

President's Message

by Brenda Leyndyke

The flu season is upon us and I wasn't spared being part of this epidemic. I have never been so sick in all my life. I apologize for the newsletter being late, but there was no way I could have written a coherent sentence.

One might think I could accomplish a lot of genealogy during this time, but I didn't even have enough energy to do that. I did think about past flu epidemics and wondered where this one fit in history. Reports say it isn't the worst one on record. The 1918 Spanish flu epidemic was one of the worst in the United States. More than 25% of the U.S. population was affected by the illness. I can't imagine my ancestors going through the flu back then. There were no vaccines or flu medications to treat it. Stores, schools, and public places were closed. Currently, we have vaccines and flu medications and most of us have access to health care. If you have an ancestor that died in 1918 or 1919, was it because of the flu?

If you are not affected by any of the bugs that are going around, there are a few genealogy related meetings coming up you might be interested in.

Thursday, February 15th: 6:30-8:00 p.m.
New Harvest Christian Center, 155 W. Van Buren, Battle Creek. Willard Library is collaborating with the Sojourner Truth Institute of Battle Creek to present Kenyatta D. Berry, host of PBS's "Genealogy Roadshow," for a genealogy program in honor of Black History Month. Berry is a lawyer with more than 20 years of experience in genealogical research and writing. A native of Detroit, Berry focuses on African-American genealogy, slave ancestral research, and the use of DNA. Her specialty is tracing the roots of African-Americans to slavery days, helping them break through what she calls the "1870 brick wall," referring

to the first federal Census during which former slaves were enumerated. Willard Library programs are free and open to the public.

Thursday, February 15th: 7:00-8:15 p.m.
Marshall District Library, Marshall, MI.
Role of Women in World War I.
Registration begins February 4th. <https://www.yourmdl.org/event/role-women-world-war/>

Saturday, March 3: 12:00 pm at Trevarrow, Inc. 1295 N. Opdyke Rd., Auburn Hills, MI. 22nd Annual St. Piran's Day Luncheon. The Cornish Connection of Lower Michigan is inviting you to "Come help celebrate St. Piran, and all things Cornish, with an annual pasty lunch. The speaker will be Julia Hanneman-Schoenback speaking on "Surprise you're Cornish—Researching Cornwall". Registration is required. Please register at https://mimgc.org/upload/events/files/1516465909_2018St.PiranDay.pdf by February 26.

Saturday, April 28: 2018 Lansing Family History Seminar, Lansing Family History Center, 431 E. Saginaw Street, East Lansing, MI. This event is free, but registration is required. More information will be available in a few weeks at <http://www.lansingfhc.org/>

May 2-5: National Genealogical Society "Paths to Your Past" National Conference, Grand Rapids, MI. A chance to attend a national conference is available and you don't have to travel far to go to it. This is the first time a national genealogy conference is being held in Michigan. Attendees will be able to choose from over 175 lectures with nationally known speakers on all areas of genealogy. Registration and more information can be found at <http://conference.ngsgenealogy.org/>



President's Message:	1	Spotlight on Libraries.....	8
About CCGS.....	2	Upcoming Meetings	8
Burgett Swiss Genalogy.....	3	Membership Reminder	8
Burgett Cont.....	4-7	Application.....	9

Calhoun County Genealogical Society

The purposes of the Calhoun County Genealogical Society (CCGS) are:

- To gather and preserve information of genealogical value.
- To encourage the deposit of such information in suitable depositories.
- To aid genealogists in the study of family history through the exchange of knowledge.
- To publish and promote Calhoun County and other genealogical materials.



CCGS is a nonprofit organization recognized as tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue code. Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent provided by law. Individuals, libraries or societies may join. Annual dues for the year, beginning September 1, are \$18 for members choosing to receive *Generations* through postal mail or \$15 for members electing to receive the newsletter via e-mail. Memberships are accepted year-round; dues received after May 1 will pay for the following year's membership. Members receive *Generations* newsletter six times per year. All are invited to submit articles to the *Generations* editor. Permission is granted to reprint articles unless otherwise noted. Please give appropriate credit to the source. Copies of pages from back issues of *Generations* are available for \$1.00 for the

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Become a CCGS fan on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/CalhounCountyGenealogicalSociety>

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CCGS member, Diane Brush, took a genealogy related trip to Switzerland in June, 2016. She has shared some pictures and information on her trip. Thank you, Diane for sharing. If you have a family story or ancestral trip you would like to share, please send it to Brenda Leyndyke at brae957@gmail.com.

Burgett Swiss Genealogy from June 2016 trip to Switzerland by Diane Brush

My GG-Grandfather was George Burgett, a farmer in Section 34 of Athens Township. (Obituary attached) I grew up hearing stories from his grandson, my Grandfather Earl Burgett, about his great-grandparents coming on a ship from Switzerland and having a baby born aboard the ship, who turned out to be my Grandpa's Great Aunt Maryann that "lived to be 104" and "died eating succotash." In 1972, Grandpa went with me and my mother Joy to his Cousin Hazel's house in Battle Creek, Michigan. to learn more about the family history. Hazel was the family historian. I had taken notes which I did not revisit again until many years later. My notes said the "Burkhardts" came from Canton Bern, Switzerland. In 1995, I had taken a one-day excursion from a tour I was on, in order to drive into the Swiss countryside in a rental car, trying to find information about these ancestors. This was before the days of Ancestry.com. I had little to go on except a book I found at the library on surnames and likely locations of origin. I found friendly German-speaking people that tried to help me, working from my questions which my daughter had helped me translate from English to German. They looked in their local history books and found the last name "Burkhard/Burkhardt" but did not find my specific ancestors Samuel Burkhardt (or Burkhard) and his wife Barbara "Kauze," which was all I had for a surname for her.

So, as I was planning the 2016 trip, knowing the focus of this trip was to be genealogy, I went about my search more systematically and with fewer time constraints, starting at the Bern Canton History office. Communicating by email, they suggested that I might better spend my time in Bern sightseeing, and instead hire a professional to do the genealogy. After I realized that the history would all be written in old German script, that even German speakers have trouble reading, I contacted a genealogist from a list I was given by the History staff. That was the best decision I could have made. Therese is her name and she made time to work on my request, even though she was fully booked. Within a few weeks, she had found my great-great-great grandparents. They were (Anna) Barbara Kanzig and Samuel Burkhard and she pinpointed the towns they were from, the names of their parents, the churches where they were baptized and the place of their marriage. Amazingly, the towns were not all that far from where I had traveled in 1995. All are in a region of Switzerland known as the "Obere Aargau," an area of valleys and rolling hills, in the northern part of Canton Bern.

Daughter Emily and I started our motorhome trip in Barcelona, Spain, and worked our way north across the Pyrenees and through France to Switzerland, with a few stops for sightseeing along the way. We arrived in Bern, Switzerland, and settled into a nice campground there where we spent the week. We were about an hour's drive from the ancestral towns.

Our genealogist Therese arranged for us to have a tour of the historic church in Oberbipp, the site of Anna Barbara's baptism in 1791, and the site of a church for over 1000 years. Fortunately, my German exchange daughter, Melanie, and her son Elias, joined us for a few days and were able to participate in the tour. We met Therese in Oberbipp as she disembarked the train. As we were walking to the Hotel Baeren for lunch, we passed a large community street celebration, and a man was speaking to the group. Therese told one of the people in the crowd that my ancestors were from Oberbipp and before I knew it, I was being introduced to the crowd.

As we enjoyed a delicious lunch at the Hotel Baeren, Therese revealed she had uncovered more information about Samuel and Barbara. She had found a document that described the townspeople taking up a collection of money to pay for Samuel and a very pregnant Barbara to emigrate to the U.S. in 1817. This was irrefutable evidence that our family story was true, and very exciting to me. Therese had even found a description of the house that was built by Samuel's father Jakob in the tiny town of Schwarzhauern. She also found a record of another child born to Samuel and (Anna) Barbara in 1815, just a few weeks after their marriage! That child was not named or baptized.

A lot of people emigrated from Switzerland at the same time because of a famine, caused by a drastic drop in temperature and sunshine, known as the "Year without Summer." In 1816, crops failed and people were starving. It affected the entire northern hemisphere, but Switzerland was one of the hardest hit places. It is now known that it was probably caused by a volcanic eruption of Mt. Tambora in the Dutch East Indies.

We had a tour of the archaeological dig in the foundation of the Oberbipp church. It demonstrated three different buildings that were on the site, dating from the 10th century. The sanctuary of the church was beautiful, with many original features, including the same baptismal font that would have been used for my g-g-g-grandmother. It was wonderful having my German exchange daughter with us because she was able to translate and clarify things.

Switzerland has a wonderful network of electric trains that go through the countryside. We walked Therese to the Oberbipp train station and said our goodbyes as she boarded the train for her home. For Saturday evening, I had reserved a room in the Oberbipp Hotel Baren, which was a lovely inn, with a restaurant serving delicious food. I had a chance to walk to the next town, Wiedlisbach, which was the ancestral home of Anna Barbara Kanzig. An Elizabeth Kanzig owns a restaurant in Wiedlisbach. On my walk, I saw beautifully maintained Swiss homes, gardens, and even Swiss cows with clanging bells hanging from their necks. Then I took the train back to Oberbipp. The train ride cost 4.40CHF and tickets are purchased from a vending machine at the station. The train arrived within one minute of its scheduled time. The Swiss are known for their promptness and it is TRUE.

We had planned to attend church Sunday morning in either Oberbipp or Niederbipp, the town where ancestors Samuel and Barbara were married. Coincidentally, these protestant “Evangelical and Reformed” churches are the same denomination as the church I attended as a child, which is now a United Church of Christ. Church that Sunday was not to be held in the churches, but was a countryside picnic, so we opted to explore some of the neighboring towns instead. We decided to look for the house that Samuel’s father Jakob had built in Schwarzhausern. We knew it was a “corner” lot on the “Stone Field” street. We even got up the courage to knock on a door of a house we thought it might be. Again, it was so helpful having Melanie there to do the talking. The lady of the house whose door we first knocked on told us it was not her house, but right behind her house and down the street, were several Burkhard families. We got brave and started knocking on even more doors. We found a Burkhard who pointed us to another Burkhard (he said no known relation) that he said was more knowledgeable about history. The next thing we knew we were invited in for coffee at the home of a Burkhard descendent, Renata. Her mother, whose husband was a Burkhard, is 80 years old and lives across the way. She joined us and brought with her a one-page family history document of her late husband. We were not able to piece together where our connection was, but it was great fun meeting them. They invited us to come to the Sunday kids’ soccer game that was about to start. They wanted us to meet even more Burkhard. There were several Burkhard there, and we again had coffee with another cousin, Mia. She even has a sister that lives in Lawrence, Kansas. Most of the Burkhard we met have visited the United States and speak some English.

Two days later, we went back to Oberbipp, Neiderbipp, Wiedlisbach, and Schwarzhausern. This time daughter Emily was with us, so we revisited the places we had visited before. Also, Melanie had arranged for us a tour at the Wiedlisbach museum, which is in an building where corn used to be stored many years ago. There were a lot of interesting objects in the museum, farm implements, dishes of all sorts, and a collection of “love notes” which were used by courting couples in the 19th century. They are beautifully drawn and painstakingly cut out by hand. They say there is still a woman in town that knows how to make them. While the guides at the museum spoke some English, it was wonderful having Melanie there to translate.

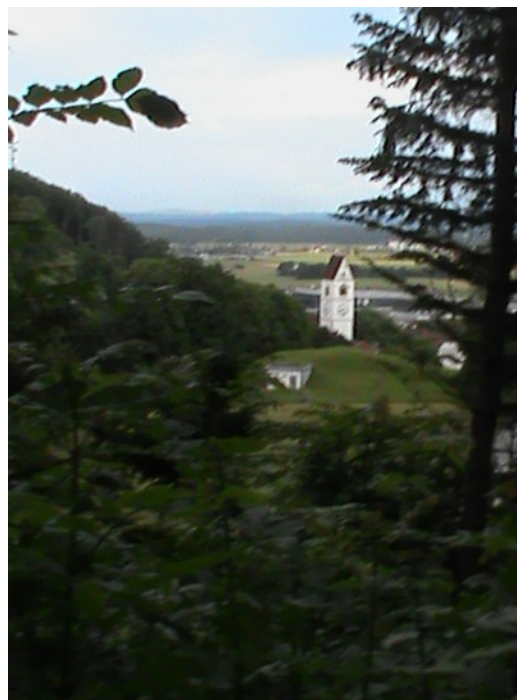
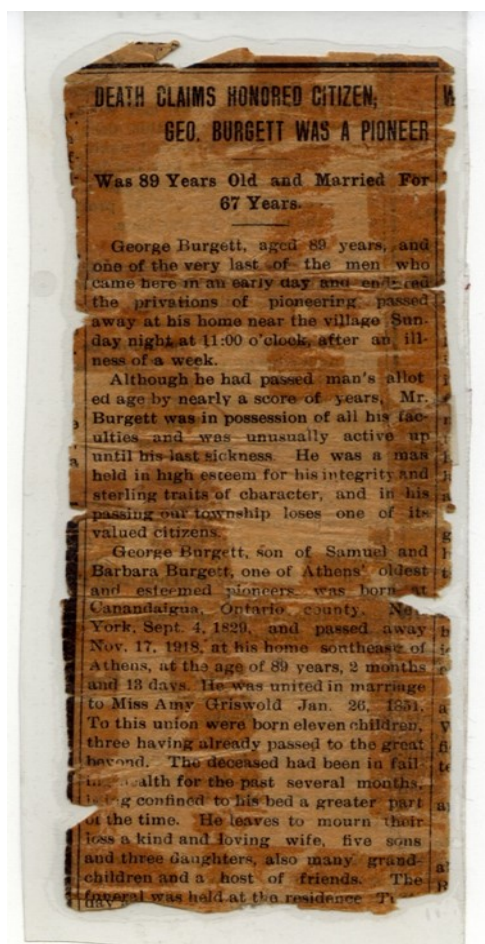
We visited the Niederbipp church where Samuel and Barbara were married in 1815. Coincidentally, the organist came in to practice while we were there. It was serendipitous when the sound of the pipe organ filled the little church. We felt like we were standing there in 1815 for the marriage ceremony of my ancestors.

We ended our visit to the Bernese countryside with an attempt to see the Oberbipp Castle , high on a hill overlooking the village. Using our GPS, we followed a road which got more and more narrow and winding, with room for one car yet with two-way traffic. We were praying we would not meet anyone in our little motorhome. Emily expertly made a U-turn and pulled into a little turn out. It turned out the castle is privately occupied, so we could not walk up to it. We did find a plaque and two rustic sculptures beside the turn-out, memorializing the famous Oberbipp duel that took place in this spot in 1659. From the top of the castle hill was a beautiful view of the little Oberbipp church. In the adjacent field was a flock of sheep. We must have upset them, because they launched into what sounded like a street fight.

Engaging a professional genealogist was the best decision I could have made. Therese took me back two more generations than I had been before. The Burkhard name is a very old name in the region and is spelled alternatively as Burkhardt, Burckhard, Burkard, and so on, but the paper trail gets more difficult the further we go back.

After my return from Switzerland, I was able to persuade my first cousin, John Burgett, to take a DNA test through FT-DNA. The test identified his Y-dna as belonging to group E-M35 and within it, branch E-V13. According to the administrator of the E-M35 “project,” this branch originated about 4000-4500 years ago near the Balkans-Greece. From the people we met in the little Swiss towns, and the repetition of the surnames, it seems clear that most people there are somehow related to each other. We saw the name “Burkhad” and “Burkhardt” on vehicles of a few businesses, and one we saw was a plumbing contractor in Hutwil, one of the towns I had visited in 1995. After arriving in the United States, Samuel and Barbara served as indentured servants for a few years, then moved to Canandaigua, New York,. Samuel Burget died in New York, but his wife (Anna) Barbara died in 1862 in Marshall, Michigan.

If anyone wants more detail on the genealogy of the Burgetts, please contact me by email, Birdbert-ly@yahoo.com.



Picture of the Oberbipp Church

Obituary of George Burgett of Athens, Michigan



Oberbipp Church



Diane Brush with the Baptismal Font that was used in 1791 for Anna Barbara's baptism.



The Neiderbipp Church where Anna Barbara Kanzig and Samuel Burkhard were married in 1815.

Spotlight on Libraries

Athens Community Library 106 E Burr Oak Rd., Athens, MI 49011 269 729-4479 <http://athensarea.org/library.html> The library has a collection of scrapbooks from 1900 to Present. These scrapbooks contain obituaries, community news, local school news, and local sports news. Please contact the library before visiting and they will have the scrapbooks you are interested ready for your visit.

Homer Public Library 141 W. Main St., Homer, MI 49245 517 568-4021 <http://www.homerpl.michlibrary.org/> The library has a local history room that contains Homer newspapers from 1957 in bound copies and on microfilm from 1900's, Homer yearbooks digitized and hard copy, Louise Parker Snyder collection of military men and women with ties to Homer including civil war, WWI and WWII, Homer Index, Homer City Directories, Homer Families, Cemetery Records, Wayne Crandall Collection, Homer Railroads, Homer Churches, Homer Postcards, Military Scrapbooks, Homer Yearbooks, Phair Undertaker Records.

Tekonsha Township Library 230 S Church St, Tekonsha, MI 49092 517 767-4769 <http://www.tekonlib.michlibrary.org/> The library has a very small collection for family historians. They have cemetery records.

Tuesday and Wednesday, November 14-15: Western Michigan Genealogical Society's Bus Trip to Allen County Public Library, Fort Wayne, Indiana. Cost includes overnight accommodations at Econo Lodge, Fort Wayne. Pick up in Grand Rapids, Lake Odessa, Charlotte and Marshall. For more information and registration go to https://www.wmgs.org/pdf/BusTrip_2017-Tu-We-Nov14-15-form.pdf

Monday, November 20 7PM: Where the Heck is it Anyway? Kalamazoo Valley Genealogical Society hosts professional genealogist, Diane Osland, on organizing your papers and records at Portage District Library, Portage, MI.

Tuesday, December 5 6:30PM: Getting Organized. Jackson County Genealogical Society will host Carolyn Palmer at their regular meeting.

Wednesday-Saturday, May 2-5, 2018: Paths to Your Past, National Genealogical Society 2018 Family History Conference, Grand Rapids, MI. Save the date for the first national conference in our home state of Michigan. Registration will begin December 1, 2017. For more information, go to <http://conference.ngsgenealogy.org/>

Membership Reminder

Included in this newsletter is a 2017-18 membership form. Memberships are due in September and good until the following August 31. If you paid at the May or June meeting or over the summer, your payment was applied to this year's membership. Membership prices are the same as last year: \$15 for single membership or \$20 for family membership with emailed newsletter; \$18 for single membership or \$23 for family membership and postal mailed newsletter. A family membership is good for all family members at the same address. Membership dues pay for programs and speakers, including handouts; newsletter publication and mailing; hospitality; dues to state and national organizations; government fees; and post office box rental.

Discover your roots. Link to the past.

Join Us

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Calhoun County Genealogical Society

Name _____ ☐ New Membership ☐ Renew Membership

Phone _____ Surnames you are researching (limit 8)

Address _____

City, State, ZIP _____

Email address _____ Feel free to attach a five-generation ancestor chart and/or a query to be published in *Generations*.

☐ Membership card requested
(please enclose SASE)

☐ Check if you would like to receive *Generations* Newsletter
by e-mail in Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) format instead of postal mail

Membership Options (Select One)

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Please make your check payable to Calhoun County Genealogical Society or CCGS.

Send to Membership Chair, Calhoun County Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 879, Marshall, MI 49068-0879

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Revised August 2016

Generations

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Calhoun County Genealogical Society *Calendar of Events*

CCGS monthly meetings are typically held the fourth Tuesday of each month except July, August and December, and are free and open to the public. Unless noted, meetings are held at 7 p.m. at LDS Marshall Branch Church at 16036 Old US-27 N, Marshall MI

Have ideas for future programs? Please contact President Brenda Leyndyke, whose contact information is on page 2.

February 27 -Finding Your Genealogy with DNA Part 2.

March 27 –Using Your Family History Center at the Battle Creek Family History Center.

April 24 –Railroad Jobs

May 23 –Tour New Displays at Fort Custer Historical Museum

June 26 –Using the D.A.R. in your Research.