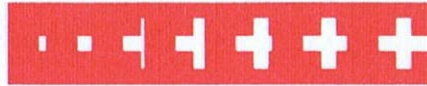


1291-1991, nos Suisses-Américains de Knoxville célèbrent aussi le 700^e de la Confédération



*1291 - 1991
700 Years Switzerland*

*1791 - 1991
200 Years Knoxville*

*The Consulate General Of Switzerland
in Atlanta*

and

The East Tennessee Historical Society

cordially invite you to

a reception opening the exhibits

“FACE TO FACE WITH SWITZERLAND”

and

“SWISS FACES IN EAST TENNESSEE”

Friday, June 28, 1991, 5:30 p.m.

East Tennessee Historical Center

Clinch Avenue and Market Street

Knoxville, Tennessee

Descendants rollois au Tennessee

Ils se souviennent du 700e

*Berney, Gétaz, Rochat, Dufour, LeCoul-
tre, Sterchi, des noms qui sonnent bien vau-
dois mais qui sont pourtant prononcés à
l'américaine dans un coin du Tennessee.
C'est là en effet que plusieurs centaines de
descendants de notre région vivent au-
jourd'hui. Américains de la tête aux pieds, ils
n'en oublient pas moins leurs origines et
s'apprêtent à célébrer eux aussi le 700e anni-
versaire de la Confédération.*

■ Vincent Babelay, jardinier à Rolle décide un jour de 1888 de partir rejoindre quelques compatriotes à Knoxville, dans un coin du Tennessee à l'est des Etats-Unis. L'exode avait commencé quarante ans plus tôt, à une époque où les membres des églises parallèles à l'Eglise offi-

cielle étaient restreints dans leur façon de vivre leur foi.

C'est ainsi que de nombreux habitants de la vallée de Joux, du pied du Jura et de La Côte s'en allèrent de l'autre côté de l'océan. Le « noyau » de Suisses constitué à Knoxville devint petit à petit une véritable colonie.

Même après la fin des frottements religieux, l'exode continua.

Aujourd'hui plusieurs générations ont passé et le français a disparu de la colonie. Il n'empêche que les origines ne sont pas oubliées. C'est ainsi que le président actuel de la colonie David Babelay, lui-même descendant de Vincent Babelay, a édité il y a trois ans deux gros volumes sur l'histoire et les généalogies de ces familles exilées, et ce après une vingtaine d'années de recherches minutieuses et de voyages en Suisse.

700e À L'AMÉRICAIN

C'est lui également qui chapeaute les préparatifs du 700e anniversaire de la Confédération. Un 700e qui coïncidera cet-

te année avec les 200 ans d'existence de la ville de Knoxville. Les habitants de la petite ville du Tennessee s'apprêtent donc à vivre l'événement comme ils l'avaient déjà fait en 1891 pour les 600 ans de la Confédération. Ce jour-là, le journal du lieu avait abondamment parlé de la colonie suisse.

Pour les 700 ans, la Société d'Histoire de l'est du Tennessee en collaboration avec le consul général de Suisse à Atlanta organiseront une exposition du 28 juin au 11 août à Knoxville. Une exposition qui passera en revue les thèmes de: *Comment les autres voient-ils les Suisses?*, *comment les Suisses vivent-ils dans leurs différents cantons?* ou encore: *Quels problèmes rencontrent les Suisses d'aujourd'hui?*

OBJETS ANCIENS

Une exposition parallèle retracera plus précisément l'histoire des familles émigrées à Knoxville avec à l'appui divers objets anciens typiques (fers à bricoler, outillage, vieilles photos, etc...).

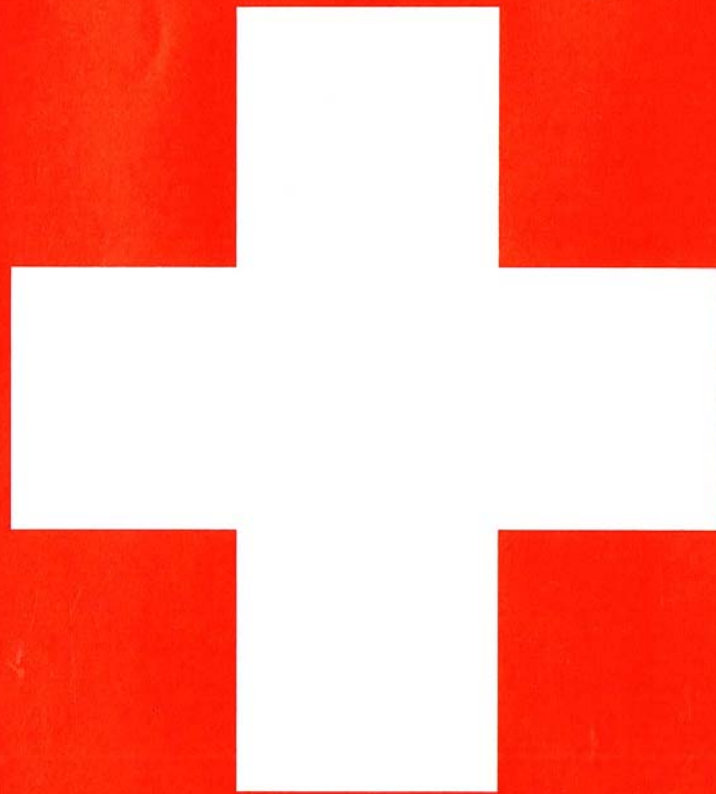
Ce 700e anniversaire qui sera fêté à des milliers de kilomètres de chez nous sera probablement moins chargé d'arrière-pensées et de questions après qu'en Suisse même. Et la colonie de Knoxville nous rappelle ainsi que la Suisse, courbée sous le flux des réfugiés, compte elle aussi ses propres exilés. Mais l'histoire s'oublie si vite... (cmn)



photo c. meathon

L'ancienne maison de Vincent Babelay à la sortie de Rolle en direction de Nyon.

**700 Years
of
Switzerland**



1291–1991



700 YEARS OF SWITZERLAND 1291–1991

INFORMATION

For detailed information on the events taking place in Switzerland, please contact the Swiss National Tourist Office in:

New York, tel.	(212) 757-5944
Chicago, tel.	(312) 630-5840
Los Angeles, tel.	(213) 335-5980
San Francisco, tel.	(415) 362-2260

For detailed information on the events taking place in the United States, please contact: **Monday through Friday:**

- For DE, KY, MD, VA, WV, District of Columbia:**
Embassy of Switzerland, Washington, DC: (202) 745-7958
- For NY, CT, MA, RI, NH, VT, ME, NJ, PA, PR, VI:**
Swiss Consulate General, New York: (212) 758-2560
- For GA, AL, NC, SC, FL, MS, TN:**
Swiss Consulate General, Atlanta: (404) 872-7874
- For ND, SD, IL, IN, IA, MI, MN, MO, NE, OH, WI, WY:**
Swiss Consulate General, Chicago: (312) 915-0061
- For TX, AR, CO, KS, LA, NM, OK:**
Swiss Consulate General, Houston: (713) 650-0000
- For AZ and the southern counties of CA:**
Swiss Consulate General, Los Angeles: (213) 388-4127
- For AK, HI, ID, MT, NV, OR, UT, WA and the northern counties of CA:**
Swiss Consulate General, San Francisco: (415) 788-2272





Banners of the early cantons, by Urs Graf, 16th century

700 YEARS OF SWITZERLAND

All Alliance Dating Back to 1291

Over the centuries Switzerland, located in the heart of Europe, has remained a mosaic of world and regional history, religions, languages and dialects, with a political will to retain its own character despite being at the crossroads of European cultures. This resolve dates back to 1291 when, in order to resist feudal claims from the Habsburgs and to settle conflicts among themselves, three small alpine communities around Lake Lucerne formed a league, swearing eternal fealty in a famous oath on the Grutli meadow. Increasingly



Banners of the early cantons, by Urs Graf, 16th century

conscious of their independence, the mountain peasants of Schwyz, Uri and Unterwald then refused to accept any judge or law not their own.

Though many communities throughout Europe managed to emancipate themselves from feudalism during the 13th century, Switzerland was one of the few to continue to the present day, developing over the years a unique social and political structure with a strong emphasis on federalism and direct democracy. The country brings together in its 26 cantons four languages and cultures—German, French, Italian and Romansch.

700 YEARS OF SWITZERLAND

An Opportunity for the Swiss to Explore Their Future

In 1991, to commemorate the feats of their ancestors, the Swiss have decided to look forward to the future rather than to celebrate only the past, by exploring the values linking the two. It will be a unique opportunity to share their experience with the world.

In keeping with this, events will be organized in Switzerland and abroad, allowing both the Swiss and their friends from around the world to meet and get to know each other better. The celebrations in Switzerland will be scattered throughout the country, stressing its federal structure and its cultural diversity: beginning and ending in the Italian-speaking Tessin, the four cultures will be celebrated in the French-speaking part and solidarity with the world in the Romansch-speaking Grisons. Events on August 1, the national holiday, will take place on the shores of German-speaking Lake Lucerne, where the Swiss Confederation was born.

700 YEARS OF SWITZERLAND **1991 in Switzerland: Fireworks of Festivities**

Scattering the festivities throughout Switzerland, especially among the French, Italian and Romansch communities, has resulted in an extraordinary outburst of exciting projects.

“Utopia” will be the motto of the celebration of the four cultures of Switzerland which will take place in the French-speaking part of the country: music in Geneva, theater and dance in Lausanne, photography and rock music in Fribourg, painting in Neuchâtel, literature in Jura, film and cartoons in the Valais. It will provide a current look at contemporary creation in Switzerland. The high



Banners of the early cantons, by Urs Graf, 16th century

point of this cultural festival will be the “Spectacle des Arts” during the second half of June 1991. To be held in Lausanne, it will feature works by Béjart, Liebermann, Godard, Spoerli and many others.

Switzerland’s solidarity with the world will be demonstrated by a series of events in the canton of

Grisons. Special emphasis will be on the North-South dialogue and on the Old Continent heralded in "The Epic of Europe," a multi-media show. Who could tell the exciting story of European civilization better than the Swiss?

In the middle of summer, especially on August 1, the national holiday, the people around Lake Lucerne will celebrate Swiss history with parades, popular historical and military shows and folklore events.

700 YEARS OF SWITZERLAND 1991 in the United States: The Celebration of a Common Heritage

Since the 18th century, the United States has been a favorite country for Swiss emigration. Some, such as Gallatin, Sutter, Guggenheim and Chevrolet, greatly contributed to the building of their new homeland. Today many Swiss colonies are found throughout the United States, hundreds of American towns and villages bear Swiss names and regular, intensive exchanges take place between the two countries. Perhaps even more significant are the common values—democracy, freedom and federalism—shared by the United States and the Swiss Confederation. When drafting the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, the Founding Fathers, especially John Adams, James Madison and George Mason, were inspired by the social and political organization of 18th century Switzerland, one of the only republican regimes of the time. Fifty years later, in 1848, the Swiss, in turn, adopted in their new Constitution many of the American features, such as the two-chamber system and representative democracy.

In 1991 Swiss colonies throughout the United States will organize exhibitions, shows, concerts, festivals, promotional events and parades to celebrate this 700th anniversary. National organizations, including the Smithsonian Institution and the Library of Congress, as well as universities, local and private groups and companies will participate in the festivities, which will provide a unique opportunity for Americans to become better acquainted with a small European country which shares many of their values.

THE KNOXVILLE JOURNAL

FRIENDS

Wednesday, Sept. 4, 1991

SECTION N



Rich Rohde



SUSAN J. HICKS/The Journal staff

David Babelay, a volunteer with the East Tennessee Historical Society, is a descendant of one of the prominent Swiss families to settle in the Knoxville area during the mid-19th century. An exhibition celebrating Swiss immigration will be at the East Tennessee Historical Center through October.

Swiss origins, Knoxville roots

These settlers made mark on town's growth

BY BENITA O'DELL
of The Journal staff

What do the names Buffat, Babelay, Gouffon, Koella and Sterchi have in common? Besides being long-standing names in Knoxville, these families are some of the first immigrants from Switzerland to

settle in Knoxville.

Like many other settlers, one of the reasons the Swiss came to this country was to escape religious persecution.

This was one of the reasons David Babelay's great-grandfather, Vincent Babelay, came from Switzerland in 1888.

"His family was Open Brethren, which withdrew from the national Protestant church. They defied authority of the state church and were harassed," said Babelay, a volunteer at the East Tennessee Historical Society.

"The first Swiss families came to Wartburg in 1848 — the Chavannes, Gouffons and Sterchi families," Babelay said.

"They came to a German and Swiss settlement there but they only stayed two months because they thought the land was too hilly and infertile."

After leaving Wartburg, Adrien and Anna Chavannes came to Knox County and settled near Whittle Springs, and that area north of Knoxville became the nucleus of the French-Swiss colony here.

Today there are still reminders of the first Swiss settlers in Knoxville. Gouffon Moving and Storage was founded in 1887 by descendants of Auguste and Henriette (Truan) Gouffon.

Babelay Greenhouses Inc. was founded in 1905 by Vincent Babelay, Jr., who was born just one month after his parents arrived in Knoxville. The business is still located at Babelay Road and Washington Pike.

Rochat Realty Co. Inc., was founded in 1919 by Ernest Henry Rochat, son of Swiss immigrants

Please see **SWISS, 5N**

Swiss

From Page 1N

John P. and Marie Rochat.

"The Buffat family came here in 1849," Babelay said. "Alfred Buffat built Buffat Mill on Buffat Mill Road in 1861." The house was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1975.

"David Getaz was with the firm of Stevenson and Getaz Architects that built the Knox County courthouse, Fountainhead Hotel, Shenandoah Presbyterian Church and also the old Knoxville Market House," he said.

Peter Staub, two-time mayor of Knoxville in 1869 and 1884, built Staub's Opera House on the southeast corner of Gay Street and Cumberland Avenue.

The first performance of the opera house was Rossini's "William Tell," the legendary hero of Switzerland who, after refusing to pay homage to a symbol of the German emperor, was sentenced to shoot an apple from his son's head using a bow and arrow.

"Swiss Faces in East Tennessee," an exhibition at the East Tennessee Historical Society, 314 Clinch Ave., is displaying about 280 artifacts and 153 photographs loaned by about 45 descendants of

the Swiss colony in Knoxville. The exhibition is held in conjunction with the 700th anniversary of the federation of Switzerland's cantons. The exhibit will be open until Oct. 31.

Some of the artifacts on display are antiques from the old Gouffon house built in 1853 by Auguste Gouffon. The house, torn down last year, was on Tazewell Pike in the Beverly community.

Other antiques on display are an authentic costume worn by women in the Canton of Vaud; a yardstick that belonged to Peter Staub who was a tailor before he became mayor; documents and books owned by the settlers; and many personal family heirlooms, such as a handmade Parisian veil first worn by Elise (Porta) Bolli during her marriage ceremony to C. Edouard Bolli in 1836.

Many photographs are on display of Swiss ancestors and their homeplaces in Switzerland and Knoxville, including a photograph of the original Buffat Mill and the Buffat house and of Wartburg Castle, for which Wartburg was named.

The local Swiss community also celebrated the anniversary of federation in August. "We had about 350 people from 13 states at Mildred Truan's farm to celebrate the anniversary," Babelay said.

Each village in Switzerland built a bonfire on Aug. 1 in obser-

vance of the holiday. At the local celebration on Aug. 3 there was also a bonfire built, as well as a remembrance to William Tell, he said.

Knoxville families represented at the local celebration included Andre, Babelay, Benziger, Berney, Bolli, Buffat, Chavannes, Falconnier, Felix, Gouffon, Guignard, Koella, LeCoultre, Marguerat, Mouron, Nussbaumer, Pellaux, Porta, Rochat, Scheitlin, Seilaz, Sterchi, Tauxe, Tobler, Truan and Zurcher.

Two years ago, Babelay published a book titled "They Trusted and Were Delivered. The French-Swiss of Knoxville, Tennessee," tracing the genealogy of 35 families.

"There are an equal number of German-speaking Swiss in Knoxville," Babelay said, "but the book only traces the French-speaking."

The Knoxville Swiss will celebrate 700th anniversary Saturday

To celebrate the 700th anniversary of Switzerland, the Swiss of Knoxville and their descendants are planning a celebration Saturday at the Truan Farm, 4908 Tazewell Pike.

Swiss friends will get to visit with each other from 4 to 6 p.m. and tour the log cheese house on the farm built by Jacques David Truan in 1857. A Swiss supper will be served at 7 p.m.

Local Swiss descendant David Babelay will talk about the early Swiss of Knoxville at 7 p.m.

David J. Harkness will speak on William Tell, the hero of Switzerland, and Peter Staub, who built Staub's Opera House in Knoxville. Special guest will be Roland L. Quillet, Swiss consul in Atlanta.

William Tell, portrayed by Pat Berney, will light the great bonfire in the Truan meadow at 8 p.m. Children in Swiss costumes will carry paper lanterns lighted by candles, as is done in each village of Switzerland on Aug. 1.

"Face to Face With Switzerland," an exhibit sponsored by the

East Tennessee Historical Society and the Consulate General of Switzerland in Atlanta, continues through Aug. 11 at the East Tennessee Historical Center. The exhibit was created in Switzerland.

In addition to the exhibit from Switzerland, ETHS is sponsoring a companion exhibit, "Swiss Faces in East Tennessee," which traces the saga of Knoxville's Swiss immigrants as they left their homeland and established roots in East Tennessee. The exhibit continues through Oct. 31 and contains artifacts and old photographs loaned by local Swiss descendants to highlight and document the contributions of the Knoxville Swiss community to their city and state.

The cowbells and the 26 coats of arms of the Knoxville Swiss now on display at the center will be on display at the Saturday celebration at the farm. Those wishing to attend should make reservations with David Babelay at 546-8726 or Mildred Truan, 687-0026.



The statue of William Tell — Switzerland's national hero — stands on a square in Altdorf, capital of Uri.

William Tell is very real to the Swiss

By Jayne Clark

Los Angeles Daily News

BURGLLEN, Switzerland — William Tell is everywhere. He is sculpted in stone, in bronze, in wax, in wood and in chocolate — 100 percent Swiss, of course.

The simple farmer with the steady aim remains larger than life almost 700 years after he shot an apple off his young son's head and became a Swiss national hero. Bearded and muscular, William Tell is often depicted with a rugged crossbow slung over one solid shoulder, the other arm resting on his son's shoulder. The image is strong but gentle. A real man.

Or was he?

As Switzerland celebrates its 700th anniversary, the debate continues over whether William Tell was born of fact or legend. Was he a Swiss patriot on the order of, say, Patrick Henry? Or is he merely a symbol of liberty a la Uncle Sam?

"He was the first Swiss army

man!" cried a young corporal named Liondahl, who, with a group of other Swiss soldiers, was devouring an ice cream sundae one afternoon in the tiny village of Gruyeres.

A fellow corporal disagreed.

"The idea of William Tell is real," he clarified. "There were certainly men like him. But William Tell is a man of legend."

To recap that legend: William Tell was a farmer from Burglen who was visiting the neighboring village of Altdorf one day early in the 14th century. There, he encountered Gessler, the Austrian bailiff who represented the authority of the ruling Habsburgs. When Tell refused to salute Gessler, the bailiff had him arrested and ordered him to shoot an apple from his son's head. Tell's aim was true and the apple, not the boy, hit the ground.

The bailiff subsequently ordered Tell imprisoned anyway, but Tell escaped, killed Gessler,

and went on to become the stuff of legends.

It's easy to believe in William Tell. After all, he has a hometown, Burglen, where there's a museum in his honor and a chapel that bears his name.

Friedrich von Schiller dramatized the story in his 1804 play, "Wilhelm Tell," which is performed every summer in Altdorf, the town where Tell supposedly snubbed Gessler. Rossini further immortalized the name in his "William Tell" opera. And Swiss schoolchildren are taught the story of the defiant Swiss farmer as if he really lived.

But questions persist about whether Tell ever really did exist. And no amount of academic investigation has laid the matter to rest.

"A lot has been written about William Tell, especially this year," said Ruedi Willi, a tourism official in central Switzerland. "But it's muddied it up more than ever be-

fore. Some find proof. Some find no proof."

Others are less concerned with facts, believing instead, that a little mythology isn't bad for the culture.

"It's a story people have grown up with," said Ellen Frossard, a physician who lives near Bern. "Everybody knows it's a legend. But they don't care to find out for sure."

Not so, said Thomas Christen, who is sure that William Tell did, indeed, exist.

"Yes! Yes!" he exclaimed, growing apoplectic at the very suggestion that the man might be a myth. "For me Tell exists!"



David Babelay avec quelques édiles du coin.





Tels qu'en Suisse.



Aug. 3, 1991. William Tell (Pat Berney), Jemmy Tell (Marshall Babelay Weber son of al Sarah Weber).