



This picture of an Oberholzer stained glass was sent to the OFA by Adrian Overholser, Hong Kong, which hangs on the outside of Oberholzer Inn, Oberholz Switzerland

From Adam to Alemanni to America

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THE BEGINNINGS OF OUR FAMILY

Antediluvian Percentile Chart of Known Dates

From Year of Creation		% of Weeks	# of Weeks	# of Years	B.C.E.	Years Lived
0	Biological creation of Adam	0.	0.00	0.000	4120.	Eve of 1st of Tishri *
0	Start of Jubilee Calender	0.	0.00	0.000	4119.0 *	
50	First Family Jubilee		2549.0	49.	4069	49
130	Seth born	7.86	6790.	130.57	3990	
217	Extinct Calender in Book of Jubilees began		11,284.0	217.0	3902	216
235	Enos born	14.17	12,246.	235.5	3885	
235	Men began to proclaim YHWH		12,246.	235.5	3885	235
325	Kaenan born	19.61	16,941.6	325.8	3795	
361	Start of Reign of Ammenon	21.67	18,721.	360.	3760	
361	Year One of Jewish Calender		18721.	0.	3760	360
395	Mahahleel born	23.77	20,540.	395.0	3725	
460	Jared born	27.715	23,946.	460.5	3660	
622	Enoch born	37.44	32,350.	622.1153	3498	
687	Methuselah born	41.357	35733.	687.173	3433	
775	Start of Reign of Daonos	46.67	40320.	775.3846	3345	
875	Lamech born	52.66	45,500.	875.	3245	0
930	Adam died	56.00	48,390.	930.576	3190	930
987	Enoch translated	59.42	51,342.99	987.365	3133	365
1042	Seth died	62.77	54,234.	1042.947	3078	912
1058	Noah born	63.68	55,023.	1058.1346	3062	0
1140	Enos died	68.65	59,316.4	1140.7	2980	905
1235	Kaenan died	74.377	64,261.6	1235.8	2885	910
1290	Mahahleel died	77.64	67,080	1290.	2830	895
1422	Jared died	85.64	73,996.	1423.	2697	962
1538	120 years of Warning		79980.	1538.077	2580	0
1559	Shem born	93.81	81,023.	1558.712	2560	0
1652	Lamech died	99.426	85,904.	1652.	2468	777
1657	Methuselah died	99.735	86,171.	1657.13461	2462	969
1658	Start of the Deluge	99.795	86,223.	1658.134	2460	
1659	Noah left the Ark	99.86	86276.0	1659.21	2459	
1660	End of Year 1660	99.97	86,372.0	1661.0	2458	
1662	Arphaxchad born	100.0	86,400.0	1661.538	2457	
1952	Birth of Abraham	710,164 Days from Adam's creation		1951.0	2168,	1st of Tishri
2127	Death of Abraham	774,000 Days from Adam's creation		2126.37362637	1993,	19th Week ; 43rd Jubilee

* Both these dates are the same day, the 1st day of 4119, the year starting on the Fall Equinox.

This chart based on 364 Day Antediluvian Calender, & incorporating the 360 Day Prophetic Calender, the 50 year Jubilee,

The # of Lusters, Book of Genesis in Akkadian, Hebrew, Greek & English languages, and the solar Equinoxes.

- This chart is from *The Galactic Calender, 2004 Dennis L Oberholtzer*

Japheth	Noah's Son - Gen. 10: 1-5	Father of Aryan Race
Gomer	Japheth's Son - Genesis 10:3,	Ezekiel 38:2-6, Father of the Celtic Peoples
Gomer's descendent Ashkenaz	Lived on north side of Black Sea	
Ashkenaz was the ancestor of the Suevi Tribe in present Germany		
Suevi descendents became Alemanni (Alamani) tribe	Documented in Roman literature.	

It is hard for us to imagine the ability to trace our family tree to the very beginning of civilization with God's first eternal creation - Adam and Eve. But amazing as God's grace is, so also He has preserved enough documentation to show our family tree directly linked through Noah to Adam. The above is the direct tree line to the Oberholtzer family. Many Swiss Anabaptist lines also come from the Alemanni tribe and come through this same lineage.

In Central Europe between the years of 4800 to 2400 bce, there was a change toward a drier and more strongly seasonal climate. This came due to the rapid depletion of the cloud canopy which covered the Earth. Trees in Central Europe began to slowly and irregularly disappear, according to modern pollen records.

In the 15th Century bce, the North Balkan States sent molten iron to Cyprus for the iron manufacturing. Tin was being added, as well as carbon, in the earliest attempts to create a harder steel. The Philistines on the Gaza strip would greatly enhance the process during the 13th Century bce.

THOUGHTS ON THE TOWER OF BABEL

A chart in the New American Standard Bible reveals the overlapping of the Patriarchs' lives. This is off by 3 years. Arpachshad is said to have been born in 1656, the same year Methuselah died, when in fact he was born two years after the flood began (see Gen.11:10), and Methuselah died in the year before the flood.

Noah, Shem, Arpachshad, Shelah, and Eber were the order of descendants in the Davidic line after the flood. These all lived 400 to 600 years long after the flood. Eber is called the father of the Hebrews. Even Shem outlived Abraham's father Terah, his great X 8 grandson. How could this be? The answer is in both the canopy theory and language hermeneutics. The massive vapor canopy which covered the earth's atmosphere before the flood of Noah was not completely erased during the flood. Evidence of its remnant was still noticed and referred to as late as 600 b.c. by some ancient writers, one being Ezekiel (chapter one). There was about 400 years from the time of Noah's flood to the Tower of Babel. The Bible implies that most of the known world's population was congregating near this town. During the time of Nimrod and the Tower of Babel, Nimrod was ruler of a kingdom which included Babel, Erech, Accad (Akkad) and Calah. The name Akkad (Accada) signifies 'highlander'. The Accadians were the "inventors" of the hieroglyphic system of writing which was used by the earliest populations of Babylon. Because there is such precise records of the Davidic line from Adam to Abraham, we must conclude that there was continuous contact between the descendants and their ancestors, otherwise, how would they have known when the ancestor died?

The answers to all this is quite simple. The hieroglyphic language with its trilateral root form is a standing testimony of the Creator God giving Adam this original language. When a person does an indepth study of mathematical theomatics, language hermeneutics, music and color; and notices how they are all intricately intertwined; a person has no choice but to acknowledge the intervention of a Divine Creator. For no human agency is capable now or in prior days of producing such a perfect intricacy. The hieroglyphic language could have easily been passed down from Adam to Methuselah to Shem to Abraham, each living for years during their ancestors lifetime.

As for the long life spans of Noah to Eber, it is obvious they continued to live within the shadow of the receding canopy in the highlands of what is now modern Turkey in the town of Akkad, which has been found by archaeologists in the 20th century. The ancestors of Eber who came to be known as Hebrews, continued to use the hieroglyphic language of God, because they stayed somewhat detached and separated from the crowd that migrated to the lowlands and later followed Nimrod in his polygamist scheme. In the hermeneutical study of Genesis Eleven we find the writer to have distanced himself from this crowd who went to Babel. For he uses the term 'they' journeyed east, 'they' found a plain in Shinar, and 'they' said... and so on. The Biblical writer was an observer, but not a participant in the Tower of Babel. So when God decided to distort their language into many different ones, the original hieroglyphic language He gave to Adam was not part of the distortion process. Eber's son Peleg was probably the one who testified of the Tower of Babel, for his name is in itself a testimony of the division of lands and language. And either he or his descendants continued south to Ur. But contact with Akkad must have been continued in order to have known the dates of the ancestors deaths, and thus the continuance of the original hieroglyphic language stayed intact by the lifestyle separation of the Hebrews.

The purpose of showing this in our family tree is to refine the fact that our ancestral line can be traced back to the Tower of Babel, and Gomer's descendants were part of the great division of families noted in the Holy Scriptures. They then proceeded to the south coast of the Black Sea, in northern Turkey, and in later years the family proceeded to the west coast of the Black Sea, and later up the Danube River into Eastern Germany. - DLO

Apart from the Bible, "the oldest known written versions of the flood were committed to clay tablets ... after the event in to Sumerian, the language of the first known" (non-biblical) "writing, a language with no known roots and no known descendants, and

Akkadian, one of the ancient tongues of the Semitic language group to which the Arabic dialects and Hebrew belong. Is it possible through linguistics to tie these people together, with speakers of other languages at about the time of the flood, and to the region of the Black Sea.”

“Linguists have discovered that languages evolve in ways that are analogous to biological species. It is certain that all of the languages spoken by the various people driven out by the flood have withered, just as Latin is no longer a spoken language.”

- *Noah's Flood*

A cold snap took place during the flood, “coincident with Catal Huyuk’s desertion that lasted almost 400 years” Catal Huyul is a Neolithic farming village eighty miles to the southwest and on the opposite side of the ancient Konya Lake [In Central Turkey]. Archaeologist “Mellaart uncovered the foundations of twelve building levels, each representing a new generation of construction. They spanned fifteen centuries.”

“The changeover from cold to dry to warm and moist had not occurred on the Bulgarian coast “ during pre-flood times”as previously assumed. The radiometric ages in the Bulgarian cores showed the expansion of the forest starting only” after the flood. “Before then vegetation had been unchanged since the onset of the ‘Younger Dryas’. The emerged shelf of the Black Sea prior to the flood was not a forest or woodland, as reconstructed by Andrew Sherratt, but was in fact grassland and steppe. ... Streams from the Balkans, the Alps, and Caucasus mountains kept the Black Sea’s rivers in flow year-round when the Euphrates water no longer arrived at Abu Hureyra.”

“...in November 1997 A.D. the case for a northern oasis strengthened. Plant geneticists announced a match of the DNA in the earliest domesticated einkorn wheat (*Triticum monococcum* subspecies *monococcum*) from the earliest farming villages with a wild strain (*Triticum monococcum* subspecies *boeoticum*) living today in Anatolia. The fingerprint caught all the experts off guard; they had expected confirmation that the cradle of agriculture would turn up in the south.” [But the Holy Bible is right as usual!]

“None could have been aware of the second Mini Ice Age that was only now being discovered. Indeed, from all the evidence that surfaced at the symposium in Ankara and from the discussions afterward, it seemed quite likely that the humans who were there to witness the Black Sea flood and be driven from their homes by the inundation would have been townspeople, some skilled in tilling fields, planting seeds, harvesting crops, and breeding animals. They may even have been experimenting with the diversion of streams for rudimentary irrigation. Many would have been artisans - bricklayers, carpenters, painters, sculptors, basket weavers, leather workers, jewelers, potters, and morticians. Goods were made for both local consumption and for trade with other distant communities in the Levant and perhaps even in Eastern Europe as Gordon Childe had foreseen. A form of social and political structure would have been in existence, with one class of society conducting administrative tasks, others manual labour, and others such as the Shaman performing ceremonies of religion, magic, and even brain surgery. They suffered from diseases including malaria and arthritis.”

- *Noah's Flood*

THE JAPHETIC NATIONS

The Japhetic nations belonged to seven families, who are called “The sons of Japheth” in Genesis 10:2 ; and seven others, who are spoken of as his grandsons in Genesis 10:3,4. These statements are not necessarily to be understood literally. There may have been other sons and grandsons of Japheth; but these are the ones whose names are remembered as the founders of nations. The peoples descended from Japheth belong to what is called the Aryan or Indo-European race.

The Cilician Gates - Now called the Taurus Pass (Kulak Bughaz or Golek Boghaz)

The Cappadocian Gates - Strabo described this mountain pass . It was explored by the Euphrates Expedition, leading through Taurus to Marsh (ancient Germanica).

- *The Historic Note-book*, E. Cobham Brewer

Japheth, the son of Noah, had seven sons: they inhabited so, that, beginning at the mountains Taurus and Amanus, they proceeded along Asia, as far as the river Tanais, and along Europe to Cadiz; and settling themselves on the lands which they light upon, which none had inhabited before, they called the nations by their own names; for Gomer founded those whom the Greeks now call Galatians [Galls, or Gauls], but were then called Gomerites....

- *Flavius Josephus*

GOMER In Ezekiel 38:2-6 Gomer is named as a race opposed to Israel after the captivity. They were probably the peoples whom the Assyrians called Gimirrai, and the Greeks Kimmerioi. There name may be perpetuated in the Crimea, their early home. A branch of this race moving westward became the Cimbri, the formidable enemies of Rome; and probably another, the Cymry, settled in the British Isles, and were the ancestors of the Welsh and the Irish. The Celtic Races, to which the French partly belong, are descended from this family.

Three of the families descended from Gomer formed separate tribes, named in the table of nations, Genesis 10:3, after Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah. All of these had homes around or near the Black Sea.

At the close of the Old Testament period the Persian Empire stood in all its power. Four hundred years later, at the opening of the New Testament epoch, the Persian Empire had given place to that of Alexander the world’s capital had moved westward, and the Mediterranean was now a Roman lake. The principal provinces of this empire, omitting minor subdivisions , were: (3)Gallia, now France, including also parts of Germany and the Netherlands, embracing 5 provinces; (4) the Danubian provinces of Rhaetia, Noricum, Pannonia, and Moesia, to which Dacia was afterward added by the emperor Trajan...

- *A Bible Atlas*

The name Gomer means completion and/or heat. He was the progenitor of Cymry and other branches of the Celtic family. Ashkenaz was the father of the people who settled on the north edge of the Black Sea, and then spread themselves southward and westward to the extremities of Europe. Ez. 38:6 ; I Chron.1:5; Gen.10:2,3. - *The System Bible Study*

Gomer - the family of Indo-European nomads in the 8th century b.c. who invaded the nearest from Northern Europe; called Cimmerians by the Greeks.

- *Wycliffe Bible Encyclopedia*

Gomer was the eldest son of Japheth, son of Noah. Progenitor of the Cimmerians, whose traces are found in the Cimmerian Bosphorus, C. Isthmus, Mt. Cimmerium, Cimmeria, and the C. walls (Herodotus, 4: 12, 45, 100), and also in the modern name Crimea. The Cymri of Wales, Cambria, and Cumberland in England are assigned to the same origin.

- *Smith's Bible Dictionary*

Gomer, Noah's grandson, is the father of the Celtic races, which occupied Germany and continues to do so to this day. Gomer had three sons recorded in Genesis 10:3 - Ashkenaz and Riphath and Togarmah. Riphath is the son who migrated quickly into western Europe, settling in the Alps and France. In the Alps they later acquired the name Helvetians from the Romans. In France they were called Gauls, a derivative of Gomerites (of Gomer). Ashkenaz, on the other hand, stayed along the coasts of the Black Sea for a time. Later, his family moved up the Danube, spreading into Eastern Europe first, then being forced by growth into Germany. The Jewish people to this day call the German barbaric tribes Ashkenaz, after their ancestor and great grandson of Noah. And one of these 17 tribes, the Alamans (also Alemani) is the tribe from which the Oberholtzer family originated. This east Germanic group migrated to the upper Rhine, and by 700 A.D. into the area of Wald, Switzerland where the Oberholtzer's permanently settled. - DLO

"The Black Sea was called 'Pontus Euxinus' by the Romans. The Alans were an ancient Germanic people who lived in northern Caucasus and today are called Ossetins." Nostradamus predicted that 'Transpercera Alane et l'Armenie' - [Could this people Alane be some of the tribe of the Alemani that stayed along the Black Sea, while the remaining tribe ventured westward to eastern Germany and later onto the Rhine and Danube upper tributaries?]

- *The Fate Of the Nations*, Nostradamus

"The Danube and its tributaries possessed a wide spectrum of natural resources to attract homesteaders whose farms were never far from abundant water. In his book *The Danube in Prehistory* (Childe) speculated that the early European farmers had purposely chosen to settle their villages and till their fields on the banks of rivers or near the shores of lakes.

...In response to a desiccating landscape, disparate nomadic groups gathered into a few oases where game, plants, and water were plentiful. Although Childe never placed this mythical "Garden of Eden" on a map, he was the first to demonstrate that Europe's farmers and their domesticates had come from Asia and thus had taken a route that would have brought them along the shore of the Black Sea. ... the oldest domesticated sheep in Europe is the descendant of an Asiatic species (*Ovis vignei*) native to Turkestan and Afghanistan."

The Vinca of the Danube River valley in Romania were believed to be as young as the Bronze Age. "... the languages spoken today had developed from ancestral tongues of the Stone Age and still embodied many concepts (such as gender for inanimate objects) from that earlier period. ... Modern tree-ring-calibrated dates now place the Vinca as contemporary with the Black Sea flood. ... the bones, tools, and pottery fragments found in relatively thin soil horizons, the less advanced farmers seem to have been mobile, relying to a great extent on exploiting wild resources."

"...the appearance of farming in the Levant and the Fertile Crescent ... predated that of Europe by at least two thousand years. ... these Mesolithic (middle Stone Age) folk were best known from the Iron Gates region of the Danube where the river breaks through a gap between the Carpathian Mountains and the Balkans."

"agriculture originated independently only very rarely ... in what Harris called 'rift-valley oases'. ... on the western side of the Fertile Crescent at a place such as Jericho, ... founder crops spread northward to Anatolia and eastward to Iraq and Iran. ... [Archaeological] Excavations showed quite clearly that people lived in rather sizable villages for a substantial part of the year far in advance of the observed domestication of cereals (barley, einkorn, and emmer wheat) or pulses (pea, chickpea, lentil)."

- *Noah's Flood*

The Ogy'gian Flood 4759 b.c.e. A great flood said to have taken place in the reign of Ogyges, a mythical king of Attica and Boeotia. (Boeotia was called Ogygia.) - *The Historic Note-book* This date is not accurate, being written prior to the great archaeological discoveries and scientific advances of the 20th Century. This event took place simultaneously with the destruction of the coastal cities in Crete, Rhodes, and Cyprus; as well as the Pheonecian coast. It was caused by the enormous eruption of the Thera volcano in the Aegean Sea in 1445 b.c.e., in conjunction with the tidal wave and other volcanic activity which had its effects on Egypt. This was the same series of events as when Moses shepherded the Israelites out of the Nile Delta. - DLO

The Oldest gold mine in the world is in Varna, Bulgaria. This mine was used probably before Noah's flood, and continued to be used in the Late Bronze Age (1550-1200 B.C.). The Vama People traded around the Black Sea, up the Volga & Danube Rivers - perhaps as far as Rudna Glava in former Yugoslavia, where the world's oldest copper mine has been found - and into the northeastern Mediterranean. - *Chalcolithic Treasures*, Biblical Archaeological Review Nov/Dec 1995

The inferred human migrations into Europe in the wake of the Diaspora from the tower of Babel is shown on a map in the book *Noah's Flood*. The Linear Pottery Farmers migrated north of the Carpathian Mountains and west through the Rhineland into France. The Vincas traveled from the Tower of Babel through the Cappodocian Gates, around the west side of the Black Sea, then heading northwest by route of the Danube River into the Hungarian Basin. The Suevi, Teutonic, and Cimri, and Celtic tribes divided central Europe over the next two millennia. This correlates with the writings of Kurt Reinhardt in his book *Germany 2000*. - DLO

"Carbon 14 dating places the settling of the Transcaucus contemporaneously with the beginning of the" Linear pottery farmers "dispersal,..." - *Noah's Flood*

The Etruscan trade from Liguria to Provence during the 7th to 4th Centuries is well documented. This continued through the end of the 4th century, with the Greeks of Southern Italy, known as *Magna Graeca*.

The Battle of OEnoph'ya in 456 b.c. Won by the Athenians over the Boeotians. The Athenian general was Myronides.

- *The Historic Notebook*

There is no question left as to our direct ascent from Noah, Japheth, Gomer, Ashkenaz, then a sub-family of Suevi, then a sub-family of Suevi called the Alemani. These Alemani were originally all direct descendants of Ashkenaz, and all retained the "red-skinned and red-hair" traits of the first man Adam. And even though by the common era the Alemani included a few people from a hodgepodge of various tribes and intermarital families, they still were Germanic tribes, still barbarians from the deep black forest, and still originated from the Ashkenaz-Aryan race. The specific physical traits to be mentioned later strongly reinforce this traditional theory.

But it is at this time-sequence that we need to pause from the normal historical and archeological evidence. The history of the Northern European tribes include many myths and legends. I am not going off the deep end and suggesting that any of these myths or legends be truth. Nor am I about to declare any of the people from these tales a direct ancestor. But, myths and legends are in some part almost always directly related to the past history of the family in which they originate. And so I merely suggest we take a look at some of these tales, and see if we can find corresponding evidence which may harmonize in a way that could help build circumstantial evidence as to the life of our ancestors during the period between the Black Sea and the Palatinate Region. - DLO

"DWARFS: Short but powerfully built. Dwarfs are generally bearded and aged in appearance, although this is because they reach maturity when only three years old and are grey-bearded by the age of seven. Their homes are the mountains of Scandinavia and Germany where they mine for precious metals to work into arms and armour and other artifacts which are often endowed with magic properties. It was the Dwarfs who fashioned Mjolnir (the hammer of Thor), the spear Gungnir, the necklace Brisingamen of Freya and innumerable other marvels, including a new head of hair for Thor's wife Sif and a rope strong enough to bind the giant wolf Fenris yet as slender as a thread. Footnote: Dwarfs are extremely sensitive about showing their feet to anyone because they invariably have some deformity. They may for example be shaped like those of a goose, or a crow. Or they may point backwards. This is why dwarfs wear clothing that reaches to the ground. The curious can discover more by strewing ashes or flour in their path and studying the resulting footprints.

"Gnomes" is derived from, or is even an erroneous elision of, the Greek *genomov* which ... could conceivably have been understood to signify 'of the earth'. At all events the resulting noun was probably used in reference to a breed of small people to be found in the remoter mountain regions of the Northern Hemisphere and notably the Carpathian mountains. These people used to mine the rock quarries of the mountains many centuries ago and hence popular legend could have described them as having actually inhabited the bowels of the earth rather in the manner of Dwarfs or Knockers. They were also said to be intimately acquainted with the locations of precious metals and stones. Hence the Greek word *gnwrizw* (to know indicating knowledge). Anthropologists .. can see no foundation for suggestions that these people might not have belonged to our race. Archeological remains have included both human and animal bones, various receptacles in pottery and glass, metal tools, fragments of leather and fibre and also charred stones which are assumed to have used in or around fires. Elsewhere, a race of 'little people', small in stature, is also known to have inhabited the caves along the Mediterranean coast of Southern Spain. The existence of such cave-dwelling people might well also have given rise to stories of gnomes.

... Writing in Latin, one of Paracelsus' works entitled *Liber de nymphis, sylphis, pygmaeis et salamandris et caeteribus spiritibus*, he also referred to the pygmies as *gnomi* which has the singular *gnomus*." - *Faeries*

It does not take an excess amount of investigation into the Alemani family tree in order to find diversification. There are midgets (also called dwarfs), who from no fault of their own were brought into this world by incestual relationships, malnutrition, or generational breeding of short people. There are people with blond hair, black hair, red hair, and brunette. Some are short and stocky, some are tall and thin. But these character traits were only noticed in the Alemani tribe after Christ. Up to that time the Alemani were a very significant breed. They were tall and thin. They were fairly hairless- what some would describe as 'plucked chickens'. They had strawberry blond hair. They had a very white complexion due to the lack of sunshine from living deep in the forest of central Germany. They were very smooth-skinned. In relation to the desires of modern American society, they were considered the sexiest race alive!

It is very obvious the Alemani tribe was originally a separate family group formed from the Suevi peoples of Eastern Germany. It is also very obvious from the historical record that the tribe originally had distinguishing marks of ancestral designation. And this should not be altered by the discussion of myths and legends. The peoples that pervade from the tales of old are no doubt malnourished, incestual midgets, and/or discolored from the results of working generationally at or in mining areas of central Europe. Initially, there was a small number of these people, and they probably stayed together for mutual support. It would only be a logical step in the business world to make use of them in the low ceilings of the mines. Out of this scenario would obviously come rumours of strange looking people. And rumours of oddities travels extremely fast in a world of fear and superstition, as was predominant during the barbarian times of b.c. to 500 a.d. in central Europe. - DLO

There is a region of dwarf-sized people living on the south side of the Toggenburg Mountain range, south of Oberholz in Switzerland. These people are called "Appenzellers". - Darwin Overholt, OFA President

SALT BECAME THE BACKBONE OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

Salt, the staple necessity of the ancient world, methodically came under Roman control with the start of the Latvium Republic. In 640 bce the Etruscans had salt mines on the north bank of the Tiber River. By 506 bce, salt prices began being regulated at Ostia in Latvium. By the 2nd Century bce the Romans had produced a mothproof ham with the use of salt at Westphalia. Germans did not lack salt, yet smoked their hams because cold winters forced food to be enclosed in fire-warmed rooms. Yet even sauerkraut in Switzerland was made with salt from mines in Lorraine, Alsace, France.

Rome continued to grow by the army taking control of salt mines. Just 200 mile east of Oberholz, Switzerland lies Salzburg & Hallein, both huge salt mining areas. A mine is in the Jura Mountains, northwest of Geneva, in France, as well as the Schwabisch Hall in Baden, West Germany. Salt came from Nancy in the Voges Mountains west of the Rhine and Strasbourg. And ancient travellers knew the mine 80 miles west of the Black Sea in the Transylvanian Alps, south of the Carpathian Mountains.

Salted sturgeon was a major trade item from the Black Sea, and the Dnieper River which flows out of the Ukraine. The Black Sea also produced tuna as a commercial product from the 4th century bce onward through Roman Empire times.

EARLY HISTORY OF THE SUEVI (1000-500 b.c.e.) (which included our ancestral Alemani tribe)

The following is a detailed description of the life and movements of the Alemani tribe. These details were taken from the book *Germany:2000 Years* by Kurt F. Reinhardt, Professor of Germanic languages, Stanford University. Published 1950, 1961 Frederick Ungar Publishing Co.,N.Y.

“In the second millennium B.C. these aboriginal populations (of Celts) were seized by a typically Indo-Germanic wanderlust which carried (some of) them into Russia and Greece. Bastarnians and Cimbers began to grow restless and started upon their migrations, some time during the first millennium B.C. The Slavs took possession of those districts that were vacated by the Goths, the Burgundians, the Alemans, and the Marcomans”

“By 500 B.C. the greater part of northern Europe was inhabited by Germanic tribes, and the aboriginal Celts found themselves hard pressed. In the southwest the Germanic advance was temporarily checked by Celtic strongholds, but during the last centuries of the pre-Christian era the Celts gradually receded toward the Alps.”

“We see eastern and western Germans adopting different methods in the ways in which they migrate and settle in the newly acquired territories: while Visigoths and Ostrogoths, Vandals, Burgundians and Langobards migrate in compact groups, carrying their movements in sweeping strides into Italy, Spain, and North Africa - Franks, Alemans, Bavarians, and Thuringians proceed more slowly and hesitating, maintaining close contact with their former homes.”
- *Germany 2000 Years*

The Suevi have a deep forest called the Bacenis. [This is a reference to the Black Forest. The dialect from which this name comes is unknown to the author, which may give light to its description.]

The Germans differ much from the customs [of the Gauls], for they have neither Druids who preside over sacred things; nor do they regard sacrifices. They hold those only in the number of the gods, whom they perceive, and by whose assistance they are benefited obviously; like the Sun, and Vulcan [fire], and the Moon. They have not even heard of others by any means of communication. All their life is employed in hunting and in the pursuits of military affairs. From childhood they accustom themselves to labor and hardships. Those who have remained chaste the longest, obtain the greatest praise among their people.

They believe that by this the statue is increased; by this their strength is increased, and the nerves are strengthened. Indeed to have had the knowledge of a woman under the twentieth year they hold among the most shameful things. Of this thing there is no concealment, both because they bathe promiscuously in the rivers, and use skins, or small coverings of deer hides, a great part of the body being naked.

They do not attend to agriculture. The greater part of their food consists of milk and cheese and meat. Nor has anyone a fixed portion of land, or defined boundaries, but the magistrates and chiefs, in each year, assign as much of land, and in what place it seems best, to the tribes and to the families of men, who may have united together, and the year after they compel them to go somewhere else. They offer many reasons for this thing, lest captivated by continued custom they may change their zeal for waging war for agriculture, lest they may be eager to acquire extensive estates, and the more powerful may expel the more humble from possessions, lest they may build with more care for avoiding cold and heat, lest any desire of money may arise, from which thing factions and dissensions originate, that they may keep the common people in peace of mind, since each one may see that his own means are equaled with the most powerful.

It is the greatest praise to the states, to have deserts as the most wide as possible about themselves, their frontiers having been laid waste. They consider this a peculiar evidence of valor, that their neighbors expelled from their lands to abandon them, nor that any dare settle themselves near. At the same time they think that they themselves will be more safe by this, the fear of sudden raids having been

removed. When the state either repels war waged against it, or wages war; magistrates are chosen, who preside over this war, so that they may have the power of life and death. In peace there is no general magistrate, but the chiefs of the provinces and pagorum (cantons) administer justice among suos (their people), and settle disputes. They hold robberies as no disgrace, which are committed beyond the boundaries of any state; and they assert that this is done for the purpose of exercising the youth; and of preventing sloth. And when anyone of the chiefs has said in council, "he will be the leader, that those who may wish to follow let them volunteer", those who approve both the cause and the man rise up, and promise their aid, and are applauded by the multitude. Those of them who have not followed, are reckoned in the number of deserters and of traitors, and afterwards credit is taken away from them in all things. They consider it not lawful to injure their guests, those who have come to them for any reason; they defend them from harm and hold them inviolable; the houses of all are open to them, and food is shared with them.

And formerly there was a time, when the Gauls excelled the Germans in bravery, and of their own accord were waging war and on account of the multitude of men, and the scarcity of land they were sending colonies across the Rhine. Therefore the Volcae Tectosages occupied those places of Germany, which are the most fruitful, and settled there, about the Hercyman (Black) forest, (which I perceive to have been known to Eratosthenes and some other Greeks by report, which they call Orcynia). This nation maintains itself in these settlements to this time, and has the highest reputation for justice and of warlike praise, and now they remain in the same want and poverty and patience, as do the Germans, using the same food and car of the body. The proximity of our province to the Gauls, and the knowledge of transmarine things provides many things for consumer use. By degrees accustomed to be overcome, and conquered in many battles they do not themselves indeed compare in valor with the Germans.

The breadth of this Hercyman [Black] forest, which has been mentioned above, extends a journey of nine days to an active man. For it can not be bounded otherwise, nor do they know measures of roads. It begins at the frontiers of the Helvetii, and of the Nemetes, and of the Rauraci, and in a straight direction along the river Danube, it extends to the territories of the Daci and of the Anartes. Then it bends itself to the left in different directions from the river, and it touches the boundaries of many nations on account of the great extent. Nor is there any one of this part of Germany, who may say that either he had heard or had gone to the beginning of this forest, though he may have proceeded a journey of sixty day, or may have heard from what place it may take its origin. It is certain that many kinds of wild beasts are born in it, which are not seen in other places; from which those that greatly differ from others, and may seem worthy to be handed down to memory, are these:

There is an animal in the shape of a stag, from the mid forehead of which, between the ears, a horn grows higher, and more straight than those horns which are known to us. From the top of this, branches are spread out broadly like palm leaves. The nature of the female and male is the same, the same form and size of the horns.

There are animals which are called elks. The shape of these, and the variety of skins is very like to goats, but in size they surpass a little, and they are devoid of horns, and they have legs without articulations and joints. Neither do they lie down for the purpose of rest, nor, if afflicted by any accident they may fall down, can they raise themselves or get up. The trees are to them as beds. They support themselves against these. and so reclined merely a little they take rest, when from the footsteps of which these it has been discovered by the hunters, where they have been accustomed to betake themselves, either they undermine all the trees in that place, at the roots, or they cut the trees so that the total mere appearance of them standing may be left. Here when by custom they have reclined themselves, they overturn the weak trees by their weight, and they fall down together with them.

There is a third kind of animal, which are called the wild ox. These are in size a little below the elephant, with the appearance and color and form of the bull. Their strength is great, and their speed great; they spare neither man nor beast that they may have seen; these they kill captured with much zeal in pits. The youths harden themselves by this task; and they exercise by this kind of hunting; and those who have killed the most of these, obtain great praise. The horns are brought into public which may be as evidence. But not even the young when taken captured can be domesticated and tamed. The size and shape and appearance of their horns differs much from the horns of our oxen. These having been carefully sought, they enclose them on the brims with silver, and use them in their most splendid feasts for cups.

- Julius Caesar, *The Gallic War* Volume VI

There is a great abundance of Yew in Germany.

- *The Gallic War* Volume V

Related History of the Cimbri and the Teutones

The Cimbri originally came from Britain, expanding into what is now northern France, then called Gaul. The Teutons originated in the Scandinavian region of Europe, also expanding into northern Gaul. This expansion most likely took place sometime between 1000 b.c.e. to 500b.c.e.

- DLO

In book seven, Caesar relates the loss of eighty thousand Cimbri and Teutones, "who driven into towns, and forced by a like want, supported life by the bodies of those, who by age seemed useless for war, nor did they surrender themselves to the enemy. If we had not this example, yet I should judge it most glorious for the sake of liberty to become established, and be handed down to posterity. For what was it like that war? Gaul, having been depopulated, and a great disaster having been inflicted, the Cimbri at length departed from our territories, and sought other lands." This happened in earlier times, when Caesar's armies first came into Gaul in the second century b.c.e.

- *The Gallic War*

In the 18th century A.D., “a German historian named Eckart was at work on the rise and development of the ancient Teutons. His researches did not take him very far back into prehistory, nor did he venture to risk the slightest consideration of those early elephant hunters. But the few Teutonic burial places and barrows subsequent to that time which he did investigate gave him quite a shock. He found no trace of iron in them, but plenty of bronze swords and shield, bronze domestic articles, and bronze ornaments. In still older Teutonic burial places even bronze was absent. The knives, scrapers and spear points were made of antlers, nephrite, and hornstone.

“Eckhart composed a treatise in which he advanced conclusions which are still valid today. A Stone Age, corresponding with primitive cults, was succeeded by a Bronze Age that introduced civilization, and finally by an Iron Age that has lasted up to the present time.

“Hardly any notice was taken of this essay. The innovating student of the ancient Germans, who had been so far ahead of his time, joined Bajer and Conyers in the ranks of the great host of the forgotten.”

- *In Search of Adam*, Herbert Wendt

Teutons. So the German races are called, from the Teutones or Teutoni, an ancient horde of Germany which, with the Cimbri, invaded the Roman dominions 113 b.c.e..

- Unknown

Teutones. A Germanic people who were formidable antagonists of the Roman armies before 102 b.c., when they were nearly destroyed by Marius at Aquae Sextiae.

- *Century Dictionary*

The Battle of Vercellae on July 30, 101 b.c.e., in which the Cimbrian host was annihilated by Marius the Roman consul.

- Unknown

In Gaul (present day France), there were originally two tribes of peoples who were derived from Gomer of the Bible. The Aedui lived in central Gaul, while the Averni lived more to the east. As these families grew, they divided into separate “family territories”. The Carnutes resided in the center of Gaul. The Redones, Aulerni, Esvivii, & Curiosolites were residents of the Atlantic coastline. The Veneti ruled the channel and inland route of the Loire River. The Unelli, Osismii, Lexovii, Nannetes, & Amialites settled the shores of Normandy. The Eburovices, Venelli, & Aulerici lived inland between Normandy and the Loire River.

Present day Paris was called Lutetia. The Senones lived in the surrounding area. To the east lived the original line of Aedui, bordered on the opposite side of the Loire river by the Bituriges. This tribe and the Carnutes were the western boundary of the Arverni, who filled the hills to Mt. Cevennes.

The powerful Suessiones filled the land north of the Arverni and to the west of the Aedui. This fertile land was the western side of the Rhine river fieldlands which were run over by invading armies for centuries.

During the time period of about 300 b.c.e. to the common era, minor tribes of German peoples groups were crossing and settling the shores of the Rhine River in the Palatinate region. The Treviri were the strongest of these, dominating the southern shores of the western Rhine. The Paemoni, Cerosi, Condrusi, Segni, Eburones, & Tencteri filled the remaining western banks as it flows northward to the sea.

In the farthest north of Gaul resided the Morini and the smaller tribe of the Diablintes. These extended along the northern coastline to the present day Netherlands. The Ambiani bordered the Nervii of the Belgae territories.

Present day Belgium and the Netherlands had several peoples groups residing there before the common era. In the latter, the Menapii were a large group of peoples in the northwest territory. The Atrebatas, the Galeti, and the Velocasses were seafaring peoples who for the most part would have been closely related to the Menapii. The ancient Vernii tribe existed to the south of the Menapii, bordering the Ambiani. These Vernii appear to be one of the earliest descendants of the Aedui of northern Gaul. In present day Belgium, the original tribes were the Belgae and the Advatuci. Two smaller groups were the Bellovaci and the Veromandui.

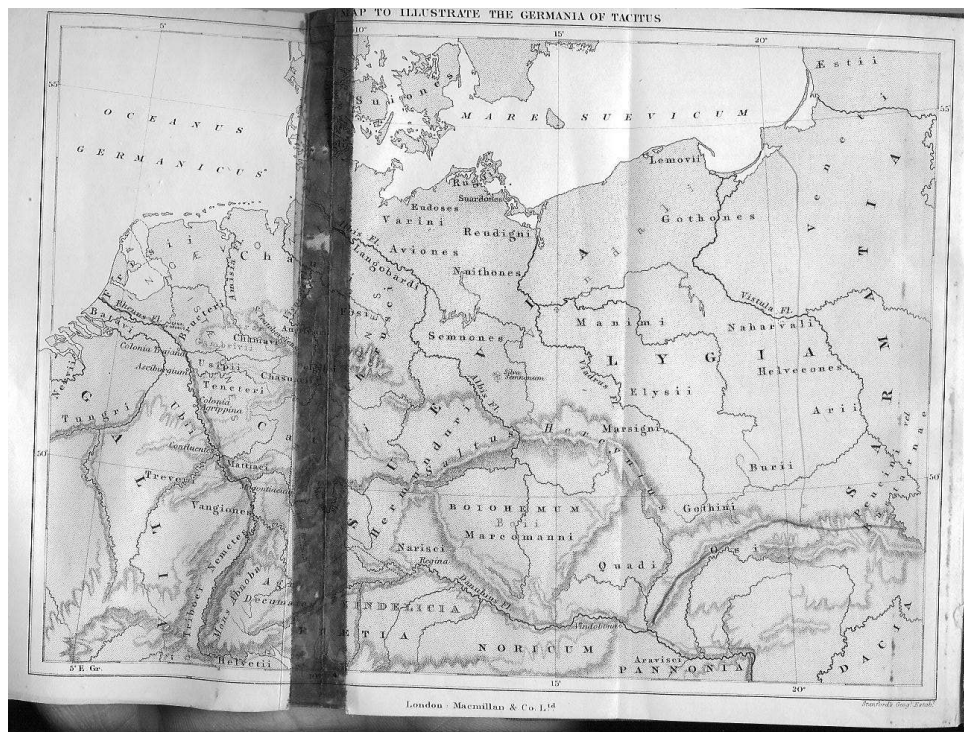
The Suevi tribe from which our ancestors came resided on the eastern side of the Rhine River from the present day city of Mainz to the Black Forest of southern Germany. The Franks and Usipetes ruled the western regions of northern Germany, above the Meuse River.

Dividing the Suevi and the Franks were some smaller groups of Germans called the Ubii, the Cherusci (who lived more to the east), and the Sugambri on the north side of the Meuse River. The Menapii controlled the western shore of the Rhine north of the Meuse to the Waal River basin. The Tencteri Germans filled the eastern shore of the Waal. - DLO, from reports in *The Gallic War*

In the first major war with the Roman Army, the Germans were listed by Caesar in his records as individual family-group-tribes. This war took place in the northern part of the Rhine River basin. It is for this reason that it can be understood that many of these family-groups were not part of the present-day Suevi, rather they came from earlier breakaway families who lived separate and to the north of the Main-Black Forest territories. Caesar lists them like this:

“Then at last the Germans necessarily led out their forces from the camp; and arranged them by nations; and at equal intervals, the Harudes, Marcomanni, Triboces, Vangiones, Nemetes, Sedusii, Suevi; and surrounded all their line with carriages and wagons. There they consigned the women, who, their hands having been spread, weeping were imploring the soldiers setting out to battle, that they should not deliver themselves into slavery to the Romans.” - *Gallic War*

The purpose of examining these people groups is to reveal how organized and definitive these “family groups” existed right up to the time of the Roman Empire. To say there was no original flow of migration that continued to last until the Roman Empire is sheer nonsense. These family groups have been tracked and documented now for two thousand years. The importance of this in establishing a family line through history is not only a certainty, but is also a paramount link to the history that cannot be disconnected to the lineage in the Holy Bible. A modern-day philosophical theory by some who wish to discredit traditional history can never stand the test of time. The closer a writing to the event, the more accurate the facts. - DLO



HISTORY OF ANCIENT NORTHERN GAUL

Because it has come to this place, it seems not to be improper to present an account of the manners of Gaul and of Germany, and in what respects these nations may differ among themselves. In Gaul there are factions, not only in all the {city-states} and pagis (cantons) and parts, but also almost in the several houses, and the chiefs of those factions are those who are considered to have, in their judgment the highest authority to the will and judgment of whom, the management of all affairs and counsels may return. And this seems to have been instituted anciently for the sake of this thing that no one of the people should want assistance against the more powerful for each one does not suffer his own to be oppressed and overreached; nor if he do otherwise has he any authority among his people. This same system is in operation in all Gaul. For indeed all the states are divided into two parts.

When Caesar came into Gaul, the Aedui were the chiefs of one faction, the Sequani of the other. The latter were less prevalent by themselves, because the supreme authority was among the ancient Aedui. The Sequani had large city-states, and had united themselves with the Germans and their leader Ariovistus, and had emigrated them into their territory by great sacrifices and promises. ... These Germans settled in the land of the Gauls, occupying one-third of the Sequani land, which was the best farming land in all Gaul.

- *The Gallic War*

In the western and southern portions of Switzerland in the 1st century b.c., Julius Caesar made his rule to reach over the mountains of Italy, conferring upon those “dwelling beyond the Po, and also upon many communities in Transalpine Gaul and in Spain. Succeeding emperors enlarged the circle of enfranchisement, until at length, in the early part of the third century, the outside provinces stood on as equality with Italy in this respect. Citizenship carried with it exemption from scourging, the right to appeal to the emperor, the right of suffrage, and eligibility to office.”

- *History of the Christian Church, Sheldon 1895*

The Germans began to cross the Rhine River “little by little”. This began around 72 b.c.e and continued fourteen years till Julius Caesar’s armies pushed them to the eastern shores of the Rhine. Caesar notes there to be 100 pagos or “cantons” of Suevi which were settled on the east bank of the Rhine River preparing to cross over into Gaul. The two leaders of these Suevi were brothers, Nasuam (Nasua) and Cimberium (Cimberius).

- *Caesar’s Gallic War*

At first, about fifteen thousand Suevi crossed the Rhine River. By spring of 58 b.c.e., 120 thousand reside in the Palatine territory of Gaul.

Ariovistus lead the German forces into battle at Magetobriga, where after defeating them, required the children of the most noble as hostages, and imposed all examples of torture upon them.

These Germans who were the most well-trained in arms, had not “gone under roof” (settled in permanent residences) within the fourteen years they had resided in Gaul.

...This custom was common with the Germans, that the mothers of the family should declare by lots and by divination, whether it might be of use to commit to battle; They say to this “It is not right for the Germans to conquer, if they should contend in battle before the new moon.”

- *The Gallic War Book I*

The Battle of Coblenz in 55 b.c., in which Julius Caesar annihilated the German swarms. It is said that 150,000 of them were either slain or drowned in the Rhine.
- *The Historic Note-book*.

ON THE GALLIC WAR, FOURTH BOOK

The fourth book contains the description of Caesar's campaign against the Germans and of his invasion of Britain, b.c. 55. The German tribes, the Usipetes Germani and the Tencteri, pressed by the Suevi, had crossed the Rhine near its mouth and conquered the Menapii. Caesar, fearing complications and a possible alliance of the Gauls and Germans, orders the Germans to withdraw from Gaul. He then advances with the army and a protracted parley takes place between him and the Germans. After a treacherous attack by the German calvary, Caesar assaults the camp of the Germans and puts them to flight. The Rhine is bridged by Caesar, who invades Germany and after a stay of 18 days returns.

- Frederick Holland Dewey, *Caesar's Commentaries on the Gallic War*

The Suevi who lived in the Palatinate east of the Rhine river "are said to have a hundred cantons; from which they lead forth yearly singles thousands of armed men from their borders, for the cause of warring; the rest who remained at home, support themselves and others. These again are in arms in turn in the year after; those remain at home." By alternating their army personnel, "thus neither agriculture, nor the theory and practice of war is interrupted. But there is not any private and separate land among them: neither is it lawful to remain longer than a year in one place, for the sake of cultivating. Neither do they live much on grain, but the greatest part on milk and cattle; and they are much in hunting pursuits; which thing both nourishes the strength and produces men of huge body size and by the kind of food, and daily exercise; as well as freedom of life, because having been accustomed to no duty or discipline from childhood, they do nothing at all against their will. And they have brought themselves into this habit, that they have neither any thing of clothing in the coldest places, except skins; on account of the scantiness of which, a great part of the body is uncovered; and they bathe in the rivers."
- *The Gallic War Volume IV*

Accessing the Suevi people was rare, and only for the purpose of trade exchange; and that mostly for dispensing spoils taken by the raids upon neighboring family-groups. "Moreover, the Germans use not imported beasts of burden, with which the Gauls especially are delighted and which they procure at a high price; but they render these, which are born misshapen and deformed among them, by daily exercise that they may be capable of the greatest labor. In calvary fights they leap down often from the horses, and fight on foot; and they accustom the horses to remain in the same spot, to which they betake themselves quickly, when need requires: nor is any thing held more shameful or more lazy by their customs than to use saddles. Therefore, however few, they dare to approach to any number of saddled horsemen. They do not permit wine to be imported at all to themselves, because they think that men become enfeebled by this thing for bearing, labor and are effeminated.

Publicly as a nation they consider it as the greatest praise that the lands are vacant as extensively as possible from their borders. That is indicated by this thing that, a great number of states could not withstand their domination. Thus about six hundred thousand paces of land are said to be vacant from the Suevi on one side. The Ubii come next at the other side, whose state has been extensive and flourishing, as the nature of the Germans is; they are a little more civilized than the rest, although they are of the same race; because they touch on the Rhine, and merchants travel much to them, and they are accustomed to Gallic manners on account of their nearness. When the Suevi, having made trial of these often in many wars, could not expel them from their borders, on account of the extent and influence of the state, at length they made them tributary to themselves, and rendered them much poorer and weaker.

- *Gallic War*

Spring 54 b.c.e. After Caesar discovered through the Ubian scouts that the Suevi had withdrawn themselves into the forests, fearing a scarcity of corn (because as we have shown above all the Germans attend very little to agriculture), Caesar resolved not to proceed further, but that he might not take away altogether the fear of his return from the barbarians and that he might retard their auxiliaries, having led back the army he broke down the farthest part of the bridge which was touching the shores of the Ubii, to the length of two hundred feet, and on the extreme end of the bridge he constructed a tower of four stories, and placed a guard of twelve cohorts for the purpose of defending the bridge and strengthen this place with great fortifications. He placed over this place and garrison a young man called C. Volcatius Tullus. - *The Gallic War Volume VI*

According to Caesar, the Suevi people were the largest and most warlike of the Germanic tribes. Suevi is the name from which the Germans who used the High-German dialect called themselves. It was not until these Suevi crossed the Rhine that they began being called Alemanni by the French Gauls. This word is a compound term combining the French word 'ala' which means 'according to the manner or fashion' and a Latin word 'manus' which means 'the force of the enemy (literally "band of the enemy")'. Thus the Suevi tribe acquired the name Alemanni, which meant "the force in accord with the manner of the enemy".

- DLO

Alamanni - of Suevi origin. Occupied the region from Main to the Danube in the early 3rd century.

The Alamannic Federation - A federation of German tribes, chiefly Suevi, in the 3rd century.

Querelle d'Allemand - German's quarrel (without cause) - *The Century Dictionary*

The Treviri lived near the western banks of the Rhine River, north of present-day Baden. This family-group remained absent from the Gallic Wars due to constant fighting with the Suevi who were pressing upon their territory. - DLO

Approximately 2000 years ago, the Germanic People heard the Aurora Borealis.

- *Astronomy Magazine*, Explore the Universe 6th Ed. Dec.1999

"Tacitus composed his *Germania* toward the end of the 1st century A.D. He opened his work with a description of the land of Germania, whose boundaries the ancient ethnographers drew at the Rhine and the Vistula, at the seas in the north (the one between Germania and Sca was called the Suevian Sea, and at the Danube in the south...

- map of Roman Empire 44bc-234 ad, *Wycliffe Encyclopedia* pg 1480)

The legend of the origins of the Germani: in their traditional songs they celebrated the earthborn god Tuisto, the 'hermaphrodite', whose son Mannus was considered the 'origin and founder of the Germanic people. Mannus (which means human being or man) had three sons, from whom where descended the tribes of the Ingaevones, Herminones, and Istaevones. ...

Germanus did not establish himself as the name of the Germanic tribes, just as French Allemands did not become the self-chosen name of the Germans. "...in late antiquity the Germanic name was first limited to the Alamanni and then to the Franks as the dominant tribal groups in traditional Germania."

Barbarians embraced one another for the kiss of brotherhood [a customary greeting] but knew no loyalty to the outsider: for just as the civilized world denied that the barbarians were fully human, they in turn regarded only their own community as the "world of human beings", as the oldest tribal names, in particular, attest. For that reason anybody who left the tribe was "beyond the pale"."

- *The Roman Empire and its Germanic Peoples*

"Germania was a comprehensive term in ancient geography. It embraced certain territories on the western bank of the Rhine, as well as the vast and imperfectly known tract of country stretching from the east of that river to the confines of Sarmatia and Dacia. The first had been formed into two Roman provinces in the time of Augustus. These were called the two Germanies, or Germania Superior and Germania Inferior; and they extended from the northern sea along the Thine to a point a little to the south of Basle. The latter, which is the subject of the present work, was sometimes described as Germania Magna, sometimes as Germania Transhenana or Barbara. It, as we should expect, a loose-ly defined area. The Rhine, Danube, and Vistula were its western, southern, and eastern boundaries..."

- Introduction, *Tacitus* pag XVII

Caracala had an unusual pleasure at visualizing the Alemannic peoples. He considered Germanic barbarians to be handsome. Prior to the Common Era, they had strawberry-blond hair and were tall and thin on average, with little hair on their chests. For people from the Mediterranean to see a blond haired person, they would imagine the sun shining from the hair. But the barbarians were usually "terribly dirty with abysmal habits of personal hygiene." Only in summer weather when they were near water did they get a desire to bathe. The thin posture of the Germanic people had much to do with the lack of food after the population had grown, forcing them to expand their territory. A good harvest was reason to hope that one could get through the winter without hunger and disease.

Only after the Common Era began did the Alemanni begin to take on various personal characteristics. The Roman Empire had conquered most of Gaul, and in doing so drove the fleeing refugees into the arms of the Alemanni. Since they had a hatred for the Romans, they would take in the refugees in order to grow their warring armies. Through a couple centuries of cross-racial marriage, the dominant strawberry-blond features began to fade.

The names of the Alamanni, Franks, and Bavarians reflect late, after the start of the Common Era, forms of tribal formations. Alamanni was given by the French dialect, which means a mixture of ethnic groups. The name Franks meant a union of free men, though free included a sense of wild and raucous rather than our modern sense of independent beings. The word Bavarians is a word of origins, meaning people of Bavaria. That region had distinguished itself in landscape, and was known by the outside world as a separate entity.

- DLO

"When we meet the Juthungi for the first time in 270 A.D. they vigorously deny- in view of the Alamanni name whose meaning was transparent to them - that they are "halfbreeds" and not pure and genuine. At that time the Juthungi were not yet Alamanni; only in the fourth century were they too counted among the Alamannic tribal confederation."

- *The Roman Empire and its Germanic Peoples*

For a time tribes with the names Hermunduri and Naristi had been migrating to the south, till they became neighbors of the Romans in Upper Germania and Raetia. They were for the most part immigrants from the Elbe region of Germania who displaced the Hermunduri name by assimilation. Many Hermundurians and Naristus refugees must have become assimilated in the Alemanni, "while their old names lived on in changed form and outside their original areas of settlement."

Until the 3rd century of the Common Era, the Franks mostly pushed into the lower lands of Cologne, and northeastern Gaul (now known as France). The Alamanni pushed toward Mainz, and the Juthungi, as successors to the Hermunduri, and developed a close relationship with Augsburg, and with the provincial administration of Raetia. The Alamanni were increasingly pushing to the south, gradually occupying northern Raetian territory too. "This gave rise to an Alamannic-Juthungian community of shared interests, which eventually led to the absorption of the Juthungi into the Alamannic tribal confederation." But the Alemanni had not reached the upper alpine regions of present day eastern Switzerland until the mass migration of Alemanni refugees from Alsace under Theodoric.

The Vandals were a tribal group from their inception, as was the Suevi of German territories, and Teutonians of the Northern Sea lands.

The Burgundians were bitter enemies of the Alemanni, due to their constant vying for the same territory. The former originated from the region of the mid-lands of the Oder River. Population growth and lack of food pushed them into Alemanni territories.

- DLO

Alemanni and Goths were the first Germans who succeeded in winning Roman territory. However, it would be more accurate to say that their success "happened" rather than that they were explicitly aiming for this. There is a noticeable difference, though, between East and West: while the Goths in the subsequent period remained largely quiet (with the exception of a few raids by individual bands), the Alemanni did not stop their largescale raids into the Imperium Romanum even after they had pushed their way into the agri decumates."

- *The Roman Empire and its Germanic Peoples*

The next extract from *The Roman Empire and its Germanic Peoples* I include with the intention to oppose its' content. The compilation of materials addressed in this book to this point of time is a clear indication of a specified family-group living in a specified territory. It had a typical barbarian tribal organization which could be identified and recorded by historians. Here again reveals the steadfast truth that a document written closer to the time of events is more accurate (excepting deliberate forgeries as Ramesses).

- DLO

"By contrast, the Alemanni had no comparable institution, no old nuclei of tradition that could create large-scale tribal organizational forms just as easily as they could drag them along in their own downfall." [This is an untrue conjecture.]

- *The Roman Empire and its Germanic Peoples*

The Alemanni regarded treaties only as individual contracts, thus when the ruler died, "they regarded the agreement as having come to an end."

- DLO

BARBARIAN LIFE

The whole barbaric world was without the true knowledge of God. ..The Apostle Paul had that knowledge and he owed it to every man who had it not, & he owed it to them simply because they did not have it.. (& we) are indebted to those who have not the world over.

- Henry Ward Beecher

In his history of the German tribes, Tacitus gives us a picture of a day's toil for one of the forest children. Moving to the banks of some new stream, the rude man peels the bark from the tree and bends it over the tent pole; with a club he beats down the nuts from the branches; with a round stone he knocks the squirrel from the bough; another hour suffices for cutting a line from the ox's hide and, hastily making a hook out of the wishbone of the bird, he draws the trout from its stream. But if for savage man a day suffices for building and provisioning the tent, the accumulated wisdom of centuries is required for the home of today. One century offers an arch for the door, another century offers glass windows, another century offers wrought nails and hinges, another plaster that will receive and hold the warm colors, another offers the marble, tapestry, picture and piano, the thousand conveniences for use and beauty.

- *Investment of Influence*

By the fourth century C.E., the Christian missionaries were beginning to make inroads into the life of the barbarians. F. Max Muller records one of the earliest German Classics from 311 A.D., written in German. It is a recital of Matthew 6:9-13, the Lord's Prayer:

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in Earth, as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

- King James Version, Holy Bible

The following is a paragraph from the *World Book Encyclopedia* :

"Early Days. Before the time of Christ, a Celtic people called the Helvetians lived in what is now Switzerland. They were conquered in 58 b.c. by Roman armies led by Julius Caesar. The region, known as Helvetia, became a Roman province. By the a.d. 400's, two Germanic tribes, the Alemannians and the Burgundians, settled there. "

As we proceed it will become clear the Oberholtzer family name is descendent from the Alemannian tribe. The Alemannian and Burgundian tribes developed from within the German people as separate clans. This an intriguing thought. Also, the definition in the dictionary for the Alemannic language - 'The High German speech of Swabia, Wurttemberg, Switzerland, and Alsace. It is obvious this Alemannian tribe has a separate language which has bin in existence for quite a long time. Could it even be traced to the Tower of Babel? This is also intriguing!

- DLO

The following excerpts are from *THE STORY OF SWITZERLAND* by Lina Hug & Richard Stead, G.P. Putnam's Sons, The Knickerbocker Press, New York, copyright 1890 :

"The mighty aspects of nature - forest, mountain, sea - play their part in moulding the character of a nation. And their impenetrable woods had influenced the destinies of the Germans in the early periods of their history - had saved them from the Roman yoke, the labyrinths of swamp and river, defying even the forces of the well-nigh all-powerful empire. Then, too, when hard fighting was afoot, and men had burnt their homesteads before the advance of the foe, the vast forest formed a safe retreat for women and children."

"The original house was a mere wooden tent on four posts, and could be carried off on carts that fitted underneath. The next stage was a hut in the style of the Swiss mountain-shed, but it was still movable - was, in fact, a chattel the more to be taken along on their wanderings."

"Their mode of settling in their new country was curious enough, though the early settlement of England was very similar in character. Disliking walled towns of the Roman fashion, the Germans felt their freedom of movement impeded and their minds oppressed by living within the prison-like fortifications of strong cities. But loving seclusion and independence, nevertheless, they built extensive farmsteads, where each man was his own master. To the homestead were added fields, meadows, and an extensive farmyard; the whole hedged about so as to keep the owner aloof from his neighbors. Each farmer pitched his tent wherever "spring or mead, or sylvan wood tempted him", reports Tacitus. This liking for seclusion on the part of the Germans is well shown in the case of Zurich, for at one time the canton had three thousand farm homesteads, as against a hundred hamlets and twelve villages."

"The mode of partitioning the land shows democratic features. It was divided amongst the community according to the size of families and herds of cattle, but one large plot was left for the common use. The large Allmend, or common, supplied wood for the community, and there, too, might feed every man's flocks and herds. The nobleman as such had no domains specially set apart for him, his position and privileges were honorary. He might be chosen as a high officer of a district, or even a duke, or leader of the army, in time of war. Payment for such services was unknown. Money was scarce, and indeed its use was mainly taught them by the Romans. Not only did flocks and herds form their chief wealth, but were the standard of value, each article being estimated as worth so much in cattle."

Society was from the very first sharply and clearly divided into two great classes - the landowners and the bondsmen - the 'free and the unfree'. The former class was again split into 'lesser men', 'middle men', and 'first men', or Athelinge (Adelige), these last named being of noble blood, and owners of most land and the greatest number of slaves and cattle. The 'unfree' were either Hoerige that belonged to the estate they tilled, and might be sold with it, or slaves who could call nothing their own, for whatever they saved fell to their lord at their death, if he so willed. A shire or large district was subdivided into hundreds. The whole of the free men met on some hallowed spot, under some sacred tree, with their priests and leaders. Here, besides performing religious exercises, they discussed war and peace, dispensed justice, chose their officers of state, and their leader if war was imminent. War and jurisdiction were the whole, or well-nigh the whole, of public life at that early stage. The popular assemblies, done away with by the feudal system, revived later on in the form of the famous 'Landsgemeinde' of the forest district, which are still in use in some cantons. Blood money, or wergild, was exacted from wrongdoers as in Saxon times in England. The tariff drawn up for bodily injuries reveals the mercenary and brawling temper of a semi-civilized people."

"At the time they settled in Switzerland the Alamanni were heathens, and worshipped nature deities - in groves, near springs, or mountains - the names of some of which we still trace in the names of the days of the week. Their religion, which was common to all Germany, reveals the German mind - full of reverie, deep thoughtfulness, and wild romantic fancy that leads to a tragical issue. Like most heathen people the Alamanni clothed their gods in their own flesh and blood. Woden and his attendant deities, shield-maidens - Freyr and Freya, the king and queen of the elves - dwarfs, giants, spirits - all these are well known to us, and are indeed the charm of the fairy tales of our youth. The bright spirits, the Asen, war against the spirit of darkness, the giants, and lose ground, for they have broken the treaties made with them. The Asen are the benevolent powers of nature, spring sunshine, and fertilizing rain, and live in bright palaces, in Walhalla, and receive the dead; the evil spirits are the sterile rock, the icy winter, the raging sea, the destructive fire. Thor destroys the rocks with his Hammer, pounding them to earth that man may grow corn. The giants scale the sky to defy the gods for assisting mankind, but Heimdallr stands watching on the rainbow-bridge that leads to Asgard - the garden of the Asen - and prevents their entrance. But the gods themselves are stained with guilt, and in a fight with the Giants before the gates of Walhalla, they utterly destroy each other. The columns of heaven and the rainbow-bridge break down, the universe is destroyed and the downfall of the gods is complete. But the heathen Germans could not bear the notion of entire annihilation, so in a sort of epilogue the great tragedy is followed by the dawn of brighter and better times, the gods recover their former innocence, when they used to play with golden dice without knowing the value of gold. The Gotterdammerung, the Divine Dawn, has broken, and a new epoch has set in for gods and men. One of Wagner's musical dramas is, as is well known, founded on these myths."

Aventicum, the Helvetian capital, was "the most remarkable place, whether for art, learning, or opulence. Of this town some mention has been made above, and did space permit, a full description might well be given of this truly magnificent and truly Roman city. Its theatre, academy, senate-house, courts, palaces, baths, triumphal arches, and private buildings were wonderful. Am. Marcellinus, the Roman writer, who saw Aventicum shortly after its partial destruction by the Alemanni, greatly admired its palaces and temples, even in their semi-ruinous condition. The city next in beauty and size was Augusta Rauracorum (Basel Augst), where the ruins of a vast amphitheater still command our wondering admiration."

"But this period of grandeur was followed by the gradual downfall of the empire, which was already rotten to the core. The degenerate Romans of the later times were unable to stand against the attacks of the more vigorous Germans. The story is too long to tell in detail, but a few points may be briefly noted. In 264 A.D. the Alamanni swept through the country on their way to Gaul, leveling Augusta Rauracorum with the ground, and considerably injuring Aventicum. At the end of the third century the Romans relinquished their rampart between the Rhine and the Danube, and fell back upon the old military frontier of the first century. Helvetia thus underwent a second

military occupation. Yet the prestige of Rome was gone.”

“For about 150 years (250 A.D. to 400 A.D.) relative peace was maintained between the Romans and the Germanic tribes. In the meantime, the beginning of the major phase of the great Germanic migrations was foreshadowed by a steady increase of the Germanic populations and a growing restlessness among the tribes. Their agricultural methods were relatively undeveloped and too inefficient to extract from the soil the necessary amount of food supplies. Their large herds of cattle made them look out for new pastures.”

- *Story of Switzerland*

Since the 3rd century, Goths and Alamanni had been settling on Roman territory from which the imperial administration had, without abandoning it, withdrawn. Though the two groups were not considered citizens of the empire, they were seen as its subjects, a notion that the Roman army knew how to drive home by making its presence known in those lands for short periods of time.

The Roman senator Symmachus, a member of the high nobility, praised the emperor with these words: “The inhabitants of Alamanni live for you, Valentinian. The people whom you remove from the sword you add to the empire. It is enough that you have changed the nature of the tribes through your gentle actions. What independence is left to them, whose well-being is dependent on your kindness and whose lands are dependent on the Roman forts? They are free by law, but captives in the consciousness of their shame. Will they perhaps move to distant lands, wither follow not only your standards of war but also new cities? ... Inhospitable land, in what state were you found so very recently? Without knowledge of ancient cities, unattractive with houses of twigs, roofs of grass. What I tell you now is to your benefit: you have been defeated. Like the other provinces of the empire, you too now show yourself fortified with towers. More fortune does it bring the lands to serve my emperor than to resist him.”

- *Roman Empire & its Germanic Peoples*

305 C.E.. The Alamanni again overran Helvetia, and completed the ruin of Aventicum. Weaker and weaker grew the Roman power, and when the Goths pressed into Italy the imperial troops were entirely withdrawn from Helvetia. As for the Helvetians themselves, they were quite unable to offer any resistance, and when the Alamanni once more burst into the land [406 C.E.], they were able to secure entire possession of the eastern portions.”

- *Story of Switzerland*

332 C.E. "At the Rhine.. the Alamanni and the Franks, mindful of the Roman successes of the great emperor here during his lifetime, held back their attacks for nearly a quarter of a century." - *Roman Empire & its Germanic Peoples*

THE ANCESTORS OF THE SWISS NATION

"It will be remembered that the modern names of German towns frequently end in -bach (brook), feld (field), holz (grove), wald (wood), born (spring), thus indicating their origin." - *Tacitus* pg 48

I bring attention to this in that the name Oberholzer is usually interpreted "beyond or above the woods or wilds". According to this quote, our surname means *one who resides beyond or above the grove*. What grove? There may have been one in the area of present day Wald, which only came into being after the Oberholzers where in there homestead for quite some time. - *DLO*

The tall, fair-haired, true-hearted Alamanni for whom Caracalla had such an admiration that to be like them he wore a red wig, are said to have been descendants of the Semnones, who had migrated from Lusatia on the Spree (in Silesia) to the Main. The name Alamanni is generally held by the learned to be derived from alah , a temple-grove, and implies a combination of various tribes, “the people of the divine grove.” The Suevi, of whom the Semnones were the most conspicuous tribe, had a sacred grove in the district of the Spree, where they met for worship. In the fifth century we find the Alamanni occupying the district from the Main to the Black Forest, East Helvetia, and Alsatia as far as the Vosges.”

- *The Roman Empire and its Germanic Peoples*

The author of *The Roman Empire and its Germanic Peoples* mistakenly believes the Alemanni took possession of eastern Switzerland by their own power. This is simply not true. It was Theodoric the Great who orchestrated the movement of the Alemanni refugees from Alsace and surrounding lands to Switzerland. The Alemanni tribe by this time had no power to take control of any lands, for they were a defeated people.

- *DLO*

Valentinian I had been forced to wage war against the Alamanni very soon after assuming power. In 368 even Mainz had been taken and plundered. In a splendid counterattack the emperor crossed the Rhine into enemy territory and inflicted a serious defeat on the Alamanni.

- *Roman Empire & its Germanic Peoples*

The following sections are from *The Story of Switzerland*:

“On the eve of the second and major phase of the migrations two great East Germanic groups occupied the territory along the Rhine: the Franks were settled on the lower Rhine River and the Alemans on the upper Rhine;”

THE TRIBES

The tribal organization of the Germanic peoples was based on the natural organism of the family. The Germanic tribes are natural units distinguished by specific hereditary character traits which are the result of a community of race, the influence or identical social and cultural experiences. A knowledge of Germanic tribal life will aid in the understanding of the complex character of the German nation and the appreciation of its cultural achievements.

The process of the formation of the Germanic tribes continued well into the thirteenth century A.D. Three important phases may be distinguished: (1) the High Germanic tribes, crossing the Rhine and Danube rivers, penetrated into Gaul and the Alpine districts; (2) the Saxons expanded and spread into parts of present-day Franconia and Thuringia; (3) the third movement, in which all the original tribes participated, took place east of the Elbe, the Saale, and the middle Danube.

The individual tribes are marked off from one another by dialect, custom, popular traditions, racial characteristics, literary and artistic expression. Some of them have fulfilled definite functions in the formative stages of German civilization. The Franks were the most important factor in welding the political, social, and intellectual frame of the western European tradition to the foundation of the cultural heritage of pagan and Christian Rome.

The Alemans were next in taking over the reins of the Empire, proving exceptionally gifted in statesmanship, and presenting Germany with a series of great dynastic leaders. it was the territory of the new colonial settlements that gave birth to the idea of German national unity and to the unified New High German language.

“In the year 486 A.D. Clovis (Clodovech), a Salian Frank of the family of Meroveus, became the absolute ruler of a strong Germanic kingdom of mixed Germanic Roman population. He had cleared his way to the throne by the murder of all possible rivals and, after his accession, consolidated his rule by successive victories over the Gallo-Romans under Syagrius at Soissons (486), the Alemans (496), the Visigoths (507), and subsequently all the Frankish tribes, including the Ripuarians.”

FAMILY LIFE

“Strictly upheld there,” says the Roman historian, “is the marriage bond, and there is no aspect of their cultural life that deserves higher praise.” Although marriage had passed through the usual primitive stages of rape and purchase, it was early considered as the most important civil contract. The father was the head of the family and of the household. In the earliest times he even possessed the judicial power of life and death over wife, children, and slaves.

At the time of Caesar and Tacitus monogamy was the generally prevailing practice. Juridically the women occupied an inferior position, although actually they were highly respected and even credited with an intimate relation to supernatural powers, and with the gifts of prophecy, divination, and healing. Their advice was sought and greatly esteemed, particularly in matters of vital concern for the well-being of the community. Motherhood was woman’s supreme title of honor, chastity her prime virtue. Adultery on the part of a woman was cruelly punished by the outraged husband: stripped of her garments, she was whipped through the village and frequently killed during or after the ordeal. Infidelity on the part of the husband was more frequent and went unpunished. As is the case with several Indo-Germanic peoples, earlier customs had made it obligatory for the wife to follow her husband in death.

LAW AND LEGAL PROCEDURE

..... The crude and barbaric administration of justice was gradually modified by the codification of Germanic law in the Latin language which followed closely upon the codification of Germanic law in the Latin language which followed closely upon the codification of Roman Law under Justinian I of the Eastern Empire (527-565). All the German tribes believed that every man should be judged according to the traditional legal concepts of his own people (Volksrecht). Thus each of the tribes had its own ancestral code. The tribal laws of the Franks, the Alemans, the Bavarians, and the Saxons were written down in Merovingian times. Even earlier the Romanized East Germanic Visigoths, Ostrogoths, and Burgundians had committed their legal concepts to writing. From the later years of Clovis’ rule (508-511) dates the oldest code of German tribal law which is completely preserved: the Lex Salica (Salic Law), containing a detailed scale of punishments that range from simple offenses to major and capital crimes.

MYTHOLOGY AND RELIGION

It is perhaps in their mythological and religious concepts that peoples are truest to themselves and most expressive of their innermost being. Early Germanic religion must not be judged according to the mature religious ideology of the North Germanic Edda, which received its shape as late as the eighth century A.D. and is partly influenced by Christianity. On the other hand, pre-Christian documents and reports on Germanic religion are completely lacking, because the written tradition begins only with the conversion of the Germanic tribes. The Roman historians, in their turn, are anything but unbiased observers, and their reports refer primarily to the southern tribes (including the Alemans). The judgment of the early Christian missionaries is similarly colored by their uncompromising opposition to Germanic paganism. It is therefore very difficult to give an objective account of ancient Germanic religious beliefs and cultic observances. Our most reliable guides and informants are the old Icelandic sagas and the many archaeological finds of the Stone and Bronze Ages.

LEARNING

In almost every department of civilization, then, we find a crossing and blend of Roman and barbarian, Christian and Germanic impulses and influences, frequently with a marked preponderance of the barbarian elements. As regards the field of education, the Romans had continued and further developed the Druidic (Celtic) schools which they had found well established in Gaul, with a curriculum that included the teaching of theology, philosophy, rhetorics, astronomy, mathematics, and law. Marseille, Toulouse, Bordeaux, Reims, Lyon, among other cities, were such Druidic and afterward Roman centers of learning.

The founding of cathedral schools and monastic schools as well as of those parish schools that were recommended by the Council of Vaison (529) contributed to the continuation and revival of learning when, toward the end of the Merovian period, it was in danger of disintegration. Books, which had replaced the rolled manuscripts of antiquity in the fifth century A.D. , were now being collected by the newly founded monasteries on German soil, and the crude script of the Merovingian age experienced a considerable refinement at the beginning of the Carolingian epoch, probably owing to the influence of the Irish missionaries.

LANGUAGE

The High German Sound Shift. Roman, Germanic, and Celtic elements mingled in the linguistic expression of Merovingian times, symbolically revealing the struggle of two ages, two races, two cultures. Between 500 and 800 the speech of the Franks, the Alemans, and the Bavarians was considerably altered by the so-called Second of High German Sound Shift*, which resulted in a sharper distinction between the High (i.e., south) and the Low German (including Anglo-Saxon, Dutch, and Flemish or Walloon) languages, literatures, and cultures. This sound shift affected principally old Germanic p, t, and k, which changed their character in High German dialects,.....

*The First or "Germanic Sound Shift," which created the dividing line between the Germanic and other Indo-European languages, had occurred about 500 B.C. At that time the tenuis (voiceless stopped consonants), t, p, k were transformed into voiceless spirants (fricative consonants); the Indo-European aspirated mediae (voiced stopped consonants) dh, bh, gh into voiced spirants; the Indo-European mediae d,b,g into tenuis. - *The Story of Switzerland*

GERMAN CLASSICS

"The Teutons of Germany retained their guttural and sterner speech, which developed into High and Low German and many dialects, spoken today as German not only in Germany, but also in Luxembourg, Austria, and Switzerland.

"The early German epic was the Nibelungenlied, 'Song of the Nibelungs', the Nibelungs being children of the mist, a race of dwarfs in Teutonic mythology, and in this work, the Burgundian kings. The Nibelungenlied tells of the traditions of the Burgundians at the time of Etzel, or Attila the Hun. The figures of Brunhild, Siegfried, Kriemhild, and others dominate the story. Nibelungs were the original possessors of the ring worn by Siegfried. The story of this ring, fashioned by the dwarf Alberich from the Rheingold (consecrated gold of the Rhine), forms the theme of Wagner's operatic tetralogy.

"German literature of the later Middle Ages is crowned with court epics, medieval romances (including versions of the King Arthur legends), the 'love songs' of the Minnesingers (12th to 14th centuries), the poetry and music of the meistersingers ('mastersingers' of the guilds, from 1300 to 1500), and folk songs of the people."

"The literature of Switzerland, in German, has been rather voluminous, but a few names are of international importance. Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531) may be mentioned for his work during the Reformation. Then there is the household classic, The Swiss Family Robinson, to be placed alongside Defoe's Robinson Crusoe, it was translated into many languages. The Swiss legend of William Tell is widely known, and occurs often in German writings. Carl Spitteler (1845-1924), also known as 'Felix Tandem', was a Swiss poet who won the Nobel prize for literature in 1919."

- *High School Self Taught*, Copeland

The German version of the Iliad was called the Nibelungen Lied (see above), written in 1210 A.D. It was the most important poem of the middle ages. It is copied in 39 books, and is about as long as Milton's 'Paradise Lost'. The poem is divided into two parts. The first part contains the marriage of Siegfried & Kriemhild, and ends with the death of the bridegroom; the second part is the marriage of the widow with Etzel, in order to revenge the murder of her first husband.

The 2nd best poem of the Hohenstauffen School was a German Odyssey called The Kudrun. It is divided into 3 parts: 1) the Hagen 2) the Hilde 3) the Hedel, so called from the chief characters.

The German version of the Bible - the Old Testament was translated at the expense of the Kaiser Wenceslaus in 1405. It was first printed in 1466 A.D.

- *The Historic Note-book*

The Swabian Poets. In German literature: (1) A former collective names on the Minnesingers. (2) A group of modern poets of Wurttemberg, the chief of whom were Uhland, Kerner, and Schwab.

- *The Century Dictionary*

The legendary hero-king Beowulf is still celebrated as theoden (lord)..... Among the Germanic peoples of the north and west, Wodan-odin embodied this duality, which the disintegrated thiudans-society had already dissolved before the 'new peoples' appeared at the borders of the Roman Empire. The Goths - or more accurately, the Amali - who had left the north before the arrival of Odin were led by his predecessor Gaut, who was also a god of military kings and their warrior bands.

- *Story of Switzerland*

By the eighth century C.E., St. Gallen was rapidly becoming the cultural town of central Europe. Several German Classics have descended from the teaching school. Matthew 8:34-9:8 is remembered in both Greek and German. Otfrieds Evangelien-Harmonie originated here and was used extensively in the eighth and ninth centuries. Muspilli was a story about Satan and the Antichrist used to teach

children of the ninth century. In 930 C.E. St. Gallen became the origin of the Mittelal-terliche Renaissance. A poem about St. Paul was recited in St. Gallen, entitled Notker.
- *German Classics*

ORIGINS OF THE LONGOBARDS

The Germans knew two families of gods: the older, settled Vanir, who bestowed fertility, practiced marriage among siblings and a pronounced matriarchal way of life, and counted helpful twin gods among their own; and the younger, warlike Aesir, headed by Odin-Wodan. Against this backdrop unfolds the saga of Longobard origins: lots were drawn to select a group of Vinnili who had to leave their homeland. The archaic sacral king apparently remained behind, for the emigrants followed the two commanders (duces), Ibor and Agio, a Dioskouridean pair of brothers who were accompanied about the gods. The first crisis on the way to the formation of a new tribe was a clash with the Vandili-Vandals. Incidentally, the same motif dominates also the heroic founding event of pre-Amal Gothic history.

Before the decisive battle, the chief Aesir god, Wodan, prophecies that the Vandal commanders, the enemy Dioskouroi Ambri and Assi, would be victorious. The Vinnili priestess, however, wins the support of her goddess, Frea-Freja (Wodan & Freda are also ancestors of Alemani), who contrives to make Wodan - in an untypical move the Vanir goddess is made into Wodan's wife - fulfill his prophecy against the Vandals. One of Wodan's many names was "longbeard". The Vinnili women and their Vanir goddess trick the god of war into involuntarily naming the threatened tribal group after himself - longbears- Longobards (Lombards). ..

Already Tacitus speaks in the same breath of the central Vandili cult site ("a sacred grove of ancient worship"), which was presided over by a priest dressed like a woman...

By contrast, the kingless Alamanni and Bavari did not produce their own heroic sagas; their songs told of foreign hero kings, like the Longobard Alboin.
- *Story of Switzerland*

The following map is from Boedecker's mapbook of Switzerland



SETTLING IN OBERHOLTZ

This next series of quotes compiles the Barbarian conquests upon the Roman Empire which bring its downfall and reveals the transition to the middle ages as they relate to the ancestors of the Oberholtzer Family. It is during this time-frame in which our ancestors most likely had migrated (by overpopulation or by waring resettlement) to the area around the middle to south end of Lake Zurich.

- DLO

“In the third century after Christ the Germans had formed on the right bank of the Rhine two confederations: on the south, that of the Suevic tribes, who called themselves the Alemani or men; ...”

The Suevian Sea , as it was called during the Roman Empire of 44b.c. to 234 A.D. was located in what is now called the Baltic Sea.

The Marcomanni - a Germanic tribe, a branch of the Suevi, 1st mentioned by Caesar. - *Century Dictionary* The meaning of this name by Caesar is evident. The word ‘marco’ has its root in the image of grape pulp that is left after being squeezed of its juices. ‘Manni’ refers to men. So in essence Caesar was referring to these people as ‘men who are grape pulp’, or man who has no civilized characteristics.

- DLO

“Among the barbarian tribes of the third and fourth centuries we find several confederacies occupying a conspicuous place, such as the Alemani , the Franks, the Saxons, and the Goths.

The Alemani inhabited the territory between the Rhine and the Danube, in the southwest corner of the Germanic domain. Not content with their bounds, they began in the last half of the third century to make inroads into Gaul, and contested the field with various of the Roman Emperors in the next century. A memorial of the alarm and distress which they caused to the people of Gaul is seen in the fact that they supplied the name Allemands, by which the French to this day speak of the Germans in general. The conversion of this people to Christianity is placed in the sixth century.

The Franks, as they came upon the stage of history, were a confederation of several tribes, dwelling along the Lower Rhine. It was in the reign of Gordian (238-244) that they make their first incursion into Roman territory. ‘Clothed in the spoils of the bear, the urus, the boar, and the wolf, they looked at a distance like a herd of wild beasts. Each man bore in his right hand a long lance, in the left a buckler; in his girdle, a two-edged axe, which was their peculiar weapon, and which they either used in hand to hand encounters, or hurled from a distance with unerring precision. In migrating to new homes, they carried their wives and children and rude household goods in rough wagons with great wheels of solid wood, drawn by oxen. The wagons, ranged in a circle, formed a protection to their camp when needful. Again and again, during two centuries, attracted by the rich prey which the towns and villas of the wealthy provincials offered, they repeated their raids; and again and again the imperial legions defeated them with great slaughter, and chased the survivors out of the empire.’ But continued pressure overcame the barriers. By the beginning of the fifth century, a considerable body of the Franks had settled upon the left bank of the Rhine. A century later they were found in possession of a large part of Gaul, and no longer subsisting as a loose confederation, but united (at least for an interval) under a single rule. The agent of this unification was the powerful and grasping Salian prince, Clovis. Under Clovis, the Franks in large part embraced Christianity. They embraced it as might be expected of uncivilized warriors. Clovis himself, while he may have been influenced to some extent by the persuasions of his Christian wife, the Burgundian princess Clotilda, found the decisive argument for the new religion upon the battlefield. Being hard pressed by the Alemani, he appealed to the God of the Christians, and vowed that he would submit to baptism if victory were granted him. His arms were completely successful; and soon after, with several thousand of his warriors, he received the Christian rites.

The Goths appeared at the end of the second century, on the Black Sea and the Lower Danube. In the 3rd quarter of the third century, the East Goths were put to the rout by the Huns. The West Goths also were hard pressed, and craved the privilege of crossing the Danube, to find refuge within Roman territory.

Nearly contemporary with the invasions of Alaric into the Roman empire, inroads were made by several tribes akin to the Goths; namely, Vandals, Suevi, Alani, and Burgundians. The first three of these tribes settled in the Spanish peninsula; the last, in the territory bordering the Alps and the Upper Rhine.”

- *History of the Christian Church*, Sheldon 1895

The French call us the Allemagne

- *High School Self Taught*, Copeland

SIX ROMAN EMPERORS IN NINE YEARS (235 - 244 A.D.)

“During the reign of Gordianus the Franks are mentioned for the first time. They were a confederation of Germanic tribes on the lower Rhine , like that of the Alemani on the upper Rhine. The Latter constantly threatened Rhaetia and even Gaul itself, whose northern provinces the former invaded. At the other extremity of Germany, the Goths had gradually descended from Scandinavia upon the lower Danube and the Black Sea. They were for the time being the empire’s most dangerous neighbors.”

The Battle of Lake Benacus in 268 A.D. , in which Claudius defeated the Alemani. - *The Historic Notebook*

“Aurelian took [leadership in Rome in 270 C.E.]. He had first to check an invasion of the Alemani, who penetrated through

Rhaetia as far as Placentia where they destroyed a Roman army and thence as far as the shores of the Adriatic. Rome was terror-stricken. The senate consulted the Sibylline books and in obedience to their responses sacrificed human victims. A victory gained on the banks of Metaurus delivered Italy; but the danger which Rome had incurred determined the emperor to surround it with a strong wall. He was less fortunate against the Goths. A treaty abandoned to them Dacia, whose inhabitants he transported into Moesia. The Danube again became the boundary of the empire.”

[In 275 A.D.] “the soldiers proclaimed Probus, who immediately hastened to Gaul, which had been invaded by the Alemanni. He recaptured sixty towns, followed the enemy across the Rhine and pursued them beyond the Neckar. The Germans delivered to him 16,000 of their young warriors, whom he enrolled, though dispersing them among his troops.”

Diocletian next reigned the empire from 285 to 303 A.D. “Diocletian imposed upon himself the double task of reestablishing order at home and security on the frontiers. While the tyranny of the governors of Gaul drove the peasants of that province to revolt, the Alemanni crossed the Danube and ravaged Rhaetia.”

No Alamannus ever attained the prominent position of the Franks, even though it seemed around the middle of the 4th century as though three Alamannic officers ‘held the state in their hands’. In 354 all three were suspected of conspiring with their tribal brothers; yet at least one of them went on to a respectable career in the East, and another died of natural causes in the same year. The accusations were more likely part of the usual court intrigues, whereby a certain hostility to foreigners may have played a role.

Barbarian kings, unable to hold on to their power, switched to the Roman side and became commanders of auxiliary units. They could even rise to become generals for a time, provided they were at the same time (tribal kings). Returnees of the highest rank, however, were unable to hang on to their lives, let alone become kings. Some were Christian, some Roman pagans. One Alamannic king had become a follower of Serapis; another, along with his wife, had converted to Judaism. The Germanic tribal religions along the Rhine and the Danube were in a process of complete dissolution, as were the social structures of the peoples on the periphery of the Roman world.

GERMANIC TRIBAL STRUCTURES AT THE RHINE & THE DANUBE

All the warlike peoples were led by Cnodomarius and Serapio (his nephew), who were more powerful than the other Alamanni kings. They were followed by the next most powerful kings, 5 in number, by 10 petty princes, and by a considerable number of noblemen. Next came many thousands of armed men who had been recruited from various tribes, partly for pay, partly on the basis of treaties of mutual aid. And suddenly there was heard the clamor of the Alamannic foot soldiers, who cried out with a unanimous and angry voice for the kings and princes to get down from their horses and join them, so that they might share the fate of all in whatever happened. Cnodomarius immediately leapt from his horse, and the others followed his example. Such was the organization of the Alamannic army that was destroyed in 357 in the battle of Strasburg. Shortly before this battle, Cologne had returned to Roman control following successful negotiations with several kings of the Franks.

- *Roman Empire & Its Germanic Peoples*

The Battle of Argentoratum in 357 A.D., in which Julian defeated the Alemanni. The city of Argentoratum is now called Strassburg.

- *The Historic Note-book*

Theodosius was the next leader in 378 A.D. “At this very time Gratian was fighting the Alemanni near Colmar, while the empire of the East was without a head. ... In Gaul Gratian had been overthrown by the usurper Maximus (383 A.D.) who, taking advantage of the Arian troubles in Italy, crossed the Alps and forced Valentinian II to take refuge with Theodosius. This prince brought him back to Italy after a victory over Aquileia. He gave him as his principal minister the Frank Arbogast, who had just freed Gaul from the Germans, but who filled all the civil and military offices with barbarians. “

“At the death of Theodosius (395) there was no serious danger (to the empire) except from the north. Driven forward by the Asiatic hordes from the banks of the Volga, the Germans were pressing upon the frontiers of the empire. The Suevi or Suabians, Alemanni and Bavarians were in the south between the Main and Lake Constance.”

- *A History of the World, Vol.III, Duruy*

“A spirit totally different from that of the inhabitants of the Roman Empire animated these barbarians. Among them reigned the love of individual independence, the devotion of the warrior to his chieftain and a passion for wars of adventure. As soon as the young man had received in the public assembly his buckler and lance, he was a warrior and a citizen. He immediately attached himself to some famous chieftain, whom he followed to battle with other warriors, his leudes or henchmen, always ready to die in his behalf. The government of the Germans was simple. The affairs of the tribe were administered in an assembly in which all took part. The warriors gathered there together in arms. The clash of shields denoted applause; a violent murmur, disapproval. The same assembly exercised judicial power. Each canton had its magistrate, the graf, and the whole nation had a konig, or king, elected from among the members of one special family which held hereditary possession of that title. For combat the warriors chose the leader, or herzog, whom they wished to follow. “

“The Olympus or heaven of these peoples presented a mixture of terrible and graceful conceptions. At the side of Odin, who gave victory and who by night rode through the air with the dead warriors; of Donar, the Hercules of the Germans; and of the fierce joys of Walhalla, - appeared the goddesses Freja and Holda, the Venus and the Diana of the North, who everywhere diffused peace and the arts. The Germans also adored Herta, the earth, Sunna, the sun, and her brother Mani, the moon, who was pursued by two wolves. The bards were their poets and encouraged them to brave death. It was their glory to die with a laugh.”

“The Germans cultivated the soil but little. They possessed no domain as private property, and every year the magistrates distributed to each village and each family the plot which they were to cultivate. They had no towns but scattered earthen huts far distant from each other, each surrounded by the plot which the proprietor cultivated. Their habits were tolerably pure. Polygamy was authorized

only for the kings and the nobles. But drunkenness and bloody quarrels generally terminated their Homeric feasts, and they had a passion for gambling.”
- *A History of the World*, Vol.III, Duruy

The Ancient Germans considered Long Hair a mark of high birth.

The Battle of Pollentia in Italy on Easter day, March 29 403 A.D. In this battle Stilicho attacked Alaric, and caused him to retreat.

- *The Historic Note-book*

In 407, A Roman usurper had concluded a treaty with the Alamanni and the Burgundians to enlist these two peoples in the protection of the Rhine border. Four years later Jovinus, a member of the Gallic high nobility, usurped the emperorship; a tribal coalition under Burgundian-Alamannic leadership in 411 gave him the political power to do so.

In the year 443, Aetius arranged for the resettlement of the severely defeated Burgundians from the Rhine to eastern Maxima Sequanorum or Sapaudia, that is to say, to the region south of Lake Geneva and on its northern shore as far as Lausanne. This province is handed over to the remnants of the Burgundians to share with the natives. What this refers to is settlement on the same conditions under which the Visigoths had been given large parts of southern France in 418: 2/3rds of the regular tax revenue went to the newcomers, to whom was assigned the defense of the border against the Alamanni in a threatened part of Gaul.

- Roman Empire & its Germanic Peoples

Here again we notice a family-tribe of people who have not genetically mixed with other cultures. The Alemanni had not mixed with other cultures up to time of Caesar, and here the Scirians are still unmixed till approximately the same time. And there is evidence from the time of Caesar onward as to what happened to these families. Therefore to say they cannot be followed genetically backward three times would be absurd. An incursion of a wife from another family into the Alemanni is no different than Tamar or Ruth in the Bible.

- DLO

The following are excerpts from Edward Gibbon's book *The End Of The Roman Empire In The West*. The time period which is covered is from 439 a.d. to 565 a.d. .

440's C.E. 'The deaths of Aetius and Emperor Valentinian had relaxed the ties which held the Barbarians of Gaul in peace and subordination. The sea-coast was infested by the Saxons; The Alemanni and the Franks advanced from the Rhine to the Seine; and the ambition of the Goths seemed to meditate more extensive and permanent conquests.'

458 C.E. 'The Alemanni had passed the Rhaetian Alps, and were defeated in the Campi Canini or Valley of Bellinzona, through which the Tesin flows, in its descent from Mount Adula to the Lago Maggiore. This boasted victory over nine hundred Barbarians betrays the extreme weakness of Italy.'

'The name of the Alemanni has been absurdly derived from their imaginary settlement of the banks of the Lemane lake. That fortunate district, from the lake to Avenche and Mount Jura, was occupied by the Burgundians. The northern parts of Helvetia had indeed been subdued by the ferocious Alemanni, who destroyed with their own hands the fruits of their conquest. A province, improved and adorned by the arts of Rome, was again reduced to a savage wilderness; and some vestige of the stately Vindonissa may still be discovered in the fertile and populous valley of the Aar. From the source of the Rhine to its conflux with the Main and the Moselle, the formidable swarms of the Alemanni commanded either side of the river, by the right of ancient possession or recent victory. They had spread themselves into Gaul, over the modern provinces of Alsace and Lorraine; and their bold invasion of the kingdom of Cologne summoned the Salic prince to the defense of his Riparian allies. Clovis encountered the invaders of Gaul in the plain of Tolbiac, about twenty-four miles from Cologne; and the two fiercest nations of Germany were mutually animated by the memory of past exploits and the prospect of future greatness. The Franks, after an obstinate struggle, gave way; and the Alemanni, raising a shout of victory, impetuously pressed their retreat. But the battle was restored by the valour, the conduct, and perhaps by the piety, of Clovis; and the event of the bloody day decided forever the alternative of empire or servitude. The last king of the Alemanni was slain in the field, and his people was slaughtered and pursued, till they threw down their arms and yielded to the mercy of the conqueror. Without discipline it was impossible for them to rally; they had contemptuously demolished the walls and fortifications which might have protected their distress; and they were followed into the heart of their forests by an enemy, not less active or intrepid than themselves. The great Theodoric congratulated the victory of Clovis, whose sister Albofleda the king of Italy had lately married; but he mildly interceded with his brother in favour of the suppliants and fugitives who had implored his protection. The Gallic territories, which were possessed by the Alemanni, became the prize of the conqueror; and the haughty nation, invincible or rebellious to the arms of Rome, acknowledged the sovereignty of the Merovingian kings, who graciously permitted them to enjoy their peculiar manners and institutions, under the government of official, and, at length, of hereditary, dukes. After the conquest of the Western provinces, the Franks alone maintained their ancient habitations beyond the Rhine. They gradually subdued and civilized the exhausted countries, as far as the Elbe and the mountains of Bohemia; and the peace of Europe was secured by the obedience of Germany.'

'Sigibert, king of the Riparian Franks, is said to have been wounded in the knee, fighting against the Alemanni.'

- Edward Gibbon Pages 112-114

493 C.E. “The Alemanni having crossed the Rhine, Clovis marched against them. He was on the point of being vanquished, when he invoked the God of Clotilde. Success seemed granted to his prayer, and the Alemanni were thrust back beyond that river and pursued into Suabia.
- *A History of the World*, Vol.III, Duruy

The Battle of Tolbiac in 496 C.E., in which Clovis repulsed the Alemanni, a Teutonic league, with great slaughter. Tolbiac is now called Zulpich; it is near Cologne.
- *The Historic Note-book*

507 C.E. “The Alemanni appealed to [Theodoric] for aid against Clovis.” Evidently they did not receive any.
- *A History of the World*, Vol.III, Duruy

The Battle of Vougle, near Poitiers in 507 C.E., in which Clovis, founder of the French monarchy, overthrew Alaric II, king of the West-Goths. Alaric himself was slain on the field.
- *The Historic Note-book*

A decade after the battle of Zulpich the Alamanni had regained enough strength to rise up against the Franks once more. The result was disastrous, the second defeat was far worse even than the first: If Theodoric had not intervened, the Alamanni may well have disappeared from history.

488-568 saw the Longobards at the middle Danube River, following the disappearance of the federate kingdoms of the Suebians, the Scirians, the Pannonian Goths, and that of the Rugians in 488, the Heruli took advantage of the tribal vacuum and expanded their power .. in all directions.
- *Roman Empire & its Germanic Peoples*

“The Alamanni fell the first victims (of Clovis). ... Clovis had vowed that he would embrace Christianity if he should prevail against the Alamanni. Victory falling to his side, Clovis and his nobles were baptized. His conversion was a great triumph for the Church, and furnished the Merovingian kings with a pretext for the conquest of the Arian Germans, who had been led astray from the orthodox faith. To crown the work and enhance his greatness in the eyes of his Roman and German subjects, the imperial purple, and the title of Roman Patricius was bestowed on Clovis by the Greek emperor.”
- *The Story of Switzerland*

Upon the defeat of the Alemanni, ‘some of their tribes settled in Rhaetia, under the protection of Theodoric; whose successors ceded the colony and their country to the grandson of Clovis.’

‘The Alemanni and Bavarians who had occupied the Roman provinces of Rhaetia and Noricum, to the south of the Danube, confessed themselves the humble vassals of the Franks; and the feeble barrier of the Alps was incapable of resisting their ambition.’

‘...and the rude institutions of the Alemanni and Bavarians were diligently compiled and ratified by the supreme authority of the Merovingian kings.’

‘In every just government, the same penalty is inflicted, or at least is imposed, for the murder of a peasant or a prince. But the national inequality established by the Franks, in their criminal proceedings, was the last insult and abuse of conquest. ... This proportion is fixed by the Salic, and the Ripuarian laws; but the latter does not distinguish any difference of Romans. Yet the orders of the clergy are placed above the Franks themselves, and the Burgundians and Alemanni between the Franks and the Romans.’

‘I am not desirous to prolong or repeat this narrative of military events, the least interesting of the reign of Theodoric; and shall be content to add that the Alemanni were protected, Ennodius and Cassiodorius, in the royal name, record his salutary protection of the Alemanni. The victory of the Franks over the Alamanni and the reception of Alamanni into the realm of Theodoric must be kept altogether apart chronologically. The date was 495 a.d. But the reception of the Alamanni was subsequent to the Sirmian expedition of 504 a.d. . Probably, as Mommsen suggests, Theodoric assigned abodes in Pannonia to the Alaman fugitives who had been wandering about homeless since 495 a.d.’
- Edward Gibbon

The Alemanni tribe occupied territories along the Rhine River (presently Alcaice, Baden, and Northeast Switzerland) in the 5th century A.D.
- *Columbia Viking Desk Encyclopedia*, 1953 Viking Press

Up to the beginning of the 6th century, we find the Alemanni (Also called Suevi Tribe) living between the Mainz in central Germany to the Palatinate along the Rhine River during 100 b.c. to 200 A.D.; pushing its borders west & south into Gaul and Helvetia till 495 C.E.

Then through slow migration they pushed onto the west bank of the Rhine, as well as occupying the land between the Rhine & the Danube. The Oberholtzer lands were most likely uninhabited during this time; the present-day northeast Switzerland territories being occupied by the original Rhatian peoples as well as the Burgundians. In same fashion as the former occupants, the people settled around lakes and major waterways, thereby not being many in number, had no purpose to explore the upper mountain areas for use as residential land. Since the latter were friendly with the Alamanni, I perceive they gave way to the Alamanni without fighting in the 6th century. The Burgundians were in the process of pushing westward into western Switzerland and eastern Gaul during this time. During the beginning of the 6th century is when the Alemanni began settling into the northeast Alps of what would become Switzerland. The way normal progression would take place, the first settlements would have been on the banks of the lakes and streams. Evidence of this is very prevalent around Lake Zurich. As families grew and the necessity of clearing fields for farming grew, families moved to the mountain tops to clear the tops of the Black Forest to grow oats and hay and millet as well as other crops with a short growing season. The timber they cleared was first used to build their homes and barns, and for fuel for cooking and heat. As time progressed, the need for additional

income, as well as something to do on those long, snow-bound winter days; wood was fashioned into furniture for themselves, and made to be sold in the towns and to the roving salespeople. This is the most likely way, in light of the political scope of the times, that the Alemanni ancestors who came to be known as 'Farmers Over The Forest' procured the land now known as the town of Oberholtz and its surrounding lands.

- DLO

In Switzerland the snow-capped mountains were called pilate (mount), meaning the hatted mountain.

- *The Historic Note-book*

Theodoric, who had organized the Raetian hill country into the 'bulwark and locking bolt of Italy', took the threatened Alamanni under his protection. In addition, Ravenna demanded in 506 that the Frankish king cease pursuing the defeated enemy, in return for which it guaranteed a secure border and the prevention of any further Alamannic attacks against Frankish territory. In order to fulfill that promise, Alamannic groups were accepted into Raetia I, but above all they were marched vis Noricum ripense and settled in Northern Italy and the upper Save River. - Roman Empire & its Germanic Peoples

The Alamannic crisis was not serious enough in the mind of Theodoric the Great to entirely cut off relations with the Franks. They both wanted to appease the hearts of the Alemanni by using music and liquor, hoping to curb the war-minded to rest their destructive ways. Theodoric the Great was able to stabilize the alpine region against the Frankish hordes. But after his death, the Franks took control not only of western Gaul, but also the eastern Alpine Region and the Thuringian kingdom. They were able to keep in check their home territory in central Germany over an extended term, while control-seeking in the south and west.

- DLO

511 C.E. "The Alemanni in Alsace and Suabia were associates in the fortunes of the Franks rather than subject to the authority of their king."

The Sons of Clovis (511-561) "The impulse by Clovis lasted for some time. His sons carried their arms to Thuringia, Burgundy, Italy and Spain. The Alemanni and the Bavarians had recognized them as suzerains, and the Saxons paid them tribute."

Dagobert in 628 C.E. "The reign of Dagobert was the most brilliant of the Merovingian line and gave to the Franks preponderance in Western Europe. ... He revised the laws of the Sali, the Riparii, the Alemanni and the Bavarians, encouraged commerce and industry and built the Abbey of Saint Denis." - *A History of the World*, Vol.III, Duruy

ALEMANNI RESTLESSNESS 536-540

Vitigis finalized the treaty with the Franks in the town of Ravenna. The Ostrogoths were made to pay a two thousand pound indemnity. In return, the Franks agreed to refrain from an attack on Italy. The Franks also took on the protection of the destitute Alamanni, as well as the other eastern Alpine people. The Ostrogoths relinquished Gaul, from which they could now recall their troops.

In 538 C.E., Alamannic raiders became impatient with their state of life and swept through upper Italy. Vitigis decided to enter into an alliance with the Franks. In starvation ravaged Northern Italy, afflicting friend and foe alike. Its horrors, suffered especially by the peasants in the lowlands, went hand in hand with an increasingly brutal warfare, for which Belisarius's cavalry commanders were responsible for the devastation.

By the 7th century, Alemanni populated the agricultural decumates and the adjoining regions on the south and western bank of the Rhine, while Northern Raetia and parts of Noricum turned into the land of the Bavarians. Remnants of the Raetians and Helvetians resided along the banks of the lakes and lower tributaries in what is now eastern Switzerland, while the Burgundians settled in the highlands of present day western Switzerland. France and England replaced Gaul and Briton, respectively.

- DLO

"The inhabitants of the Forest were Alamanni, who, in the seventh century, had moved into the higher Alpine regions, the immigration into those regions being greatly promoted by a decree of Charlemagne, that whoever should cultivate land there with his own hands should be the owner thereof."

"The ambition of the Franks to found an empire after the fashion of Rome was practically realized when Charlemagne was crowned Emperor of the West by Hadrian in A.D. 800. Yet Charles (Martel, one of the Mayors of the Palace, who defeated the Alamanni in a great battle of A.D. 730) aimed less at mere outward grandeur than at the establishment of a spiritual kingdom on earth, and a kingdom that should embrace all his people in one Christian Church, upheld by a strong and well-organized state-commonwealth. The union of Church and State, yet giving the preponderance to the latter, was Charlemagne's leading idea, and well-nigh summed up his religious and political creed. The strong religious bent of this 'priestly king' was revealed at the very beginning of his reign, when he took upon himself the mission of 'Defender of the Holy Church, and Coadjutor of the Apostolic See', thus claiming, with the concurrence of the Primate, the spiritual guidance of his realm. ... Yet in this matter Charles but confirmed to the policy of his ancestors, and to the spirit of the age, an age remarkable for acts of piety and devotion."

- *A History of the World*, Vol.III, Duruy

EARLY HOMESTEADING

As the river and lake settlements became more populated, some Alemanni families moved to the top of the mountains. The upper

house in what is now the village of Oberholtz was being used since about 700 A.D. by the Overholser-Alemanni family. The original homestead “lies in a valley from which a ski lift rises from 2850 feet to 4350 feet above sea level. The village name Oberholtz means “upper wooded slope”.”*
- DLO, *Ettie Wright

Oberholtz is “a day’s journey by foot from the town of Wald. These people lived near the area of the wooded place and so were called the ‘Bauern Im Hof in Obern Holz’, which means ‘The farmers in the Village Above the Woods’. Later they were given the name Oberholz or Oberholzer.
- Rosy Oberholzer’s Greetings

Translated by Ruth Overholser, Overholser Family Bulletin, 2/1984

By 700 C.E. the homestead of Overholser was being established on the top of the mountain. By the mid 9th century, they were able to begin trading goods along the trail which ran between Zurich and the area of Morgarten along the banks of Lake Zurich. This enabled them to buy the necessary tools needed to make fine furniture, which they obviously became skilled at. And by the turn of the millennium their skill turned into the making of fine church furniture.
- DLO

“The Gallo-Romans and the Italians spoke with slight differences a similar language, derived from the Latin. But the Germans retained their Teutonic idiom. Charlemagne left to the Lombards and Saxons their own laws. The Salian and Ripuarian Franks, the Alemanni and Bavarians, preserved theirs. Thus these peoples were not fused and welded in one. The will of Charlemagne was the only bond that held them together.”
- *A History of the World*, Vol.III, Duruy

“And the history of Switzerland is for that period rather a history of the religious movements of the time than a political chronicle. For in those early stages the Church was proportionally far more important than in our own times. Then she was the sole, or almost the sole, centre of intellect, of art, of letters, and represented the ideal side of life in an illiterate age. Despite her defects the Church was a blessing to mankind.”

“A few words may be given here respecting the famous monastery of St. Gall. The cloisters of St Gall shed a bright lustre on Swabian lands during its best period, from 800 to 1050 A.D. This famous religious-house was a centre of art and high culture, and was a blessing to the whole country. We can but allude to some of its famous monks, such as the Notkers, Ekkehard, Ratbert, and so forth; many famous as poets, musicians, savants, historians, and teachers of the very highest rank. In the noted school attached to the monastery there resided and were educated some three hundred sons of the German and Helvetic nobility. The discipline kept up was most severe. A story runs that King Conrad I. (from our Stauffer family line), on a visit to the institution, wished to put this to the test, and caused to be scattered under the school benches a basketful of fine apples. Not a single scholar touched the fruit, and, to reward them for this very remarkable self-restraint, Conrad gave the youths three holidays. But the number of anecdotes attaching to this magnificent institution is endless.

“Helvetian lands had entirely lost their political independence. During this reign, the vigorous government of the monarch frustrated every attempt at insurrection, and in the end both Alamanni and Burgundians began to feel the benefits arising from the existence of a wise and firm administration. To curb their power the sovereign abolished the dignities of the mighty dukes, and parceled out the land into smaller shires (than the old county divisions), and placed over these counts as royal governors with judicial power. The people no longer appeared in corpore at the shire-motes, but were represented at the lesser court by Schaffers, or reeves. These reeves had to bring in the verdict; if they could not agree, trial-by-ordeal was resorted to. Twice a year Charles assembled his nobles and bishops to receive their reports, and to frame laws, which were, however, submitted to the people, that is, the ‘freeholders’ at the ‘real thing’, when they met in May. For the control of the shire administration, and to give the people a means of appealing more directly to the king’s justice, he appointed a special commission of spiritual and temporal officers (missi dominici).”

“The treaty of Verdun (in 843 C.E.), to which the French and German States trace their origin, also effected the most sweeping changes in Helvetia, and altered greatly its political aspect. The country was rent into two halves, East Switzerland, forming the Aare, with Chur-Rhaetia, being incorporated with the East Frankish Kingdom; and West Helvetia and the Valais with Lorraine or the middle kingdom. This naturally tended to revive the national antagonism between the two Helvetias.”

“Freed from the iron hand which had crushed all attempts at insurrection, the peoples began again their struggles for the recovery of national independence and separate rule, and thence came the restoration of the kingdom of Burgundy and the Duchy of Alamannia, or Swabia.”
- *Story of Switzerland*

As the top of the mountains became filled by each family, the brothers would divide the mountain. One family would remain on the top of the mountain and continue to farm and herd. The other family would move down the mountain into the valley areas to clear land and raise plants and grain which could not withstand the weather on top the mountain. In the area of Oberholtz, this is how the town of Wald acquired its’ name. Wald* means “forest”(wood), and the younger brother most likely was given the wald. This same style of population growth is found on the west side of Lake Zurich. The families of Landis, Brubacher, Zug, and many others followed this same style of agricultural growth and population progression.
- *Definition of Wald, *Der Zerbruchewe Krug*

By the beginning of the 10th century, the family expanded into an upper and lower house. “The lower house eventually spelled their name Oberholtzer. The present Oberholtzer’s used the lower house since about 900 A.D.^ Due to the lack of employment, most of the children would move to other areas of Switzerland and Bavaria to find or use their skills. This, as well as losing some sons to the continual skirmishes over the next five centuries, and plagues thinning the family, led to the ability to trace the Oberholtzer family back to the 1400’s with only one parental ancestor. This Jacob Oberholtzer is called (by Rosy Overholser who runs the hotel in Oberholtz)

the “erster bekannter Vorfahre”. In English this means “the first well-known ancestor”. Rosy also described him as being a “burger and bauer”. The former has a double meaning. It means a middle-class resident, which farmers who owed their land during feudal times would have been. But the word also means “underhaus”, which is a reference to the progressive expansion of the family lands. A “bauer” is a small farmer and/or husbandman. Rosy must be pretty certain of this information, or she would not associate us with their family. These definitions are a confirmation that our ancestor in Aa/Wald came from the ‘lower’ house and can safely be traced to the Overholser ‘upper’ house which was situated in the present village of Oberholtz. This type of homestead settlement was typical of most Alemanni families in the Zurich area.

^ Ettie Wright - DLO

“It is perhaps preferable to use the word Swabia instead of Alamannia so often. Freeman in his essay on the Holy Empire speaks of the Swabian Emperors, the Hohenstauffen.”

“It remains now to show briefly what may be considered the authentic history of the period, that is, the history as found in authentic documents.”

“But besides these farmer freemen, land was taken up by religious-houses, and by secular grandees, who claimed the soil cultivated by their serfs, bondsmen, and dependents of all kinds. By the bounty of Louis the German, the ‘Gotteshausleute’ (God’s-house-people), had become of great importance in Uri; in 853 that monarch had bestowed his royal lands in Uri, with everything appertaining thereto, on the Abbey of our Lady at Zurich, an abbey founded for his daughters. Beneath the mild rule of these royal ladies the inhabitants had acquired great independence, and had shared with their mistress the high privilege of the ‘Reichsfreiheit’, which saved their lands from being mortgaged, or from falling under the power of vassal princes. Besides the Lady Abbess, there were other proprietors in Uri - the Maison Dieu of Wettingen, the barons of Rapperswyl, and other high-born or noble families, and lastly, a body of ‘freemen’.”

“This scattered and various society was knit into one close boundary-association by the possession of the ‘Almend’, a stretch of land common to all, according to the old German custom - to free and unfree, rich and poor, noble and serf, who were brought together in council for deliberation. These assemblies gave rise to the political gatherings of the ‘Landsgemeide’.”

“In East Helvetia, (the advance of Rudolf II King of Burgundy (West Helvetia) was checked by Burkhard I., Duke of Alamannia, who routed him at Winterthur, near Zurich, in 919. (This is about 30 miles North of Oberholtz.) Led no doubt by their mutual admiration for each other’s prowess, and by common political interests, they made peace and contracted a lasting friendship. To seal the union between the two Helvetias, Burkhard gave his lovely daughter, Bertha, in marriage to the Burgundian king, and gave her as dowry the land between the Aare and the Reuss, the district for which he had been contending.”

“Henry I, called ‘the Fowler’ and the ‘City Counder’ (919-936), was the first German ruler who erected a true German Kingdom. ... Burkhard I, assuming the title of ‘Duke of Alamannia by Divine Right’, bent to Henry’s royal supremacy with little objection, no doubt feeling it a safeguard to his own position. His successors likewise held to Germany, and were faithful adherents of the emperors, who in turn strove to knit Swabia more closely with the empire.”

From 973 to 1038, the land was under the control of three more Saxon emperors, Otto I; Otto II 983 A.D.; and Otto III, 1002 A.D. “In 1024 the Duchy of Swabia was vested in Ernest II., stepson of the Emperor Conrad II. of the Salic dynasty. A fierce struggle arose on the question of the succession to the Burgundian throne. Ernest claimed through his mother, and Conrad through his wife, niece to Rudolf III. Seeing his hopes frustrated Ernest, with his friend Werner of Kyburg, and his party, fell upon the imperial troops, and bloody frays occurred. Ernest was imprisoned, and the manor of Kyburg besieged; but both friends escaped, and again combined in new opposition to Conrad. In order to break their union, the emperor promised his son installation in Burgundy if he would deliver up his friend. But this was indignantly refused, the struggle began anew, and the gallant youths fell in a skirmish in 1030. Ernest was long a chief figure in medieval heroic poetry.”

“The greatest changes were effected by the growth of feudalism, which had arisen indeed under Charlemagne, but had to some extent been checked by him. Feudalism outgrew all other systems, and entirely disarranged the social scale. The free peasantry shrank to a small number, and there sprang up a martial nobility of high functionaries, who held offices in the army or courts of justice, and exerted much influence. On the native soil, on the very meeting-places where the old German people had assembled to deal with civil and judicial matters, eminent men founded families which grew into reigning houses. These men, combining political discernment with military ability and experience, rose above their fellows, and assumed the highest offices. The distresses, the dissensions, the intestine wars, and particularly the invasion by savage hordes drove people to seek the protection of powerful lords even at the risk of losing their own independence. In most cases the people became ‘unfree’, or serfs.

- *Story of Switzerland*

...in the twilight of the empire the foundations of modern European culture were laid. ...studying land charters and administrative records, showed that the early Middle Ages (a.d. 500-1250) were anything but primitive. They stressed the complex social organization of Europe’s new villages, reflected in planned settlements with manors and peasant dwellings, and the far reaching effects of a new class of merchant-adventurers who were prepared to travel long distances and cross tribal borders linking Christian lands with pagan cultures to the north and east.

Historical texts ascribe the end of the Roman empire to invasions and migrations of central European tribal peoples .. (also) what happened was far more complex. ...The economic crisis of the Roman empire in the 3rd century - an age typified by steep inflation, civil unrest, and political instability - was a stimulus to investing in the eastern empire, focused on Constantinople, and created problems for the Germanic tribes beyond the frontiers. These people had long depended on stable relations with the well-run Roman provinces. The First Millennium documents how civil unrest and economic tension in the western provinces affected these so-called barbarians. Hoarding practices beyond the Roman frontier, ..invariably correlated with economic or social upheaval within the frontier, and example being the Franks’ crossing of the Rhine in the 2nd half of the 4th century. Under pressure to survive, these people sometimes forced their way into the provinces to benefit, as best they could, from dwindling opportunities, such as gaining entitlement to land through conquest or by occupying deserted estates. In fact, the archaeology of the 4th century to 7th centuries in much of Europe points to the synthesis of two

different cultures, Roman and Germanic.

The pattern of colonization, the steady deterioration of imperial standards of civic life, and the rhythms of Mediterranean and pan-European trade ...bears comparison with the collapse of the Soviet Union into a mosaic of impoverished states.

The chronology of the new towns is significant. They prospered ca. 670-720, suffered a recession in the 750's, experienced a boon when Charlemagne fused Europe's regions into a new Holy Roman Empire, ca 800, and fell into terminal decline in the 820's. The dendrochronological record... reveals a boom-and-bust rhythm to the trade before new inland market towns founded in the early to mid-ninth century eclipsed these coastal trading settlements in importance. Ironically, most of these early towns are first recorded at a time when they were in sharp decline and the target of Viking raids.

Unlike classical monuments, Dark age structures, built as they were of wood and wattle and daub, were ephemeral, and their remains are rather unappealing to tourists.

- Richard Hodges, *Archaeology Magazine* Sept/Oct 1998

"An article appeared in the Los Angeles Times, which was copied by the Washington Post and the Windsor Star in Canada, about Durand Overholtzer whose church furniture company is based in Modesto CA. ... Durand traces his woodworking ancestry back 1000 years to Oberholtz, near Zurich, Switzerland.

- February 1995, *Oberholtzer Family Association Newsletter*

(Switzerland) was held for the most part by feudal families after the 11th century A.D.

- *Columbia Viking Desk Encyclopedia* , 1953 Viking Press

PLANTS AND FOODS OF THE ALEMANNI :

Swiss Soflower grows in the pristine fields and forests of Switzerland. Its' floral elixirs and herbal extracts include vitamin E, hyaluronic acid, pantherol, and jojoba oil, and are used in modern skin care products.

- *Nikken sales catalogue*

German Camomile *Matricaria chamomilla* has an apple-like fragrance and flavor. It is an annual with fine-cut foliage and a single daisy-like flower with a yellow, hollow disk and white rays. It is a cultivated plant, although some natural wild plants exist. It stands erect and is used for medicinal purposes, as carminative, sedative, and as tonics taken in the form of an infusion of the blossoms. The usual infusion is made of a half to a full ounce of the dried blossoms and a pint of boiling water. The Germanic tribes considered the camomile sacred in ancient times and dedicated it to their sun god Baldur because to them the camomile's yellow center and white petals around it seemed to convey sun forces. It is also used for ornamental purposes.

Horseradish *Armoracia lapathifolia* is in the Cruciferae family. The Germans ate horseradish sauce with fish and meat. In 1657, Coles wrote that the root, 'sliced thin and mixed with vinegar is eaten as a sauce with meat.' However, Coles made it clear that horseradish was not a gourmet food. The old French name for the horseradish was *Moutarde des Allemands* , indicating that they had learned its use from their German neighbors. Horseradish was of great value to the ancient herbalists as a plaster. Culpepper said, 'If bruised and laid to a part grieved with the sciatica, gout, joint-ache, or hard swellings of the spleen and liver, it doth wonderfully help them all.' It is also used to kill tapeworms in children.

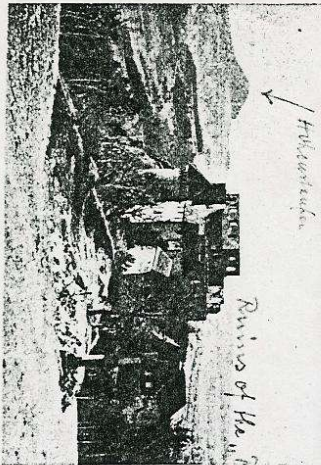
- *The Rodale Herb Book*

In the first few centuries of the Common Era, the Alemanni diet consisted of millet rather than wheat, a wine which was called by the natives *medos* (mead is the Germanic word), which is made from honey. A black ale made from barley that the barbarians call *kamon*. The roving tribe had not yet learned the art of agricultural crops, which would have meant they had to remain in the same place for an extended period of time, something they had not been accustomed to for at least a millenium.

After they finally resigned to the fact they had to live in a permanent settlement, the Alemanni became skilled at growing oats on top of the Switzerland alpine landscape.

- DLO

HOUSE OF HOHENSTAUFEN IN SUABIA



Ruins of the ... ch.



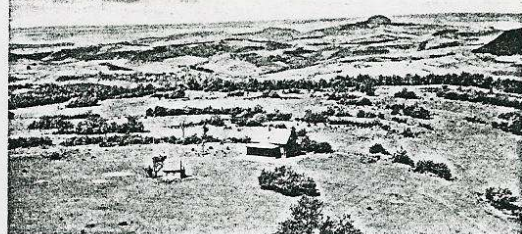
Hohenstaufen
Bartholomäuskapelle



DIE STAVFER AVF DEM DEUTSCHEN THRON:
 KONRAD III - FRIEDRICH I - HEINRICH VI - PHILIPP - FRIEDRICH II - KONRAD IV
 1138-1152 · 1152-1190 · 1190-1197 · 1198-1208-1215-1250 · 1250-1254
 EHERNE GEDACHTNISSTAFEL IN DER SCHUTZHALLE DES
 SCHWÄEBISCHEN ALBVEREINS AVF DEM HOHENSTAUFEN.



Wollmarbergturm b. Oberlochen



Franz-Keller-Haus (Kalkes Feld)



Hohenstaufenhalle

The Hohenstauffen Family ruled from Bavaria

HOHENSTAUFFEN DYNASTY

According to tradition the Stauffers owe their origin to a generation of knights called Stauffacher, at Hohenstaufen.* It is presumed that all of the Stauffer pioneers that emigrated to America at different times have the same common origin, and are more or less remotely connected, and in all probability the pioneers of this work have also their origin in the ancient House of Hohenstaufen in Suabia. A description of the House of Hohenstaufen is given in a translation from the German History by Fred Raumer, from which we glean as follows:

“In the middle of the eleventh century Frederick of Buren removed from the confined valley of Buren to the plain of Hohenstaufen, built the castle and founded the town of Hohenstaufen, and from him descended the Hohenstaufen dynasty. The House of Hohenstauffen exalted itself over all the tribes and principalities until after a period of splendor and glory it was suddenly seized by a dreadful calamity and hurled into the darkest night of oblivion, leaving hardly any traces behind. At the time of the prosperity of the House of Hohenstaufen their ancestry was traced back to the ancient Emperor of France, as far back as the reign of Charlemagne. A close inquiry, however, throws some doubt on the legend.

“Frederick of Buren, founder of the House of Hohenstaufen, was however, beyond any doubt of Franco-Alsatian ancestry. He was equalled by none of the noblest dukes of Suabia, and was Emperor Henry IV’s of Germany, most steadfast defender and protector. He knew well under his peculiar circumstances the value of a friend like the Frederick

*D.K.Cassel’s History of the Mennonites

of Hohenstaufen. Therefore in the year 1079 he called him to Regensburg and said: ‘Brave and valiant man, whom I always found the truest and bravest among all, you are well aware how in the Roman Empire crime and misdeed prevail, how through the Devil’s influence revolt and conspiracy are held sacred, while God’s command is despised and the laws of the land trampled under foot. As you have battled in the past against all these evil sods, and as a proof how highly I appreciate your former services, and how sincerely I trust your future, I will give you my only daughter, Agnes, to wife and the Duchy of Suabia as a dowry.’

“Frederick died in 1105 leaving two sons, Frederick and Conrad, who their uncle, Henry V, adopted.

- *The Stauffer Family*

From 1038 to 1100 the land of Northeastern Switzerland was under the control of the Swabian kings of Hohenstauffen. Their descendants are related to us after the immigration of our families to America. But their power waned on the south side of the Rhine River, in which Bertold II. of Zaeringen exerted his authority.

- DLO

“The rule of the Dukes of Zaeringen ushered in a long period of comparative peace (1100- 1218), which improved the social and material condition of the people.

Yet this time of peace was every now and again interrupted in the west by feuds with the Burgundian nobles. This Swabian family took their name from the ancestral manor of Zaeringen, near Freiburg, in the Breisgau (Black Forest). The vast estates they had derived from the House of Rheinfelden on its extinction reached from Lake Geneva to the rivers Aare and Emme, and gave them a dominant position in the country at the opening of the twelfth century.”

- *Story of Switzerland*

“After the death of Henry V, in 1125, the Imperial Crown was contested between Frederick and Lothaire, Duke of Saxony. Lothaire was elected by fraud. He died in 1137, childless. Frederick having died, the crown was again contested between Conrad of Hohenstaufen, and Henry the Proud, Duke of Saxony, and heir to Lothaire. Conrad was elected March 7, 1137, and crowned March 15. Conrad was born at Ampulia in 1093. His mother was Agnes, daughter of Henry IV. Conrad married Gertrude, duchess of Sulzbach, in Bavaria. His title was disputed by Henry the Proud of Saxony. A civil war ensued. Conrad gained a victory and the war ended.

“In 1147 Conrad conducted a large army of Crusaders into Palestine. He besieged Damascus but failed to take it, and returned in 1149. He died without issue in 1152, and was succeeded by his nephew, Frederick I, surnamed Barbarossa, son of Frederick, Duke of Suabia and brother to Conrad III. His mother was Judith, daughter of Henry the Black.

“He was elected Emperor of the death of his uncle, Conrad III, in March 1152. In 1155 he passed into Italy with an army and was crowned by Pope Adrian IV, at Rome. In 1156 he was married to Beatrice of Burgundy and reduced the King (or Duke) of Poland to become his vassal. In 1158 he led a large army into Italy and subjected the revolted city of Milan which was punished with rigor. Two rival Popes, Victor IV, and Alexander III, having been elected in 1159, Frederick recognized the former and was excommunicated by the latter. His reign was disturbed by disputes with the Pope and wars with the cities of Lombardy.

- *The Stauffer Family*

From 1173 to 1212 A.D., the Habsburgs inherited the rights of the Count of Zurich. They remained loyal to the local governing body, which at the time was the Hohenstauffen emperors.

- *The Habsburgs*

Frederick Barbarossa’s “army was defeated by the Lombards near Legano in 1176. He then made peace with Pope Alexander and a truce with his other enemies in Italy. In 1183 the celebrated Peace of Constance was concluded between Frederick and the Lombards. In 1189 he joined the third Crusade with an army of 150,000 men, and after having marched by land as far as Asia Minor, defeated the Turks near Iconium. He was drowned in the river Calycemis in 1190. He was ambitious but liberal, and was considered one of the greatest generals and statesmen of his age. He was succeeded by his son, Henry VI.

Henry VI was born in 1165. He married Constance, daughter of Roger, King of the two Sicillies, who inherited the Throne of her father in 1185 A.D. [Common Era]. With a view of subdividing that country, he invaded it, but being unsuccessful, he was obliged to return to Germany. With the ransom money which he received from his prisoner, Richard Couer de Lion [Richard the Lion-Hearted], he

fitted out another expedition. After taking Naples and bringing Sicily into subjection he caused himself to be crowned at Palermo. His conduct towards the Sicillians was marked with great cruelty and tyranny, and his death, which took place in 1197, was supposed to have been caused by poison. He was succeeded by his brother Phillip, Duke of Suabia, and Otho IV, between whom the crown was disputed.

“Phillip, Duke of Suabia and the Emperoe of Germany, son of Frederick Barbarossa, was born in 1170 or 1176. He married Irene of Constantinople. He was elected Emperor in 1198, but his title was disputed by Otho IV, which caused a civil war to ensue. The Pope favored Otho and excommunicated Phillip, but was afterwards reconciled to him. Philip was assassinated in 1208 by Otho Wettlebach at the wedding of his niece. After his assassination, Philip’s wife, Irene, fled to Hohenstaufen, and died shortly after in childbirth. The child also died. The two daughters of Philip were saved by the Bishop of Speyer.

“Frederic II, son of Henry VI and Constance, was born at Jesi in 1194. He had superior talents, and was master of the Greek, Italian, French, and Arabis languages. He was married at Palermo in 1209 to Constance, young and childless widow of Emrich, King of Hungary, daughter of Alfonso II, and sister to Peter II, of Aragon, Spain. He was crowned Emperor of Germany July 25th 1215, at Aix-la-Chapelle, then only 21. After the defeat of his rival, Otho, at Bovines, he was supported by the Ghibeline party in an attempt to unite Germany and Italy into one empire. The project was resisted by the Pope and the Guelphs in a long contest. In 1220 he removed his court to Naples, which belonged to him by inheritance, and in which he founded a university. In accordance with a vow extorted from him in his youth by the Pope, he undertook a crusade against the Infidels in 1227, but turned back before he reached Palestine, for which he was excommunicated by Gregory IX. He renewed the enterprise in 1228, took Jerusalem and made peace with the Pope in 1230. He suppressed a rebellion raised by his son, Henry, gained in 1237 a great victory over the Guelphs at Corleone, and waged war against Gregory IX. In 1245 Pope Innocent renewed the papal anathema and absolved his subjects from their allegiance. In the midst of these troubles Frederic died, in 1250. He was succeeded by his son, Conrad IV. Frederic was eminent for courage and other qualities, and was considered the greatest general and statesman of his age.”

- *The Stauffer Family*

“Feudalism had grown apace in Switzerland, and what a hard struggle the people had to hold their own against the impositions of princes and nobles.”

From 1218 to 1267, East Switzerland was ruled primarily by the House of Kyburg, then Savoy, then Habsburg. During this time, the local rulers held to the house of Stauffen (Hohenstauffen) instead of the Papacy of Rome. But upon “the death of Conradin (Stauffen) on the scaffold at Naples (in 1267), and the consequent extinction of the Stauffen line, Rudolf (of Habsburg) veered gradually round to the side of the Pope. “

- *Story of Switzerland*

“Due to the loss of power in the late 1200’s, many of the younger branches of the Hohenstauffen line fled from Prussia to Baden, Bavaria, and Switzerland. Still another branch of the family went at a later date into England and settled in Devonshire, where the name became Stover.

- *The Stauffer Family*

With the descent of power of the Hohenstauffen Dynasty, Ottokar Przemysl became King of Bohemia in 1273. Although reigning at this time, his power was more localized, and most likely had little effect on the Oberholtz lands and their neighbors.

- DLO

HABSBURG DYNASTY

On October 1, 1273, “news was brought to Rudolf that had been elected King of Germany. Notwithstanding the extension of his power eastward, he likewise continued his aggressive policy in Switzerland. ... And, taking advantage of the pecuniary straits of the monastery of Nurbach, he obtained by one means or another Lucerne, which belonged to the abbey, as well as numerous farms reaching into the Forest Cantons. The stewardship of Einsiedeln and Pfaffers likewise fell to his share. Many more instances might be given to show how Rudolf’s clever and unscrupulous scheming extended his power all over the midlands and the eastern districts, and how grievously his hand was felt throughout the country. Yet the famous Habsburgs, able, warlike, and energetic as they were, met with one obstacle to their progress which they were unable to remove, and against which all their plans came to nought - the love of freedom innate in the Swiss peoples.”

“Genuine democracies represent the cantons (of today) a Landsgemeinde. The government embodied the will of a sovereign people, and from its very antiquity commands our veneration and deserves special attention. To time immemorial the ancient custom goes back. It was known amongst the Greeks, and we meet with it in the ‘Volksversammlung’ of the early German tribes - the gathering of a whole people around their king to administer justice or decide issues of peace or war. These assemblies sprang up again in the thirteenth century, in the Forest Cantons, but now became political meetings, from the necessity of guarding against a common foe. The rule by Landsgemeinde was adopted by eleven Alpine districts, of which two, Gersau and Urseren, were almost microscopical. Five of these were swept away, Schwyz amongst the number. Of these we shall not speak. Yet the hoary and patriarchal custom still lingers on in some of the secluded Alpine nooks, favored by the isolation of the place, and the genie conservateur innate in the Alpine folk. Unable, however, to clearly understand the ancient Landsgemeinde except by reference to the present age, we prefer to draw the reader’s attention to the living spring, the sacred spot where he can ‘look face to face on freedom in its purest and most ancient form’ -to quote Freeman’s fine words - a heart-stirringsight to witness.”

“The last Sunday in April is the date usually fixed for the holding of the Landsgemeinde. The gatherings all bear a general resemblance to each other, yet each shows the influence of the locality, the religion, or the industrial pursuits of the people. “

“It is clearly absurd to suppose that the three Forest Cantons sprang suddenly into existence as democracies. Feudalism had spread its net over the Waldstatten elsewhere in Switzerland and Europe generally. But the inborn love of freedom amongst the ‘freemen’

of the three cantons was intensified by two things, the secluded Alpine life and the tyranny and aggressiveness of the Habsburgs.”

- *Story of Switzerland*

In 1291 there was peace in the land.

- *The Habsburgs*

“The death of Rudolf in 1291 was good news to the men of the Forest, and all their pent-up hopes of the recovery of their ancient rights once more burst forth. Yet dreading new dangers from new governors, they took measures of precaution. Within a fortnight of Rudolf’s death the three districts of Uri, Schwyz, and Unterwalden had entered into a perpetual league of defensive alliance (Ewiger Bund), a renewal no doubt of a previous pact, probably that of 1246. They may have met on the Rutli to swear the solemn oath which was to bind them into a confederation, a perpetuite .

The various acts of agreement were drawn up in Latin, and the document - the Magna Charta of the Eidgenossenschaft - treasured up at Schwyz, is held in veneration by the whole Swiss nation. It bears an essentially conservative character, and witnesses to the thought and consideration given to the matter, no less than to the strong sense of equity and clear judgment of the contracting parties. Amongst other things it enjoins that every one shall obey and serve his master according to his standing; that no judge shall be appointed who has bought his office with gold, nor unless he be a native; that if quarrels shall arise between the Eidgenossen (inter aliquos conspiratos), the more sensible shall settle the differences, and if the one party does not submit, the opposition shall decide in the matter. To the document were affixed the seals of the three countries as a guarantee of its authenticity.”

- *The Story of Switzerland*

“German literature shone under the Hohenstauffens, but mostly as a reflection from the French. Wolfram von Eschenbach in Suabia imitated the epic songs of the Carolingian or Arthurian cycles. ... German prose is hardly visible in a few rare moments of the thirteenth century.”

- *The History of the World, Vol.III, Duruy*

All over Europe war was the prominent feature. Power struggles by localized leaders were a guarantee that no peace would come for a long time. And the 11th and 12th centuries are testimony to the lack of submission toward a foreign authority. The forest cantons viewed life no different than others in Europe. The Habsburgs’s Rudolf died at Germesheim on July 15, 1291. His successor Albert was deemed “uncouth and vulgar in appearance, ferocious and unseemly in aspect, gloomy and reserved by habit and constitution, even his good qualities were obscured.”* To someone who has been following the ancient barbarian Alemanni tribe through its’ history, this description would seem much like the Oberholtzer ancestors. But it is obvious from the many humiliating defeats of the barbaric tribes, that these families who moved into the upper Alps were wanting both personal freedom and peace from all the warfare; as well as an increase in their living standards. Thus it was almost understandable why the forest cantons rebelled and seized Habsburg possessions in the early 14th Century.

* *The Habsburgs*

- DLO

The Palatinate or ‘Pfalz’, Germany. -The ancient empire had two palatinates, the upper and the lower. The Upper or Bavarian Palatinate, in the circle of Bavaria; and the Lower Palatinate or Palatinate of the Rhine.

A Palatine (Count). “Comes Palatinus”, a high judicial officer, generally near a frontier, with jura regalia. The district over which he had jurisdiction was called a palatinate or county palatine. In Germany the ‘Pfalz-graf’ was far more powerful than a simple graf. He superintended the royal revenue, and took part in the government. Originally the palatine was named by the kaiser, but in time the title and office became hereditary. The chief palatines were the counts of Lotharingia, Saxony, Bavaria, Swabia, and later on Burgundy.. Of these the palatine of Lotharingia was the chief, being the first prince of Germany, and afterwards called the Palatine of the Rhine. In 1315 this nobleman was called the Elector-Palatine.

- *The Historic Note-book*

THE BATTLE OF MORGARTEN.

On October 25, 1315, 1300 Switzers , made up of 600 men of Schwitz 400 Uri and 300 from Unterwalden, fought against 20,000 Austrians who were under the command of Duke Leopold. The 1300 Switzers slew 15,000 Austrians, and not a few of the army of Leopold were drowned in the Egerer See. This and Marsala are, perhaps, the most extraordinary battles of history, if we except that of Gideon, who with 300 men put to flight the allied Midianites and Amalekites. Gideon’s victory, however, was from panic, the other two the result of indomitable valour.

- *The Historic Note-book*

This battle was taken place at the mountain pass alongside the Ageri See. There is a field nearby which also was part of the fighting.

- DLO

“By the mid fourteenth century, Europe was on the cusp between a world in which the oral tradition predominated and one in which the written word carried the greater weight. The power of the spoken word as the transmitter of tradition and custom from generation to generation was still in full force. Evidence before a court of law had to be given orally even if read from a written text; if was the formal declaration, made before witnesses that gave the written word its formal sanction. Conversely, a written text once sanctioned by oral or legal process carried a particular weight, for by its very existence it testified to the truth of the matter contained within it.”

- *The Habsburgs*

“The Hapsburgs (Habsburgs) had lands in Switzerland, and their bailiffs were hard upon the mountaineers. In 1307 the cantons of Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden united to end this oppression. To this period attaches the heroic legend of William Tell. Albert was assassinated by his nephew at the passage of the Reuss when about to give the confederates battle. Leopold, Duke of Austria, lost the fight at Morgarten (1315), where the Swiss laid the foundations of their independence and of their military renown. The three original cantons were joined by Lucerne, Zurich, Glaris, Zug and Berne (1332-1353).

- *The History of the World, Vol.III, Duruy*

"Dutch is a South German dialect - Palatinate or Phalz-Baden, Bavaria and Darmstadt - and in these countries a similar dialect is spoken today. And the Pennsylvania Dutch dialect is a modification of this South German dialect. B. Oscar Kuhns states: "The Pennsylvania-German dialect is a mixture of Frankish and Alemannic dialects. Wurtemberg and Switzerland are practically pure Alemannic and the Palatinate is Frankish with a strong infusion of Alemannic blood in certain parts thereof. And the Alemannic Swabians of Wurtemberg have a different dialect from that of their Alemannic cousins of Switzerland." He also says: "The inhabitants of the Palatinate are descendants of the group of German tribes called Rheinfranken, with an admixture of the Alemanni, the latter of whom occupied the land until 496 AD, when Chodwig, King of the Franks, defeated them in a battle on the Upper Rhine. The Alemanni afterwards settled in Swabia (Wurtemberg) and Switzerland."

- *Jacob Oberholtzer Genealogy*

EVENTS THAT PROMOTED ANABAPTISM

"Among those who, in a general way, may be called followers of Eckhart, a foremost place belongs to John Tauler. He was born at Strasburg in 1290. About the age of 18 he entered the Dominican cloister in his native city. Soon afterwards he began to study at Paris. On his return to Strasburg, as is supposed, he met Eckhart. Under his teaching and also that of the less speculative mystic, Nicolas of Strasburg, his bent to the mystical theology and piety was confirmed.

In his chosen path Tauler found many congenial spirits among the so called 'Friends of God'. This was not a sect, but a kind of pietistic association whose growth was favored by the exigencies of the times. The quarrel which was started by the interference of the Papacy with the Empire in the time of Louis of Bavaria involved prolonged miseries for Germany. Religious services were largely interrupted by interdicts. The days were exceedingly dark. For mutual encouragement, those most interested in a spiritual type of piety entered into an association bearing the above name. The society spread widely in Germany. Its adherents were especially numerous in the region of the Upper Rhine.

In the controversies between the civil power and the papacy, Tauler took sides with the former. Counting it an inhuman robbery to deprive the poor people of spiritual consolations, especially during the fearful ordeal of the plague which fell upon Strasburg in the year 1348, he refused to observe the papal ban. Not only this: in connection with two co-laborers he sent forth a written protest against the hard and unrighteous dealing of the Pope. This bold course provoked attack, and Tauler was obliged to retire from Strasburg. Little is known of his later years. He died in 1361."

... Tauler was "one of the most popular and effective preachers of his century. A large part of what he said came much nearer to the common understanding, and was eminently adapted to edify and inspire. His sermons still contain food for the religious mind. A deeply spiritual tone characterizes them throughout. They show also clear traces of practical good sense. Tauler was far from directing men to a visionary life. He strongly insisted upon practical righteousness. Let his own words testify. 'You should not trust in virtue that has not yet been put into practice. ... There is no work so small, no art so mean, but it all comes from God, and is a special gift of His. ... If I were not a priest, but were living as a layman, I should take it as a great favor that I knew how to make shoes, and should try to make them better than anyone else. ... Our Lord did not rebuke Martha on account of her works, for they were holy and good; He reproved her on account of her anxiety. ... If, when at thy work, thou shouldst feel thy spirit stirred within thee, receive it with solemn joy, and thus learn to do thy work in God, instead of straightway fleeing from the task.'"

- *History of the Christian Church*, Sheldon 1895

THE COST OF LIBERTY AND FREEDOM

Only a few centuries ago the liberty of thought was unknown. All lips were padlocked. The public criticism of a baron meant the confiscation of the peasant's land; the criticism of the pope meant the dungeon; the criticism of the king meant death. Now all are free to think for themselves, to sift all knowledge and public teachings, to cast away the chaff and to save the precious wheat. But to buy this freedom blood has flowed like rivers and tears have been too cheap to count.

And here are our own ancestors. Soon our children now lying in the cradles of our state will without any forethought of theirs fall heir to this rich land with all its treasures material - houses and vineyards, factories and cities; with all its treasures mental - library and gallery, school and church, institutions and customs. But with what vicarious suffering were these treasures purchased? For us our fathers subdued the continents and the kingdoms, wrought freedom, stopped the mouths of wolves, escaped the sword of savages, turned to flight armies of enemies, subdued the forests, drained the swamps, planted vineyards, civilized savages, reared schoolhouses, builded churches, founded colleges. For four generations they dwelt in cabins, wore sheepskins and goatskins, wandered about exploring rivers and forests and mines, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, because of their live of liberty, and for the slave's sake were slain with the sword- of whom this generation is not worthy.

- *Investment of Influence*

The following is a letter called *The Oberholzer Story* by Richard E. Oberholzer of Maugansville, Maryland:

In June 1986, my wife Lois and I had the rare opportunity of spending two days in the little village of Oberholtz, Switzerland as guests of Gottfried and Rosy Oberholtzer. We never met Gottfried since he was hospitalized with a blood clot. Rosy had invited the local Oberholzers along with those from America for a family reunion. This was held Sunday afternoon June 22 at her Guesthouse and restaurant. It was an interesting experience to meet cousins who may have been more than twenty generations removed.

As early as 700 A.D. people of the Alemanni tribe came from what is now Germany and settled in the area of Wald, Switzerland (25 miles east of Zurich). They went to the top of the mountain and cleared land to sell lumber and then graze their cattle and farm the

land they had cleared. They came to be known as “The farmers over the forest” which is literally what the name Oberholzer means. By the 13th and 14 centuries they were known as the “Oberholzer Farmers”. Somewhere around the end of the 14th century the plague hit the area and many died until there were only two families left.

- Letter to Christian Stauffer Oberholtzer

The procession of growth of the typical Swiss canton farm is well worth noting. Upon their arrival the mountaineers built their homes as near the top of the mountain as possible, yet on or beside a spring which would provide water during the long winter months. This way they were as close as possible to the farming land first available to them after clearing the land of the original forest. The trees were used for logs to make their houses and barns, for firewood to do the cooking and heating, leaves for animal bedding, and the best wood was used to hew furniture for their personal use.

As time progressed more land was cleared farther down the mountain. As the families grew, more land could be cultivated. But the short growing season and thin topsoil did not allow for a very wide variety of crops. Thus when the family out grew the size of the home, and brotherly bickering enhanced the need for more space, a new homestead was created in the lowland section of the farm. This enabled the lower farm to grow grapes and other vine-crops, and vegetables which needed both longer growing seasons and richer soil. The dual farm system was very productive for both families, as they could trade goods with each other at a much lower cost to the family than to buy on the open market. This form of pioneering lands is probably unique to Switzerland. Other areas of the world do not have the strong family ties, the diverse landscape, and the proper political environment for such a form of pioneering.

THE OBERHOLTZER FARM

The Oberholtzer farm was in a rather unique geographical position until the uniting of the Swiss Confederation. The farm sits on the north side of a mountain range which was a borderline for the political control of Zurich, St Gallen, and the Schwiz. It was not on the main traffic routes, so the total destruction and the movement of people in and out of the neighborhood was not so prevalent. But it was under a fair amount of friction on the political scene. The battlelines of the Austrian empire brought them past the farm as far as Lake Zurich. The Schwiz were close friends of the family, due the fact that many of them were also Alemanni which settled the area. And therefore, the Schwiz were called on to help fight the political ambiguities coming up the valleys from the north side of the Rhine. And later, when Zurich became the territorial stronghold, the family divided its allegiance between St. Gallen and the Canton of Zurich.

THE BLACK PLAGUE

“Black Plagues killed one-third of the European Population in 1348-49 A.D. One-Half of the Jewish population died because the church blamed the Jews for bringing the plagues to the West.” - *New American Standard Bible*

“In October 1347, a galley entered the harbour of Messina, to the horrified eyes of bystanders a ship from hell. The vessel stank of corruption, and about its deck lay dead and dying sailors, oozing pus and blood. Even the few living fell ill and died within a few days. Then from other points of contact with the east there were similar tales of a pestilence which spread with astonishing speed. In ten years perhaps as much as a third of the population of Europe died, and a chronicler of Sienna, Agnolo di Tura, provided an epitaph which had a universal application: ‘Nobody wept no matter what his loss because almost all expected death ... and people said and believed “This is the end of the world.”’ Tura himself buried his five children with his own hands. To this ravaging of the world, by what later came to be called the Black Death, the Church could provide no answers and was reluctant to accept the popular view that it was caused by the wrath of God, inflicted on a wicked and corrupt world. Scapegoats were quickly found, especially the Jews, who were massacred wherever they could be found. Many were killed by the wandering bands of flagellants, who roamed the roads of Germany and France beating sin from themselves, and then by killing the Jews, becoming the scourge of God, cleansing the world.”

- *The Habsburgs*

The problem with this kind of thinking is that God’s word declares that those who are friendly to the Jews are friends of God, but those who are enemies of the Jews are enemies of God. This is just another example of true haters of God masking themselves in false christian doctrine. Ignorance played a large part in the bubonic plague. Yet it took such a disaster for people to wake up to the fact that cleanliness would deliver them from many illnesses. - DLO

“In 1349 the Black Death, or bubonic plague, ... swept through Europe with a death toll of millions of people. Thus was labor made scarce and the demand for hired laborers increased.” - *High School Self Taught*, Copeland

“The Black Death, riding on the backs of rats and fleas, raced from one crowded German town to the next in 1350.

A word of mouth legend has it that as a result of a time of plague, the family died out to two brothers. Of these, one chose to go to the parish of Wald, as a protestant, the other to the Catholic parish of Eschenbach. The two got into such a hot dispute about religion that they began to fight. They beat up each other so brutally that the brook on the path to church was red with blood. That brook is called Rotwasser to this day.

- *Early Oberholtzers in Switzerland*, Overholser Family Association

The Black Death “threatened the stability of society in two senses. First, it destroyed the economic basis for agricultural and urban life. In much of Europe, where land was already marginal, the fields were simply abandoned when there were no hands to tend them.

Second, the papal power had always stood between God and man, a necessary intermediary. Now that God had intervened so directly with his people, did the old superstructure of Holy Church have any validity, especially since the Church had become riven by factionalism and doctrinal disputes? Indeed, perhaps it was that very corruption within the Church, stinking to high heaven, that had brought down the foul and appropriate penalty upon God's people for allowing such obscenity to persist. ... The old theories of papal supremacy, of a pure and powerful Church leading humanity towards the fulfillment of divine will, had been transmuted into a reality of rapacious and corrupt ecclesiastics battering on civil society. This decay and degradation was evident"* to most.

* *The Habsburgs*

- DLO

The Battle of Sempach on July 9, 1386, in which 1400 Switzers utterly defeated the Austrian army under Duke Leopold. The Austrian army consisted of 4000 knights of high rank, and a numerous well-appointed host of foot soldiers. The duke and most of the knights were slain. It was in this battle that Arnold Struthan von Winkelried of Unterwalden rushed on the advancing spears of the Austrians, grasped as many of them as he could reach, buried them in his bosom and bore them to the ground; thus making a gap into which the Swiss rushed and slaughtered the Austrians right and left. The loss of the Swiss was about 200, of the Austrians at least 6000.

- *The Historic Note-book*

The Battle of Sempach included descendants of those who fought in the Battle of Morgarten. Although to Oberholtzer's were on the east side of the Zurich See, they were very closely tied to and had their allegiance with the Alemanni Swchyz on the west side of the lake. The battle most certainly included some residents from the Oberholtzer farmlands, which are less than forty miles from Morgarten.

- DLO

The victories of Sempach (1386) and of Naefels (1388) consolidated Helvetian liberty."

- *The History of the World, Vol.III, Duruy*

The Hanseatic League was a principally ship-trading alliance which controlled international commerce in the waterways of Northern Europe. Salt came from Luneburg on the Elbe River until French salt became cheaper in the late 1300's. Wine and pottery were exported from the Rhineland. Bales of cotton and linen cloth were traded from England and the Low Countries. This League flourished from the 13th century to the mid-sixteen hundreds.

- *National Geographic*

The Swabian League, or Swabian Cities League. A league of various Swabian cities, formed 1376 and later extended, as a defense against the extortions and depredations of the counts of Wurttemberg. It decayed after 1388.

The Great Swabian League. A league of Swabian cities and governments formed 1488 for the maintenance of the public peace: dissolved in 1533.

- *The New Century Dictionary*

In 1415 the Swiss captured the remaining Habsburg lands south of the Rhine River.

The Oberholtzer family takes its name from the hamlet of Oberholz, which belongs to the township of Goldingen, S.G.

The name of the homestead Oberholz was first officially cited in a document of 1438. It is a definition of the location of the farm in "Oberholz", the high-lying woods. The document states that in 1390 a "Gult" or deventure of 1380 quarts of oats annually was sold by the homestead of Oberholz.

The folk from Oberholz belonged to the parish of Wald, Canton Zurich. In 1438 at their general meeting, the members of the Swiss confederation had to deal with the problem of a certain Farmer Oberholtzer who did not want to submit to the government of Zurich, since he had fought for and sworn to the common laws of the canton Schwyz. Farmer Oberholzer, obviously a very rich man, whom the Zurichers had captured and put in a tower, was fined 200 pounds, the value of more than 400 swine. His wealth and patently also his self-confident personality, led the Schwyzers and Zurichers to fighting about the division of his property. Nothing is known about the outcome of this quarrel. Later, after the civil war between the Schwyz and Zurich (for quite other reasons) the homestead of Oberholz was apportioned to the shire of Uznach.

- *Early Oberholtzers in Switzerland, OFA*

Toggenburg (or Tockenburg, Switzerland. This has been the site of two wars, the first in 1426 was a contest between the Count of Zurich and the Count of Schwitz for the succession. The second war was in 1712, the revolt of the Tockenburgers against the abbot of St.Gall their ruler, ending in favor of the revolters.

- *The Historic Note-book*

From 1436 to 1442 The Forest Schwiz closed the road totally which went over the mountains through Graubunden. * This shut down trade markets and created a famine in two of the districts. Zurich was blamed for the action. This brought on many skirmishes east of Lake Zurich which included the whole area of Oberholtz, Wald, Goldingen, and Eschenbach. The area from Morgarten to Zurich on the East side of the lake was nick-named 'The theatre of war'.

**Fairies*

- DLO

SWISS INDEPENDENCE

THE WAR BETWEEN ZURICH AND SCHWYZ [with the OBERHOLTZER farm caught in the middle] 1436 - 1450 A.D.

"A gloomy picture in Swiss history do these civil wars present, marking as they do the chasm separating the Confederates, who were each swayed by a spirit of jealous antagonism. Yet it was clear that the town and the country commonwealths - citizens and peasants - formed such strong contrasts that they would not always pull together. Indeed, the smoldering discontent was suddenly fanned into flame by questions respecting hereditary succession that threatened to consume the whole Confederation. Feudalism was tottering to its fall in Switzerland, but it seemed as if the famous counts of Toggenburg were for a while to stay its ruin in the eastern portion of the country.

Frederick VII. (1400-1436) possessed what would come up to the present canton of St. Gall, the Ten Gerichte, a large portion of Graubunden, Voralberg (which he had wrenched from Friedel 'of the Empty Pocket'), and other districts. Despite the popular struggles for freedom he managed to maintain his authority by adroit and designing policy and by alliance with Zurich and Schwyz, which stood by him against foes domestic and foreign. Having no children Frederick promised that on his death the two cantons should receive his domains south of Zurich lake, which acquisition would round off their territory. He died in 1436, but left no will - intentionally, as was thought by some, with the view of entangling the Confederates in quarrels - 'tying their tails together', as the expressive but not very polished phrase had it. Be that as it may, the apple of discord was soon in the midst, and there set up as claimants numerous seigneurs of Graubunden, barons from the Valais, near relatives, as well as Austria and the empire. Zurich and Schwyz also contended for the promised stretch of land. To penetrate into the maze of petty conflicts which followed would be ridiculous as it would be impossible. In accordance with her more aristocratic inclinations Zurich paid court to the dowager countess whilst Schwyz humored rather the subjects as the future masters, and the three latter proved in the end to have had the better judgment. The strife, indeed, fell into one of emulation between the two most energetic and talented statesmen of the two commonwealths. One of these leading men was burgomaster Stussi, of Zurich, and the other was Ital von Reding, from Schwyz, both highly gifted and energetic men. Even from their youth they had been rivals, incited by the Emperor Sigismund whose favor they enjoyed.

Save the battle of St. Jacques on the Birse, the war brought forth no great military exploits, and as it effected no material changes it may be very briefly passed over. It splits naturally into three periods. The first of these [1436 - 1442] is simply a series of wasteful feuds waged by the Confederates alone. Schwyz had taken for itself the whole heritage in question, with the exception of the fragmentary portion left to its rival. Zurich, thus deprived of her portion, and disappointed in her scheme of planning a direct commercial road to Italy through Graubunden, retaliated by shutting her market against Schwyz and Glarus, causing a famine in the two districts. The Confederates did not act with impartiality in the matter, but, laying all blame on Zurich, drove her to arms. She was, however, again a loser, for her territory to the east of [Lake Zurich], which was the theatre of war, was terribly wasted." [This most likely included the Oberholzer valley recorded above.*] "This portion of the land Schwyz wished to annex, but was prevented by order of the federal Diet. Nevertheless Zurich lost to Schwyz and Glarus three villages on the upper lake, and the island Ufensu which she had governed for half a century, and she was compelled to reopen her roads and market. "

- *The Story of Switzerland*, *DLO

The village of Oberholz was a part of the Canton of Zurich until the reformation in the early 1500's when the Canton of Zurich became Reformed Protestant. The Overholzers fought to remain Catholic, and did. A map of Switzerland today will show the Canton line going around Oberholz, and excluding it from the Canton of Zurich. - Overholser Family Association

"The reformed faith penetrated, but only gradually, into the northern and eastern cantons. Bern was reached in 1528, after a brilliant disputation held in that city. Basel and Schaffhausen followed in 1529, and then St. Gall, Appenzell, Graubunden, and Solothurn, though some of them had serious struggles within themselves and fell in only partly with the reforms. But in the Central or Forest Cantons it was that the fiercest opposition was encountered. Many things combined to produce this result. In the first place, the district was a very stronghold of Catholic and Conservative feeling, and religion was entwined with the fond memories of a glorious past. From the very simplicity of their lives the people ignored the degeneracy of the priesthood, and amongst these pastoral peoples the priests were of simpler manners and more moral life than those in the cities; they disliked learning and enlightenment."

"It is necessary to bear in mind that at [this] time the Bible was well-nigh an unknown book to the common people. There were even to be found priests who neither possessed a copy of the Scriptures nor could have read it if they had."

- *The Story of Switzerland*

"In Switzerland the Reformation was born as early as in Germany. In 1517 Zwingli declared that the Gospel was the only rule of faith. The evangelical religion spread in German Switzerland, except in the original cantons of Lucerne, Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden, which remained faithful to the ancient [Catholic] faith. The war, which broke out in 1531, and in which Zwingli perished, was favorable to the Catholics. Each canton still remained sovereign as to regulating its worship, but the evangelical doctrine was expelled from the common possessions. This was a defeat for Protestantism."

- *The History of the World*, Vol.III, Duruy

EARLY 1500's:

..There were classes in the German empire who were far from being satisfied with their position & prospects. The nobles looked jealously upon the modern movement toward concentration of power in the hands of the princes. To this restlessness on political grounds was added the stimulus of the great religious agitation which had been started in Germany. .. Franz von Sickingen.. determined to make a bold stroke for the nobility and for ecclesiastical reform. Being a soldier of reputation, and possessing unusual talents for exciting personal enthusiasm, he rallied to his standard the nobles of the Upper Rhine, and proceeded to attack the Archbishop of Treves. But Sickingen had miscalculated the strength with which he had to contend. He was speedily driven to act on the defensive, and fell mortally wounded in his castle (1523). With him fell the hope of the nobility to regain the old measure of power and independence.

The peasantry was quite as much dissatisfied as the nobility, and with much better reason. The latter deserved to be curbed in view of the inexcusable lawlessness which they had frequently indulged. But the peasants were the victims of a grievous oppression. The safeguards which were being introduced in behalf of other classes had little or no relation to them. To whom could they look for protection? To no one. These half-human beings had no rights, and in the current view were entitled to none. They were dependent solely upon the grace and compassion of the masters. Even in Swabia, and the countries on the banks of the Rhine, where their condition was most tolerable, the peasants not only paid the full rent of their farms to their landlord, but if they chose either to change the place of their abode, or to follow a new profession, before they could accomplish what they desired they were obliged to purchase this privilege at a certain price. Besides this, all grants of lands to peasants expired at their death, without descending to their posterity. Upon that event, the

landlord had a right to the best of their cattle, as well as of their furniture; and their heirs, in order to obtain a renewal of the grant, were obliged to pay large sums by way of fine. These were customary burdens, and as such were borne with some degree of patience, though not with entire cheerfulness or absence of protest.

What wonder that an outbreak should have occurred? Since the middle of the fifteenth century, the discontent of the peasant had issued in a number of eruptions, some of which were of considerable extent. How, then, could it be expected that this exasperated element would remain quiet when all minds were being stirred by the excitements of the age? The responsible cause of the uprising of the peasants was the oppressions under which they groaned. The Reformation was but the occasion. As the herald of a new era, it could not fail to give hope and courage to the oppressed multitude, whether or not it made any direct connection with their cause.

The peasant revolt commenced the next year after the abortive attempt of the nobles under Sickingen. The two movements were independent of each other, as the two classes were unconnected in sympathy. Each class went its own way, and perished alone, - the nobles like an army of officers without soldiers, the peasants like soldiers without officers. Had they united their forces, they would have formed a lever which would have produced a tremendous commotion.

The cause of the peasantry was not a little affected by their alliance with the Anabaptist enthusiasts.

If there was less cause of ferment in the cities than among the nobles and the peasants, they still had their own occasions of agitation. Constant watchfulness and energy were required to guard their privileges against the encroachments of princes and nobles. In now a few of them, moreover, there was an interior conflict, - a struggle between aristocratic and democratic elements. Some of the cities, especially in Southern Germany, were suffering from a decline of industry. This naturally bred discontent among the poorer citizens. It is probable that a fraction of this class, impelled at once by their unpromising state and their feeling of exasperation toward the clergy, who seemed to care more for pleasures and emoluments than for pastoral service, were not disposed to frown altogether upon the revolutionary effort of the peasants.

The Reformation exhibits a remarkable combination of culture with popular elements. The leaders were learned men, but, at the same time, from the people, and well able to sympathize with their needs and modes of thought. Melancthon came from the shop of an armorer, Zwingli from the hut of an Alpine shepherd, Luther from a miner's cottage. Luther found great enjoyment ..in the writings of Tauler. In 1516 he made mention of them in terms of warm commendation.

- *History of the Christian Church* Vol2, Sheldon 1895

"About this time(A.D.1519) the reformation received still further support, in a good work which was begun by Zwinglius, a canon of Zurich in Switzerland; who boldly resisted the sale of indulgences in that country, in a way similar to what Luther had done in Germany; thus laying the foundation of that noble superstructure of Gospel liberty, which afterwards adorned the cantons of the Helvetic republic.

"Zwinglius was a man of extensive learning and uncommon sagacity, accompanied with the most heroic intrepidity and resolution. From his early years, he had been shocked at several of the superstitious practices of the church of Rome; and even before the name of Luther was known in Switzerland, had called in question the supremacy of the pope. In the year 1519, it appears this great man took an open and resolute stand against the sale of indulgences; and this was the first remarkable event that prepared the way for the reformation among the Helvetic cantons. His noble efforts were seconded by some other learned men, educated in Germany, who became his colleagues and the companions of his labors; and who jointly with him, succeeded so far in removing the credulity of a deluded people, that the pope's supremacy was rejected in the greatest part of Switzerland. - *Church History* , C.A. Goodrich

As mentioned above, when Zurich became the territorial stronghold, the family divided its allegiance between St. Gallen and the Canton of Zurich. This is seen very prevalent in the division of religious factions. The town of Oberholz, not having a church of its own, went across the top of the mountain to Sunday services at the Catholic Church of Eschenbach. The hamlet of Aa, which was the valley family of Oberholtzers, who also did not have a church, went to the protestant church in the town of Wald. This distinction was prevalent in other families of the forest cantons as well. The protestant movement was first met by the valley churches, which received it joyfully. This was probably due to the fact that they had more cross cultural influence on a day-to-day basis than did the mountain-top households.

- DLO

1523 - The Reformation. The villagers, who had all been Catholic, visited the church in Wald which had become protestant through Zwingli. In the end the Catholics went to the church at Eschenbach and remained Catholic. The other group stayed in Wald and became Protestants.

- *Rosy Oberholzer's Greetings*

Translated by Ruth Overholser, Overholser Family Bulletin, 2/1984

"The cantons of Zurich, Basil, Berne, Schaffhausen, and also parts of Aphenzel and Glaris, having embraced the reformation, were obnoxious to the nine popish cantons, who took up arms to compel them to return to the Catholic Church. They resisted by the troops of the reformed party. Zwinglius accompanied them as chaplain, in 1531, and fell in one of their engagements. The papists found him lying among the wounded, with eyes uplifted to heaven; and, as he would not comply with their wishes, to confess to the virgin Mary, they murdered him. The same year, many having perished on both sides by the sword, a peace concluded on the condition that each canton should retain its own form of religion. The celebrated Helvetic confession of faith was prepared and adopted by their synod in 1566.

"Zwinglius was succeeded in the Church of Zurich by Bullinger, a man worthy of that age. After laboring for the faith of Christ, he died in the assured hope of glory, in 1575. Death approaching, among other delightful things, he said, 'I rejoice exceedingly to be taken from this corrupt age, to get to my Savior Christ. I am sure that I shall see my Savior Christ, the saints, Patriarchs, Prophets, apostles, and all the holy men who have lived from the beginning of the world. Since I am sure to partake of the felicity, why should not I be willing to die, to enjoy their perpetual society in glory?'"

“Zwinglius & Carolstadt, with the Church of Switzerland, adopted the opinion that the elements in the sacrament are only symbolical of the body and blood of Christ. ... The disciples of Zwinglius ..adopted the doctrines and discipline of Calvin,”

“About the year 1524, the political state of Germany became unsettled, by reason of different estimates made of the papal system, in different states, and the intestine division which existed among the reformers themselves. But the circumstance which threatened the greatest mischief to the cause of the reformation, and which involved all Germany in commotion, was a civil war, usually called the war of the peasants. The persons concerned in this war, who were called Anabaptists, from their rebaptizing such as had already been baptized, consisted of the lower orders of society, who demanded a release from the oppression of their superiors, and from all religious control.”

- *Church History*, C.A. Goodrich

War of the Peasants, 1525. Waged by the Elector of Saxony and the German princes against the Anabaptists, headed by Munzer, Stubner, Storck, and others. Munzer was taken prisoner and beheaded.

- *The Historic Note-book*

Luther translated the complete Luthern Bible and published 1534.

It is scarcely necessary to add, that the copies of the new German Bible, issued as fast as the hard-worked presses could supply them, became powerful instruments for the spread of evangelical truth. ... The insurrection reached formidable dimensions, spreading from the region of the Upper Rhine through Swabia and Franconia, and extending into Thuringia and Saxony. As the uprising grew in strength, so also the demands of its partisans were augmented. The first manifesto which the peasants put forth, expressed in twelve articles, was by no means extravagant. Liberty to have preachers who should proclaim the pure gospel, and release from various forms of oppression and deprivation, were the sum of the requirements. But later more exacting demands were made. In some quarters the revolt was aggravated into a leveling project, and plunder, arson, and bloodshed attended its course.

The history of German Protestantism, in the four or five years preceding the Diet of Augsburg (1521-1530), was marked in particular by two important events, the organization of national churches, and the project of an alliance among the Protestant powers for their mutual defense.

The Diet of Spire in 1526 really established the territorial principal which lay at the basis of the ecclesiastical organizations described above, - the principle that each state (for the time being) should manage church affairs within its limits according to its own discretion. But this concession in its full import was not long allowed. At the Diet of Spire in 1529 the Roman Catholic party was in the ascendant, and passed measures decidedly adverse to the progress of Reformation. The protest issued upon this occasion by the evangelical party fixed upon them the name of Protestants. Efforts were made immediately after the close of this Diet, to consummate an alliance with the Swiss, and thus to prepare for effective resistance in case of attack. This called up the doctrinal differences between Luther and Zwingli, the principal of which lay in Luther's affirmation and Zwingli's denial of the real bodily presence of Christ in the eucharist. Luther was in general extremely averse to warlike leagues in connection with religion. Least of all would he consent to an alliance with the Swiss errorists, as he deemed them. An unfortunate association of the Swiss leaders with the Anabaptist enthusiasts was early formed in his mind, and he never learned to rate them at their worth. A discussion which he held with Zwingli and OEcolumpadius at Marburg in 1529 failed to bring about any substantial agreement. The Reformation, therefore, parted into two streams near its fountain-head. ...

The Peace of Augsburg in 1555 is the date when legal protestantism was established. But true evangelical Christianity began in the autumn of 1530, the victory of the Word of God and of faith.

- *History of the Christian Church*, Vol III, Sheldon

In Germany, the Waldenses were called Good Men (or Consolati), from the sincerity of their persuasion and the purity of their lives. A religious party formed in England in 1549 called the Gospellers. When two ministers read the communion service, the one who stands on the northside of the table is called the Gospeller because he reads the Gospel. They were said to have been very profligate in their lives, and thus brought scandal on the Reformed Church. Article 38 of the Church of England is aimed at these men: The goods of Christians are not (in) common ... as certain Anabaptists so falsely boast.

Xabatenses (Wooden shoes), so the Waldenses were called from Xabatata (a wooden sandal), worn in imitation of the apostles.

- *The Historic Note-book*

The Oberholtzers who belonged to the parish church of Wald in Canton Zurich were, in 1523, according to the decision of the council of the City of Zurich, assigned to the reformed belief of Ulrich Zwingli. The Oberholtzers who lived in the townships of Uznach and Godingen stayed fast with the old Catholic faith.

The baptismal records of the church in Wald, which begin in 1559, record in the first four years as many as six protestant families named Oberholtzer. These entries show that at the time of the Reformation there must have been more than only two family-fathers. ...

The folk who remained at the Oberholz homestead, remained faithful to the Catholic church as well, and belonged “Brut und Bahr”, cradle and bier, to the parish of Eschenbach, Canton of St Gallen. If someone died, his corpse was taken by a long-round-about way to Eschenbach for burial. The direct way, shorter but partly across protestant territory was shunned, so that those who accompanied the train as praying mourners “could be on catholic ground at all times and pray as loudly and clearly as possible”.

About 1611 another plague broke out, of which type it is now impossible to determine. On the Oberholzer homestead alone, 6 adults and 14 children died. An enormous number of fatalities for so tiny a hamlet.

Although the forefathers came from a great farm, the descendants often settled in towns and cities.

- *Early Oberholtzers in Switzerland*, OFA

With time, more families came to Oberholz. It is written that the Oberholzers were hard-working, ambitious people. Later the Oberholzer lands were divided amongst the families and each had a small amount. To this day there is a Catholic Oberholzer Corporation dating from those long ago times. Now only two Oberholzer families are left to belong whereas 20 families belonged at one time.

- *Rosy Oberholzer's Greetings*

Translated by Ruth Overholser, Overholser Family Bulletin, 2/1984

THE POLITICAL CONDITION OF SWITZERLAND

At the time of the Reformation, Switzerland was a confederation of republics. The principal part of the confederacy included thirteen states called Cantons: Uri, Schwytz, Unterwalden, Zurich, Lucerne, Berne, Zug, Soleure (now Solothurn), Glarus, Basle, Zppenzell, Shaffhausen, and Freyburg. These thirteen cantons are a forerunner for independent theology to which were the thirteen independent states that formed the United States of America. The number thirteen is the number of atonement by God for being steadfast in wanting freedom to seek and worship Jesus Christ.

- DLO

The political importance of Switzerland, at the break-out of the Reformation, was vastly greater than it has been in recent times. The long struggle with Austrian despotism begot a military temper and aptitude, which long survived their first occasion. The different powers of Europe became covetous of Swiss valor; and from the latter part of the 15th century, Swiss troops won many victories in behalf of foreigners. Occasionally, in the complications of the foreign service, Swiss met Swiss in battle. The remark was provoked, that the flesh of the Swiss was cheaper than that of cattle. Great numbers were sacrificed on the fields of Italy in the bloody conflicts incited by French ambition. Milan was rightly called the Switzer's grave. Aside from the abhorrent spectacle of countrymen slaughtering each other in mercenary warfare, the foreign service reacted with disastrous effect upon the national spirit and the morals of the Swiss. A system which permitted foreigners to buy up the favor of the leading men of the cantons, with pensions, could not be otherwise than deleterious to the spirit of independence and nationality; while mercenaries returning from the butchering trade naturally became missionaries of vice and corruption. The vice of unchastity, in particular, became notorious.

The Roman Church offered no proper resistance to the corrupting order of things. On the contrary, papal agents were continually laboring to swell the list of Swiss mercenaries for the service of the Pope. The energetic Cardinal of Sitten wrought to this end with indefatigable zeal. Referring to his practices, Zwingli said, 'With right do the cardinals wear red hats and cloaks; for, shake these garments, and out fall ducats and crowns; wring them, however, and they drip with the blood of your sons, fathers, and best friends.' It is not strange therefore, that patriotism as well as religious zeal called forth the utmost efforts of Zwingli to emancipate Switzerland from the curse of the foreign service. Still this position of Switzerland, between different parties bidding for her arms, gave some important opportunities to the reformation. Rome and the Romish hierarchy admitted far more of delay and tolerance into their dwellings with the reform movement than they would have conceded without the military incentive.

COMPARISON BETWEEN THE SWISS & GERMAN REFORMATION

The beginning of the Swiss reformation was independent of the Luthern. It was not Germany that communicated the light of truth to Switzerland, Switzerland to France, and France to England; all these countries received it from God; just as one part of the world does not communicate the light of day to the others, but the same brilliant orb imparts it direct to all the earth. One sole and same doctrine was suddenly established in the sixteenth century, at the hearths and altars of the most distant and dissimilar nations; it was everywhere the same spirit, everywhere producing the same faith. Zwingli expressly testifies; 'I began to preach the gospel in the year 1516, that is to say, at a time when Luther's name had never been heard in this country ... It is not from Luther that I learned the doctrine of Christ, but from the word of God. But, while the Swiss reformation was not an offshoot of the German, in all probability the former was not without very positive obligations to the latter; for it may fairly be questioned, whether the movement would ever have reached to so wide limits in Switzerland, had it not been for the prestige and aggressive energy which the cause of the Reformation acquired through the powerful agency of Luther.

...In Switzerland, the chief opposition came from the nobles, who liked foreign pensions, and from the unenlightened class, particularly the mountaineers, who clung with blind conversation to old customs. As is apt to be the case under a democratic form of government, public opinion, when once it commanded a majority in favor of a change, asserted itself with great energy and boldness. Sweeping reform measures were carried through at a stroke in some of the principal cantons. As respects leadership also, the Swiss Reformation exhibits a more republican cast than the Lutheran. To be sure, Zwingli and his canton of Zurich took a leading part. But Zwingli had contemporaries in other cantons who stood comparatively near to him in influence; he was less the monarch of the Swiss Reformation than Luther was of the German.

The two Reformers differed quite as much as the circumstances of their countries. Luther, although he appreciated the humanistic culture, did not draw his inspiration, to any considerable extent, from the classics. Augustine and writers of a mystical vein, such as John Tauler ... were his chief sources after the Bible. Zwingli, on the other hand, drew from the classics next to the Bible. He inclined more to

the logic which reasons out conclusions from definite premises. ...Zwingli's straightforward logic made him, in some respects, the more radical in principle; he had less sympathy with the preceding history of the church; was more disposed to conform everything, with unsparing rigor, to apostolic simplicity. Hence, Zwingli, though far from being hostile to art in itself, banished images from the churches, and reduced the Lord's house to a Puritanical plainness...

...the Romish cantons were angered by the rather aggressive manner in which the reformed cantons passed for ascendancy in the common bailiwicks, and were afforded an occasion of complaint in their negotiations for a defensive alliance with the Protestant princes of Germany.

BONDS OF UNION BETWEEN THE REFORMED IN SWI & ELSEWHERE

The protracted efforts of Bucer to find a platform of union between the Swiss and the Lutheran churches proved abortive. The differences were too positive to be successfully wrapped up in the midst of ambiguous formulas, at least in an age which made so much account of dogmatic distinctions. But if union failed on that side, it was consummated in another direction, and the congregations which had been founded in SWI in the time of Zwingli, obtained recognition in a great sisterhood of churches, which bears in history the collective name of the Reformed Church, as distinguished from the Lutheran communions. In the 1st place, the good understanding between Bullinger & Calvin paved the way for a bond of connection between the evangelical congregations to German & French Switzerland. If Bullinger did not prefer just the terms in which Calvin spoke of the Lord's Supper, he did not regard them as obnoxious, and therefore readily assented to his exposition of the subject as it appears in the Zurich Consensus, which was drawn up in 1549.

A more comprehensive bond of union was provided by Bullinger shortly after the death of Calvin. In the Second Helvetic Confession, which was published in 1566, he supplied a creed highly acceptable not only to the churches in SWI, but to the Reformed churches generally. Many of them, as those in France, Scotland, Poland, and Hungary, gave it their express sanction. Pestalozzi describes it as broad in its outlook, clear and simple in expression, pronounced in its rejection of Romish errors, mild in its attitude toward Luthern peculiarities, and catholic in its appreciation for the historical continuity of the faith. The Westminster Confession may be more massive, and may meet better the demands of scholastic rigor; but it is not so well adapted for prolonged use, not so near the proper standard for an oecumenical creed.

Another bond of association, rivaling in popularity the foregoing, was the Heidelberg Catechism, published at the instance of Frederic III of the Palatinate, in 1563. As a standard of public doctrine, says Schaff, the Heidelberg Catechism is the most catholic and popular of all the Reformed symbols. The German Reformed Church acknowledges no other. The Calvinistic system is herein set forth with sie moderation, and without it sharp, angular points. This may be a defect in logic; but it is an advantage in religion, which is broader and deeper in logic.

- *History of the Christian Church*, Vol III, Sheldon 1895

Menno Simon (1536-1561) "drew up a plan of doctrine and discipline, of a much more mild and moderate nature than that of the Anabaptists, already mentioned, and gave to the community an appearance, not dissimilar to that of other Protestant Churches. The Mennonites, as they were now generally called, soon separated into two great parties, distinguished by the name of the rigid and moderate, or austere and lenient. The Former were sometimes call Flandrians; the latter Waterlandrians, from the places where they resided.

"The rigid Mennonites were far more strict than any other denomination of Christians, and bordered upon cruelty and superstition. They were disposed to excommunicate not only all open transgressors, but even those who varied from their established rules, as to dress, without a previous admonition, and to separate them from all intercourse with their wives and friends. The moderate Mennonites were for treating offenders with more lenity and moderation."

- *Church History*, C.A. Goodrich

South and west of the city of Zurich are the Albis mountains, scattered through which are many farms, called Hofes, and small villages. In 1614 the parish of Horgen was divided and the parish of Hirzel was created from part of it. The church was constructed on land confiscated from Jacob Isler, an Anabaptist.

After Hans Landis was executed in 1614 because of his disobedience to civil authorities, the prestige of Zurich in Protestant Europe was greatly diminished. During the next two decades, the state Reformed Church tried to reform itself, emphasize education, especially religious instruction of the young, and improve the moral conditions of its members that made Anabaptism appealing. Anabaptists were tolerated, as long as they paid their annual fine, and by 1633 there were 182 Anabaptists recorded in the Canton of Zurich. The Thirty Years War was raging and Swedish troops had just passed through Zurich territory near Stein am Rhein to the north on their way to attack the city of Constance in present Germany. Because Anabaptists refused military service, the authorities wanted to know their number, and a complete census of the Zurich parishes was started in 1634.

Hirzel was the home of forty-six of these 182 Anabaptists, and three sons and a nephew of Hans Landis lived at Siten in 1633. Hans' son Rudolf lived at Siten with his wife, Anna Baumann, and six children aged two to twelve years. One of them, Ulrich, lived at Unter Siten with his family in 1649. Hans' oldest son, Hans (minister of the congregation) lived at Siten in 1633 with his wife, Elsbeth Ertzinger, and eight children. Caspar was nineteen years old, Hans Heinrich was eleven, and Rudolf was ten. By 1650 all three had emigrated with their families to Alsace. Caspar's descendants settled in Neckarburken, Baden, Germany, by 1678, and later in the German colony in the Russian Ukraine in 1809. Eventually some came to North America.

Caspar's brothers Hans Heinrich and Rudolf were probably the ones who attended the 1661 Anabaptist meeting in Steinsfurt, Germany.

Most important was the fact that so many of these people owned and farmed on their own land, such as the farm at Unter Durrenmoos in Hirzel, which was owned by the Bauman family as early as 1591. In 1525 most of Zurich farmland had been owned by Orders of the Roman Catholic Church, and became property controlled by the Zurich city council when Zwingli founded the Reformed Church. The farms were offered for sale to the hereditary tenants who had cleared and now farmed them, rather than to the nobility, as was done in Germany.

It was the property of the leaders and more prosperous Anabaptists which was confiscated during the persecutions. As early as 1614 the Anabaptist congregation at Hirzel had a fund for the poor built up out of levies on the members and from legacies. Fear of confiscation must have been a major consideration to those early Anabaptists, and families were divided as some descendants accepted the state religion in order to inherit property, while others remained Anabaptist.

Lumbering and dairy farming enabled these Zurich entrepreneurs to become prosperous, self confident managers of their own property, and later of the property of the nobility or the church when some of them moved to Alsace and Germany. When they came to Pennsylvania, they had the skills, the capital, and the drive to successfully establish the farms on which some of their descendants still live.

A second factor was the cohesiveness of the communities of which they were a part. Many of the farms were within sight of each other, and their families had been intermarrying for generations. Moosacher was owned in 1633 by Oswald Landis, and Oswald Bauman died in 1673 at nearby Ober Durrenmoos. Unified by the persecutions which strengthened them, they defied the church and the state and chose their own leaders, worshiped in their barns and forests, and supported their own poor. What a wonderful preparation for the wilds of Pennsylvania!

In many ways these Swiss Anabaptists were ahead of their time. They insisted on freedom to worship God according to their convictions years before William Penn began his holy experiment in Pennsylvania. They refused to let the state dictate how and when their church should admit its members long before separation of church and state became a principle of the U.S. constitution. Swiss law required that all children had to be baptized a short time after birth, and apparently the Anabaptists complied with this law. They got their name of Wiedertaufer, or rebaptizers, because they did not comply with the law that forbade baptizing again.

They were ahead of their time also in their witness to pacifism and alternatives to violence. In the last twenty years that witness has been joined by many other churches, including my own Lutheran Church, which now also emphasizes that we all live under the rule of a peacemaking God.

You have probably noticed that I always use the maiden names of Swiss women. In the Zurich records of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries which I have studied, a woman's maiden name was used throughout her life, even in widowhood. It is an invaluable asset in the study of these families. Many of these Anabaptists on the 1633 list were women. It was a thrill for me to meet people like Elsbeth Peter, the widow of Jacob Graf of Baretswil. What courage and strength it must have taken for her to remain faithful to her convictions! Her influence on her many descendants can never be measured.

- Jane Evans Best, *Penna. Mennonite Heritage* Vol. XVII, #4 October 1994

Among the smaller parties which found a refuge in the Dutch Republic was an offshoot of the Anabaptist movement, the Mennonites, or followers of Menno Simons. After 1626 full toleration was accorded them in the republic. In their attitude toward infant baptism the Mennonites held the common Baptist principle. On the other hand, they were distinguished from the ordinary type of Baptists, as not being, in the main, immersionists. In several respects, such as the reprobation of oaths and all forms of violence, they exhibited a distinct kinship with the Quakers.

The jealousy which existed between the Romish and the Reformed Cantons of Switzerland twice issued into open violence within the period. In the earlier contest (1656), which is described as the first Vilmergen war, the advantage was with the Romish party. The later struggle, or second Vilmergen war (1712), the victory was with the Reformed Cantons. In neither case, however, was the gain or the loss of sufficient moment to seriously disturb the political or religious balance in the Confederacy.

In its theological activity the Protestant Church of Switzerland gave some distinct tokens of the influence of outside movements. The conservative party had occasion to defend Swiss orthodoxy against the modified Calvinism which was advocated in France by Placcæus and Amyraut, as also against the critical views of Louis Cappel. Placcæus advocated mediate imputation of Adam's sin, as opposed to immediate. Amyraut contended that Christ Died for all, though the benefits of his death are efficaciously applied only to the elect. Cappel opposed the extreme theory of the time, which made even the vowel-points in the Hebrew Bible the product of inspiration. The Helvetic Consensus Formula (1675) was designed to raise a secure barrier against innovation from this direction. It can hardly be said to have fulfilled the aim of those by whom it was contrived. Some years later a resolute attempt was made to close the door against Pietism, which had crossed the border from Germany. The attempt was but partially successful. While Pietism did not become a controlling factor, it continued to hold a place in Switzerland.

- *History of the Christian Church*, Sheldon 1895

CATHOLIC INVASION OF THE PALATINATE

A Catholic 'reactionary movement on this extended scale was undertaken by the house of Habsburg, which held the imperial dignity, aided by its Roman Catholic allies in Germany, especially Bavaria, and also in Spain.'

In 1608 Protestant princes formed the Evangelical Union. In 1609, the opposite party provided an offset in a Roman Catholic League. ... After 1617, when Ferdinand was crowned King of Bohemia, the causes of complaint were aggravated. Protestants of the royal domains were denied the rights of conscience, which had been assured to them. One of their churches was closed, and another was torn down. At length, in 1618, some of the high-spirited nobles resolved to take advantage of popular feeling, and to sever the connection between Bohemia and the Austrian crown. The revolution was started by an act of miscalculating outrage, and was not conducted with a

discretion adequate to the emergency. The next year(1617) after the outbreak, Ferdinand was strengthened by an election to the imperial dignity. The Bohemians, who had taken their crown from Ferdinand and awarded it to Frederic of the Palatinate, received far less sympathy from the German Protestants than they had expected. Frederic did not prove to be an efficient leader. The battle of White Hill, in November 1620, proclaimed the uprising a failure.

The defeated now lay at the mercy of the conqueror. They were treated as though mercy had no place in the Christian vocabulary. Wholesale confiscations brought them down by the hundred thousand to the verge of beggary. The woe under which the land groaned can be likened in compass and depth only to that which, in the time of the barbaric invasions, came upon the inhabitants of Gaul and Upper Italy through the conquering Franks and Lombards. Religion was spared still less than property. The Protestant ministers were banished. Their flocks fared no better after a brief respite. In 1627, commissioners went through the country, with troops at their backs, offering to the worried and impoverished people choice between return to the Romish Church and exile. Moravia, which made common cause with Bohemia, was treated in like manner. Meanwhile the sword descended upon the Palatinate. The electoral dignity was taken away from Frederic, and bestowed upon Maximilian of Bavaria. Much of the territory of the Palatinate was also given to Maximilian, and its Protestant inhabitants were subjected to the usual expedients for restoring Roman Catholic ascendancy. From the Palatinate the course of the war was into the Lower Saxon circle, or the districts of Northern Germany. The movements in this quarter brought a new combatant into the lists, since Christian IV of Denmark felt that the integrity of his own kingdom was being threatened. His active participation in the war was not, however, of long continuance. In 1629, he availed himself of the peace of Lubeck to retire from the struggle.

Thus far the advantage had been decidedly on the side of the Roman Catholic forces. ... Two considerations explain their relative success. They dealt with a divided foe. The relations between the Lutherans and the Reformed were far from being cordial. The evangelical princes were slow to unite upon any general policy. Some of them were conspicuously selfish and cautious. In planning and in executing, not one of them was the equal of Maximilian of Bavaria. Moreover, the ablest generals were in the service of the Emperor and the Hanseatic League.

In 1630 Gustavus Adolphus, the Swedish King, landed on an island on the mouth of the Oder river. But not till the fall of Magdeburg could the princes be constrained to give up their neutrality, and render any hearty aid to the Swede. .. The invasion of Saxony followed close upon the fall of Magdeburg. Tilly established himself at Leipzig. Here he was confronted by the combined army of the Swedes and the Saxons (September 1631). The result of the ensuing engagement was a complete breaking of the spell of imperial success. .. Following up this success with great vigor, Gustavus pressed through Franconia and the Palatinate, capturing many cities for his Protestant allies.

- *History of the Christian Church*, Vol III, Sheldon 1895

THE THIRTY YEARS WAR 1618-1648 SHATTERED THE POLITICAL MAP OF EUROPE. BY 1670 THE LEAGUE WAS ALL BUT FINISHED.

- *National Geographic*

It is very important to notice the political climate of the times, even though the local family is not noticed on the surface of the recorded documents. And yet by following the political climate of the day, one can trace the footsteps of the individual family and notice the events that led them in the direction they pursued. This complete study of the Oberholtzer family reveals this fact very plainly.

Upon this statement, I wish to include the actions of most of the Anabaptists who left Switzerland. The authorities have kept meticulous records of the actions of the "heretic" Weidertäufer. They knew some families moved to the Ukraine; others to South Africa, the Netherlands, Lebanon, etc. Because of these documents, it is easily recognizable how some ended up in the Palatinate/Black Forest/Alsace region. The migration to Alsace and the Palatinate during the course of the seventeenth century was no accident. Those who migrated to that area were prepared to do so fairly well in advance. In the above quotations we find that some of these Anabaptists were from the original Alemanni tribe. This tribe can be very definitively traced to the region between the Mainz in the north to the northern border of the Rhine River in the south, and west into what is now called Bavaria. It is also stated that they returned to their former lands. The Oberholtzer family certainly fit all this criteria. It is not unlike the story of Jacob returning to his uncle Laban in the book of Genesis. This revelation helps the historian to understand the pattern of flight progression. These people returned to their former ancestral abode looking for refuge.

But to make the matter more complicated, the wars in the Palatinate region during the seventeenth century were just too much for the families to bear. The continuing conflicts over several years left them with burnt crops, ravaged families, and persecution due to their faith. Over the last half of the seventeenth century and on into the first half of the eighteenth, these embattled warriors for their steadfast faith in Christ were pressured into scattering over the globe. It is fortunate for us, their descendants, that William Penn saw an opportunity to help these families as well as his financial endeavours.

- DLO

In 1633, during the thirty year war, when the Lutherans in Germany, came to help the reformers in Switzerland, some of the Oberholzers went to the valley and became Protestant. Some of these then joined with the Anabaptists and were exiled, with many others of the Anabaptist movement. They settled for some time in the Palatinate section of Germany, just west of the Rhine River. From there some came to America and at least one went to South Africa. ..

- Overholser Family Association

THE PEACE OF WESPHALIA

Though some of the interested parties may have felt that their claims were not duly regarded, it was with no small satisfaction that the news was received, in October 1648, that terms of peace had been ratified. Hundreds of thousands of people had been killed during the past several years, property and churches confiscated and /or burned. These terms were favorable to the Protestants, at least more favorable than any which had previously been accorded. The Reformed were included in the stipulations on an equal footing with the Lutherans. A security was given for the just settlement of disputes, in that the Imperial Court in a case between Protestantism and Romanism was to be composed of an equal number of representatives of either side.

At the Peace of Wesphalia we reach the close of the first great era in the history of Protestantism. That peace had the force of a definite proclamation that the religious revolution of the 16th century was to hold its ground.

- *History of the Christian Church*, Vol III, Sheldon 1895

THE OBERHOLZER HOMESTEAD AFTER THE REFORMATION

The Oberholzers in the area have always been known to be hard workers. They are also devout Catholics. In 1706 they donated money to build a chapel in Oberholz. It was all built by volunteer labor. It was dedicated March 15, 1707 and many people came from far and wide for the first service. It was enlarged and remodeled later. Various Oberholzer families have donated bells at various times throughout it's history.

In 1807 the pastor's house was built, with all the lumber donated by the Oberholzer Corporation.

In the 1800's an embroidery factory moved into Oberholz and employed many Oberholzers. Each home had an embroidery machine and did their work at home. Gottfried's father, Joseph Anton, had two machines and, with the help of his thirteen children, kept them going day and night. He also made some wise investments and when he died in 1919, he was worth 100,000 Francs. At that time the average wage was 1/2 Franc per day.

In the year 1900 there were 15 families of Oberholzers living in the area of Oberholz. Many since moved away and at one point Gottfried and Rosy and their family of 2 girls and 2 boys were the only Oberholzers in the village. Today there are two Oberholzer families in Oberholz.

Records in Zurich show approximately 2400 Oberholzers living in that city today. Oberholz is still a quiet little village with the Gasthof {Gasthaus Kantonsgrenze} (Guesthouse) and Restaurant operated by Rosy Oberholzer (and her daughter Johanna). There is also a ski-lift and slopes for skiing all winter long. - Overholser Family Association

I hope that our journey today has left you with a renewed admiration for the heritage that we share.

- Jane Evans Best, *Penna. Mennonite Heritage*, Oct. 1994

- My sentiments as well, DLO Summer 2000

RESEARCH

For more information on the Teutonic Tribes during 113-102B.C. see page 109 in The History of the World, Vol.III, by Duruy

For more information on the Battle of Morgarten (1315) , The League of eight States (1332-68), an Zurich (853-1357) [which includes comments about the forming of the Corporations], see chapters 6 to 8 in The Story of Switzerland.

Also, a map of the 8 Cantons of Switzerland in c 1648., pg. 138

Medieval Germany, by Alfred Haverkamp, Oxford Press \$21.00

2nd half of book on the Hohenstauffen Dynasty

The Zurich archives are remarkably rich in materials relating to the reformation period. The Simmler collection contains copies of eiteen thousand authentic letters. The "Epistolae Tigurinae", published by the Parker Society, London, in 1842, contain copies of the original letters from the Marian exiles to Zurich divines. At Zurich are preserved original letters from Erasmus, Henry the Fourth of France, Lady Jane Grey, etc. -The Story of Switzerland

More information on the thinking of Zwingli, Calvin, and others of the Reformation era may be found in Church History and Martyrs Mirror.

More information on Teutonic pagan religious worship may be found in Church History.

More records of Oberholtzer fathers may be found in the catholic church in Eschenbach, where the original family worshipped and are buried. - DLO

Chalcolithic Treasures, Vama Bulgaria, Nov/Dec 1995 Biblical Archaeology Review

Testaments of Time, pages 30 - 36 are about secretary Poggio and his finding of manuscripts at St Gallen.

Cambridge Archeology, Forward: We are all shaped by the past ----- The history of archaeology is the history of self-awareness.

Preface Pg IX: 2nd paragraph: Archaeology.....is an accepted fiction.; Pg X 2nd & 3rd paragraph

Pg 94-95 Swiss Lake Dwellings; Pg 134 Swiss and Austrian Hallstatt Cemetary ca 700-500bce;

Pg 97 Village of La Tene on Lake Neuchatel, Switzerland 500 to 100 bce

Pg 377 Chronology: 1854 Keller identifies Swiss Lake Dwellings