

# THE HOMELAND OF THE FIRST SETTLERS IN LANCASTER COUNTY.

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It was not without reason that I was glad when I received an invitation from Miss Clark to write a paper for the Lancaster County Historical Society. If anybody ought to be interested in her history, it is I. I was born in Columbia, in the same house in which my mother was born. Her father, John Brown, was for two successive terms High Constable of the borough. For two hundred years, every member of my family on both father's and mother's side have been born and raised in Lancaster itself, or in the country round about, Strasburg, Landisville, East Hempfield and other places. I am related to many of the well-known Lancaster county families, the Browns, Minichs, Groffs, Herrs, Hubberts and others. Although born in Columbia, I have spent most of my life in a New England college town, Middletown, Connecticut, the seat of the Wesleyan University. Although I am fond of New England and her people, yet I am proud of my native county, the Garden County of the United States. I am proud of my descent from her first settlers, who, two hundred years ago, came from Switzerland, the land of snowy mountains and green valleys, the home of the brave and the free. It was this ancestral pride that has led me to visit Switzerland so often. I have been there nine times. I have lived in every part of it. I love the whole country, but I love most of all the Cantons of Berne and Zurich, both for their charm and the fact that from these two cantons the first settlers of Lancaster County came, more than two hundred years ago. It is my purpose in this paper to say something about the places in these two Cantons, in which the different families had their origin.

It is not always easy to trace a family back to the particular place in Europe from which it came, but in the case of our own county this can be done in many cases. I have in my library a copy of the *Ausbund*, the official Hymn book of the Swiss Brethren, as they were called then, the term Mennonites only being applied to them later. This copy I have was published by Christopher Sauer, in Germantown, in 1751. There is an appendix to this edition, which contains "A True Account of the Brethren in Switzerland in the Canton of Zurich, and the tribulations which they suffered for the Gospel's sake, from the year 1635 to 1641." This appendix gives valuable information concerning certain well-known Lancaster families and where they came from. Among those who suffered persecution was Rudolph Egly, a citizen of the city of Zurich; Hans Meyli and his two sons, Hans Muller, of Uticken; Hans Ringer, Henry Frick, Rudolph Hagi, Stephen Zander, Dorothea Grobin, Catharine Mullerin, Heinrich Gut, Ottily Mullerin, Barbara Mylin, Barbara Kolbin—all from Klonauer Amt. From Wadenswil and Horgen are Peter Brubacher, Hans Landis, Jacob Rusterholz, Hans Huber, Conrad Strickler, Hans Rudolph Baumann, Oswald Landis, Veronica Ableny, Felix Landis, Rudolph Sommer, Hans Asper, Werner Pleister, Ulrich Schneider, Gally Schneider, Rudolph Bachmann.

From Gruningen are: Hans Jacob Heess, Hans Muller, Jacob Gochnauer, Jacob Egly, Gebрге Weber, Jacob Baumgartner, Ulrich Muller, Jacob Nussly, Catharina Forrerin, Burckhard Ammen, Elizabeth Hutzney, Heinrich Schnebely (Snavely).

The reader will at once recognize all these names as Lancaster County names, and the above mentioned Nachricht, or Account, is the highest importance to the Snavely, Miller, Gochenauer, Forrer, Kulp, Landis, Strickler, Bowman, Nissley and Brumgardner families of our county.

I have spent some time in the city of Zurich, have traveled along the delightful shores of the lake, and anyone has reason to be proud of his descent from the heroes and martyrs of Zurich nearly three hundred years ago. Herewith I shall send some illustrated postal cards of Horgen and Wadenswil, the chief places of interest to us. Horgen is a market town, nine miles from Zurich, on the southwest shore of the lake, and together with its suburbs, contains about three thousand inhabitants. The history of the castle, round which it grew, runs back nearly fifteen hundred years, and is given in the book on Horgen by Dr. Johann Strickler, a copy of which I have. Wadenswil is a large market town, almost a city, of between six and seven thousand inhabitants. Its location is one of the most beautiful in Switzerland, with the blue lake, the fertile fields and snow-crowned mountains in the distance. Its history goes back nearly one thousand years and is given in the book written by Johann Heinrich Kagi, entitled History of Wadenswil, published in 1867, a book which I have before me as I write these lines. It is of interest to the descendants of the Anabaptists of Wadenswil in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries, to know that some still exist there and are declared by Kagi to be "peaceful, industrious and worthy people, who deserve all respect and consideration."

Before we leave the Canton of Zurich, a word or two should be said of a book written by Dr. A. B. Faust, of Cornell University, and published by the Carnegie Institute in Washington, D. C., entitled "Guide to Materials for American History in Swiss and Austrian Archives." Among the manuscripts he examined in Zurich was a list of the emigrants to Pennsylvania and Carolina between the years 1734-1744. This is a complete list of emigrants from every district of the Canton of Zurich during the period of the greatest migration to the American Colonies. Dr. Faust says: "It is invaluable for genealogical purposes and should be printed entire. During this decade the number of emigrants that came from the Zurich Gebiet and journeyed to the American Colonies was 2,310. The record made by the district Eglisau was 680. The country districts furnished more emigrants than the cities. Many names that have become familiar American family names are found in these lists, as Frick (Frick) from Knoau "also from Aargau, migrating to Carolina in 1739." Professor Faust is doing all he can to get this list copied and published. Of all people in the country, those of Lancaster County ought to be vitally interested in the publishing of this list, for, undoubtedly, it will throw light on all the particular towns or villages from which the Hersheys, Stricklers, Millers, Gochnours, Bowmans and others, came two hundred years ago.

But the place in Switzerland that is of chief interest for Lancaster County is the Canton of Berne. From here came most of our early settlers, and to-day the traveler in Berne can see on all sides the old familiar names. I have visited and spent weeks in Berne a half a dozen times. Only two years and a half ago I was caught by the present war in the little valley of Lauterbrunnen, at the foot of the Jungfrau and the other snow-crowned mountains of the Bernese Oberland, and when we tried to get out of the

country we were held up in the city of Berne itself. I remember walking through the streets on market day, when the farmers from the surrounding country came in with their wares. They had little booths with the names of the owners on the top, and I could read the names of Aeschlimann and many others equally well known.

But the larger number of Lancaster settlers came, not from the city of Berne itself, but from the little towns and villages round about. The chief place of interest is the beautiful valley of the Emmenthal, with the river Emme flowing between green hills and by the flourishing villages of Langnau, Sumiswald, Lutzenfluh and others. This valley is the ancestral homeland of thousands of our Lancaster County citizens, and they have indeed reason to be proud thereof. There is a book written by the pastor of the Reformed Church in Langnau, on the Bernische Taufer, the Bernese Baptists, in which he gives the causes that led to the emigration from Emmenthal to America, two hundred years ago. It was the desire for religious freedom in their case, just as much as in the case of the Puritans that led them to leave the green fields and snowy mountains of their native land and face the perils and dangers of a journey across the sea to the unknown land on the other side. These early emigrants from the Emmenthal were Taufer, or Baptists, as they called themselves. The name Mennonite comes from a Dutch priest, Menno, and was never applied to these people in Switzerland. I remember a most delightful visit I made some years ago to Pastor Muller, in Langnau, which is one of the most beautiful and prosperous towns I have ever seen. It is about twenty miles from Berne and has between seven and eight thousand inhabitants, who are engaged in farming, cattle raising, cheese making and linen manufacture. The Emmenthal cheese is famous and is exported even to foreign lands. It is interesting that they have also flourishing tobacco factories. Langnau has two printing establishments, one private and two public schools in the village itself, besides eight other schools in the parish, which stretches to some distance around it, and in which a number of Baptists or Mennonites still exist. The church runs back to the year 1294; the present building was constructed in 1672. The history of the town itself goes back over one thousand years, for we find a mention of it in the year 850. It was a beautiful October day when I took the train at Berne for Langnau. On my arrival I was met by Pastor Muller, who took me to his house, where we had dinner. His house was a large Swiss chalet, full of old carved furniture. After dinner, which consisted entirely of bean soup and bread and butter, he took me to the church, the town hall, where the records are kept, and also to the homes of some of the people. It was one of the most delightful afternoons I have ever spent. In the town hall I went over the old records and found on every page names familiar to me, names in the different branches of my own family, as well as those of other Lancaster County families. Like all church records in Switzerland, these at Langnau began in 1555. In 1556 I found under those baptized the names of Aeschlimann, Breckbuhl (Brackbill), Schumacher, Zurcher and Neuenschwand (Newswanger). In the immediately following years I found, beside the above, the names of Baumann, Boss, Buhler, Egli, Bichsel, Haldiman, Long, Kundig, Oberli, Zoug (Zook), Stram, Krayenbuhl (Grabill), Gutt, Funkuser, Leemann, Burki, Baumgartner and Longenegger.

All these families did not live in the village of Langnau alone, but in the little places in the country round about; for Langnau is the seat of the parish church and people came in from all parts of the parish to get married and to have their children baptized by the village pastor. Hence, the Lancaster County man who wishes to trace his family to the original spot in the

Emmenthal must know from what particular village they came. In Muller's Bernischen Taufer we have a valuable help in this matter. In his chapter of the enforced emigration of the Bernese Taufer (Quakers or Mennonites) in 1711, he gives the list of the names of those on the different boats that took them down the Rhine, as well as the particular place from which they came. In the ship which took the inhabitants of the Emmenthal, we find that Peter Gerber and his wife, Verena Aeschlimann, Hans Burki and Hans Wisler were from Langnau.

Ulric Beer, Niklaus Baumgartner, Hans Schellenberger and his wife, Elsbeth Neuenschwander, were from Trub, a village of some twenty-five hundred inhabitants; Hans Fluckinger, from Lutzelfluh, on the river Emme, with about thirty-five hundred inhabitants; Ulrich Schurch (Sherrick) and Christian Brand, from Sumiswald, a larger village of nearly 6,000 inhabitants, on the main road from Berne to Lucerne, famous to-day for its manufacture of clocks. Other ships bore emigrants from other parts of the Canton Berne, beside the Emmenthal. Thus on the Oberlander ship we have names of emigrants from Frutigen, a large market town on the road from Thun, over the Gemmi Pass, in which I distinctly remember passing a pleasant night, in the course of a walking tour through Switzerland, a number of years ago. Others came from Spiez and Thun, both on the Lake of Thun. On the Neuchatel ship were people from Diessbach, Oberhofen, Reutigen and Schwarzenburg. This latter place recalls the pleasantest memories to me of a visit I made eight years ago. I copy here some notes I made of this visit. It was August 24, 1908. All around me lay a perfectly beautiful country with quaint old houses and barns, the latter built on hill-side like the Lancaster County Swiss barns. Each house had its pile of wood around it, and its pile of manure; but it also had flowers in the windows and in the garden. As I walked through the streets, the little children would look up and say, "Gruss" (Hello). The day was cool, bright and clear. The sun shone pleasantly on the weather-beaten chalets and the white schloss, or castle around which the little village grouped itself. All around was green grass, running water, women working in the garden, children playing in the street. The flowers in the windows or in the garden, red, yellow and purple, stood out brightly against the weather-beaten wood of the chalets. The whole neighborhood was utterly free from tourists; it was a glimpse of primitive Swiss life in the days of our ancestors, two hundred years ago. If ever God made a fair country it is Schwarzenburg. High up above the sea, with the air fresh and pure, with rolling hills and valley, green fields and pastures and on the distant horizon the snowy mountains of the Canton de Vaud. A woman showed me the "Waag" to the church on the top of a hill, from which I enjoyed a beautiful view all around. I went into the church yard and read the old familiar names of Egli, Trachsel, Rohrbach, Wenger and Bigler.

I do not think I ever saw a more variedly beautiful landscape, with valleys and hills and amphitheatres scattered all around it. The hill on which the church stands is an isolated one, with a wide view on all sides; the green of the pastures is varied with the gold of the harvest, where men and women are working in the fields. The houses are picturesque, with red tiles on the roof. And as I gazed I could hear the sound of scythes being sharpened, the bells of the church struck out the hour, while groups of little children were playing and shouting in the distance.

In concluding this paper it has occurred to me that it would not be without profit to some of the members of the society, if I should add a few notes concerning the history of some of the families in Berne and Zurich, which bear the same name as those in Lancaster County. Some may possibly find

therein a hint which may well lead them to some connection between the families here and in Switzerland. While I was in Berne and Zurich I frequented the town archives and found much material along the lines of genealogy. One of the most important books on this subject is *Allgemeines Helvetisches oder Schweizerisches Lexicon*, by Leu, in a number of volumes, published in Zurich, 1750. It contains the genealogy of the chief families of the various cantons of Switzerland from the earliest times. Lancaster County people will find a rich mine of information therein. A copy of this book is in Harvard University, and I think there is a copy in the library of the Pennsylvania Historical Society, in Philadelphia. Among the families given I found the following names: Kunz (Bern, Solothurn and St. Gall); Munch (Minnich), (1. an old family of Zurich, going back to Werner Munch, 1253. 2. An old noble family of Basel, beginning with Hug, 1202. 3. A family in the city of Solothurn).

A number of Graf families are given in Zurich, Berne, Appenzell, Basel, Luzerne and Uri. A number of Landises are also given in the various cantons. Among them is Hans Landis, of Wadenswil, an Anabaptist. But enough has been said to show the immense value of Leu's Lexicon for Lancaster County genealogy.

Other valuable aids I found in manuscript. One of these was a list of the coats of arms of various families. Among the Zurich families I found, and made a rude sketch of, the Frolich (Fraley), Braun and Munch coats of arms. In the Canton of Berne I found coats of arms of the Baer, Braun, Brunner, Forer, Muller, Nageli, Wolf and Ziegler families.

The Graf family, of Berne, is of French origin, and was originally named Lecompte, from Etaples, Pas de Calais, France.

Another book giving coats of arms is Gatschet's *Wappenbuch*, illustrated in colors. Here I found the arms of the following families.

Herr:

1. Of the Canton of Glarus, representing a deer leaping between two stars; the field is blue, the deer and stars are white.
2. Of Reinthal, showing three ears of wheat in yellow.
3. Of Canton Schwytz.
4. Of Canton Zug.

A list of Zurich families with coats of arms, given by Gatschet, includes the following names:

Brugbacher, Her (going back to 1429), Graaft (1344), Grebel (old nobility), Hager, Hofstetter, Huber, Kagi, Kundig.

In many cases the name itself tells the original spot from which the family came. In Pastor Imobersteg's valuable book, entitled "The Emmenthal, Its History, Land and People," he devotes one chapter to the *geschlechter* or families of the Emmenthal, in which he discusses the origin of the different names. He shows how, away back in the beginning, the Brechbuhls (Brackbill), came from a little place of the same name, in the parish of Eriswyl; the Fluckigers came from Fluckigen, in the Parish of Rohrbach; Aeschlimann from Aeschlen, in the Parish of Diessbach; Eichelberger, from Eichelberg, in the Parish of Lutzelfluh; Zurcher, from Zurich; Neuenschwander (News-wanger), from Neuenschwand (in the Parish of Eggiwyl; Krayenbuhl (Graybill), from Krayenbuhl, in the Parish of Hochstetten; Fankhauser, from Fankhaus, in the Parish of Trub; Ruegsegger (Ricksecker), from Ruegsegg, in the Parish of Rottenbach. I send herewith a map, in which all these places can be identified. It may be I have been too personal in discussing these places in Switzerland from which our ancestors came, but I cannot help giving a little expression to my feeling of pride in this far-away homeland of my

fathers. Whatever may be the outcome of the present war, two things are certain, Belgium will go down in history as the greatest example of an heroic people in modern times; while Switzerland will be equally known as the Nation who did her best to take care of the sick and wounded, the starving and helpless among her unhappy neighbors. I was in Berne when the war broke out, and I had ample opportunity to see how this spirit of kindness permeated the whole people. As one Swiss lady wrote us after we got home: "We are so happy to think we can help others in this time of suffering." Many people are anxious to trace their ancestry back to noble or even royal families. Enough for us to trace the history of Lancaster county families back to the simple, upright, kind-hearted, sturdy and brave, God-fearing people of that land of snowy mountains and green valleys.

Where the white mists forever  
Are spread and unfurled,  
In the stir of the forces  
Whence issued the world.

Author: Kuhnz, Oscar.

Title: The homeland of the first settlers in Lancaster County / by  
Prof. Oscar Kuhnz.

Primary Material: Book

Subject(s): Genealogy.  
Zurich (Switzerland : Canton)--Genealogy.  
Bern (Switzerland : Canton)--Genealogy.  
Switzerland.

Publisher: Lancaster, Pa. : Lancaster County Historical Society, 1917

Description: 23-28 p. ; 23 cm.

Series: Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society ; v. 21,  
no. 2

Call Number: 974.9 L245 v.21

Location: LCHSJL -- Journal Article (reading room)

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