

GLATTFELDER ASSOCIATION AND ITS SWISS TIES
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This is a brief account of the Casper Glattfelder Association of America and the ties between the family in this country and their relatives in Switzerland.

The principal impetus for the organization of the association in 1906 came from the genealogical work of Dr. Noah M. Glatfelter (1837-1911), a St. Louis, Missouri, physician who published a history of the family in 1901.

Born on a farm in York County, Pennsylvania, 1837, Noah was the great-great grandson of Casper Glattfelder (1709-1775), the immigrant ancestor of the family in America, who had arrived in Philadelphia from Glattfelden, Canton Zurich, Switzerland in the summer of 1743. A few years later he settled with family and friends in Codorus and Shrewsbury townships in southern York County, where he spent the rest of his life.

In 1859 Jonathan Glatfelter (1803-1883) dictated to his son Noah, who was by this time a country schoolteacher, what the latter called "a family tree," listing the members of the first four generations of the family and "placing every then known name in proper relation." Jonathan Glatfelter was in a good position to perform this task, since he knew personally five of Casper's six sons. While there were omissions in what he remembered and told his son, the record which was created in the spring of 1859 was to be of extreme value in later years.

In the pursuit of further formal education, Noah Glatfelter soon gave up his position as a schoolteacher and attended several educational institutions. During the Civil War, he served in the Union army, attended the medical school of the University of Pennsylvania, received his M.D. degree in 1864, and was finally discharged from the military service in 1867. In that year he began the successful practice of medicine in St. Louis.

Eventually Dr. Noah reached the conclusion that, since the family tree which he possessed was "the only key wherewith to unlock the past," its very continuing existence imposed upon him "an incumbent responsibility which would not be shaken off." Consequently, at some point in the 1890s he sought and obtained the support of a number of kinsmen in York County and began the laborious task of compiling a family history. In 1901 a St. Louis firm published the Record of Casper Glattfelder of Glattfelden, Canton Zurich Switzerland, Immigrant, 1743, and of his Descendants, in part, comprising 861 families. In his preface, he named five persons who deserved "special mention" for their generous help: Granville Glatfelter (1836-1913), James A. Glatfelter (1873-1950), Lewis K. Glatfelter (1843-1916), Luther S. Glatfelter (1860-1951), and Adam Stump (1854-1922).

Nine years later Dr. Noah published a supplement, which added 545 families to the record. He now included descendants of Casper's oldest son, Solomon, who had left York County before the American Revolution and eventually located in what is now Somerset County, Pennsylvania. In the supplement, Noah carefully explained that "it is due the record of my original family tree, made 1859, to say that my father stated Casper had six sons, but he did not know what became of one of them, nor his name.

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Soon after the publication of the first family history in 1901, several of the men who had helped actively in gathering information for it decided that the interest which clearly had been generated among the several hundred families who had been approached during its preparation warranted the holding of a family reunion. Among its leading promoters were Samuel F. Glatfelter (1858-1927), a York building contractor; Rev. Dr. Adam Stump, a prominent Lutheran pastor; and Harry I. Glatfelter (1850-1943), a Seven Valleys businessman and banker. "As the tribe numbers over two thousand," a local newspaper predicted, "a large concourse is expected."

The first reunion was held on September 8, 1906, in a woods not far from the original family homestead. The response was so favorable that the promoters decided to organize the Casper Glatfelter Association of America on this day and to announce their intention to hold reunions thereafter annually.

In preparation for purchasing land of their own on which to meet, on October 3, 1910, the officers secured from the Court of Common Pleas of York County a charter for a not-for-profit corporation, to be governed by a board of seventeen directors. On January 21, 1913, the corporation purchased from Martin Glatfelter, one of the first seventeen directors, a tract of 2 acres, 153 perches in Springfield Township, York County, across the Codorus Creek from and overlooking the original homestead. At the eighth reunion, on August 9, 1913, Adam Stump formally dedicated the grounds and the recently completed Swiss-type pavilion "to the cause of education, sociability, history, and religion." Samuel F. Glatfelter had designed the pavilion, which measured some 40 by 60 feet in size. An open refreshment stand was built in 1914. In the early 1920s, people began calling the park Heimwald, or home woods.

It is evident that the founders of the Glatfelter Association and its annual reunion had chosen a decidedly favorable time in the history of the family and of the country to launch their enterprise. Members and friends of the family responded in large numbers. If contemporary newspaper accounts are to be believed, there were often a thousand or more people, many of whom were not actually Glatfelders, who attended the reunion in the afternoon and the picnic which went with it in the evening. A York newspaper ran the following bold headline in August 1919: "2,500 Glatfelders Present at Reunion."

Between 1910 and 1967 reunion and picnic were held on the second Saturday in August. Until automobiles came into general use, most people reached Heimwald either by horse-drawn vehicles or by railroad. A main north-south line of the Pennsylvania Railroad ran along the Codorus Creek between Heimwald Park and the old homestead. For many years there was a station at Glatfelters. Reunion-goers coming from points north (Harrisburg or York) or south (Baltimore) could leave the train at this station and walk the short distance to the park.

Some of the things long associated with the reunions made an appearance early in their history. Rev. Dr. Stump composed the words for the reunion hymn, first used in 1906 and still sung today. Ribbons or badges made their appearance in 1907. The first ones were gold and black; a different color combination (often red and white) is still used each year. Printed programs date from 1908. At the suggestion of Adam Stump, a memorial service for members of the family who died during the preceding year was introduced, the first one being held in 1909. In 1911 the association adopted a family emblem which Samuel Glatfelter had designed. It featured American and Swiss flags, the years 1743 and 1906, keystone representing Pennsylvania, an American eagle, and six edelweiss, one for each of Casper's sons. A revised emblem was adopted in 1987.

Well into the 1930s the reunion and picnic still attracted hundreds of people. The highlight of the 1939 reunion was the appearance of Dr. and Mrs. Albert Glattfelder. After about a decade living and working in Japan, where Albert was a chemist, the couple were returning to their home in Switzerland. Having learned of the existence of the Glattfelder Association through a letter which its then president had written in January 1939 to anyone named Glattfelder in Glattfelden, Switzerland, they decided to travel home by way of the United States and accept the invitation to attend a reunion. They were the first Swiss to do so. Copies of the correspondence which preceded and followed this visit are preserved in the association archives.

The demands upon all segments of America's population during World War II prompted the directors not to hold reunions during the years 1942-1945, although members who could were invited to come to the park on the customary reunion day for informal activities. When the war ended and reunions were resumed in 1946, the directors decided to number them as though there had been no interruption. Thus it was the ninetieth reunion which was held on July 30, 1995.

The end of World War II coincided with (and to a debatable extent was responsible for) a number of significant changes in American values and how people chose to spend their time as a result. It soon became obvious that the family reunions which had long flourished in York County and elsewhere, and of which the Glattfelder reunion was only one example, no longer had the attraction of former years. Several large York County family reunions of many years standing simply folded. Attendance at the Glattfelder annual gathering declined

to the point at which at least some of the directors were about ready to consider whether they should not do likewise. Before taking such a step, and in the hope of rekindling interest, in 1968 they moved the reunion to the last Sunday in July and in 1975 began the day's events with a covered dish meal. The evening picnic had been abandoned in 1959.

For whatever reason or reasons, reunion attendance did begin increasing in the later 1970s and 1980s. It is now not unusual to have persons present from fifteen to twenty of the fifty states. When in 1993 the association observed the 250th anniversary of the Glattfelder family in America with a three-day series of events, total attendance was well over five hundred persons. Ambassador of Switzerland Carlo S. F. Jagmetti and his wife were present and participated in the Sunday reunion program. As representatives of the community of Glattfelden, Conrad Ulrich and Ernst Baumann attended all of the three-day activities and brought formal greetings.

The income from a small endowment fund and generous contributions to a beautification fund have made it possible for the association to keep in regular touch with persons on a mailing list with about 900 names and to maintain Heimwald Park in what is probably its most attractive appearance ever.

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Among the founders of the association in 1906, Samuel Glattfelter was clearly the one most determined to establish contact with persons in or near Glattfelden who might be able to give him reliable information about Casper and his family before they came to America. In letters written in 1901 and 1906, first the parish pastor (Rev. Edwin Jaggli) and then a Zurich schoolteacher (Emil Glattfelder) reported on what they had found in marriage, baptismal, and death records, beginning in 1570. The original letters which these men wrote to America are still in the archives of the association.

In the summer of 1910 Samuel Glattfelter visited Glattfelden, taking with him mementos of the family as well as of York County and returning with photographs and stories of the ancestral village. In a letter which he wrote home to Adam Stump, Samuel compared the topography of Glattfelden and the family homestead along the Codorus Creek. "It looks to me," he noted, "as if Casper Glattfelder selected the place he did because it looked like the home he left in Switzerland." He was so impressed with what he was learning, he told Stump, that he "climbed up into the tower" of the old church "and caressed the old bell that rings the time of day and calls these dear people to worship."

Except for the visit of Dr. and Mrs. Albert Glattfelder in 1939, there was little further direct contact between the families in Switzerland and America until long after the end of World War II. In 1989 the association joined a travel agency in sponsoring the first of a number of fall tours to Switzerland and surrounding

countries, all of which included some time spent in Glattfelden. In addition, both before and after, many family members visited the old home country on their own.

In 1979 and again in 1985 Dr. Hans Glattfelder, attorney and retired chief justice of the Supreme Court of the Canton of Zurich (this is intended to describe the Pennsylvania equivalency), spent some time visiting with the family in America and attended the reunion. On the second occasion he brought with him and presented to the association two of the letters which Samuel Glatfelter had written in 1906 and 1907 to Emil Glattfelder, who was his father. At the same time, the historian of the association was able to show him the original of the letter which his father had written to Samuel in May 1906. Dr. Han's friendly and unassuming ways endeared him to everyone he met on both of his trips. It was only ill health which prevented him from returning to Pennsylvania in 1993. Conrad Ulrich, the schoolteacher who was one of the two representatives from Glattfelden in 1993, had attended the reunion five years earlier.

Casper Glattfelder and his sons all knew the correct German-Swiss spelling of their family name, but neither used it consistently in America. In signing his will, for example, Casper wrote Glatfelter. Public officials who entered the name into township or county records spelled it in a great variety of ways, as it sounded to them, and in all probability without stopping to ask for the proper way. While in central Pennsylvania Glatfelter and Gladfelter eventually became the usual spellings, in southwestern Pennsylvania it was Glotfelty, in North Carolina and neighboring states Clodfelter, and in places in the west Clotfelter.

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For many years most of the descendants of Casper Glattfelder in America were either farmers or pursued occupations closely associated with an agrarian society. Economically they were on a par with many neighboring families, including those into which their male and female members married. They did their duty filling township offices to which they were appointed or elected, but rarely aspired to political office on the county or state level. Just as Casper and his family had decided to move on from Glattfelden in 1743, many of their descendants, beginning with eldest son Solomon, decided to contribute to the expansion of the United States by moving west from the York County base. Today there are probably Glattfelder descendants in every state in the Union.

By the end of the nineteenth century many members of the family had left the farm and become schoolteachers, merchants, lawyers, doctors, pastors, editors, and businessmen.

In 1864 Philip H. Glatfelter (1837-1907) began operating a paper mill at what is now Spring Grove, York County. He entered the industry at a crucial time in its development, when the transition from textile fibers to wood pulp as the chief raw

material was occurring. This greatly reduced the price and increased the demand for paper and paper products. In addition to being highly successful in that industry, Philip acquired interests in several other major York County businesses. His successors as president of the paper company were son William L. (1865-1930), grandson Philip H. II (1889-1971), and great grandson Philip H. III (1916). Only in 1980 did the first non-Glatfelter become president and chief executive officer of the company. Glatfelter Hall on the campus of Gettysburg College was named in recognition of the services which the founder of the paper company had rendered to that institution.

Noah M. Glatfelter (1837-1911), author of the family history, was not only a well-known St. Louis physician, but also a writer on scientific subjects. His daughter, Lisbeth Gladfelter Fish (1869-1955), was for more than a third of a century a major contributor to the cultural life of Denver, Colorado. In all probability she was the first descendant of Casper to visit Glatfelden, Switzerland, arriving there a short time before Samuel Glatfelter.

Samuel F. Glatfelter (1858-1927), already identified as one of the prime movers in the reunion, was a York building contractor and banker. He served one term (1923-1925) in the United States House of Representatives.

George A. Goodling (1896-1982) was a Loganville fruit grower whose wife and grandmother were both Glatfelters. Goodling served seven terms in the lower house of the Pennsylvania Legislature (1943-1954, 1957-1958) and six in the United States House of Representatives (1961-1965, 1967-1975). His son, William F. Goodling (1927), succeeded his father as a member of Congress in 1975 and is serving in that capacity at the time of this writing. In January 1995 he became chairman of the important House Economic and Educational Opportunities Committee.

Millard E. Gladfelter (1900-1995) began a career with Temple University in Philadelphia in 1930 which culminated in his service as its president from 1959 to 1967. Gladfelter Hall on the Temple campus was named in his honor, in recognition of his successful efforts to transform Temple into a major regional, if not national, university. During the course of a long career, he served with distinction the Lutheran church, many institutions and agencies of higher education, and the larger Philadelphia community. Millard was a director of the Casper Glatfelter Association of America from 1922 until his death. His keen interest in its work continued to the last days of his life.

George M. Leader (1918), both of whose maternal great-grandparents were Glatfelters (they were only distantly related before their marriage) was governor of Pennsylvania from 1955 to 1959. He was one of the youngest persons thus far to serve in that capacity. After completing his term (at that time Pennsylvania governors could not succeed themselves), he began devoting himself to ways in which to provide quality long-term health care for the elderly. One of the

companies lie founded established nursing and rehabilitation centers; a second set up retirement communities. In recent years he has helped to create educational opportunities for youth in the inner city of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

The foregoing list is far from exhaustive. Suffice it to say that among the present directors of the Casper Glattfelder Association of America, with a total of more than 134 years of service, are a retired banker and recognized community leader of Columbia, Pennsylvania; a prominent York County businessman and banker; the president of a regionally prominent insurance agency and active York community leader; a United Church of Christ pastor and retired vice president for development at Lancaster Theological Seminary; the postmaster of Gettysburg; and a former dean and professor of history at Gettysburg College and former president of the Pennsylvania Historical Association.