

Joshua Wild The Story of Myself



Joshua Wild 1813-1879

The Story of Myself
Translated
By his Second Youngest Daughter
Mrs. Maria Kundert, Age 61
Mrs. G. F. Klassy
In the year 1935

THE STORY OF MYSELF

I saw the first ray of light of this world August 10, 1813 at Schwanden, Switzerland. I was the second son of Hilarious Wild, the first son having passed away a few weeks after birth. I received Holy Baptism, August 13, 1813, being named Joshua Wild.

My father conducted a butcher business. He was so well acquainted with cattle and hogs that many of his friends advised him to take up veterinary as there was a need for such a man in their community. The man having that occupation was then eighty years old and could not give it the proper attention. I then went to study under a man who was named Joseph Judd, who lived in a neighboring town, Gaster in St. Gallen. I learned the trade in a short time, which was to the satisfaction of my friends. Then I returned home and practiced with the aid and good advice of my father, who was very kind to me.

My mother was a very good practical woman. Both mother and father had very little means. Mother's name was Katrina Flurry. She was a dress-maker and in that way earned money enough so that we did not have to suffer any.

My first remembrance is of the time when I must have been about three years old. I was put to bed. When I was asleep, my parents called on one of the neighbors for a social evening. I awoke in pitch darkness. I screamed and cried until the neighbors called my parents.

When I was four years old, (1817) - a little sister came into our family circle.

1816. The summer was very cold. Therefore the grain suffered a great deal, which meant a very poor crop would result and every thing would be very expensive and there would be poor earning power. Bread then cost fifty cents a five pound loaf. Many poor people did pass away of starvation or wasted away to a skeleton. During that winter, a great deal of snow fell, which endangered the lives of the people by snow-slides. A family of eight persons were trapped and killed in such a slide. Many collections were made for the poor and suffering.

I remember very distinctly of owning a large Newfoundland dog, or Butcher dog, as he was called. A distant relative of ours was serving military services in France in this time of hunger. He came with his family, wife, and child, to beg for this dog in order that they might have food on which to live. Father managed to spare the dog so mother and I led him there to the center of the village of Schwanden, where these people lived. In this house were two leaded windows (stuba). This militarise wished to have some fun with the dog before butchering him. He took him by the front paws and marched him around the room a few times, but the dog soon became tired of this kind of foolery and took one grand lunge out through the leaded window

and home. When my mother and I got home the dog came to meet us. He came to beg for the dog a second time and was successful, but this time he did not fool with him, and butchered him immediately. The summer of 1817 was short but the harvest was in plenty. Jobs were also plentiful. Spinning and weaving employed many and earnings were good.

I distinctly remember the serious illness of my father. He suffered with rheumatism. I can still remember when a number of men came to help him get out of bed and in again. It was a very hard time for us until he recovered.

When I was six years old I accompanied him on many a trip. Climbing mountains, we would often have to sit down and rest. He was suffering with asthma and often expressed his wish to be able to breathe as I. He was already suffering with tuberculosis. As I grew older I had the privilege to attend school, but it was not compulsory. I enjoyed my lessons a great deal. My first teacher was an old man who spent his early days in Russia. He was severely adapted to the use of whiskey, so his family was poor. Of course, his wages were small to begin with. He was a good penman, so besides teaching, he wrote letters for others. In the evening he would buy whiskey and promise to pay in the morning; but in the morning he would have forgotten. He was very easy with the children, especially those who gave him something occasionally. The only thing he despised and despised very much was talking back; for that offense the students were severely punished. I attended this instruction until the age of ten.

I was very much interested in the printing of public documents kept in the court house, which very likely was destroyed in the fire of 1861, when the city of Glarus was burned. I was very much interested in drawing. I drew everywhere, even on our stone stove at home.

I had a grandmother and an uncle (mother's brother), who lived in Italy. At that time a great many went to Italy to work. The uncle often wrote very encouraging letters of the promising land and beautiful country where jobs were many. Grandmother could not read German script, so teacher Tschudy was asked to read them to her and then to answer them. Then she asked me to print them for her and she would read them until she knew them by memory.

In nice weather I was compelled to leave school to gather wood for the family's comfort, even if I was but ten years old.

Father was called to his reward May 7, 1823, at the age of only 34 years. He had been confined to bed only eight days.

I was gathering wood the day of my father's death and had had a heavy load on my back when I came to a bridge. Here I threw off the load and was peacefully resting when someone tapped me on the shoulder and told me my father had just died, which was a great shock to me. He was lying on the floor when I came home. His two brothers helped clothe him for the burial

but had no words of comfort. All they said was, "Now you are left a poor boy." These bony men were considered wealthy but they were cold and heartless having disowned father for marrying into a poor family, and so they did not care for my mother either.

Praise God, their wish was not granted. God watched over me and heard my prayers. When we were with the other grandchildren visiting at grandmother's, we were treated as strangers; this hurt me so much that I could not even bear to attend her funeral. The relatives were considered wealthy, but they would not even give us as much as a piece of bread. After the estate was settled there was very little of means left; only one old house. The administrator got most if it as the law was very liberal as to the fees. No report had to be presented, so what was left over was left for a death banquet. The administrator was rich and forceful and therefore several times swindled a poor family, but this money most certainly was a curse to the owner.

This was the beginning of a very hard time for us; mother earned some money as a seamstress and I gathered wood and worked in a factory.

After being a widow for one and a half years, mother married a twenty-five year old man from Owenberg. He was one of six brothers, his name was John Jacob Ott. My father and this man were good friends. Father had taught him some veterinary arts. He enjoyed my father's books and followed that trade.

I remember very well having gone on a mountain trip with my father and Ott. I slept between them, never dreaming that Ott would some day be my step-father. It was hard for me to learn to call him father, as it nearly choked me. He seldom allowed me to accompany him on trips which probably was the reason. I was compelled to learn the art of weaving, in a cellar which I despised very much and often looked for other work. For pleasure I climbed the mountains to gather herbs and roots and flowers for my own use.

In 1827, Jenny and Blumer started a factory, which brought prosperity into the community. In 1828 we moved to Nitfurn, my step-father's house. There I was compelled to work for his brother. I felt very lonesome. I gathered herbs for my own use and sold some but my pin money was very scarce.

One day I journeyed to Schwanden, where a shooting match was held. There I met my mother's brother, who still took an interest in me. He asked if I would like to try to shoot; this pleased me very much. I was allowed two shots.

In the first attempt, I did not shoot so good, but in the second, I shot the center. For a long time I was the best, but then an opponent shot one better, so I got second prize, which was a gulden. This pleased my uncle very much. At the second shot I just got out with expenses. At the third shot, I got forty shillings, so that I had some money of my own.

In a factory where I worked, a watch was raffled off. I begged my mother until she consented to my buying a ticket. There were four lucky numbers. I was lucky to get some money. My mother convinced me to buy a goat. I got a beautiful animal, fed it well all winter and was well-pleased with it. In the summer it was put up the mountain for pasture. I never saw the animal again. Mother consoled me by promising me my father's watch (which he had promised me on his death bed). When I got the watch I was bargained by my sister to be given a silver spoon for it. I found out later that the goat had been sold and the money spent. That was where my money went.

In the spring of 1831 I looked for work. I got a job as an apprentice in a factory. This was hard and the wages were little. On holidays I stayed at home. I enjoyed myself writing and drawing. I had few friends because of my poverty. I also had very little clothing. I drew and painted a picture, which my friend and co-worker posted in the workshop of the factory. When the boss saw this he admired it and asked who had drawn it; I was pointed out and given a better job.

From 10 to 20 years I stayed weak and sickly and small. On the morning of December 23, 1832, when I was ready to work at the factory, my mother called me to her bedside, where she had for some time been suffering with tuberculosis. She soon told me I should leave here and get among good people and I would surely prosper. She reminded me of God and His care, and gave me her blessing. She was only 42 years of age when she died. She left my sister and myself by her first marriage and two sons by her second marriage. Three sons died in infancy by her first marriage and two daughters by her second marriage also died. Both of my parents died very young. I stayed with my step-father for three months or until spring; then with seven gulden in my purse, a bundle under my arm, I started for Schwanden, my home town. Here I visited my uncle (Bott Strebbe), who was my administrator, a fine, kind gentleman, as well as his kind wife. They treated me kindly, as one of the family. Once in my life I now at least had good food. I gradually became stronger. For the last ten years since my father's death I had found hard, and hoped they were at an end. Thank God, I earned a little money and my board was reasonable, so I could spend more money for clothing and still have some money to save.

In 1834 a gentleman came to ask me if I cared to work in a spinning factory in Luchsingen; here I would be overseer and bookkeeper, which was quite an advance; of course it meant more responsibilities. This same man was in a dry goods business in Rio de Janeiro. He was not there long when the terrible news came that he had been murdered. He had many friends who mourned his death. There was lots of money lost through this.

As I was working in this factory which is told of above, there was a day and a night shift. I had to get up at one o'clock and go down a stone stair covered with ice. I fell and hurt my knee, but did not stop working. Ice was

coming to clog the wheel which furnished water power. I got an implement to keep the ice back. The workman who was supposed to do this just came on duty so I told him to let me take care of that ice as I was soon going home, and could change to dry clothing, while he would have to stand in his wet clothing all day long. So I had to kneel in this water for hours which was bad for my sore knee. Soon everything was in order and the factory was running again. Then I went home and stayed in my warm room. I suffered terribly. A foreman who lived in Schwanden took me home with him, so I would be closer to the doctor. The doctor gave up hope, wanted consultation, and suggested amputating my leg. I hesitated and called my boss and told him the situation. I wished for a specialist, and my wish was granted. By morning the pain had disappeared, but a great deal of pus had formed an opening large enough to lay in three fingers. The wound drained for ten weeks. My pay went on, but it soon disappeared for doctor bills and I was still owing. I had very little pleasure out of my money. I begged to be given an easier job and I would do the bookkeeping after regular hours. I wished I could learn a trade; I begged the gentleman to teach me mechanics. They told me to be quiet and satisfied. But my conscience told me, "You are not in the right place." I was soon permitted to have a lathe and work bench. I had to work four years for the same wages and I was already twenty-three years old and no trade experience yet, but that did not discourage me. I went ahead with fresh enthusiasm. I had good clothing and plenty to eat and no debts. Already in my younger years I made it my aim to never buy anything unless I could pay for it.

So I stayed my own boss. Evenings I spent in drawing, reading books and papers. My board and room was high so I bought myself a bed and slept in the factory. Many thoughts went through my head; one was, that I could easily support a household with the money I spent for board and washing and patching. I was happy when I soon found a maiden that promised to be true to me in storm as well as in sunshine. We were united in marriage in the church in Schwanden in 1838, May 10. We went on a honeymoon cruise on a steamship. My wife was a saving, mother-like kind. We lived with her parents. My boss soon brought us the good news that my apprenticeship days were over by good behavior, and so I was promised an increase in wages.

When I was yet a young man I made the acquaintance of a man twice my age (Joe Hefty), Basie Baties Gotti, ninety years old. He possessed many good books and had experienced a great deal. We became close friends. He taught me geography, which he enjoyed as well as I. He was surprised that a young man like I would put up with an old man as he was. We discussed and planned immigration to American. He reached the age of 95 years, at which time he was hard of hearing, and his eyesight failed him. He had one daughter after which I named my own daughter, Maria.

The question of immigration was becoming serious. Some talked favorably

of it and other could see no advantages. One thing they agreed, there would be hardships to go into a new land, new languages, and new customs. I would have loved to migrate but dared say nothing at home; my wife's parents did not agree with me on that question. I also did not like to disappoint my bosses, where I was getting pretty good pay.

1841. We had a little daughter, who lived only three weeks.

1842. My wife's father passed away. He was sick only six weeks. He left a fair inheritance. There being only two daughters, mother stayed with us. The other daughter married a shoemaker. Twenty-eight weeks later mother died after an illness of only eight week's duration. Death came on May 6.

1843. Glarus planned a Swiss celebration. I looked forward with joy, but when I asked my boss if I might attend, he answered with an emphatic "No." This displeased me very much. He said if I went I need not come back. I did not think he was serious because work was slack, and I had not taken any time off.

So I went and in this time thoroughly enjoyed myself. There were military officers in uniform from every canton. When I came back I was fired. I consulted with the manager who hated to lose me, but he said I must confer with the boss, who was new. I replied that the boss would have to come and ask me as it was he who sent me away. I was disappointed, but again made the best of it. I had a lathe and work bench at home and in that manner in the home I could earn more than in the factory and had more leisure time. The thought of immigration was again in my mind.

In the fall my former boss sent for me and asked if I cared to work in the factory again, and receive better wages, but I was sure this would only be a temporary position.

1844-45. The project of emigration developed. The government encouraged it by giving twenty acres of land gratis. This settlement was to be named New Glarus. Two experts were sent out to explore the land and buy it from the government for the immigrants. The government and privates encouraged it by offering money. They started in March 1845, during which time papers were circulated and many decided to migrate. Many volunteered from different cantons. The journey was anything but pleasant, they endured many almost unbearable hardships. The route was mostly by water, from Basel to Holland, from there to Baltimore, to Pittsburgh, to the Ohio River, to the Mississippi River, and then on to St. Louis where they rested for a few days. They did not know where they might locate these experts since there were no mail services or trains to that part of the wilderness. They inquired of everyone and everywhere and finally traced them to what was called Wisconsin and then to Green County where they found the experts busy surveying the land. On August 17, after seventeen weeks of hardships they finally reached their destination.

I was very interested in the progress of this project of emigration and

considered it an opportunity for myself and therefore did not want to miss it. In August and September, being quite favorable months in which to travel, I decided to take my wife and six and a half year old daughter with me. I prepared for this trip all summer and embarked on August 12, 1845 for Syracuse, New York, which was our destination. Here I had two friends whose occupation was carpentering. I hoped that they would give us aid and advice in this new and strange land. Henry Schindler and wife, a lady named Rosina Blesie and her twelve-month old son hoping to meet their husband and father in New Jersey, traveled with us, also Baltz Jenny, a young man, who wished to seek his fortune in America.

We started by stage coach to Havre, from there to Paris, the largest city, where we spent a day to see the wonderful sights. From there we traveled by train, which was the first time any of us had been aboard a train. The train was drawn by horses. We arrived just in time to embark immediately, but we decided to wait for a ship that would sail in a few days. During this time we looked up a Glarner friend who helped us get better accommodations on board the next ship. We stayed in Havre six days; in the last days people came in great numbers. The owners of the ship demanded double the sum for the journey as for the last ones. There was a terrible storm while starting the voyage. While we were just leaving the harbor a ship was seen struggling to get to the harbor, but that had struck a sand bank, so we could see only the top mast. Steamships were unknown, but ours was a good sail ship. The journey in itself was not very stormy, but ours was a very good long voyage lasting twenty-eight days. At this time this was considered as very good time in which to make the voyage. The very same day we landed a ship landed that had been on the ocean a hundred days. The ship that started two days before we started had landed two hours before we had landed. On our ship one birth and one death occurred during the duration of the voyage. My wife was bedfast most of the time.

One of the passengers had eggs packed in his trunk, I among others wished to purchase some of them for our sick ones. He asked an enormous price for them and when offered twenty cents apiece for them he only sneered. He put a nice basket of eggs on deck which he said were for sale. Unfortunately for him, a sudden gust of wind came along and blew them down, breaking every egg in the basket.

The next day we landed, Mrs. Blasie met her husband in New York, and Mr. Jenny and the Schindlers and we took our baggage from the sail ship to a steam ship which would then take us to Albany, N.Y. On account of exchanging a check for money I was delayed a day, but my family could travel on. I disliked to travel alone but I met Expert Duerst of New Glarus and a farmer from Mitlodi (mother's home town). Duerst was ill and could not give me much encouragement. I went by steamship to Albany and met my family. We all thanked God to be united again. I did not expect to find them so quickly. They were glad to find me because, they had to spend their last penny for an overcharge we had not figured. We traveled up the Erie

Canal which was a national project. I had a map which told me exactly how fast we were advancing. We arrived at our destination, Syracuse, on the night of September the 22nd. We spent our first night at a warehouse. In the morning we went in search of a good hotel. We stayed there all Sunday. The next day we looked up some friends, they were very happy to see us. They were Gabriel Blumer and J. J. Luchsinger by name. They welcomed us and helped us all they could. Luchsinger helped us find a house and work. We had to struggle all night with the bed bugs even if the beds were clean. Schindler had no money and I had to furnish him too.

The first money I earned in America was for services for a long day. The Jews dared not kindle a fire even to light one on their Sabbath. I had to go to the Synagogue before daylight to start the fire and light the candles, about twenty wax candles. Then the services began which seemed to be nothing but a mix-up. At daybreak I could blow out all the candles but two, which burned all day. In the evening I had to light them again and keep order. For many Jews it was a long day to have to fast for 24 hours. Of course, I did not fast. After their fast they had a feast. For this work I obtained 75 cents. Soon I got work with a chair manufacturing company so I had work all winter. I had to work alone in the shop and so seldom saw my boss, in this way I learned very little English. Wages were small, 50 cents a day and later 62 1/2 cents per day. We lived mostly on meat, especially mutton because it was only 2 cents a pound. This we cooked with rice which often made stomach discomfort. After being in the land two months we were blessed with a baby daughter. There was an unusual amount of snow this winter. There were a great many fires. First we also ran to help like in the old country, but later we left that work to the firemen as is the custom in American cities. It seemed queer to us that other men went about their business not paying any attention to the alarm. I had been dissatisfied with my job for some time. It being (fasnacht), Schindler and I wanted to celebrate, so we went to the mail. We received the first letter from home which gave us a thrill. I said this is a good omen, we are in good luck, let us go to the railroad and ask for work. I would like that better. Unfortunately I could not speak English but I was lucky enough to get a job. The job required me to do many disagreeable jobs. My pay was small but I had an opportunity to learn the English and considered this good enough pay.

I bought a lot of land near the factory, but it was a water lot. I built a house on it. In spring when the water was high we could just about swim around in it. We were fortunate enough to sell it to the railroad president. We bought an adjoining lot which was somewhat higher.

One day during the noon hour one of the workers asked me if I could work at his lathe, if I could master that, he would perhaps be advanced and I promoted. When the boss saw me he asked if I thought I could manage it, so I told him I had learned the trade in the old country. As a result my co-worker was raised to engineer and I could step up and demand help instead

of work when he was gone as when he had my position. The boss was kind to me because I did as much when he was away as when he was watching, which was unusual with most of the others. Every Sunday we had company or we called on some friends. In this way we spent very little money for entertainment. We saved a nice sum of money and every month added to our savings.

In 1849 we welcomed company from the old country, my step-father and his two sons (Jacob Ott Sr. and Anton and Jacob Jr.). We were all very happy. They brought with them a girl, my sister's daughter, who was very neglected. She needed lessons in behavior as well as in studies, also a thorough cleaning up was necessary. They stayed with us five days then they journeyed yet to another spot of interest. They went to New Glarus, Wisconsin, where they could still purchase land cheaply. After that I became dissatisfied at Syracuse, so in the spring of 1850 we found sale for our house and decided to move west. On May 1st, we started. Our neighbors and friends all wished us good luck and blessings. After a few days of travel by steam and train we reached Milwaukee. Here we met Harry Schindler, our friend who came over with us. He was a carpenter of furniture but he disliked living in the city. He then decided to go west with us. I left my family in Milwaukee and walked to New Glarus. We happened to meet J. J. Tschudy who came over from the colony direct, with him was a newly married couple.

After a few days of travel we arrived at a farm house which happened to be Tschudy's, about 3 1/2 miles east of New Glarus. Soon I got my first glimpse of New Glarus. I was sadly disappointed at the size of the village. Schindler and I then went to Madison and Monroe. There was no lathe shop in Monroe so we decided to locate there. Then we went back to Milwaukee to get my family and two big trunks. I was unable to locate them at first, but luck was with us and after I had found them we started for Monroe. We had one horse and a wagon. Mr. Tschudy had to go ahead of the horse displaying a cob of corn to coax it along. There was no faster means of transportation. Then we each bought two lots near the square with a poor, small house on it. On these premises we constructed a work-shop and a show room and I installed a lathe. Of course Schindler had to turn it as we had no horse power. He soon got tired of this so our partnership broke up and I sold my share at a loss.

Then I located at New Glarus, where I was interested in buying a saw mill. I was compelled to buy 80 acres with it for the dam which I planned to use for water power to turn the water wheel. I bought lots of wood and 40 acres of Congress land. Soon I was running low of funds and there was no money in the colony to borrow.

Soon I was appointed by the colonists to help them obtain land fairly. There was so much graft then with these deals. This was a difficult task as the congress of Switzerland measured the land as they do there which did not work to the same advantages here. There were false agents who took

advantage of these greenhorns. Until Pastor Streisgut and Peter Jenny, who were good honest men, came it was indeed a very hard task. Next I was appointed postmaster. I finally accepted in the interests of the colonists. The former postmaster was not trustworthy. His name was Bonsier and he had come to this country from Canton Wallis. He was very well educated and could read German, English, and French. There were no newspapers and very few letters for which I was responsible so I received a very meager sum. There was some misdeal through the mails so I was asked to do the correspondence. Some of the people received land and money and others received free interest for ten years, etc. All in all, they were certainly not treated alike.

I built a saw mill in 1851, also a house. We could not move into the house until spring, during which time we had to live in a very poor house. The winter was severely cold, oftentimes the water would not thaw out beside the stove all day. Then the terrible epidemic of scarlet fever covered the entire country. Many children died. We were sad but when we had to see her suffer with convulsions for 2 1/2 days we gladly gave her into the arms the Lord. Our own dear little Maria also was a victim of that terrible disease. Before that time she was a very healthy child.

The saw mill did not work as well as I had expected. The iron material I had to get in Milwaukee, so I had to walk there after it, as the only means of travel was oxen and roll wagons.

In January, 1853 thirty-one citizens went to Monroe afoot to get their citizenship papers. Everyone was happy. The county clerk poured a bushel of apples on a sheet. All the men grabbed them because they had not had apples for years. Some men took home the seeds and planted them and when the trees grew they were called citizenship trees.

This same year I also took the job of Superintendent of Schools for which purpose I did everything possible to improve the school system.

1854. In this year we were blessed with another daughter. In that year floods were very common. Everything seemed to be at a loss. I hired a man to make hay for me, he worked a whole week and everything was lost in the flood. Firdle Schindler, wife and two children came from Freeport happy and looking ahead with great dreams. He hired out a man in Albany to work in the harvest, but in the night, cholera overtook him, and he finally died after suffering a great deal. Twenty-two persons followed in the same manner. It was indeed a bad state of affairs. The harvest was ready and nobody cared to work. Nobody knew who would be next. They did not dare to work and therefore lower their resistance or they would be sure victims.

Pastor Streisgut was the only doctor. Every one was chewing garlic and carrying camphor which prevented the severe disease to some extent. People always had brandy on hand.

That summer I became ill, and nobody could run the saw mill, so I sold it with the eighty acres to David Klassy for \$1350.00.

The next year I bought a horse. The next year my ten year old daughter Barbara, and I went to Dayton, to the mill. We experienced a runaway and by being thrown from my seat broke my arm above the elbow. I did not know that my arm was broken until I wanted to take my pocket knife out of my pocket. Barbara ran to the nearest house (Red Tschudy's) to get aid. This happened over on the Fred Schneider hill. Fred Tschudy took care of my horse and we walked home. My step-father set my arm. The reason we were thrown off was because I had loaned my good seat to Pastor Streisgut as he was going to have his removed. In five weeks I was restored to my normal health, and took the wild horse back to its former owner, as it proved to be too wild an animal for me. I really could not drive very well so I decided to start a store. I traded in butter and eggs and hides and then took them to Madison or Monroe once a week. One July evening a fellow came and asked if I would not like to drive two horses to Madison to take along butter as it was hard to keep it in the hot weather, so I went with him. I was dressed lightly and as it cooled off at midnight I got a severe chill, but the next day I felt all right, until at midnight the next night, I got a severe coughing spell for about an hour, this spell came back every night after that. My health had been shattered.

In the year 1860 I decided to visit my old home in the old country, Switzerland, and decided to leave about May 31st. In company with others I left for Madison. It was still very cold. From there we traveled by rail to Milwaukee. We got there at four o'clock. Then we went on steamship on Lake Michigan. We all landed at Great Haven, from there we went by railroad to Detroit. The second of June we came to the Niagara Falls which could be heard for miles away. This was wonderful-all works of nature. The large wire bridge in itself was a miracle. This sight alone was worth the trip. From there we went to Syracuse, N.Y. Here I visited friends who treated me very kindly. Then we soon sailed for Europe. Our ship was of iron construction and we very soon became confident of its safety. If I only could have stayed on the ocean my health would have been restored. After fourteen days we arrived in Liverpool. In the harbor there were many war ships. The masts of which reminded us of forests. Liverpool is a trade center. We were examined quickly for valuables. We stayed there all night. Then we went to London, here we saw a train go into a tunnel underground and one on top and an elevated train. At five o'clock we landed in London, the largest city in the world at the time. Here was a hotel manager who came to meet us as it was Saturday night and no train would operate on Sunday. So we took in the sights of the city. St. Paul's church was one of the largest churches in the world. Westminster Abbey, which contained statues of all kinds, I wish I could have spent more time there.

We then had to go to a large depot where there were forty tracks located. Over all there was a large glass roof. Here I had a glass of lemonade

which cost me twenty five cents. At noon we came to the English channel. The water was very stormy. The next morning we were over in Paris and looked up a German hotel near the Strasburg depot. We saw many wonderful sights in Paris. The large beer gardens, the menageries, and gardens. We would like to have spent more time there but our love for our homeland pushed us onward. That evening we went from France to Basel where we could see Switzerland. The air already seemed more free. From there to Zurich and then to Glarus. The sight made tears come to my eyes. It was fifteen years since I had left my home with a heavy heart not knowing what would happen. Everything seemed so small. The mountains seemed closer. We soon went to Schwanden to a hotel where a daughter of the innkeeper recognized me. I went to visit my relatives. I fell into their arms and both cried. We had many experiences to relate to each other. They thought that I was rich. I then took a certain diet and got lots of appetite. First, I drank whey, then plain mountain food. The scenery was beautiful, but a terrific hailstorm drove the hay and grass into the ground. After that many people left the hotel on account of the cold weather. This proved to be of great loss to the hotel keeper.

A man wanted to obtain some sure money so we had noticed that he had a watch for sale. When I bought it and paid gold for it I was considered a rich man. Men talked to me that had formerly disregarded me. Now they wanted me to tell them all about America. I found out the money spoke louder than character. Some time later I got a letter from one of these men from Philadelphia telling me that his wife and daughter had left him and that he was suffering a broken leg. He wanted me to find a job for him, but I had to tell him that old people could not get jobs. His pride was lowered, that is as far as a person will go when they pretend to be superior to others.

Next I journeyed to Luchsinen (Betschwandan) to church. This was mother's home. Everyone was dressed in black. I was dressed in my summer linens and straw hat, which was not their style. I inquired about a man named Babler. He did not happen to be there but his son was. He seemed to wish that he had not met me, but I got to his home anyway. Babler tried to be polite but I could tell that I was not welcome. He invited me in to have dinner but after dinner he politely excused himself. That he had not been feeling well, was his polite excuse. I said I should take a little walk before I left his home. So I sat for awhile when to my surprise who should come but a number of his friends. Then Babler felt fine, and we all went out for an afternoon walk, but it seemed that I was always left in the back ground. Babler whispered to me that I should have changed my garb, otherwise I should not have been in their company. I told him that it did not depend upon fine clothing so long as a man was honest. Babler told me that the previous year a friend had visited him from America and that he was a real gentleman, but I happened to know whom he was referring to and told him that I would not uphold a swindler and a person who had served a jail

sentence. He told me that if I would be better dressed I could go into this beautiful hotel with them, but I told him that I did not care to go as I was satisfied in a small place, but I thought I would go in there if it cost me twenty dollars. While at a table in there a stranger came in to my company. He asked me about the different conditions in America. We visited together and one after the other came to my table to listen to my story, even those who had shunned me before. This pleased me very much.

I then went to visit Uncle Joachim Klassy (father of John and Joshua). They wanted to send John to America with me, but there were so many tears that I suggested that they all come or none, so they sold their stock and came. On their way to Wisconsin they stopped at Syracuse, where candidate-for-president Douglas gave a long oration to about 3000 people. We stayed there three days and then traveled home. September 26th we arrived home very unexpectedly, well and happy. We found my family well and also happy. Before I had left I had signed a paper signifying that if I did not return my wife would be sole beneficiary of my estate. When I got home I destroyed the paper. I felt that my health was restored after being away for four months.

My oldest daughter was now married and had moved a hundred miles away. I had given them my horse and wagon to use until my return, so when a friend of mine went to visit them he returned with the horse and wagon. At my suggestion they traded their farm in Crawford County and came to live with us for awhile. This year also brought us the great Civil War.

The Civil War was fought between the North and the South. New Glarus alone furnished 100 soldiers. This became a bad time. Taxes were high, whoever had lots for sale got high prices. On pay day the soldiers could send home money to their families. Some sent it to me to keep for them until they came home, others spent it for drink. Prices of all products were high, calico was 50 cents a yard, sheeting was \$1.00 a yard. The gold dollar was worth \$2.85. The trust of the American people was lost. Those who did not care to work stole money from those who saved hard earned dollars. Swindlers were not penalized enough.

When the war was finally over, telegrams were sent to every Capitol in the nation. I happened to be in Madison, our Capitol, when the news came. Such happiness, cannons were fired, fireworks, patriotic speeches everywhere. The next day before I started for home I bought a flag and placed it on the front of my wagon. Many stopped me on my way and asked why the display. I was very happy to report that peace was declared. When I got home the spring election was in progress, and there was great happiness. (Mother now 81 years of age says she can remember the day very clearly as though it was yesterday. Tears came to her eyes when we translated this portion.) Gradually the soldiers came back. It was quite a change for many for they had to start working. Their easy earned income had ceased.

February 25, 1864, our second daughter Barbara, married a soldier

Fridolin Streiff, who enlisted in the army. After peace was declared he wished to go into business with me. This I approved of as my health was not very good. But this did not give us enough income for both families, so we moved to Paoli, this was twelve miles closer to Madison. But we did not like our Yankee neighbors, they demanded too much credit. Streiff seemed to lose interest in the store and thought that he would like to go farming with his family. So we bought a farm of 211 acres for \$3000 and live there together. This proved to be too lonesome for me, so my wife and children moved back to town, but my asthma grew worse. In 1868 my stepfather died. Everyone mourned who knew him, he was so well liked. He had relieved many from suffering with his simple remedies. He died in June.

1871. I bought two lots and built a comfortable home, but my health was very poorly. I had to smoke herbs almost every hour. I prepared myself for death. I was called to Monroe on business, where my son John took me as quick as possible. In spite of my warm clothing I suffered a severe chill. Then I got a severe pain in my abdomen, instantly I was relieved of my old sickness, asthma, with which I had suffered for nineteen years. I went to Doctor Blumer but he could not help me. Then the secretive organs failed me. June 21st. is marked the shortest night but it was the longest for me. I suffered immensely. The doctor with a very crude instrument tried to relieve me, but ruptured my intestines.

* * *

His youngest daughter was asked to close this autobiography. He died in 1879 at the age of 66 years. Mrs. J. J. Figy was his first great grandchild.

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Dedicated to
Alvin Fredolin Streiff
Great-Grandson of Joshua Wild
On his 34th Birthday, June 15, 1943
From his wife Beryl Krause Streiff



This photo, taken in the 1860's, shows the old mill pond north of New Glarus. Joshua Wild's mill served the community from 1851 until it closed in April 2001, after serving the area for 150 years. The second owner of the mill, David Klassy, installed what was supposed to be the first barley hulling mill in Wisconsin. Early residents traveled many miles to purchase Klassy's barley.

Lower photo shows the mill in the early 1900s.

