

Un dernier « jubilee » pour David

Nous sommes en 1998. Il convient donc de fêter le 150^e anniversaire de l'arrivée des premiers colons suisses à Knoxville.

MERRY CHRISTMAS 1998

The year 1998 brings three special things to report.

The 150th anniversary of Knoxville's Swiss Colony was held August 1 and 2, 1998. More than 450 Swiss descendants gathered at the Truan farm, and at Volunteer Landing (where the early Swiss arrived) on the Tennessee River. Eleven Swiss cousins came from Switzerland to help us celebrate.

"YODEL HEAVEN - Swiss Ancestry Tour" (\$3399.00) is planned for July 6 - July 21, 1999. Those who have indicated that they are REALLY INTERESTED will receive a detailed itinerary in January, 1999.

My cousin, Josiane BABELAY Hodel, one of the eleven who came in August, fell in love with Tennessee and returned to Knoxville on November 11 (her 45th birthday!). We've had a great six weeks. The Great Smoky Mountains, Thanksgiving with my sister, Sarah, and family in Hendersonville, Tennessee, visiting friends in Columbus, Ohio, and a two week tour of Amish country near Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Gettysburg, Philadelphia, and Washington, DC. Like me, Josiane and her husband Kurt are Bill Clinton fans! Returning home we visited Lexington, Virginia where my McCampbell and Anderson ancestors had originally settled. The plan was that on December 21 Josiane and I would both return to Switzerland for Christmas and the New Year. I had planned to visit my Swiss cousins for one month. But, believe me, Josiane is a "man killer"!!!

On Friday night after returning from our trip on Thursday, I had pain in my chest which went down my left arm. It passed and I decided I would call my doctor on Monday. I worked at the McClung Collection on Saturday but it was a slow day so I could mostly sit at the front desk.

On Sunday morning, December 13, I HAD A HEART ATTACK!!! I realize now it was probably a second one. Josiane called 911 and said "Now speak!" I had angioplasty and a stent was implanted in my circumflex artery which was blocked 100 % by plaque and a clot. I returned home on Wednesday and Josiane is staying on an extra week until December 28. She is REALLY SPECIAL!!!

I feel fine but will take it easy for a few weeks. The "Yodel Heaven Tour of Switzerland" is *still on*. My best to each of you. I must get this in the mail and get back to bed!

HAVE A HAPPY AND HEALTHY NEW YEAR 1999

David Babelay
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Knoxville, Tennessee 37917

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Relive History 150 Years To The Day After The Event!

**The Chavannes, Gouffon, and Sterchi families arrived in
Wartburg, Morgan County, Tennessee
July 7, 1848**

That will be 150 years, Tuesday, July 7, 1998! Would you like to retrace their steps? If interested meet at 10 a.m. in front of the courthouse at Kingston. We'll have a brief walking tour of Kingston and visit the waterfront there.

"We visited a little in Kingston, which pleased us very much. It is a charming place."--Anna Chavannes, 1848

We will drive to Wartburg for lunch, and take a walking tour of the courthouse square and the historic Wartburg Cemetery.

"Very dear and beloved parents, although we do not yet know where the place is that the Lord has prepared for us to pitch our tents, nevertheless, we do not lack courage, for just as He has been with us during our voyage, we have the confidence that He will not abandon us but that He will place us Himself in the place He has chosen for us."--Auguste Gouffon, Wartburg, July 9, 1848

"We were very disagreeably surprised on seeing this place. The village consists of two or three houses. The country is pretty enough but not very fertile. We were all a little upset. The director of the colony received us in the best way possible, but we did not hide from him our astonishment, and the little probability that we would stay here."

"You cannot imagine the pleasure which this letter from our friends [the Truans] of "Le Devent" gave us, which announces their arrival. We hope a little that Mr. Buffat will join them."

"My husband is about to leave with Mr. Sterchi. I am going to give him this letter. I would love to be the letter, and go to embrace you and all our dear relations and friends. I do not need to tell you how much I think of you. My children talk often of Lausanne."--Anna Chavannes, 1848

This is for the most dedicated and hardy and is being sent to only a few. If you know of others who might want to join in tell them to be in front of the Kingston Courthouse at 10 a.m sharp, Tuesday, July 7th!

Hope you can join us,



David Babelay

RSVP 546-8726

P.S. The sailship *Hector* arrived in New York, June 12, 1848, and the three families disembarked the next day (that is this Saturday!) Read Madame Anna Chavannes' journal and follow them along to Wartburg!

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That will be 150 years, Tuesday, July 7, 1998! Would you like to retrace their steps? If interested meet at 10 a.m. at the gazebo on the courthouse lawn at Kingston.

To reach Kingston from Knoxville take I-40 West. Take the Kingston exit (Exit 352). Go west on Highway 58 (Kentucky Street) and turn left on Cumberland Street. The Roane County Courthouse is on the right. Robert Bailey, Roane County Historian, will give a brief history of Kingston and point out historic buildings. We will visit the Roane County Museum of History and Art in the Old Roane County Courthouse.

After a wreath laying at the grave of Friedrich B. Guenther (1797-1878) in Bethel-Kingston Cemetery (hint page 7), and a visit to Fort Southwest Point we will have lunch in some of the many restaurants of Kingston: McDonalds, Pizza Hut, Dairy Queen, Sonic, Petro's, Subway, Hardee's, Courthouse Cafe, Hundee Burger, or Taco Bell to name a few.

No doubt Madame Chavannes, the Gouffons, and Sterchis would be able to find something to their liking! You may want to get it "to go" and eat in Kingston City Park along Watt's Bar Lake (Clinch River). There is a beautiful view of Fort Southwest Point. For those who would rather eat in a historic house there is Pennybacker House of Fine Food, 411 Third Street at Spring Street. Also known as the Muecke House, it is the third oldest house in Kingston and was built about 1847. Call (423) 717-3706. Pennybacker House is on the World Wide Web. www.roane-web.com/pennybacker/ e-mail: tdabja@usit.net

Yesterday we had an excellent roast of veal, as fresh as if it had just come out of the butcher shop. Another day we had excellent boiled meat. I assure you that we will be well fed up with chicken. We have not been two days without having it. Today we had an immense goose, and a ham with white sauce. We disembarked near Kingston. We breakfasted there in a farmhouse. We have magnificent meals, such a profusion that it makes us ill. Since we have been in America, we have only seen and washed in ice water. You do not see one drop of wine. In New York Mr. Sterchi asked for three glasses of beer for himself and his children. They were so surprised that they had to be told three times before they brought it. -- Anna Chavannes, 1848.

Today in Kingston, tablecloths, even with holes, are a thing of the past in most restaurants and there are said to be few if any flies! There were no tablecloths or flies at Pennybacker's the day I was there!

They put on our table tablecloths which have holes as big as the hand. The first time that we saw that we were not able to keep from smiling, but it was a tablecloth that did not have a spot as big as a handkerchief without holes. We only had time to breakfast in a hotel, where there was at our table a Negro who chased away the flies with a kind of broom. As you may imagine, our children, and we also, had a great deal of trouble in refraining from laughter. -- Anna Chavannes, 1848.

I am enclosing three brochures. Roane County, Morgan County, and the Obed. You will see Wartburg at the right of the map of the Obed Wild and Scenic River.

There are some charming views; very good air; it is altogether mountainous. -- Anna Chavannes, 1848.

To reach Wartburg take I-40 West again and take the Harriman, Rockwood exit (Exit 347). Follow Highway 27 through Harriman. Chartered in 1890, the Swiss never heard of Harriman! After Harriman, Highway 27 bears left. Follow it to an Amoco and HutNGo Market and turn left onto Main Street. The Morgan County Courthouse is one mile on the right at Kingston Street. Meet at the gazebo on the courthouse lawn. Donald Todd, Morgan County Historian, will point out early East Tennessee Colonization Company sites to us.

We, therefore, left Friday morning [July 7th], and arrived here [Wartburg] at 7 o'clock [p.m.]. We were very disagreeably surprised on seeing this place. As they had written [the director, Friedrich B. Guenther] from New York, he had already secured a lodging for us, and the next day he conducted us to it. The country already appeared more pleasing to us. He took us to a lovely farm inhabited by a German family 20 minutes from Wartburg, where we can have three rooms downstairs, and a large one in the garret. They asked four dollars a month. We decided to take it and there we are settled like princes. We sit on our trunks, which furnish the walls of the room. I am in the big room. In the third room the Gouffons; and in the attic our boys.

The cooking is done in the open air. We hang pots on a pole, and take turns with the neighbors. They loaned us a stove, so that we could bake our bread in the manner of this country. Living is not high, and the cost of maintaining our little home is very reasonable. There are certain things which are very high. For example, they do not know what chocolate is. We do not see it here. I still have three pounds, which will give us a great deal of pleasure, and which I cherish like gold.

I am perfectly well, and very happy to have a home of my own. We have accomodated ourselves well to the place, but it is too far away from all towns. Communications are very difficult on account of the bad roads. It is charming to spend two or three months of the summer here, but that is all. Kingston pleases us infinitely better.

The gentlemen have all decided not to stay here. There is not enough market and the soil is not fertile enough. Good-bye, dear friends, and dear relatives. Pray often for us. -- Anna Chavannes, 1848.

After a brief tour of Wartburg we will visit the historic Wartburg Cemetery.

Can you keep a secret?

**July 7, 1998
has been declared
“CHAVANNES, GOUFFON, AND STERCHI: SWISS IMMIGRANTS DAY”
by
Morgan County Executive, Tommy Kilby
The proclamation will be read in Wartburg.**

It is really ok to tell!

**Hope to see you in Kingston at 10 a.m. sharp
Tuesday, July 7, 1998**

**David Babelay
2914 LaVillas Drive
Unit 1203
Knoxville, Tennessee 37917**

**RSVP (423) 546-8726
If I'm not in my “Swiss Maid” will take your call!**

e-mail: DBSWISS@aol.com

In addition to the 150th Anniversary
of the
Adrien Chavannes,
Auguste Gouffon,
and Francois Henri Sterchi families;
1998 marks special anniversaries of 11 other Swiss families.

145th Anniversary (1853)
C. Edouard Bolli family
Louis Falconnier family
Frank L. Pellaux family
Gustavus Albert Pellaux family
Elise Porta Ogden family

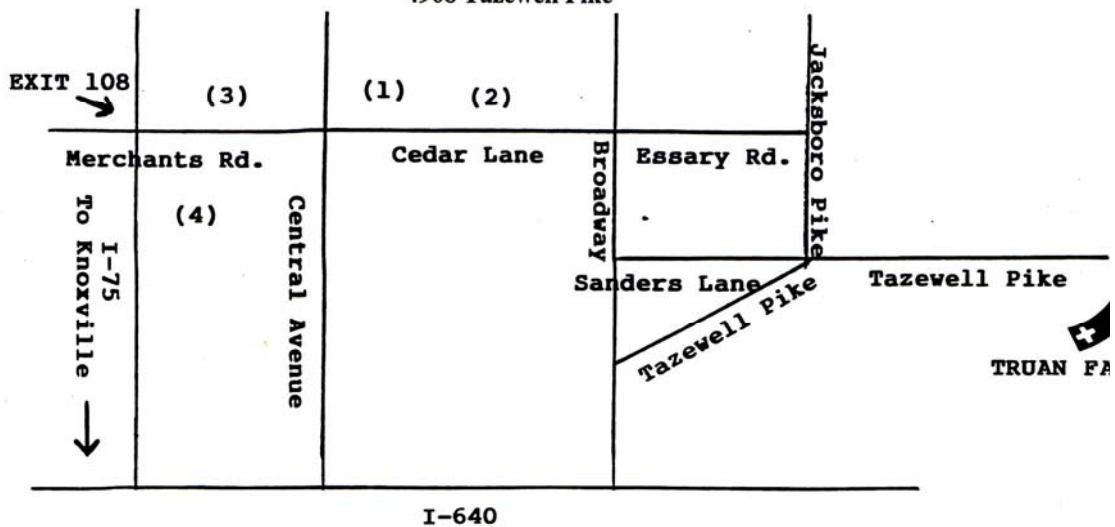
120th Anniversary (1878)
Paul E. Berney family

115th Anniversary (1883)
Frank L. Andre family
Georges M. H. LeCoultré family

110th Anniversary (1888)
Vincent Babelay, Sr. family
Leon M. Marguerat family

85th Anniversary (1913)
Henri C. Rochat family

DIRECTIONS TO THE TRUAN FARM
4908 Tazewell Pike



**DIRECTIONS TO VOLUNTEER LANDING
ON NEYLAND DRIVE AT THE TENNESSEE RIVER**

**From I-75 South take I-275 South
Go 2 1/2 miles take I-40 East
From I-40 East
take James White Parkway (Exit 388A) which becomes Neyland Drive
Go 1.2 miles on Neyland Drive
Turn left into Volunteer Landing
or right on Walnut Street and immediately right into
The City County Building Parking Garage (Free)
Walk across the pedestrian bridge that crosses Neyland Drive to Volunteer Landing**

150TH ANNIVERSARY OF KNOXVILLE'S SWISS COLONY

1848 - 1998

To celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Knoxville Swiss, their descendants are planning to celebrate on Saturday, August 1, and Sunday, August 2, 1998.

PROGRAM

Saturday, August 1, 1998
The Truan Farm, 4908 Tazewell Pike

3 to 6 p.m. Visit with Swiss friends and relatives. Nine cousins are coming from Switzerland to help us celebrate!

Francois Rochat
Francoise Rochat
Alexis Rochat

Blaise Rochat
Doris Berney Rochat
Frank Rochat

Roderich "Rody" Rochat
Frenande Rochat

Thomas Herrmann

*Merci pour le 2
livres de "La Muratte"
tres beau et bon!
Monsieur le President
de la Colonie Suisse*

6 p.m. Catered Swiss supper in the big ten

7 p.m. Program in the tent on the meadow.

8 p.m. Lighting of the great bonfire on the Truan meadow.

PROGRAM

Sunday, August 2, 1998
The Riverwalk At Volunteer Landing

9 a.m. Gather at Volunteer Landing.

9:30 a.m. Scripture reading, hymn, and reading of the 1849 letter of Louise Rochat Truan (in French and English).

Continental breakfast and tour of the Tennessee Riverwalk where our Swiss ancestors safely landed. (OVER)

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Swiss family reunion

Fountain City will host 150th anniversary gathering

By Scott Barker
Special Publications correspondent

At the end of the summer of 1848, after a long and circuitous journey, three Swiss families arrived by riverboat at the Knoxville waterfront. The Chavannes, Gouffon and Sterchi families settled in what is now known as Fountain City and were joined in 1849 by others from the old country. Within a couple of years, the Swiss composed the largest immigrant group in Knoxville.

This year, during the weekend of Aug. 1-2, their descendants will celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Swiss arrival in Knoxville. On Aug. 1, the Swiss National Day, there will be a gathering at the Truan farm at 4908 Tazewell Pike for festivities that will include a catered Swiss dinner. They will meet at Volunteer Landing on Sunday morning, Aug. 2, for a scripture reading, breakfast and tour of the riverfront where their ancestors first landed in Knoxville.

"It's a time for all these descendants to come back home and renew acquaintances with their cousins and enjoy their time together," says David Babelay.

Babelay, who literally wrote the book on the French-speaking Swiss of Knoxville, and Mildred Truan are coordinating the gathering. Babelay's two-volume history, entitled "They Trusted and Were Delivered," chronicles the histories of 35 French-speaking families.

Truan, who still lives on the family dairy farm where she was born 85 years ago, has preserved a log house used by her forefathers for cheesemaking. Built in the 1850s and restored in 1971, the house contains original shelves used to store traditional cheeses like chevrotin and tomme, a soft white cheese.

"It was a companion house to the spring house," Truan explains.

This year's celebration promises to be a truly international event, Babelay says. Doris Berney Rochat, whose grandmother taught French at the old Holbrook Normal College, will be among nine Swiss cousins making the trek to America for the occasion.

Babelay says one reason their ancestors came to the United States was to find a refuge from religious oppression and political turmoil in Switzerland. Most families were members of the Open Brethren, a minority denomination persecuted by the National Protestant Church in Switzerland.



Wade A. Payne Photography
David Babelay, left, holds a custom-forged ceremonial bell traditionally worn by the lead cow when cattle were led to summer pastures in Switzerland. Mildred Truan holds a straw hat which is part of a folk costume distinctive to those from the Canton of Vaud. In the background is the cheese house, where Truan's ancestors made cheese as part of their dairy farm operations. Old tintype photo, above right, shows J. David and Elisa Truan.

"They met in their homes in a very simple service with no music," Babelay says.

The local Open Brethren were eventually absorbed by other Protestant denominations.

The new land, although reminiscent of the Jura Mountains back home, contained many wonders for the new settlers. At least one, Sylvie Tauxe Buffat, believed fireflies were lanterns in the distance.

According to the accounts collected in Babelay's book, they had never made lye soap or eaten that staple of the East Tennessee diet, cornbread. One custom that surprised the new arrivals was that American women dressed in bright finery for funerals.

"They were shocked," Truan explains, "because over there, they only wore black." The French-speaking Swiss adjusted quickly to their new land and have played a major role in Knoxville affairs ever since. David Getz designed and built the Knox County Courthouse and the Market House. Peter Staub founded Staub's Opera House and twice served as mayor.

Several major businesses, among them Sterchi Bros. Furniture Stores, Gouffon Transfer Company, Schaad Lumber Company, Babelay Greenhouses and Rochat Realty, were started by Swiss families.

One of the highlights of this year's event will be the lighting of a large bonfire, the traditional way

of celebrating the Swiss national holiday. Babelay believes the celebration will also kindle a renewed interest in Swiss heritage among his fellow descendants.

"I'll bet next year a lot of people

from here will want to go (to Switzerland)," he says.

For more information about the event, call David Babelay at 546-8726 or Mildred Truan at 687-0026.

