

Chapter 3

The Homelands: Stäfa, Zurich, Switzerland and Aitersteinerling, Germany

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It is known that the Pinter family of Bureau County, Illinois, has its roots in the towns of (for Heinrich) Stäfa, Canton of Zurich, country of Switzerland, and (for Elizabeth) Aitersteinerling, Forstinning, Ebersberg, Upper Bavaria, Germany. The evidence for Heinrich is as follows:

1. Henry and Jacob state in the 1880 and 1900 census interviews that their father was born in Switzerland.
2. The gravestone of Heinrich's wife Elizabeth Hohenbrunner states that she was the "wife of Heinrich Puentner".
3. A person named Heinrich Pünter was found in the records of the Evangelisch Reformierte Kirche Stäfa (translation: Reformed Evangelical Church of Stäfa) and was christened or born in Stäfa on 17 August 1810. This is the same date as the recorded birth date of Heinrich Pinter of Bureau County.
4. The LDS International Genealogical Index Web site and church microfilmed records list dozens of Pünters in the village of Stäfa between the mid 1500's and today.
5. Henry's certificate of baptism indicates his father is from Stäfa.

The evidence for Elisabeth is as follows:

1. Elizabeth's death record in the Bureau County Church on the Hill shows her birth town as Aitersteinerling, Bavaria.
2. Elizabeth and her family were found in Catholic church records in Bavaria.
3. Henry's certificate of baptism indicates his mother is from Aitersteinerling.

The following is a brief introduction of these two homelands:

Stäfa, Zurich, Switzerland

Stäfa is a small town on the northeast shores of Lake Zurich. The pictures below show it is situated on gently sloping hills quite close to the lake and thus not very high above sea level... certainly not in the high snow-covered Alps as we are accustomed to thinking of when we think of Switzerland. The locals speak a variation of German called *Stäfe*.

There is no way right now to know much about Stäfa in the late 1700s and early 1800s, but here are some current statistics:

Canton	Zurich
District	Meilen
Population in 2007	13,452
Area:	8.59 Square KM (3.3 sq miles)
Elevation	408 M (approx 1339 feet)

Note that Switzerland is divided into regions that are called Cantons. A Canton would be roughly equivalent to a state in the United States.

Here is an English-language excerpt from the Stäfa web site (www.staefa.ch):

(Note: Google searches of such terms as Stäfa Switzerland or uberwachte Stäfa may result in other translatable pages about Stäfa).

Welcome to the English-language Homepage of the Municipality of Stäfa.

Stäfa is a village with a population of 14'000 located on Lake Zurich, 20 kilometers or about 30 minutes by car or by train to the east of Zurich.

The history of Stäfa can be traced as far back as the 10th century, when it was closely allied with the Monastery of Einsiedeln.

In the late 18th century, Stäfa was the focal point of a movement demanding equal rights for the country people as those enjoyed by the citizens of Zurich. The demands, known as the "Stäfner Memorial", were rejected by the Government, which in turn sent troops to Stäfa and occupied the village for two months in the summer of 1795. A monument (the "Patriot") in memory of the leaders of the uprising (Heinrich Neeracher, Hans Kaspar Pfenninger and Johann Jakob Bodmer) is situated near the boat harbor.

In September and October of 1797, Johann Wolfgang Goethe, the eminent German writer, on his second voyage to Italy, visited Stäfa and stayed with his friend Heinrich Meyer. "Kunschtmeyer", as he became known, joined Goethe in Weimar and became a renowned man of letters in his own right.

Today, Stäfa is a prosperous community with a diversified economy. Activities range from the truly High-Tech, the "Hearing-Aid" company PHONAK (now Sonova) being one of the world leaders in its domain, to the production of wine (RieslingxSylvaner[w], Räuschling[w] and Clevner[r]). With a privileged climate, Stäfa is also the largest wine-growing area in the canton of Zurich.

Below are some commercial photos of modern day Stäfa:



These two images are modern-day maps of the Lake Zurich region:



Other Stäfa Notes:

“**Wonder of Stäfa hybrid Aster** (*A. xfrikartii*) is said by many to be one of the 10 best perennials. Named for the town of Stäfa, Switzerland, where Carl Frikart created the hybrid, the soft, lavender-blue flowers blend well with most other flower colors”.

A Very Brief History of Switzerland and Zurich

The following was taken from the web site:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Switzerland>

Early history

Switzerland is a federation of relatively autonomous cantons, some of which have a history of confederacy that goes back more than 700 years, arguably putting them among the world's oldest surviving republics. Historically, in 1291, representatives of the three forest cantons of Uri, Schwyz, and Unterwalden signed the Federal Charter. The charter united the involved parties in the struggle against the rule by the Habsburgs, the family then holding the Duchy of Austria in the Holy Roman Empire. At the Battle of Morgarten on November 15, 1315, the Swiss defeated the Habsburg army and secured existence of the Swiss Confederation within the Holy Roman Empire.

By 1353, the three original cantons had been joined by the cantons of Glarus and Zug and the city states of Lucerne, Zürich and Berne, forming the "Old Federation" of eight states that persisted during much of the 15th century (although Zürich was expelled from the confederation during the 1440s due to a territorial conflict) and led to a significant increase of power and wealth of the federation, in particular due to the victories over Charles the Bold of Burgundy during the 1470s, and the success of the Swiss mercenaries. The traditional listing order of the cantons of Switzerland reflects this state, listing the eight "Old Cantons" first, with the city states preceding the founding cantons, followed by cantons that joined the federation after 1481, in historical order. The Swiss victory in the Swabian War against the Swabian League of emperor Maximilian I in 1499 amounted to *de facto* independence from the Holy Roman Empire.

In 1506, Pope Julius II engaged the Swiss Guard that continues to serve the Vatican to the present day. The expansion of the federation, and the reputation of invincibility acquired during the earlier wars, suffered a first setback in 1515 with the Swiss defeat in the Battle of Marignano. The success of Zwingli's Reformation in some cantons led to inter-cantonal wars in 1529 and 1531 (*Kappeler Kriege*). The conflict between Catholic and Protestant cantons persisted, erupting in further violence at the battles of Villmergen in 1656 and 1712. Under the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, European

countries recognized Switzerland's independence from the Holy Roman Empire and its neutrality (*ancien régime*).

French invasion of 1798

In 1798, the armies of the French Revolution conquered Switzerland and imposed a new unified constitution. This centralized the government of the country and effectively abolished the cantons. The new regime was known as the Helvetic Republic and was highly unpopular. It had been imposed by a foreign invading army, had destroyed centuries of tradition, including the right to worship, and had made Switzerland nothing more than a French satellite state. Uprisings were common and only the presence of French troops kept them from succeeding. The brutal French suppression of the Nidwalden revolt in September was especially infamous.

When war broke out between France and other countries Switzerland found itself being invaded by other outside forces from Austria and Russia. The Swiss were divided mainly between "Republicans" who were in favour of a centralized government, and "Federalists" who wanted to restore autonomy to the cantons. In Paris in 1803, Napoleon Bonaparte organized a meeting of the leading Swiss politicians from both sides. The result was the Act of Mediation which largely restored Swiss autonomy and introduced a Confederation of 19 Cantons. From then on much of Swiss politics would be about balancing the cantons' tradition of self-rule with the need for a central government. The Congress of Vienna in 1815 fully re-established Swiss independence and the European powers agreed to permanently recognize the Swiss neutrality. At this time, the territory of Switzerland was increased for the last time, by the new cantons of Valais, Neuchâtel and Geneva.

Constitution of 1848

In 1845, a civil war broke out between the Catholic and the Protestant cantons (*Sonderbundskrieg*). The Catholics disliked the moves towards a more united Switzerland which the Radical Party, then in government, was promoting. The Catholics therefore came up with a 'special treaty' (*Sonderbund*) which the Radicals objected to. The war lasted for less than a month, causing fewer than 100 casualties. Apart from small riots, this was the most recent armed conflict on Swiss territory.

As a consequence of the civil war, Switzerland adopted the use of referenda and a federal constitution in 1849. This constitution provided for a central authority while leaving the cantons the right

to self-government on local issues. The constitution was amended extensively in 1872 in order to take into account the rise in population, the Industrial Revolution and the settling of a single currency. It also established federal responsibility for defense, trade, and legal matters.

In 1893, the constitution was revised with unusually strong elements of direct democracy, which remains unique even today. Since then, continued political, economic, and social improvement has characterized Swiss history.

Some Additional Web Sites for Switzerland

Note. For future reference in tracking the village of his birth, these web sites can be consulted:

www.geocities.com/heartland/9711/chpostal.txt

www.zumbo.ch/maps/ch19/stieler/1b.jpg

There is also: www.maps.ethz.ch/map_catalogue-switzerland-general.html, and

www.davidramsey.com/view.html

Aitersteinerling, Forstinning, Ebersberg, Upper Bavaria, Germany

Aitersteinerling is a small village located in the gently rolling farm-based countryside of Bavaria to the east of the town of Munich. In Elizabeth’s time, Aitersteinerling was a village of its own. Today, it is a so-called constituent community of the community of Forstinning located in the district of Ebersberg, in the region of Munich in Upper Bavaria, in the state of Bavaria, in Germany. Geographically, it is found in the Southeastern part of Germany relatively close to the Austrian border.

The way you refer to Aitersteinerling is:

Aitersteinerling/Forstinning, Ebersberg, Upper Bavaria, Bavaria. Germany.

Here are a few pictures of modern-day Forstinning/Aitersteinerling:



These maps show the location:

