adulthood. Two charming miniatures, representing Dr. Johannes and his wife, can be seen in the Apothecary Room of the Allerheiligen Museum in Schaffhausen. From their portraits, painted on copper, with black, polished frames, they look out into the world with serious mien.

One of their sons, Johann Conrad Ammann #94 also became a physician, with rather an unusual career. An appealing portrait of him shows a dreamy-eyed, handsome young man. By the age of 18, he had already earned his degree in medicine in Basel. On a trip as a student he became so enchanted with Holland that he later settled there to practice. Becoming interested in the problems of the deaf-mute, he performed pioneering work in speech therapy for them. It was his claim that he could teach a deaf-mute to speak fairly fluently in two months, providing that the patient was of normal intelligence and had no impediment of the tongue. His technique was described as follows: "He uses himself as a mirror for showing the movements of speech and also lets the student feel the vibrations of the vocal cords — a procedure that has become very important in teaching the deaf-mute. This basis of his teaching derived from a fact already known to him that the deaf-mute must be helped to distinguish the voice from the breathing. He also maintained that it was important immediately to associate the learned sound with a written picture.
knowledge that has been currently revived in the so-called picture-writing method. Although he was originally a physician, he retired from his practice and devoted himself totally to the study of the deaf-mute.” A publication of an article describing his technique made him known to others in this field. Even a street in Amsterdam carries his name. The cause of his early death at the age of 55 has not been recorded.

Like his grandfather, father and uncle, Johannes Ammann #179 received a medical degree, however he never practiced medicine. His great love and expertise was in botany. After graduation from the University of Leiden, he came to the house of the court physician of the King of England on the recommendation of his professors. There he catalogued the valuable collection of natural herbs (over 300 large portfolios) and translated the physicians’ textbook *Historia Jamaicam* from English into Latin. This brought him recognition and acceptance as a member of the English Society of Science. In 1731 he was proposed and accepted as Professor of Botany and Nature Study in St. Petersburg. There he married Elizabeth Schumacher, the oldest daughter of the advisor and librarian of the Czar. She died one year after their marriage, and in less than a year following that, he also died. Johannes left a valuable herbarium of over 5000 herbs that he had collected with immense effort and great expense from Holland, England, Russia and elsewhere. This collection was acquired by the Czar’s Art Museum in St. Petersburg as well as the collection of manuscripts and correspondences.

Another colorful physician in the family is Johann Conrad Ammann #217, who also was a physician-collector, his specialty being the study and collection of fossils. He lived in Schaffhausen in that magnificent house, “At the Zoo”, originally owned by his father. There must have been some influence of the fossils that allowed him to live out his 87 years in his majestic house, surrounded by his unusual collection of old etchings, a herbarium of rare, exotic plants, and a library of rare books in the field of medicine and natural history. This collection that Johann Conrad amassed in a period of over 50 years gained him international recognition. He had acquired specimens from all parts of the world, some of which he had found himself. He had tirelessly collected many specimens from Randen, a surrounding area of the city of Schaffhausen, known for its fossils. It may have been that collecting these local fossils had inspired his interest and was the beginning of his magnificent
collection. Fossils and shells are usually sourced from sea life and tropical fauna; finding them in Switzerland seems unusual. Shifting tectonic plates, receding glaciers, greenhouse effects, all are reminders of climate changes and the upending of some sea deposits from the Paleozoic era.

A well-known specialist in fossils gave the following enthusiastic description of J.C.’s collection: “It was known to me for several years and now with amazement and pleasure, I have seen a part of it. That the Randen” (an area surrounding the city of Schaffhausen) “supplied many beautiful specimens, I can well believe, and practically all are outstanding and perfect pieces that Dr. Ammann has made worthy to place in his collection from there and other places”. This was followed by a two-page description of the most beautiful pieces and concluded with the remark, “But surely, my gentlemen, this description has become somewhat prolonged. It couldn’t be made shorter, it had to be so. Doesn’t it seem to you that alone this cabinet is worth a trip to Schaffhausen?” Unfortunately, no traces of this unusual collection are to be found. It is believed that part of it was auctioned off at the time of Johann Conrad’s death. Another portion, consisting of more than 60 drawers, was supposedly kept on the top floor in the Natural History Museum in Schaffhausen, and was destroyed by the American bombing in April 1, 1944.

And now for the lawyers.

There are almost as many members of the Ammann family practicing law as those in the field of medicine: nine members holding legal positions: four judges, three legal councilors, two jurists, and a marriage lawyer. Most of them had local, cantonal or federal appointments. Some were educated in Switzerland; others went abroad to Heidelberg, Berlin, and Leipzig.

In medieval times the ruling monarchs or the church controlled legal judgments. Freedom from the Austrian Empire in 1415, joining the Swiss Confederation in1501 and breaking from its ties with Rome during the Reformation in1529 were major events bringing radical changes in the legal system in Schaffhausen. The guilds played a vital part of these changes. By the16th Century the city justice department consisted of 20 members, one member being recruited from each of the 12 Guilds, and the remaining members were chosen from the citizenry. These 12 district judges
Review

(Urteilsprecher) regulated laws of debt for the city as well as disputes between employer and employee concerning salary, discharge, etc. Likewise they “ruled in all circumstances dealing with physical attacks or fights with weapons (duels, knives, etc.), marriage violations and slander”. The district judge also presided over the criminal court and under his chairmanship, the council decided on crimes worthy of the death penalty. Separation of powers between criminal and civil violations did not exist.

Appointment as district judge (Urteilsprecher) was usually the first step in a political career. Hans Ammann #2 and #3 were elected to this post, however the career of #2 was cut short by his untimely death at the battle of Kappel in 1531 and #3 apparently was not interested in a further career in the government. Then after two generations of pastors, the name of Ammann reappeared on the political scene through the flamboyant figure of Hans Heinrich #34, whose ambitious career commenced with public posts. As bailiff of Neunkirch, he often functioned as a judge in local disputes. Although he had no formal legal training, one could say, “his word was law”.

In the 18th century, a bona fide lawyer entered the family scene: Hans Jacob #146. His post in the Marriage Court had its origin during the introduction of the Reformation. Prior to that, Schaffhausen was under the jurisdiction of the Episcopal court for matters of marriage and all related situations. With the separation from Rome, the entire clerical jurisdiction was abolished and one of the first duties of the Schaffhausen council was to create a position to take over this function. Already by November 1529, the marriage court had been established. It judged marriage disputes, complaints of divorce, cases of prostitution and obscenity, paternity claims, etc. The members of this court consisted of the three highest clergymen in the city and members chosen from the House of Representatives.

Centuries later, when the legal system became unified under the Swiss Confederation, a father and son distinguished themselves in the field of jurisprudence beyond the boundary of Schaffhausen.

The father, Johann Heinrich Ammann #305 obtained his jurisprudence education in Basel, Berlin and Heidelberg. His career rapidly rose from legal appointments in the city and then the canton of Schaffhausen. Finally he was elected to the Federal Court of Justice. From there, by an unprecedented majority, he was elected chairman of the House of Representatives. He was noted for his clear legal judgments. He had a long list of public positions unrelated to his professional appointments. As so many others in the family, he died at an early age, (47 years old).

Although his father’s act was a hard one to follow, the son Paul Albert Ammann #358 distinguished himself equally in both legal services to the public and in his private practice. For his graduate education in jurisprudence he attended the University of Leipzig and Heidelberg, where he received his doctorate “summa cum laude”. He started his legal career in Schaffhausen by becoming a member of the Cantonal Court of Justice in 1891, and then took
over the presidency of the District Court, a post that he kept for 22 years besides representing Schaffhausen in the Federal House of Representatives. He became famous throughout Switzerland for the clarity of his presentations and sharpness of his judgments.

Paul Albert did not have any children, so the legacy of two distinguished lawyers ended. In fact, no lawyer emerged in the subsequent four generations. It remains for some Ammann born in the 21st Century to pick up the banner.

And where were the ladies?

By the old rules of genealogy, the family name is carried on by the male line. But what about the mothers, sisters, wives and daughters? Haven’t they contributed to the family history? Shouldn’t they be included in the family stories? Haven’t they added to the family characteristics? “No” says the archivist, Ernest Rüedi, “then one would have the history of the ancestors rather than of the family.” The whole saga of family “blood line” goes far back. It has been regarded as vitally important in succession of monarchies and dynasties. Today, access to information from our DNA has brought out many surprises concerning this so-called “pure blood line”. Civilization will move a step forward when accomplishments establish one’s identity rather than one’s lineage. Family names, however, offer convenient labels for identification.

The genealogical listing of the original archival study of the family offers a glimpse of the role of the women. The maiden name of the wife is recorded, with date of birth, marriage and death. If prominent, her family name and family town of or origin is mentioned. Baptism records recognize the full birth names of both parents. The husband or his family is recognized if deemed worthy of note.

A great debt of gratitude is owed to Lewis Bunker Rohrbach of Picton Press for his generous and courageous offer to put the genealogical table in Rüedi’s text into the modern American genealogical format. It was indeed a heroic contribution; exacting far more time and research than had been anticipated. With the modern Modified Register system every wife, daughter, and child is listed. This is important for researchers and gives recognition to the individuals, regardless of their sex and whether they have produced male progeny. Mr.Rohrbach noted in the preface to his genealogical listing, “My strong instinct is that additional research on most of the individuals listed below, except for those born prior to about 1600 would yield significant new information.” Interested, anyone?

In several cases, a joint coat of arms served as recognition of a wife’s family. That of the pastor, Johann Conrad #5 and his wife Blandine Burgauerin is no longer in existence, however a copy of it was shown in a chronicle of the country scribe in the Neunkirch Archive. The original had been placed above the epitaph at the St. Moritz church in Hallau at the grave
sight of the two pastors, Samuel and Johann Conrad, and their wives and children. Another joint coat of arms appears on the gravestone epitaph honoring the wife of the Bailiff, Hans Heinrich. The text and print of this epitaph appears at the end of this section. In 1662, Magdelena Peyer, daughter of the country Squire family from the Court of the Rose was married to Hans Heinrich #62. The combined coat of arms confirming this union is still to be found on the middle bracket of the bay window at the “House of the Ark”. A fourth double coat-of-arms is today in the Allerheiligen Museum in Schaffhausen. It is an intricately carved piece of ivory, commissioned by the missionary to India, Johann Jacob #298, on the occasion of the marriage of his son Emanuel Christian #342 to Emalie Rosa Labhardt, daughter of the Swiss landscape artist.

Several female members of the Ammann family were involved in the Pietist movement by marriage. Anna Maria Ammann, daughter of the goldsmith Hans Conrad #59, was married to Salomon Peyer, a minister who became a member of the “Pietists”. He and five other clergymen were “crossed off” the list of ministers of Schaffhausen by a council decision called the “Piety Process”. This certainly must have had a great effect on the lives of his wife and children. Following the death of Anna Maria, in 1725, he became more actively involved in the movement and this finally led to his exile to Hamburg.

The marriage of the daughter of the Johann Jacob #279, to a member of the Hurter family resulted into a happier connection with the Pietist movement. Her husband, Friedrich Emanuel Hurter, was leader of the Evangelic Church in Schaffhausen. He had advanced to a post in the Cathedral in 1824, and then in 1835 became a member of the Anabaptist movement. His conservative attitude together with Catholic sympathies, were not well accepted by his colleagues. After various strong attacks and counterattacks he stepped down from all his public offices and in a surprise move converted in 1844 to Catholicism during a visit to Rome. On the first of January 1846, he entered into the service of the Kaiser’s court in Vienna. Shortly thereafter, his wife converted. From the post of Court Counselor and Historian, Kaiser Franz Joseph raised Hurter in 1852 to the rank of Peer: “Von Hurter-Ammann”. The Document of Nobility (Adelsbrief), dated 21 October 1852, specifically enabled the recipient to “add the name of his wife, Ammann.” Today descendents still carry that family name of Hurter-Ammann.

Other women in the Ammann family married men sufficiently important to warrant mentioning in the family genealogical listing. The three daughters of the Guild Master and highly successful businessman Hans Jacob Ammann #146 all married well: the oldest daughter, Anna Elisabetha, to J.J.Pfister, an owner of a silk spinning mill, the next daughter in line, Maria Catherina, to Eberhard Gaupp, a successful manufacturer and cloth merchant and Maria Magdalena, the youngest daughter to Rudolph Frey, who was in the business of her father. This Rudolph Frey, a citizen of Lindau, Switzerland, applied for
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citizenship in Schaffhausen; an appointment very difficult to obtain at that time. The sum for admission was set extremely high, increased in 1726 to the impossible amount of 4,000 Gulden. However, Rudolph Frey received his citizenship in consideration that he “not only possessed considerable means, but also that he was industrious and in all ways an upright man”. He had paid the required 4000 Gulden, but also ceded various property assessments to the amount of 6500 Gulden. Besides wealth and prestige, having a guild master as father-in-law was probably very helpful.

The marriage of several Ammann daughters into the Junker Peyer family was probably also facilitated by their father’s connection in the business world. This noble family of squires was involved in the social welfare and political life of Schaffhausen for several generations, a role which must have been shared by their wives. A brief description of the contributions to the city by the Peyer family is discussed at the end of this paper under “Minutiae.”

Ah, the Gaups, the Freys, the Hurters and the Peyers: all good connections! This crossing of marriages from one family to the other went on for several generations. From prints showing the grandiose front of their residences, one longs for the chance to glance through the windows to visualize the home and social lives of these families. With successful manufacturing and trading to distant parts of Europe and the Far East, some of this must have reflected in the household: porcelain from the Orient on their tables, lavish dinners, ladies gowned in luxurious fabrics from papa’s factory?

It is perhaps out of place to describe the life of a man in this section on the ladies, yet the story of David Ammann, the youngest son of the missionary to India is so linked with a concern for women and children, that he deserves mention here. The archivist, Rüedi, has not reported much about his life, yet an article published by the Schweizer Frauenblatt (Swiss Women’s Journal), after his death in 1923 highly praises his work in the development and advancement of the women’s movement. His early adult years were spent in a restless search for his place in life. First he studied theology, and then traveled in Spain and France as a private tutor. Later he joined his brothers in manufacturing and business. Then this man who had spent his childhood in India, embraced the Zoroastrian faith. This religion, originating in Persia, mainly concerned itself with the goal of purity of the soul and body. David immersed himself in these teachings and returned to Switzerland to promote principles stressing the importance of hygiene and a simple vegetarian diet. His ideal was the woman as “Priestess of the Hearth”, who stood beside her husband in total social and political freedom.

Added to these bits and pieces of women in the family, is this charming account of Emalie Rosa, mother of Othmar Ammann #374. Before marriage, she and her sister were running a fashion shop, selling ladies hats and accessories. An acquaintance told this lovely anecdote about her: “Each spring the Labhardt sisters came to our house and brought along samples of the newest hats. And whenever Emelie entered with her merry smile and held up
the colorful beauties from her boxes, it was as though she brought along spring itself!” Later Rosa (Emalie) married Emanuel Ammann, (one of the sons of the missionary to India) and together they started a business of manufacturing felt and straw hats. This developed into a large factory with a wide circle of clients in Switzerland and also in European cities and overseas. Rosa was fully engaged in the business, contributing with her artistic talents for exhibits in the Parisian fashion houses and elsewhere.

Although Swiss women did not have federal voting privileges until 1971, records reveal interesting insights in women’s status. For instance, in the document of the sale of the house purchased by Hans Ammann #1 in 1477, his wife is mentioned as co-owner:

We, the mayor and council of Schaffhausen recognize and let be known to all with this letter, that our citizen Erhart Sailer and with him the honorable Hans Murback, our senator friend in the district of Adelheid and the honorable housewife of the named Erhart came to us in good faith and in good faith reported to us that they received payment of a hundred pound good Haller from Hans Ammann, our citizen, and Arena his wife. For that they have received the ownership for themselves and their progeny of the house and courtyard in our city by the Upper Gate.

Anna, wife of Hans #3, was one of the children of Christopher Clauser by his second wife, Margaretha Ruettimann, an orphan whom he had purchased from a cloister for 44 Gulden 32 Shilling, (or so the record stated. Probably she was not actually purchased, but rather the payment was simply a contribution to the Cloister.) When the mother died, Anna received
inheritance from her mother from the Cloister. It is interesting to note that in those early centuries, women were awarded such rights.

Samuel Ammann #61 the Innkeeper, married Elizabeth Behel, the “surviving widow of the Bailiff Bergers” from Zurich. At the time of his marriage, he requested to have his bride excused from the obligatory 50 Gulden that a “foreign” bride had to pay the Spital (a charity organization), on the excuse that she had been a citizen of Schaffhausen before her first marriage. The Council hastily decided that his bride would not be regarded as a citizen of Schaffhausen before the designated sum be paid. A footnote in the minutes of the Council of July 3, 1689 stated, “this has been taken care of by the same evening.” The wedding promptly took place on the next day.

In the 18th Century, the marriage ceremony of city dwellers often took place in a village church “in the country-side of our Lord.” This custom was apparently an exception in the middle of the 17th Century. Through the mediation of his influential father the Bailiff and Mint-master Hans Heinrich Ammann #47, he was given permission to be married in the village of Herblingen, but only under the condition that the bride place 12 Gulden in the “poor box” and continue this custom from then onward.

Another Sammuel Ammann, #79, a goldsmith, settled and married in Nurnberg, Germany. At that time, a citizen of Schaffhausen moving to another canton and especially to a foreign country would have to notify the city council of his intentions and to renew his citizenship every three years. Otherwise, his citizenship would be “crossed out”. He also would have had to pay the fee of 50 Gulden to marry a foreign wife and she would have to give proof of a wealth of at least 400 Gulden. The council had cancelled his citizenship, which seemed to indicate that this fee had not been paid.

Rather amazingly, several divorces occurred in the family, starting from as far back as the 18th Century. One Ammann, Samuel #125 seemingly ran out of luck with his women. After a marriage of 12 years, his first wife, Barbara Ziegler died and he remarried within seven months, to Anna Maria Schwarz, who was eighteen years his junior. This marriage ended in divorce and Anna Maria then married H. Bernhardt Ziegler, (related to the first wife, Barbara Ziegler? The dates and details of this are not recorded.) He then married a third time, Maria Barbara Speissegger, 12 years his junior and who outlived him by 28 years. There were no recorded children from any of these three marriages.

Widowers very often remarried to the sister or cousin of their first wife. The widows rarely remarried (or if so, this would not have been recorded on the Ammann family genealogical listing). Likewise, no record was made of the support given to the divorced wife and to whom care of the children had been relegated.

Stories of the women of the Ammann family will have to be left to the imagination. Some of that family spirit must have raged in the female breasts and expressed itself as best it could. A supportive wife may have inspired,
encouraged, even assisted her husband in his achievements. Some ambitious mother may have passed on the spark to her sons. An unmarried daughter may have become a beloved schoolteacher or trustworthy aunt. An artistic talent may have expressed itself in painting, singing, embroidering. Such contributions are not registered in the guild or city records; for that matter, neither are the personal qualities of the male members.

All children appear on the genealogical listing, male and female. Especially in the early centuries, it was not unusual for the married women to have “given” 10 or 12 children to their husbands. Even though many of these children died in infancy, one does not have to look far to realize what functions the women played in the families. Childbearing, rearing and household duties would not have allowed time for an outside career. Tragically, so many of the children never reached adulthood. The women must have taken their role stoically and carried their sorrows silently. Theirs are the untold stories.

Besides the epitaph in memory of his father and grandfather, as well as their wives and children, Hans Heinrich, the Bailiff commissioned a touching and elaborate epitaph in memory of his wife, Anna Kochin, which is now located in the Nave of the Mountain Church in Neunkirch. It is worked in wood in the elaborate style of the late Renaissance. Above the written part is the joint coat of arms of Ammann-Kochin and on either side are two columns, various other elaborate allegoric decorations and an accompanying verse glorifying the virtues of a housewife.
Here laid to rest is the very honest and virtuous wife, Anna Ammann, born Anna Kochin, on January 17, 1609. She lived a Christian life for 58 years, 11 months, was married 35 years 6 months, having born and nurtured 11 children, of whom she left 10 after death, and died in Grace on the 16th of December, 1667.

Here lies the model of virtue, entombed and buried, Enhanced from heaven with beautiful talents, God, her highest passion: discipline, her shield. In her heart true; in speech, soft and mild. Her master, who loved her deeply, she in turn loved. To her children, the awe of God was always preached, She was comfort to the ill, support to the poor, Yet pale death used the force That by God's wish, took her from the world Into the Kingdom of Heaven; we firmly believe That if the Lord would show himself in the clouds, So then her pure soul would rise again in glory.

In Christian memoriam and out of obligatory duty, her surviving husband had this erected; Johan Heinrich Ammann, Guild Master and Senator of Schaffhausen, 30 years Bailiff of the City and District of Neunkirch. May the forgiving God give the deceased a glorious entrance into eternity; to us, however, grant a god-fearing heart and holy hour of death. Amen

**From rope to steel wire**

Rope has an interesting history, going far back in human civilization. Today, even though steel and synthetics frequently replace hemp, rope making is still an important industry, now usually performed by machines. Descriptions of rope making and cable spinning are given in the next section, under Minutiae. In the Ammann family tribe, Hans #1, back in the 16th century, was a rope maker and this trade was carried on in the family for three generations. With a stretch of the imagination, Othmar Ammann #374, in the 20th Century, has

Othmar H. Ammann, New York bridge builder
revived the rope makers’ tradition by spinning steel ropes to form the cables for his masterful bridges.

His story starts with his formative years at the end of the 19th Century, and continues with his amazing career in structural engineering, covering more than three quarters of the 20th Century. His father Emanuel Ammann #342, was a manufacturer, son of the missionary, Johann Jacob #298. Othmar’s mother was the daughter of the Swiss landscape artist, Emanuel Labhardt. This created an interesting mixture of talents and backgrounds.

The first phase of Othmar’s life was spent in Schaffhausen, steeped in family and Swiss tradition and nourished by a thorough Swiss education in the grade schools and the famous Federal Polytechnic Institute in Zurich. Following graduation, and two years with an engineering firm, he traveled to the United States to “gain more experience”. Coming for a year, staying for his lifetime, he left his mark on the map of New York City and an impressive lineup of long span bridges around Manhattan and surrounding boroughs. Literally, just glancing on a map of New York City, one sees his major bridges connecting the boroughs to the mainland: the George Washington, Bayonne, Triborough, Bronx-Whitestone, Throgs Neck and Verrazano-Narrows Bridges. These bridges are his monuments. They stand as testimony to his esthetic sense of simplicity and majestic design.

Unlike his forefathers, whose stories had to be constructed on dates of births, deaths, christenings, and taxations, Othmar leaves a glorious paper trail. Many interesting stories may be gleaned from his letters, professional writings, newspaper and magazine interviews and personal accounts. To share each detail of his long interesting career would be out of balance with the bare skeleton of information given to the other members of the family. The following vignettes describe the brightest moments in his full, productive life.

April 24, 1904, on route to America on the S.S. Pennsylvania, he writes with full enthusiasm and optimism: “Like a caterpillar I shall shed old habits and thoughts and replace them with good, new ones.” The hustle and bustle of New York impresses him, as well as the grandness and greatness of it all: “the most daring buildings, some up to 30 stories high”. Within two weeks he is working for a well-known consulting engineer, Joseph Mayer, marveling at the speed, efficiency and magnitude of engineering projects. “I am earning 35 cents per hour for overtime”. He shaves off his moustache: “One is much cleaner. That’s how the American’s are, sanitary from head to foot.”

Soon thereafter he was working as a draftsman for Pennsylvania Steel, then to Chicago for several months work under another well-known consulting engineer. He was welcomed back to Pennsylvania and then New York as the reliable, enterprising assistant. Repeatedly he cancelled his plans to return to Switzerland because some new opportunity for working on an important construction presented itself.

July 1, 1925, a note in his daybook: “Started position as Engineer of Bridges with Port of N.Y. Authority.” Twenty-one years after first coming to
NY, Othmar would make his debut in the world of public service. He was married to his childhood sweetheart, their oldest son just entering college, the second son an ardent Boy Scout, and the three-year-old daughter keeping the home front lively. He had allied himself with top engineers in the field. Behind him lay the years of being the quiet, thorough, responsible assistant, an independent thinker but a good team worker. How did this great change come to being?

He had been first assistant to Joseph Lindenthal for construction of the Hell Gate Bridge over the East River in Manhattan, then again two years later for working on plans to construct a monumental bridge for railroad and vehicle traffic between Manhattan and New Jersey, across the Hudson River at 57th Street. Lindenthal failed to find a sponsor for his ambitious goal, but refused to give up his dream. Reluctantly, Othmar left his service.

A letter to his mother dramatically reveals his hard decision. “I will no longer conceal from you that the giant project for which I have been sacrificing time and money for the past three years, today lies in ruin. However, I have gained a rich experience and have decided to build anew on the ruins with fresh hope and courage – and, at that, on my own initiative and with my own plans and on a more moderate scale.”

To achieve such a result he would have to design a bridge with a cable span twice the length of any existing bridge. This required strong confidence in the engineering principles that he had been taught and the courage to apply them in ways that had hardly been tried before. Furthermore, he had to meet his own keen sense of aesthetic value. “A bridge must be pleasing to the eye.”

The two tense years spent in struggling to gain public interest and acceptance of his proposed bridge were behind him. He was now engaged by the Port Authority to supervise the construction of this bridge of his own design. He also was straddled with the responsibility of organizing a supporting engineering staff and supervising construction of three other major engineering projects: the Outer Bridge and Kill Van Kull Bridge and one of his own design, the Bayonne Bridge.

October 24, 1931: opening day of the George Washington Bridge. A glorious autumn day, a joyous celebration! Flags fluttered in the breeze. People had lined up at the break of dawn to be among the first to ride over the bridge following all the official cars. Airplanes drew awe from the viewers as they flew under the bridge in formation. Franklin Roosevelt, at that time Governor of NY, presented the dedication speech; “Certainly a great tribute is due to O.H. Ammann, the bridge engineer and chief engineer of the Port of NY Authority, responsible not only for the design of this great structure but also for its rapid and successful execution, his works mark a new high standard in public service.” Ammann in his modest, quiet manner responded, “Such a great work was only possible through the combined effort of all concerned.”
Praise for its aesthetic appearance came from the famous architect Le Corbusier: "The George Washington Bridge over the Hudson is the most beautiful bridge in the world. Made of cables and steel beams, it gleams in the sky like a reversed arch. It is blessed. It is the only seat of grace in the disordered city."

November 21, 1964. Opening ceremony of the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge: another sparkling autumn day. Othmar Ammann, now 85 years old, was accepted worldwide as the dean of long-span bridges. He had remained the same modest, dignified man as at the opening of his first bridge 33 years prior, giving credit to those who had worked with him. Besides the George Washington and Bayonne Bridges, he had added the Triborough, Whitestone and Throgs Neck Bridges to his name. A second deck had been added to the George Washington Bridge.

At his side was his second wife. The sleek, majestic towers that framed the harbor resulted from her suggestion to design them "more modern" than the open latticework of the George Washington Bridge towers. His first wife, who had played such a supportive role through those first few hard years of his career, could share his moment of glory at the opening of the George Washington Bridge, but tragically died of cancer two years later.

What were his thoughts as he modestly stood to acknowledge the praise of Robert Moses, who had engaged him to design and engineer this impressive bridge? This day was the culmination of 60 years of professional work. He was recognized as an outstanding member of his profession and had accumulated a long list of awards and honorary degrees. His bridges were standing as a legacy to his greatness. In public he presented the face of modesty and reserve, but earned respect and confidence. A memorial plaque in the office of his engineering firm carries this message: "Othmar H. Ammann, 1879-1965, a man endowed with dignity, humility and integrity; an engineer gifted with rare insight and leadership; this plaque is presented in fond memory by his employees."

He was a loving husband and father. To his close friends, he showed warmth and a sense of humor. His house pets were treated with affection. Gardening, hiking, and music, or spending a quiet evening with a book were his modest pleasures. In family games, his charades were the funniest and his puns the most far-fetched. Jokes and surprises always delighted him. He always remained grateful for his parents and his Swiss education and Switzerland was always close to his heart.

In the framework of the history of the Ammann family, he carried on the old-world tradition of thoroughness, reliability, and attention to detail. To this he added an innate sense of esthetic appearance and the new-world dreams of progress and innovation, thus leading the way for subsequent generations to follow. He also serves as an inspiration for a return to the old-fashioned strong moral values and diligent pursuit of one duties and aspirations.
The chronicle concludes here, with members born before 1950. The family tree continues to grow, some branches spreading, others ending. New stories will be created. It will take a century before they become history.

Minutiae tossed up from the vast ocean of records

All Saints Monastery

With the Reformation, the Catholic Cloister in Schaffhausen was taken over by the city. Eventually it became a museum and exists as such today. During World War II, through a series of unfortunate events, an American bomber, aiming for an ammunition factory located in a German town directly on the border of Switzerland, inadvertently bombed Schaffhausen. Among other buildings, a portion of the Allerheiligen museum was hit. In observing a map of Switzerland one can understand how this could have occurred. The canton of Schaffhausen protrudes like a thumb, surrounded on three sides by Germany. By coincidence, the original portrait of Hans Heinrich, Bailiff of Neunhauser as well as that of Dr. Johann Conrad Ammann, the deaf-mute teacher, were in the portion of the museum that was destroyed. The same fate was met by the valuable collection of fossils of Dr.med. Johann Conrad Ammann, housed in the Natural History Museum. Plates of the destroyed paintings that are appearing in the Ammann Family Book must have been taken from copies.

Anabaptists and Pietists

Several references are made in the Ammann family book to “Wiedertäufer”, literally meaning “Re-baptizers”, also called “Anabaptists”, “ana” being Greek and meaning “again”. The Swiss Anabaptist persuasion emerged in various regions of Switzerland, but is well documented in the city of Zurich where in 1525 a disputation was held between Huldrych Zwingli and Conrad Grebel about the validity of infant baptism and the right of the authorities to demand tithes. Zwingli insisted against Grebel that infant baptism as well as tithes were sanctioned by scripture, which Grebel denied. The magistracy sided with Zwingli and forbid Grebel and friends further to debate the issues and expelled their associates who went into the countryside, especially also to the Hallau region where the peasants resented the tithes and the rule of the magistrates. They preached and re-baptized but were persecuted with increasing intensity. The Swiss Anabaptists of Swiss and South German regions need to be distinguished from the Dutch and North German Mennonites and the Hutterites. All three groups rejected infant baptism, but otherwise followed a different theology, but in the United States the Swiss and Dutch traditions merged.

Pietism – the authorities used in the 18th century the phrase” Anabaptists and Pietists” – was a movement that penetrated all Christian denominations
after the 1660s. Pietists minimized the importance of doctrinal purity in favor of a deeply experienced religious outlook, were ecumenical in spirit and stressed the role of the laity, thus were seen as a threat to the establish churches.

For genealogical research, the church baptism records are often the only clue to the date of birth. This information is often missing for Anabaptists since baptism was delayed until adulthood.

The Ammann family was indirectly involved with the Pietists in several ways. One of the daughters of Hans Conrad #59 was married to the minister, Salomon Peyer. He had become part of the Pietist Movement and for this faith was removed from his post and later banned to exile. The same fate befell the daughter of Hans Heinrich #62. Her husband, the minister J.G. Hurter, founder of the orphanage, also lost his post as minister because he was part of the Piety Movement. A large center of Pietists was located in Hallau and in Schleitheim. Both of these areas came under the jurisdiction of the pastors Samuel Ammann #10 and Johann Conrad Ammann #33, as well as Bailiff Hans Heinrich Ammann #47, and the Pietists living there caused them considerable trouble.

Cables

These are elements of a bridge that support the road deck. They consist of bundles of wires that have been “spun” by means of a wheel carrying a single wire, traveling back and forth from anchorage to anchorage on a guide wire. The George Washington Bridge has two pairs of cables; each cable consisting of 475 individual wires forming a single strand. 61 of these strands were bound together to form a single cable. The total weight of the cables on the George Washington Bridge is 28,100 tons and the cables consist of 107,000 miles of steel wire.

Civic responsibilities carried on by various family members:

Gate Keeper, Michael, brother of Hans #2
Corn Master, brother of Hans #3
Keeper of Fountain on Hunters Corner, Hans #3
Overseer of Corn, Johann Heinrich #274
Powder Grinder, Jerg, nephew of Hans #3
Guardian of the Salt, Johann Heinrich #216

Grains, powder and salt were under city control, indicating the importance and high value of these commodities. Salt had to be imported. Also grains were largely imported because cattle raising dominated Swiss agriculture. Butter, cheese, meat and cattle were the major exports. The huge “Corn House”, constructed in 1679, still exists today.
The story of currency is perhaps the story of civilization. Early on, bananas were traded, then “wampum”, and still later, metal coins. In the middle ages, the use of coins for currency was in great confusion. Some cantons in Switzerland were printing their own coinage; others used the coinage of the country that dominated them, such as the French Louis d’or (equal to 11 Gulden). In 1045 Schaffhausen was given permission by the German Emperor Heinrich III to print its own coinage, which greatly facilitated trading. After questionable management of the minting by Hans Heinrich #47, no coins were produced for 17 years, then finally discontinued at the time of introduction of Federal currency in 1850. Until this unification of currency, many services and goods were paid in natural products: for example: the orphaned children (12) of Hans Heinrich #47 were granted “the generous compensation after his death to the equivalent of a half year of his salary of 32 Mutt grain, 4 Mutt rye, 52 Malter oats, 17 Saum wine, a tenth of all the penalties and violations collected, the use of seven Vierling wine from the vineyard and the same for the meadows, and in addition, compensation for legal duties of their father.” The trade guild of the Ammann family (Ruedenzunft) used donations of silver beakers and plates as currency that would be more stable than coinage. Now, on a grander scale, in the 21st century the EU is struggling to unify currency between nations in Europe.

Monetary values mentioned in Rüedi’s text, on such matters as taxes, and house purchases, are difficult to convert to present values. Lewis Bunker Rohrbach’s Introductory Guide to Swiss Genealogical Research, published by Picton Press, as Publication #21 of the Swiss American Historical Society, gives very helpful conversion values. (1 Krone = 25 Batzen = 100 Kreuzer. 1 Louis d’or =160 Batzen, 1 Gulden =15 Batzen. 1 Vierer = 1/8 Batzen). To bring perspective: in the 1870s a Swiss woods worker earned 5 Batzen per day and a female household servant earned 50 Batzen plus room and board per month.

Hanging was a custom of execution carried over from the Middle Ages and was still in existence in Schaffhausen at the time of Bailiff Hans Heinrich. “The Council was not inclined to abolish this custom so “our beloved citizen” was commissioned to replace the old dilapidated gallows.

This village is located in the district of Klettgau. The inhabitants take pride in their double reputation of independence and for producing good wine. Hallau, under the jurisdiction of Neunkirch, gave Bailiff Hans Heinrich considerable trouble. The parish and St.Moritz church also were in the Klettgau district, and the minister Samuel Ammann #10 and then his son, Johann Conrad Ammann #33, often locked horns with the Hallauers. After
1526 Hallau became a center of Anabaptism and rural dissent. The city council leaned upon the pastors to encourage the Anabaptists to pay their taxes and serve in the army, but to no avail.

Identification of Houses
By name, rather than by a street number:
“In Gratitude”  “At the Raven”
“By the Dove”  “At the Ark”
“By the Golden Stone”  “At the little Beetle”
“Behind the Bird of Paradise”

Loaded gun
Christoph Ammann #67, a glass painter by profession, was bringing New Year’s greetings to his cousin, Mayor Ott. Someone had lifted up a loaded carbine left on the table from the previous night, when a thief had attempted to break in. It accidentally went off, hitting Christoph in the stomach. Shortly thereafter “he gave up the ghost”. The report stated, “With him, the glass painters’ handicraft in our city died out for 100 years.” This was a dramatic end to Christoph’s life, but also symbolic for the general decline of glass painting, not only in Schaffhausen.

Mayor by Lottery
Johann Heinrich Ammann #176 served as Mayor of Neunkirch for 6 years. He was elected by a lottery, which was a system that was introduced during the Reformation of 1688/89 for election of political posts in the outlying districts of the town of Schaffhausen. By this system several posts were occupied by citizens who were inadequate as administrators, and after ten years it was abandoned. There is very little recorded about the abilities of J.H., an apothecary by profession, in his term as Bailiff except for a long description of an unfortunate event concerning his punishment of a citizen of the district of Hallau, whose citizens were notoriously unruly and even today are proud of their spirit of “independence”.

Marriage Court
This court was established during the Reformation. Before that, Schaffhausen was under the jurisdiction of an Episcopal court in Constance for matters of marriage and all related situations. In the Reformation, adopted by Schaffhausen in 1529, the city magistrates assumed ecclesiastical jurisdiction. The marriage court ruled on marriage disputes, complaints of divorce, cases of prostitution and obscenity, paternity claims, etc. Members of this court were chosen from the House of Representatives plus the city’s three highest clergymen. Hans Jacob Ammann #146 served as marriage lawyer in this court from 1741 until his death in 1777.
Military Service

Several members served as officers in the army, two as captains of the Cavalry #151 and #237, two as lieutenants #142 and #149, and as subaltern officers in the city militia. One, Johann Conrad Ammann, #281 served for 20 years in the Royal Army of Sardinia in Italy as army chaplain. and then entered the French service where he reached the rank of lieutenant. Later he returned to Schaffhausen and managed the hotel of his father, “The Crown”. He also became Chief of the Cadets Troop in Schaffhausen and was 1st Lieutenant and Commander of the Infantry Militia in the Military Commission, as well as in the Home Guard. Of interest was his foreign service in Piedmont and then France, probably as a mercenary.

Name origin

The family name Ammann probably derived from the word “Amtman”, Mayor. The title of some political posts originally used the word Ammann combined with a function such as Hausammann (House Ammann) or Zinsammann (Tax Ammann). Then somewhere along the line, the generic term was taken over as a family name.

Occupations

After three generations of Rope Makers, occupations diverged:

Theology: eleven Ministers
Medicine: six Physicians, two Apothecaries
Legal field: two Lawyers, numerous Judges and Legal Advisors
Arts and Crafts: Watchmakers, Die Cutters, Goldsmiths, Etchers and Engravers, Painters, Glass Painters, and a Sculptor.
Academic work: Professor of Natural History in St.Petersburg
Professor of Medicine in Shanghai
Photography Lecturer, Polytechnic Institute in Zurich
Industry: 20 Percent: — Merchants, Bankers, and Industrial Managers
Technical field: three Civil Engineers and several Technicians
Public officials: A Mayor, several Senators, a Governor, Army Officers, and two Guild Masters
Other Occupations: Two Confectioners, two Lathe Turners, a Button Maker, three Hotel Keepers, three Inn Keepers, two Beer Brewers, an Actor, a Naturalist and a Musician.

Pestilence (“The Pest”, “the Plague”)

Pestilence, or Pest or Plague, and Black Death were terms applied to highly infectious diseases, such as typhus, small pox, and cholera that ravaged
Europe for over 300 years. They were pandemic in nature and associated with a high mortality. The most severe one struck Europe in 1348-49, decimating 25 million people, that is, two thirds of the population. The last epidemic to occur was in 1663-68.

The term “Plague” applies to the pandemic disease caused by a typhus organism, believed to be carried by rats and rat fleas and spread along the trade routes. The form known as Bubonic plague infected the lymphatic system, causing “buboes”, or enlarged glands, especially in the groin or under the armpits. The other form, infecting the lungs, was called “pneumatic plague”. Death occurred within a few days, the patient becoming blue-black in appearance, thus the name “Black Death”.

The families of Samuel #10 and Johann Conrad #33 were nearly wiped out by this disease.

Persecution of the Jews

Jews were the moneylenders of the middle age. From time to time, laws were made to discourage money lending. In 1591, the Council in Schaffhausen forbade usury for the citizens and their relatives as it often led to abuses. Jews were ordered to wear “gold rings about themselves”, so that they would be recognized immediately. They were allowed to take a light meal in the city, but under no circumstances were they to stay overnight. They were forbidden to enter the Trading House. Hans Ammann #3 was penalized several times for borrowing money from a Jew, once with a heavy fine. The lender received a much higher fine and had to remain in prison until the fine was paid.

Peyer, Squire from the Courtyard of the Rose

Junker Peyer, von Hof zur Rose (“Courtyard of the Rose”). The grandfather, Squire Johann Ludwig Peyer had transferred from the businessmen to the Rueden Guild in 1777 and was immediately elected as guild master. He not only acted as commissioner to oversee the renovation of the guildhall but also generously did not charge interest for his loan of 900 Gulden during the 15 years of construction on.

The “young” country squire, Johann Friederich Peyer who married the daughter of Johann Heinrich #237, founded the Organization for Aid to the Needy. Their son, Friedrich Peyer (1817-1900) became a political and agricultural leader, who, with Heinrich Moser, was responsible for Switzerland’s recovery from a long and difficult agricultural depression. In 1848, after the establishment of the new Constitution, he was the first Schaffhausen member of the Federal Council of States.
Records

Baptismal and marriage records were first started in Schaffhausen in 1540 and until 1648 only the father was listed for the christening. This often led to confusion, as same names were frequently used in family lines.

The schoolmaster Hans Ludwig Bartenschlager used these records in 1744 in his genealogy registry, “Important Family lines of Schaffhausen.” Two other important sources of information for Rüedi’s book, besides the archives of the city and canton, were the notes of the city council (Ratsprotokol) and the notes of the Rueden Guild (Zunftprotokoll).

The date of death (or in the early centuries, only the date of burial) is recorded on the genealogy listing, but rarely the cause of death. Rüedi mentions it on occasion, such as Hans #2 who died on the battlefield; the family of #33 that was almost completely wiped out by the plague; Christoph #67 who “gave up the ghost” shortly after being accidentally shot in the stomach by someone who picked up a loaded pistol; the Anabaptist husband of a daughter of Hans Conrad #7 who died in exile at age of 77; the physician Johannes #64 who died of a “stroke at the Ergottinger mill above Neunkirch”; the “untimely death at the age of 35” of Hans Jacob #101 and at age 45, of his physician brother Johann Conrad #94, who was famous for his work with the deaf-mute; Johann Heinrich #305 at the age of 47 in “broken spirit” because of unfortunate events leading to the failure of his bank; and of the missionerary to India, Johann Jacob #298, who died of “failing health”.

Rights to Citizenship

By the 18th Century it became most difficult to acquire Schaffhausen citizenship. In 1762 Johann Conrad Ammann, Dr. Med.#217 married Margaretha Gestefeld. Her lin 1733. Since 1521, the castle had been owned by the city. The council would have gladly accepted Gestefeld’s offer, but the law forbade the sale to a foreigner. However by obtaining citizenship to the canton of Schaffhausen for a tax of 4,000 Gulden he then was able to purchase the castle.

One of the members of a side-branch of the Ammann family had settled down in Germany in the second half of the 17th Century. The troops of Louis XIV invaded this area in 1688, causing terrible destruction. The house and property of Ludwig Ammann went up in flames. Once having been a citizen of the canton of Schaffhausen, he returned to his homeland with wife and child. The city fathers sent him back because he had not kept up his citizenship. Records do not report his further move. One wonders how he handled that!

Rope making

From a description in the Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 19, 1964, pages 543-544: “Rope making has been going on for centuries with little change up to the time of the introduction of machinery about the middle of the 19th
century. In the early days all the yarn was spun by hand. First, the hemp was hacked by combing it straight over a board studded with sharp steel teeth. A bunch or ‘head’ of this hacked hemp was then placed around the spinner’s waist, who attached a few fibers to a hook on the spinning wheel and, as the hook was revolved by means of a large wheel turned by hand, walked backwards away from the wheel feeding the fiber from the supply around his waist, preserving the uniformity and proper size of the yarn. Several yarns were twisted together by use of a hand wheel and several hooks, forming the ‘strand’ and three or more strands twisted together, ‘laying’ the rope.’ The term ‘ropewalk’ came from the long low buildings used and the walking back and forth of the spinners and rope makers.

Scallywags and scoundrels

Hans #3 received a penalty for borrowing from the Jews, which was prohibited at that time. He also seems to have gotten into other financial troubles on several occasions and even was placed into prison “because of his sloppy and poor accounting”. Through the beseeching of his wife, relatives and friends he was immediately released under oath that “he would not go out of the city. If there were matters that he must settle out of the city, they would have to be done by the gate.” On several occasions friends and relatives were assigned to regulate his properties and pay his debts.

Max, a nephew of Hans #3, functioned as bailiff in Neunkirch. Nothing praiseworthy of his activities was mentioned in the official recordings of the town. “He administered his office despicably, especially for his own personal use. He committed usury, made excessive demands from the tax collectors and delayed salary payments to the local ministers. His post was rescinded and he was given until Easter to leave the city.”

Hans Heinrich #47, ten years before he was elected Bailiff of Neunkirch, held the post of “Mint master”. (At that time each city was printing its own coins.) The portrait of Hans Heinrich shows him holding a compass in his left hand. Seals and iron stamps on the mantle represent his vocation as seal cutter, which made him qualify for the post of mint master. Rather than billing the city for his services, he received an agreed amount for each printed piece. Neither the council nor the public were pleased with his work and he was admonished several times for his “inexactness”. He was fined 400 Gulden and discharged from his post. He had to take back the “unround and crooked coins”, (whose weight was also criticized as being less that the stated value), melt them down and then give the residue to the city controller and leave the mint within four weeks. This scandal does not seem to have spoiled his political career. He became a district judge and then advanced to become a member of the city council. Later he was elected bailiff of Neunkirch, a district of Schaffhausen, by his own instigation.
Taxation

Taxation in one form or another probably has existed since the beginning of civilization. The first Tax Register in Schaffhausen was started in 1396. This register provides valuable information for research on an individual since assessments were made on personal income and property. The guilds also had their own set of rules for taxation as well as penalties for rule violations.

Wanderlust

Already in the 16th Century, members of the Ammann family began venturing forth into other parts of Switzerland and Europe. At first they sought to enhance their education and later, entrepreneurs found opportunities in Swiss cities beyond Schaffhausen and other parts of the world. One went to spread Christianity in India, another to teach at the University in St. Petersburg. An 18th Century merchant established trade as far away as Shanghai. Ammanns settled permanently in Nurnberg, Berlin, Munich, Danzig, London, Amsterdam, Australia, New York, and San Francisco.

Watch making

The Swiss watch making industry has a history that goes back to the early 15th Century. Following the Reformation, Huguenots moved to Geneva to escape religious persecution in France. The already existing watch industry there provided a welcome source of income for them and their large number greatly expanded the industry. Who would have imagined that religion could have played a role in developing a flourishing production of watches? Today Geneva and the Jura Valleys have become world renowned as the center of mechanical timepiece manufacturing, with small workshops scattered throughout the small towns, with the big name houses in Geneva and surroundings. Besides the ateliers of houses such as Omega, Blancpain, Audemar Piquet, Zenith, Patek Philippe and many more, there are two watch museums and a Hotel of the Watchmakers.

It was feared that the introduction of quartz watches in the ‘70s would pose competition for the handmade watches. Actually, this has enhanced the appreciation of the time and meticulous skill required in their production and increased the pleasure of owning such masterpieces. They have been elevated from the field of utility to luxury.

In Schaffhausen the first watchmakers appeared in the middle of the 17th Century. In 1868 the first “modern” watch factory was started in Schaffhausen by an American. This occurred through the fortuitous meeting of an American manufacturer looking for a suitable source of electric power and a Swiss entrepreneur of Schaffhausen with a newly installed electric plant on the Rhine River looking for a client. The American, Florentine Ariosto Jones, director of the watch manufacture F.Howard of Boston introduced the “modern” technique of using electric power to aid in the production of parts.
for mechanical watches. The factory and company of IWC watches, Schaffhausen, emerged from this alliance and is in existence today, holding its own among the family of distinguished Swiss watches.