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# THE SEARCH FOR HANS KÄGI'S LINEAGE

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A Compilation  
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[www.KagyHistory.org](http://www.KagyHistory.org)

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## INTRODUCTION: SEEKING HANS BEFORE PENNSYLVANIA

Franklin Keagy in his 1899 *History of the Kägi Relationship in America from 1715 to 1900* offered almost no information at all on Kägi families in Europe, perhaps because so little was known or remembered by his time. Details on the life and lineage of Hans Kägi prior to Pennsylvania have been scattered among several sources and must be located, consolidated, and annotated before the researcher can easily use them. That is why we consider our present work a “Compilation.” Many sources are needed to tell our story.

For many years we have appreciated the research of Richard Warren Davis of Provo, Utah into the European roots of hundreds of Swiss Mennonites who migrated to southeastern Pennsylvania during the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. In particular we have especially valued his 16-page file on our “Kägi/Kagey” family in Switzerland, Germany, and Pennsylvania which grew out of his three volumes, each titled *Emigrants, Refugees, and Prisoners*, published during the 1990s. Davis updated his information for the new Millennium and greatly expanded access online with his “MennoSearch” subscription website. (CAUTION: MENNOSEARCH WEBSITE HACKED DURING 2018-2019)

However, we had never been in a position ourselves to actually test and confirm (or disconfirm) his data on European names, dates, and relationships. To be sure, his was the most detailed and credible-looking information we had yet encountered about Hans Kägi’s life and genealogy before Pennsylvania. But, although we treated it as an invaluable source of hypotheses, we repeatedly found ourselves obliged to label his information “As Yet Uncorroborated.” We had only the single source of his website we could cite. Ideally, we would always prefer at least two independent sources for any information before accepting it and repeating it without caveat.

That situation has now changed. Several independent sources have recently emerged that permit us to check various parts of R. W. Davis’s information. Together they serve to verify many of Davis’s findings on our Kägi families in Europe, corroborating most of his details. The new sources, which became available during 2018-2019, include the following (listed in the order we encountered them):

- 1) Hans Kagy’s 1735 Patent (deed) from John Penn granting title to his 100-acre Original Plantation in Conestoga. That document, discovered by my colleague Dale Keagy, referred to Hans Kaiggey as “Late of the Palatinate of the Rhine in Germany,” confirming the family’s sojourn in Pfalz/Hesse after leaving Switzerland and before migrating to Pennsylvania. This was a major tenet of R. W. Davis.
- 2) The translation from German to English of *Progeny of Claus Kägi*, conducted exclusively for KagyHistory.org. This family history was originally written in 1981 by the modern Swiss genealogist Hans Kägi of Eschenbach, Canton St.

Gallen. The book mentions that one Felix Kägi, blacksmith, had migrated from Unter-Hittnau in Canton Zurich to Pfalz by 1680. R. W. Davis said that Felix was one of Hans Kägi's uncles and initiated the family's sojourn in Pfalz.

- 3) The online availability at the FamilySearch website of Julius Billeter's 155-page *Genealogy of... the Kagi Family of Bauma, Kt. Zurich, Switzerland, 1524-1898* (published 1900-1916). Astoundingly, this manuscript has been available in some form for over 100 years! It may have been overlooked by Kagi researchers because it was bundled with genealogies for two other surnames in the greater Winterthur area and was positioned third in the bundle. We ourselves had ignored it for years in its microfilm version because the phrase "Of Bauma" in its title led us to assume (wrongly) it was about some unrelated line. Only recently did we discover that our Kägi ancestral village of "Gublen," originally located in Bäretswil parish, was transferred to Bauma when that parish was created in 1651. Billeter corroborates Davis's Swiss data.
- 4) Shortly after we found Billeter's work available online, Mary Nelle Kaegi Douglas of Illinois sent us images of the original primary records from Swiss church-books that both Billeter and Davis had based their work on. These records in 17<sup>th</sup> Century German cursive had been preserved on microfilm at the Family History Library. Mary Nelle had accumulated copies during her own Kägi research and generously shared them with us. They permit skeptics to judge for themselves the extent to which Billeter's earlier findings corroborate Davis's more recent work. We present transcriptions in our Appendices.

Each source confirms key aspects of R. W. Davis's report on "Kägi/Kagey." None contradicts him. Of the four, Billeter's typewritten information is the most easily accessible. But the transcriptions in our Appendices of primary records from original Swiss ledgers serve to corroborate **both** Billeter and Davis, documenting the ancestry of several Kägi generations back in the Zurich Highlands.

**OBSERVATION: R. W. Davis remains the pivotal player in this quest. Only he interconnects the Swiss data with the Pfalz/Hesse data with the data from Colonial Pennsylvania. Southwest Germany was the crucial link in the Kägis' journey between Switzerland and the New World and only Davis covers it. Billeter limited himself to Switzerland and so never encountered Hans Kägi (b. c1692 in Pfalz). And Franklin Keagy, while picking up Hans' story in Pennsylvania, seemed unaware of the family's decades-long sojourn in Pfalz. Without Davis's work we would not be able to connect the dots that document the family's full transit from Switzerland to America.**

## I. ANCESTRAL HOMELAND: THE ZURICH HIGHLANDS

The ancestral homeland of the Kägi Family is in Switzerland's Canton Zurich, particularly the hilly region east of the city of Zurich known as the "Zürcher Oberland" or Zurich Highlands. This ancestral area includes Hinwil District, adjacent Pfäffikon District, and part of neighboring Winterthur District. The Tössstal (Töss River Valley) runs through it as does the Tössstalstrasse highway (Rt. 15) and the Tössstalbahn railway (Train Line S-26).



Note for additional map information about the Kägi homeland, [click here](#) or go to [www.kagyhistory.org](http://www.kagyhistory.org) and go to the "Resources and Maps" tab. Red dots on map denote historic "Industrial Trail" of early industrial sites, mainly involving textile production.

The best source for locating a family's geographical territory in Switzerland is the *Familiennamenbuch der Schweiz*. In the U.S. this was published on CD-ROM in 2003 by Picton Press as *Swiss Surnames*. This reference work identifies the parishes associated with each of thousands of surnames before 1800 and, in reverse fashion, the surnames

associated with each parish. (Why 1800 as a cutting-point? Clue: Armies from Revolutionary France overran Switzerland in 1798 and imposed new civil registration systems.)

It can't tell the researcher which parish was the earliest family seat or which was home to the most numerous members of a particular surname. But for many families it allows them to discover their ancestors' geographical locale or locales.

Of the two dozen parishes where Kägi families had "Heimat" rights (hereditary citizenship) prior to 1800 and still existed there when the work was compiled, eight are in Hinwil District, six are in Pfäffikon District, and two are in Winterthur District – all in the Upper Töss region of the Zurich Highlands. The remaining Kägi parishes are scattered among other neighboring districts within Canton Zurich (such as Uster) and immediately adjacent cantons (like St. Gallen to the east). One additional parish, Hittnau in Canton Zurich's Pfäffikon District, has been identified as a once-important Kägi residence but the family there apparently died out, emigrated out, or "daughtered out" before the lists were compiled.

Examples of the individual parishes with Kägi families -- in geographic order from south to north (up-river to down-river) – include: Wald, Fischenthal, Bäretswil, Hittnau, Bauma, Wila, Turbenthal, and Zell. On a map one's eye is drawn toward the center of this area, particularly to the cluster of four parishes including Fischenthal and Bäretswil (Hinwil District) and nearby Hittnau and Bauma (Pfäffikon District). They form a rough parallelogram a few miles on each side with two corners anchored on the river and two more in the hills to the west of the Töss. This is Kägi Country.

Of these, Fischenthal "May be regarded as the birthplace of the Kägis," according to a 1981 letter in the possession of author Kagay from modern Swiss genealogist Hans Kägi of Eschenbach, Canton St. Gallen. He is the author of a German-language Kägi genealogy and family history (posted in English translation elsewhere on this website as *Progeny of Claus Kägi*). The Swiss author adds that during the 16<sup>th</sup> Century Kägi families spread from Fischenthal throughout the Zurich Highlands.

## II. RICHARD WARREN DAVIS ON THE KÄGI FAMILY OF BÄRETSWIL PARISH

Perhaps our most valuable and detailed information has been provided by Richard Warren Davis (R. W. Davis or RWD) of Provo, Utah. He published his growing collection of genealogies (ultimately 700 surnames were indexed) during the 1990s in three volumes each titled *Emigrants, Refugees, and Prisoners* and has kept the information updated on his “MennoSearch” subscription website.

### *Some “Very Possible” Swiss Ancestors*

Davis identifies the “likely” father, grandparents, great-grandparents, and great-great-grandfather of Hans Kägi (b. c1692), our 1717 immigrant to Pennsylvania. We say “likely” because RWD was able to name Hans’ probable father as Jacob Kägi (b. 1659) only via a “process of elimination.” In his 2011 correspondence with author Kagay RWD concluded that “Hans Kagey as a son of Jacob is not proven, but it is an educated guess.”

RWD identifies Hans’ likely paternal grandfather as Hans Jacob Kägi, born 1625 in Bäretswil parish and died 1684 in Unter-Hittnau. He was a miller at Gublen village in Bäretswil parish when in 1649 he married Anna Spörri (b. 1633), daughter of Hans Jacob Spörri and Barbel Bachmann, also of Bäretswil parish. The younger Hans Jacob and Anna subsequently lived at Unter-Hittnau.

Hans’ great-grandfather RWD identifies as Peter Kägi (b. c1589) of Gublen village in Bäretswil parish who in 1624 married Anna Bosshart, daughter of Ulrich Bosshart of Wila. (Other documents refer to her as a widow.)

Hans’ great-great-grandfather was identified by RWD as one Jacob Kägi (b. c1555) of Gublen village in Bäretswil parish.

Bäretswil parish includes several associated villages. The particular village of all the above Kägis was called Gublen, located near the town of Bauma. Hittnau is a neighboring parish. Unter-Hittnau (Lower Hittnau) and Ober-Hittnau (Upper Hittnau) apparently refer to separate villages within that parish. “Unter-Hittnau” is the particular settlement associated with the Kägis.

### *RWD’s Exclusive: The Family’s Prolonged Sojourn in Pfalz*

During the persecution of the Anabaptist movement Switzerland eventually solved its “Mennonite Problem” by essentially exporting it. Many Mennonites fled down the Rhine into exile at locations such as Alsace and Pfalz (German Palatinate) formerly in Hesse.

R. W. Davis' information also covers the family's apparent 35-year residence in Pfalz after exile from Switzerland and before Hans' migration to Pennsylvania. That was surprising news, unmentioned by other sources, and only Davis covers it. We now concur that the family resided there for decades, but it required years before we found independent corroboration.

Davis continued in his 2011 correspondence with author Kagay to describe his reasoning: "Heinrich Kägi (1651-1710 of Unter-Hittnau in Canton Zurich, Switzerland)... had three brothers who went to the Pfalz -- Felix, Jacob, and Johannes. These are the only Kagis that I could find who left Switzerland for the Pfalz during this time period with a member of the family named Felix...(Davis accounts for the children of Felix and Johannes.) The third brother in the Pfalz was Jacob who lived in Westhofen (northwest of Worms)...It is very possible that this Jacob is the father of Mennonite Hans Kagy (b. c1692). Sometimes with Mennonite families you have to use the process of elimination and use circumstantial evidence to zero in on family relationships."

According to Davis in his file on "Kägi/Kagey" all four Swiss brothers had been born in Bäretswil parish (Hinwil District) and lived at Unter-Hittnau (Pfäffikon District) before the three younger ones moved to Pfalz. Swiss censuses conveniently enumerated former residents and identified their current location even if they were exiles living abroad. Davis reports that in the 1682 Swiss census of Unter-Hittnau Felix (b. 1656) was age 25 and living at Rohrbach; Jacob (b. 1659) was 23 and living at Westhofen; Johannes (b. 1664) was 18 and also living in Westhofen.

For years we had only RWD's report that the Kägi family even had a sojourn in Pfalz. Franklin Keagy never mentions it in his 1899 *History*. Nor did any other family source known to us ever mention it. But in recent years there have been developments that increased our confidence in this finding.

During 2018 as part of his research on "The Search for Hans Kägi's Land" (posted elsewhere on this website) my colleague Dale Kagay discovered the 1735 Patent (deed) from John Penn, Proprietor of Pennsylvania, granting Hans Kägi ownership of his 100-acre Conestoga Plantation.

To view a copy of the original patent, [click here](#), or go to [www.kagyhistory.org](http://www.kagyhistory.org) and then the "Documents" tab.

Significantly, that document referred to "Hans Kaiggey" as "Late of the Palatinate of the Rhine in Germany."

That language in the Patent constitutes the formerly missing evidence that locates and corroborates the Kägi family in Pfalz prior to migration to Pennsylvania. By itself, of course, it does not prove that all RWD's other details regarding Kägis in Pfalz are necessarily correct. But for many of us it served to reinforce the credibility of RWD's



overall report. The existence of the Kägi family's sojourn in the German Palatinate has now been independently confirmed.

Another source that also became available only during 2018 is the book by modern Swiss genealogist Hans Kägi of Eschenbach, St. Gallen, *Progeny of Claus Kägi* (1981). Translated from German to English in 2018 exclusively for KagyHistory.org, it confirms from Swiss records that one Felix Kägi, blacksmith, had migrated from Unter-Hittnau to Pfalz by 1680 and resided at Rohrbach. That, too, matches Davis and also serves to confirm the beginning of the family's migration to Pfalz.

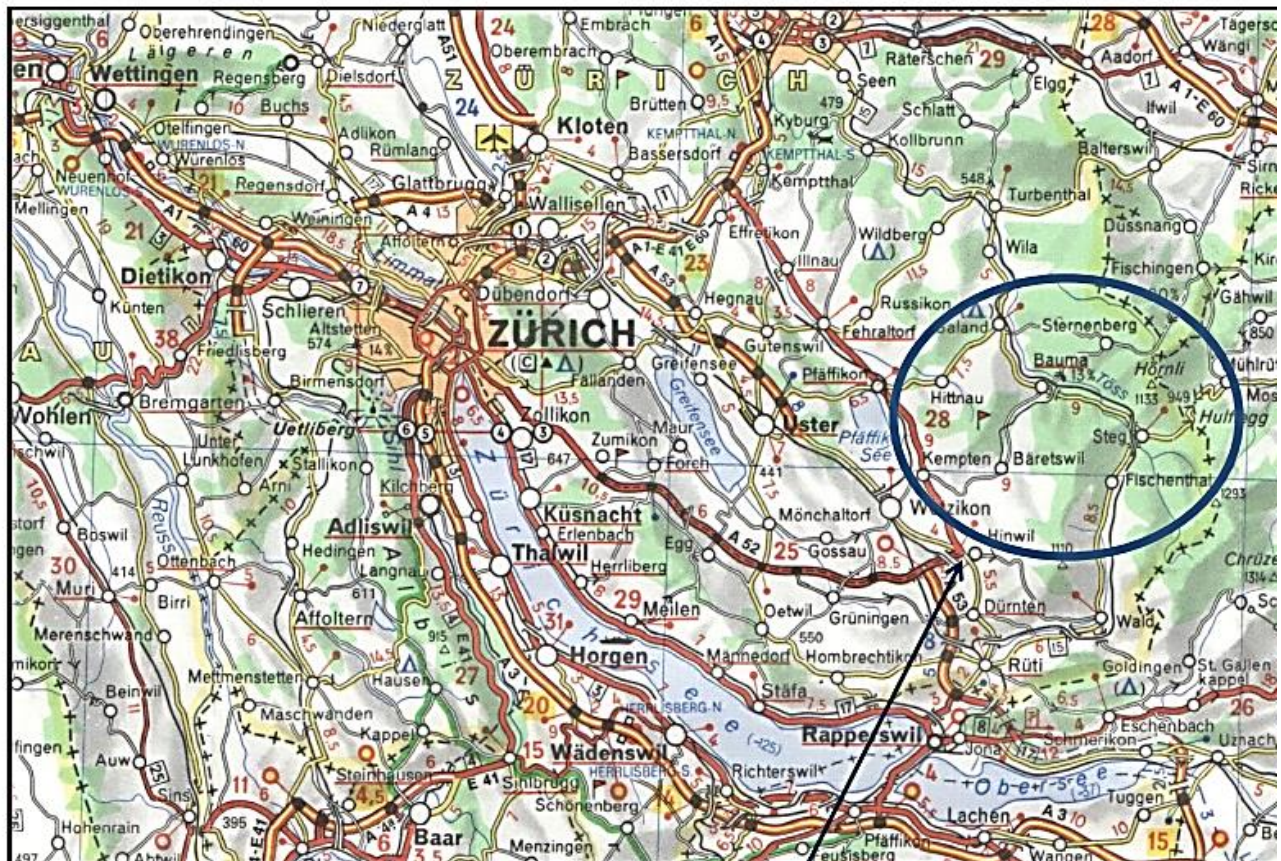
Finally, in 2019 Mary Nelle Kaegi Douglas of Illinois sent us images of Swiss census records showing that in 1682 the three Kägi brothers, former residents of Unter-Hittnau, were indeed enumerated as then living abroad in Pfalz. These were among the original primary records Davis and the modern Hans Kägi of Eschenbach would have examined.

Swiss Mennonites were welcome in Pfalz as German-speakers, Protestants, and hard-working farmers (not to mention as taxpayers!) after those lands had been nearly depopulated during the Thirty Years War. But they lived under restrictions: They could not inter-marry with or proselytize among the native population, their worship services were limited in size, and land ownership was frequently forbidden. They also had to pay an annual toleration or protection tax. Therefore, while not overtly persecuted as in Switzerland, the Mennonites faced a situation in Pfalz that was still far from ideal.

And records for Mennonites there are apparently scarce. For example, Davis was not able to identify the wife of Jacob Kägi (i.e. Hans' mother) nor any of Hans' possible siblings. However, the Family History Library has microfilms of the church records from Westhofen, so additional fact-finding there may still be possible without traveling to Europe. In Pfalz, however, unlike Switzerland, the Mennonites were aliens rather than citizens and so may have been treated differently by church authorities.

Westhofen, where Hans' presumed father and an uncle settled, is located in Alzey District northwest of Worms on the west side of the Rhine in the modern German state of Rhineland-Palatinate. That area is in wine country, the region known as Rheinhessen, and wine is the principal industry there. But we don't know whether the Kägis had any connection with grape growing, winemaking, cooperage or other aspects of the wine business. The nearest Mennonite church would probably have been in Ibersheim on the Rhine, but we don't know whether Kägis worshiped there. In those days Pfalz extended even to the east side of the Rhine to include much of Baden, but we don't know if the Kägis had any acquaintances on the east side (like the Kendig family, fellow exiles from Canton Zurich who lived there and would figure in Hans' future life in Pennsylvania). There are still many details to be learned about the family's life in Pfalz.

Another interesting but open question is whether Hans Kägi ever actually saw Switzerland or knew his Swiss relatives there. If his father and two of his uncles were already in Pfalz by the 1682 Swiss census, then Hans (born ten years later c1692) would likely have been born and reared in the Palatinate, not in Switzerland. We have read, however, that Swiss authorities permitted even exiles to return home for brief visits, such as to conduct family business or collect inheritances. So it may be that Hans was able to visit his homeland and get to know his relatives there, even if only for brief periods. (His grandfather Hans Jakob, however, died in 1684, years before Hans was born, according to RWD.) Hans would have been in his mid-20s when he eventually departed Pfalz for Pennsylvania.



### III. Julius Billeter on the Kägi Family of Bauma Parish

Julius Billeter (1869-1957) was a Swiss genealogist and Mormon researcher who collected data in Switzerland on behalf of many Americans with ancestral roots there. During the decades before microfilm, xerography, and digital scans he reportedly managed to transcribe in cursive – mainly from church books – information about some 3,000 family surnames. His handwritten notes have been microfilmed and made available by the Family History Library.

In addition to his cursive transcriptions of primary records from various parishes in Switzerland Julius Billeter also produced family genealogies for American clients. These typewritten documents consolidated and annotated information from his handwritten transcriptions regarding specific surnames.

The format he apparently favored, rather than a narrative style, was a listing of each nuclear family with ID numbers assigned to each member and with names of husband and wife, marriage year, children, birth dates, plus annotations of linkage between households (e.g., head of household #149 is son of #40) and the page on which each child's eventual marriage can be found.

There is such a Billeter genealogy for the "...*Kägi Family of Bauma.*" It fills the final 155 typewritten pages of a larger 203-page manuscript devoted to three surnames. Available for years in microfilm format via the Family History Library, it is now digitized and available online at the FamilySearch website.

The FamilySearch citation is: Julius Billeter, *Genealogy of the Wiesendanger family of Berg-Dägerlen, abt. 1570-1898, Reimann family of Richetwil-Oberwinterthur, 1620-1907, and Kägi family of Bauma, Kt. Zurich, Switzerland, 1524-1898.* (929.2494.W637) Apparently, the three works in the 203-page bundle were originally produced during the years 1900-1916.

Although we had been aware of this title for years, we never accessed it until 2019 because the label "Of Bauma" made it seem a lower priority item probably unrelated to our direct line. But in May of 2019 we made a startling discovery that caused us to rethink all things Bauma. Our ancestral village of Gublen, originally located in Bäretswil parish, was shifted to Bauma parish when the latter was created in 1651 out of Bäretswil and Pfäffikon. Because our line was about to exit Switzerland for Pfalz, I never focused on this change. But by the time Billeter conducted his research Gublen would have been part of Bauma parish for roughly 250 years! More recently we have further determined that Gublen was located very near the town of Bauma and today has been absorbed into that town's eastern side.

Below we have transcribed Billeter's typewritten information regarding four generations of presumed ancestors for Hans Kägi the 1717 immigrant to Pennsylvania. According to R. W. Davis, they would be the families of Hans' paternal grandfather Hans Jacob Kägi (Billeter's #149) and Hans' paternal great-grandfather Peter Kägi (Billeter's #40). Two earlier generations (Billeter's #5 and #1) are also shown but are less complete.

We first transcribe the information for the grandfather. We have also seen Billeter's handwritten notes for this same family. Having available both cursive and typewritten versions clarifies his occasionally illegible handwriting as well as his idiosyncratic abbreviations for common terms and given names. Page numbers (**bold**) refer to pages 48-203 of the online manuscript.

<b>Table 1 – Family of Hans Kagi's Paternal Grandfather</b>			
No.	Name	Born or Baptized	Married
Parents:			
149	Hans Jakob Kagi (1) (Son of No. 40 page <b>54</b> )	2 Jan. 1625	1649
212	Anna Sporri		1649
Children:			
213	Barbara	3 Sept. 1649	
214	Heinrich	28 Sept. 1651	
215	Anna	1? Jan. 1654	
216	Felix	7 Sept. 1656	
217	Jakob	2 Jan. 1659	
218	Johannes	27 Mar. 1664	
219	Elsbeth	14 April 1667	
220	Barbara	24 Oct. 1669	
(1) Notation for Hans Jakob Kagi occupation as "Mullerknecht"			
SOURCE: Julius Billeter, "Genealogy of the Wiesendanger family of Berg-Dägerlen, abt. 1570-1898, Reimann family of Richetwil-Oberwinterthur, 1620-1907, and Kagi family of Bauma, Kt. Zurich, Switzerland, 1524-1898." Digital images of typewritten pages at FamilySearch.org website, page 57 of 203.			

**OBSERVATION:** Hans Jacob Kägi is described as a "Müllerknecht" by occupation which translates literally as Miller Servant, rendered into English here as Millhand. Being a Millhand might require or develop skills sufficient to merit being recorded in the church-book, but he was probably a worker in someone else's mill. Sons Felix, Jacob, and Johannes were the three brothers who migrated to Pfalz around 1680. R. W. Davis identifies the middle son Jacob as the "likely" father of the Hans Kägi who went to Pennsylvania in 1717. Billeter himself confined his work to Switzerland so would have been unaware of Hans in Pfalz.

<b>Table 2 – Family of Hans Kagi’s Paternal Great-Grandfather</b>			
No.	Name	Born or Baptized	Married
Parents:			
40	Peter Kagi (Son of No. 5 page <b>50</b> )	About 1597	1624
147	Anna Bosshard		1624
Children:			
148	Jorg	17 Sept. 1620 (sic)	
149	Hans Jakob	2 Jan. 1625	See page <b>57</b>
150	Margaretha	19 March 1626	
151	Hans	30 Dec. 1627	See page <b>59</b>
152	Rudolf	15 Feb. 1629	See page <b>58</b>
153	Jorg	1? Jan. 1632	See Page <b>61</b>
SOURCE: Julius Billeter, “Genealogy of the Wiesendanger family of Berg-Dägerlen, abt. 1570-1898, Reimann family of Richetwil-Oberwinterthur, 1620-1907, and Kagi family of Bauma, Kt. Zurich, Switzerland, 1524-1898.” Digital images of typewritten pages at FamilySearch.org website, page 54 of 203.			

<b>Table 3 – Family of Hans Kagi’s Great-Great Grandfather</b>			
No	Name	Born or Baptized	Married
Parents:			
5	Jakob Kagi (Son of No.1 page <b>48</b> )	About 1562 (In Bauma)	
35	Mrs. Jacob Kagi	About 1564	
Children:			
36	Jakob	about 1589	See page <b>53</b>
37	Elsbeth	31 Jan. 1591	1612 Hans Brandenberger
38	Anna	9 Dec. 1593	
39	Hans	9 June 1595	See page <b>53</b>
40	Peter	about 1597	See page <b>54</b>
41	Marti	4 Mar. 1599	See page <b>56</b>
42	Anna	22 Mar. 1601	
SOURCE: Julius Billeter, “Genealogy of the Wiesendanger family of Berg-Dägerlen, abt. 1570-1898, Reimann family of Richetwil-Oberwinterthur, 1620-1907, and Kagi family of Bauma, Kt. Zurich, Switzerland, 1524-1898.” Digital images of typewritten pages at FamilySearch.org website, page 50 of 203.			

<b>Table 4 – Family of Hans Kagi’s Great-Great-Great Grandfather</b>			
<b>No</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Born or Baptized</b>	<b>Married</b>
Parents:			
1	Mr. Kagi	about 1524 (Bauma)	
2	Mrs. Kagi	about 1520 (sic)	
Children:			
3	Hans	<b>about 1551</b>	<b>See page 49</b>
4	Ulrich	<b>about 1556</b>	<b>See page 49</b>
5	Jakob	<b>about 1562</b>	<b>See page 50</b>
6	Sebastian	<b>about 1565</b>	<b>See page 50</b>
SOURCE: Julius Billeter, “Genealogy of the Wiesendanger family of Berg-Dägerlen, abt. 1570-1898, Reimann family of Richetwil-Oberwinterthur, 1620-1907, and Kagi family of Bauma, Kt. Zurich, Switzerland, 1524-1898.” Digital images of typewritten pages at FamilySearch.org website, page 48 of 203.			

**OBSERVATION:** The relationship numbering was not typewritten but entered by hand, perhaps following lengthy analysis, presumably by Billeter himself. Billeter’s methods for ascertaining family relationships by which he linked households (e.g., #149 is son of #40; this child married on page 50) are occasionally obscure and sometimes disputed. Presumably, the method involved matching given names and birth years (when stated) but likely also utilized any spouses, witnesses, godparents, villages or other facts that were recorded. In many cases those identifiers would be sufficient to insure a correct match. But not always. Therefore, it is reassuring to know that for #5 Jakob (b. c1562) through #40 Peter (b. c1597) and #149 Hans Jakob (b. 1625) to #217 Jacob (b. 1659) the above linkages identified by Billeter were similarly interpreted by Richard Warren Davis. Matching in this case would have been aided by the fact that some less popular given names (like Peter and Felix) were involved. Appendix A presents our transcriptions of the original 17<sup>th</sup> Century German cursive records. Note that the above relationships to Hans Kägi (e.g. paternal grandfather, etc.) were specified by R. W. Davis. Billeter limited himself to Switzerland and would have been unaware of Hans who was born in Pfalz.

Julius Billeter was typically paid for the genealogies he constructed for American clients. Hans’ branch of the Kägi Clan would have produced the most numerous descendants in America by Billeter’s time. It seems quite likely that one of them commissioned and paid for Billeter’s labors – whether motivated by family pride, or genealogical curiosity, or Mormon religious obligation (or perhaps all three). We would like to identify and acknowledge that person, if possible. If any reader has a likely name to nominate, please contact us.

## IV. COMPARING AND CONTRASTING THE TWO ACCOUNTS

### *Details on Which Billeter and Davis Agree*

Hans Jakob Kägi (b. 1625) as Hans' paternal grandfather  
Anna Spörri as Hans' paternal grandmother (married 1649)

Peter Kägi (b. c1589/1597) as Hans' paternal great-grandfather  
Anna Bosshard/t of Wila as Hans' paternal great-grandmother (married 1624)

Jakob Kägi (b. c1555/1562) as Hans' paternal great-great-grandfather

### *Details on Which Billeter and Davis Differ*

*Bauma parish (Billeter) vs. Bäretswil parish (Davis):* The two researchers seemingly differ on the ancestral parish. But the difference is more apparent than real. The ancestral village was Gublen which was originally located in Bäretswil parish but which was transferred to Bauma parish when the latter was created in 1651 out of Bäretswil and Pfäffikon. Billeter operated at the parish level because he relied mainly on parish church records; by the time he wrote Gublen had been in Bauma parish for over 250 years. Davis's work, which utilized census data in addition, is somewhat more granular since he identifies individual villages within parishes and cites their parish locations as of the relevant timeframe. It was Billeter's label "Of Bauma" in his title that I misconstrued, causing me to long ignore his document, assuming (incorrectly) it would contain only unrelated lines from the "wrong" parish.

*Estimated birth years for the great-grandfather and the great-great-grandfather:* Both Billeter and Davis apparently were forced to estimate birth years for the two oldest generations. Each designates those birth years as "About." Their estimates match roughly, but not exactly. Without knowing how each went about making his estimates, we find it difficult to judge which, if either, is to be preferred. The best we can do today is to average them, as one might do with other conflicting numerical estimates.

### *Details Which Only Davis Offers*

*Jacob Kägi (b. 1659, son of Hans Jakob) as father of Hans c1692, Westhofen, Pfalz:* Davis extended his report into both Pfalz and Pennsylvania. Billeter limited his work to Switzerland. So this key father-son relationship in Pfalz remains single-sourced, i.e. as yet uncorroborated. So far this relationship is an RWD-exclusive.



### *Details Which Only Billeter Offers*

Billeter offers an even earlier family of four sons (including Jakob, b. c1562) headed by a “Mr. Kägi” b. c1524 and a “Mrs. Kägi” b. c1520. Rather than being based on any actual record(s), however, I think this information and estimated dates were synthesized by Billeter into a hypothetical record, perhaps after connecting the four males as likely brothers. It may have pleased Billeter whenever he could work any family all the way back to the Reformation Era. But, if there had been any actual record, Davis would likely have reported it too.

### *Conclusions*

We readily concede there remains the one major conclusion drawn by R. W. Davis that none of our new sources can speak to: The assertion that Jacob (b. 1659), one of the three Kägi brothers who migrated from Unter-Hittnau to Pfalz around 1680, eventually became the father of Hans (b. c1692) who went to Pennsylvania as a young man in 1717. In his correspondence with author Kagay in 2011 Davis says that this conclusion was “likely” but “not proven.” It represented his “educated guess” after “a process of elimination.” Essentially, he tried to account for all the children of Jacob’s two brothers (Felix and Johannes) in Pfalz, leaving Jacob as the only other Kägi available in the area. Davis was able to find no actual records documenting this father-son relationship.

That “educated guess” is clearly a problematic assumption. Yet circumstantial evidence is consistent with Davis’s guess. It was common practice among 18<sup>th</sup> Century couples to name their first son after the husband’s father, i.e. the boy’s paternal grandfather. In Pennsylvania Hans would name his firstborn son “Jacob,” (not Felix or Johannes). Of course, such circumstantial evidence would be stronger if Jacob were not so popular a given name among Swiss-Germans generally and the Kägi Clan in particular. Consider, for instance, if Hans’ father and first-born son were both named Balthazar (or, more revealingly, Felix). Either would be stronger evidence. Nonetheless, baby “Jacob” (b. 1719 in Pennsylvania) was consistent with Davis’s guess.

Also even a wrong guess is not necessarily a pedigree-killer. If it proves erroneous or untestable, the next most likely scenario is that Davis simply guessed the wrong brother and that one of Hans’ two uncles in Pfalz was actually his father. In that case Hans’ ancestry back in the Zurich Highlands would remain unchanged. So a single source for this relationship, even one based only on an “educated guess,” is not too serious a dilemma. In this instance we are aided by the Kägi trio’s relative isolation in Pfalz: Only three prime candidates for Hans’ father were available there and they were all brothers with identical lineage!



## V. THE TAKEAWAY: CORROBORATION, BUT...

So can we now say that much of what Richard Warren Davis reports about our Kägi families has been independently corroborated? The answer would seem to be “Yes, but...” Yes, Davis’s key details about names, dates, and relationships for our Kägis in **Switzerland** have been corroborated by Billeter. But this does not extend to all of the details from **Pfalz** because Billeter confined his work to Switzerland.

Pedants might argue that “independent corroboration” at its strictest implies confirmation by a separate researcher who reaches a similar conclusion based on separate evidence (as in the replication of a scientific experiment by a different laboratory). In this case, however, those Swiss parish church-books may contain the **only** relevant records available for primary analysis. So what we have here is, rather, a separate researcher reaching a similar conclusion after reexamining the **same** evidence. Realistically, that may be the only type of corroboration even possible in this case.

Our Takeaway is that – in the case of the Swiss Kägis – Davis studied the same primary records as Billeter had and interpreted them in a similar way (except for some differing estimated birth years).

The FamilySearch catalogue lists microfilms of these same records so skeptics can potentially repeat this analysis themselves. Unfortunately, these images are apparently still being transferred from microfilm to digital format, so are not yet available online.

But as an aid to corroboration we present modern transcriptions of the key images in our Appendices, courtesy of Mary Nelle Kaegi Douglas of Illinois who acquired them from the Family History Library during the long course of her own research on Kägi families of the Zurich Highlands. She has generously shared them with us. To examine the original cursive version, please contact us for screenshots or hard copy.

We should point out that the genealogy of this Kägi family is only a small fraction of each researcher’s body of work. The Index at Davis’s website lists around 700 surnames, but his 16 pages on “Kägi/Kagey” constitute just a single surname study. Billeter’s 155 pages on the Kägis of Bauma cumulatively tally 3,741 individuals across 350 years, but he also researched hundreds of other Swiss surnames during his career.

So, we hasten to add, mutual corroboration in the case of our Kägi/Kagey data does **not** automatically validate information or conclusions in the hundreds of other surname files on Davis’s MennoSearch website or the hundreds of other genealogies by Billeter that are catalogued on FamilySearch. Every user needs to evaluate the accuracy of each particular study for his/her own individual research project.

## VI. NEXT STEPS: THE SEARCH FOR CORROBORATION ENDS IN PFALZ

If possible, we would like to resolve our final remaining mystery and clarify the identity of Hans Kägi's father in Pfalz, even though it is unlikely to alter either's earlier ancestry back in Switzerland. FamilySearch lists microfilmed church-books from Westhofen, Jacob's and Hans' village in Pfalz. But we have learned that their lending of microfilm records has been discontinued as they near completion of their digitization program. So we may have to await online availability or else engage a researcher in Salt Lake City.

While **Swiss** church-books often recorded data for parish residents even when they were not members of the established church, we are not sure what to expect from **German** church-books. In Pfalz the Mennonites were not only a heretical religious minority, but were also aliens rather than citizens and so may have been treated differently by church officials.

An alternative source of potential evidence would be the censuses of Mennonites conducted periodically in Pfalz. One published census from 1685, taken shortly after the three brothers migrated there, did not record them, but -- probably still unmarried -- they may have been staying with temporary hosts in unrelated households until they got established. We are hoping that later censuses may be found in which they were enumerated in their own households along with their wives and children. That might even reveal the identity of Jacob's wife (Hans' mother) and any of Hans' siblings -- all of which are presently unknown.

If both church-books and census records eventually fail to confirm Jacob's residence and relation to Hans, we may ultimately need to learn to live with a single source as evidence for this key link or else treat it as unproven. But we are not at that point just yet.

A third research possibility, not as yet fully developed, is yDNA analysis. There are living today in the U.S. descendants of both Hans and his uncle Felix. We are seeking to compare yDNA data from both. This may provide a Brick Wall Buster, a scientific way to prove that Hans was the son of **one** of the three Kägi brothers in Pfalz. Stay tuned.....

One element that had been missing until recently is any Kagy family member with the motivation, German language fluency, research skills, and other resources needed to tackle the European end of this story. That's why the work of the modern Hans Kägi of Eschenbach, Canton St. Gallen was such an exciting discovery. Regrettably, we have been informed that he has likely passed away (age and date currently unknown). Perhaps another Kagy, Swiss or American, will emerge to carry on his work in Europe.

Michael Kagay  
June 2019

## VII. AFTERWORD

### INITIAL SEARCH OF WESTHOFEN RECORDS FAILS TO IDENTIFY HANS' PARENTS

Just in time for this essay we engaged researchers in Salt Lake City to access Westhofen records at the Family History Library and perform an initial search for any Kägi family data. We limited the search to the prime years of 1692 +/- 4 (i.e., the years 1688 to 1696) in order to yield the highest priority data with quick turnaround and limited costs.

The results: No trace of either Jacob Kägi or his younger brother Johannes or of any Kägi child was found in Westhofen church records during the 9 target years. The search drew a complete blank, a total lack of any evidence either pro or con.

A more preferable outcome would have been if records for other Kägi infants had been found, but none for Hans. In that case we would have concluded that births or infant baptisms in Mennonite families were indeed noted in parish records. And we would have been encouraged to expand the target period to include earlier and/or later records that might capture Hans.

Tentative Conclusion: Protestant clergy in Germany (or at least in Westhofen, Pfalz) evidently didn't record information on Mennonites residing in their parish. (Perhaps they weren't required or expected to, or just didn't bother.) This is understandable, even if frustrating, but we were always aware that this was one possible outcome.

### COULD OUR SEARCH HAVE BEEN FLAWED AND A FULLER SEARCH SUCCESSFUL?

If and when these records are digitized and posted online we plan to extend this search further. So our initial search should not be considered exhaustive. It was more an opportunistic strike, our "best shot" within limited time and cost constraints.

We don't know exactly when brother Jacob married. Since no Kägi infant was recorded during the 9-year period of our search, it might make sense to broaden it to both earlier and later years. By contrast, brother Johannes was five years younger than Jacob. That means he was likely to have married somewhat later and started his family somewhat later, perhaps after our targeted years but not likely before. However, if Hans were Johannes' child, and born around 1700, it means he was possibly too young to migrate to Pennsylvania in 1717. That possibility increases with each later birth year.

Other factors: In the 1690s perhaps infant baptism in Pfalz was optional, rather than legally required. Or maybe some aliens like Mennonites were exempted. It is also possible we reviewed just too few records (140 infants over 9.5 years) to detect any clear patterns. Westhofen was a small village with probably only a few Mennonites.

## ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES

We can also continue our search in several Censuses of Mennonites conducted in Pfalz. So far we have examined one (1685), but there may be others around 1700 (+/- 10 years).

If both church books and census ledgers eventually fail to document Hans and his parents, we may need to learn to live with only a single source for the hypothesized Father-Son relationship. The trouble is that the “single source” is not any actual record or document at all, but rather R. W. Davis’s “educated guess” after a “process of elimination.” That seems a rather problematic basis for any key conclusion.

Still, Davis has proven to be so accurate about so many details concerning this family in both Switzerland and Pennsylvania that we are inclined to credit even his educated guesswork in Pfalz. But we would always like to find independent corroboration.

## THE TAKEAWAY

So for the moment here is our temporary verdict: The hypothesized Father-Son relationship of Jacob and Hans remains categorized “As Yet Uncorroborated.”

We repeat that we have little stake in which of the three Kägi brothers in Pfalz proves to be our Hans’ actual father. Any of the three would leave Hans’ ancestry in Switzerland unchanged. And we have no reason whatever to suspect any other Kägi family’s involvement. So that may make it easier to live with a single source if we ultimately need to. Future analysis of yDNA from descendants of both Hans and Felix, potentially showing an extremely close match, might make that necessity even easier to accept.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Finally, we want to thank David Kibler of Texas for taking the lead in this phase of our long collective search for Hans Kägi’s lineage. Dave is a descendant of Hans Kägi through his son Henry. He is also the first Kagy researcher I encountered who had actually visited the Zurich Highlands in search of the Ancestral Homeland.

Having volunteered over the years at the Family History Library branch in San Antonio, Dave understood the resources available in Salt Lake City and also knew the options for accessing them. He commissioned this limited search of Westhofen church records on our joint behalf. It offered the hope, but alas not the evidence, for settling the last remaining mystery of Hans Kägi’s lineage. Our joint search continues.....

Michael Kagay  
August 2019

## **APPENDIX A: TRANSCRIPTIONS FROM BÄRETSWIL PARISH RECORDS**

Previously we concluded that Billeter and Davis independently examined the same primary records in Swiss church-books and reached similar conclusions. Because the Family History Library had also microfilmed those original source records in Switzerland, we remarked in passing that any remaining skeptics could potentially repeat that examination and analysis in order to judge for themselves the degree of corroboration provided.

Mary Nelle Kaegi Douglas of Illinois, who has spent years researching her own Kägi line in the Zurich Highlands, has now sent us images of the relevant marriage, baptism, and census records from the microfilms taken in Bäretswil and Hittnau parishes where our Kägi family lived at the time. We are very grateful to Mary Nelle for acquiring and preserving these images during the long course of her research even though they had not proven relevant to her own ongoing project.

And, of course, we are grateful to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for the original microfilming of records across Europe which has assisted so many American genealogists over the decades.

We had planned to present in our Appendices images of the original 17<sup>th</sup> Century German cursive records. However, this turned out to require more Photoshop wizardry than we possessed or had time to acquire. So, instead, we present modern transcriptions of the cursive records. Anyone wishing to examine images of the originals is invited to contact us for screenshots or hard copy.

The following six Transcriptions document Hans Kägi's (presumed) Swiss lineage:

1) 1624 Marriage record for Peter Kägi

Peter Kägi (Gublen, säumer,\* son of Jacob Kägi) to Anna Bosshard (Wila)\*\*

SOURCE: From page 617 of FHL Bäretswil parish marriage microfilm.  
Also Dokument E III 10.1, EDB 357 in State Archiv of Zurich (digital record)

2) 1625 Baptismal record for Hans Jakob Kägi

Hans Jacob (infant son of) Peter Kägi (with godparents listed)

SOURCE: From page 117 of FHL Bäretswil parish Baptism microfilm

3) 1649 Marriage record for Hans Jakob Kägi

Hans Jagli Kägi (Gublen, miller) to Anna Spörri (Hinterburg, dyer's dau.)

SOURCE: From page 642 of FHL Bäretswil parish marriage microfilm.  
Also Dokument E III 10.1, EDB 595 in State Archiv, Zurich (digital record)

4) 1659 Baptismal record for Jacob Kägi (father of Hans Kägi c1692 in Pfalz?)\* \*\*

Jacob (infant son of) Hans Jagli Kägi & Anna Spörri (w. godparents listed)

SOURCE: From page 256 of FHL Bäretswil parish Baptism microfilm

5) 1656 Baptismal record for Jacob's older brother Felix

Felix (infant son of) Hans Jagli Kägi & Anna Spörri (w. godparents listed)

SOURCE: From page 248 of FHL Bäretswil parish Baptism microfilm

6) 1664 Baptismal record for Jacob's younger brother Johannes

Johannes (infant son) Hans Jagli Kägi & Anna Spörri (w. godparents listed)

SOURCE: From page 271 of FHL Bäretswil parish Baptism microfilm

## APPENDIX B: TRANSCRIPTION OF SWISS CENSUS LEDGER

- 1) 1682 Census Record from Pfäffikon district, Canton Zurich, for Family of Hans Jakob Kägi, showing three sons residing abroad in Pfalz

Hans Jacob Kägi miller

Anna Spörri

Felix age 25 in Pfalz (location given, but unclear)

Jacob age 23 in Pfalz (location unclear but may be Westhofen)

Johannes age 18 in Pfalz (location unclear but may be Westhofen)

SOURCE: From page 49 of FHL 1682 Pfäffikon district Census microfilm

NOTE: The original primary Swiss records can make for difficult reading. They are in 17<sup>th</sup> Century German cursive. They sometimes include Old German words or conventions. They also occasionally use nicknames (e.g., "Jagli" for Jacob). Apparently, Anabaptists complied with the law requiring Baptism of infants, perhaps because it seemed unimportant to them compared with their true religious Baptism at an older age and/or perhaps because non-compliance would be to advertise their heresy with each new child. (Anabaptist = "Re-Baptiser")

\*Peter's occupation "Säumer" can be translated either as hemmer (as in the cloth & garment trades) or as a freight hauler (like a teamster?). We are inclined toward cloth & garment hemmer because his daughter-in-law Anna Spörri was called a dyer's daughter, indicating some villagers in Bäretswil parish were involved in cloth production. Before industrialization occurred (c1800) with water-powered spinning machines, home spinning was a cottage industry in the area. Also St. Gallen, the immediately adjacent Canton to the east, had long been famous for its linen and embroidery.

\*\*Anna Bosshard was designated as "Witwe" which usually means a widow. But R. W. Davis calls her "daughter" of Ulrich Bosshard. Both could be true. If she were a young widow then that could explain why her oldest son Jorg was recorded by Billeter as born 1620, four years before her marriage to Peter, but quite consistent with a previous marriage. Davis does not mention this Jorg.

\*\*\*The Father-Son link between Jacob Kägi (b. 1659) and Hans Kägi (b. c1692 in Pfalz) is an "educated guess" by Richard Warren Davis which has not yet been corroborated. Since, if incorrect, the next most likely scenario would be that Davis

simply guessed the wrong brother and that one or the other of Hans' two uncles in Pfalz was his actual father, we present their Baptismal records, too, confirming that Hans' ancestry back in Switzerland would remain unchanged.

**OBSERVATION: The above Transcriptions are based on the original cursive records, copies of which are in our possession. What a skeptic can judge using the original cursive images is whether the identifiers included in the records seem sufficient to justify Billeter's (and later Davis's) linkage in their constructed genealogies. Proper linkage is aided in these cases because some less common given names (like Peter and Felix) were involved. Had everyone been named Hans (or Jakob) linkage could have been more problematic. However, there were often spouses, villages, and godparents recorded that would still have helped in the matching process. Anyone wishing to study the cursive records is invited to contact us for screenshots or hard copy.**



## ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SOURCES

- Patent A-7-426 granted in 1735 by John Penn, Proprietor of Pennsylvania, to Hans Kägi. Discovered only in 2018, this Patent (deed) legally conferred ownership to Hans for his 100-acre Plantation in Conestoga. It refers to “Hans Kaigey” as “Late of the Palatinate of the Rhine in Germany.” This constitutes the previously missing evidence we needed to confirm the family’s residency in Pfalz. Previously we had Richard Warren Davis’s invaluable report on this phase, but no corroborating documentation. Ideally we would always prefer agreement between two independent sources. The language in the Pennsylvania deed, of course, doesn’t guarantee the accuracy of all the other details about Pfalz in RWD’s report.
- Dale Keagy, “The Search for Hans Kägi’s Land” (2018) posted elsewhere on this website. My colleague Dale Keagy discovered the 1735 Patent (A-7-426) during research on his 2018 study, documenting Hans Kägi’s land acquisitions in Pennsylvania and their disposition after his death in 1748.
- Richard Warren Davis’s “MennoSearch” is a subscription website which contains hundreds of genealogies, including a 16-page file on “Kägi/Kagey,” resulting from his decades of research on the European roots of Mennonite pioneers of Lancaster County PA. It provides the most detailed information available on Kägi locations, names, dates, and relationships, but for years it stood alone without any independent confirmation of his findings in Europe. Beginning in 2018-2019, however, several new sources have corroborated most of Davis’s key findings in Switzerland. But some of his information from Pfalz remains single-sourced, i.e., as yet uncorroborated. CAUTION: MENNOSEARCH WEBSITE HACKED 2018-2019.
- --Julius Billeter, “Genealogy of the Wiesendanger family of Berg-Dägerlen, abt. 1570-1899, Reimann family of Richetwil-Oberwinterthur, 1620-1907, and Kagi family of Bauma, Kt. Zurich, Switzerland, 1524-1899.” Digital images of a 203 page manuscript, originally published 1900-1916, on FamilySearch website. This is the 100-year old typed manuscript, based on Swiss parish church books, that corroborates R. W. Davis’s Swiss data. Why did it remain overlooked for so long? For one thing, it bundled the Kägi data with genealogies for two other surnames in the greater Winterthur area and placed the Kägi section third in the bundle, reducing its visibility. Second, the appearance of the phrase “Of Bauma” in its title might have misled any researcher tracing the Kägi family of Bäretswil parish where their ancestral village was originally located. (That 1651 parish transfer threw me off for many years.) And third, researchers have long been cautioned about Julius Billeter’s work in general. The rap on Billeter among critics is that, while his transcriptions of primary records were typically very accurate, he sometimes made arguable assumptions in linking together households and generations for his constructed genealogies, especially when multiple candidates with identical names and similar ages lived in the same area. A surplus of caution might have caused some to ignore his work on the Kägis without even bothering to evaluate it.

- *Progeny of Claus Kägi born about 1520 in Fischenthal* was published in 1981 in Switzerland by modern genealogist Hans Kägi of Eschenbach, Canton St. Gallen. But this German-language genealogy was translated into English only in 2018 by Jens Rutkowski of York, PA exclusively for the KagyHistory.org website. It focuses on Clan Kägi in Switzerland as they spread throughout the Zurich Highlands beginning in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It is not a complete family genealogy, but it constitutes the general “backstory” of Kägis in the Old World. More particularly it also confirms from Swiss records that Felix Kägi, blacksmith, migrated from Unter-Hittnau to Pfalz around 1680. That squares with R. W. Davis. Felix appears to be the relative who began the family’s migration downriver into exile. RWD identifies Felix as a likely uncle of our Hans Kägi.
- *Familiennamenbuch der Schweiz*. This reference work records the “Heimat” (parish of hereditary citizenship) for thousands of family surnames throughout Switzerland. It is the key reference work for any researcher wishing to identify the ancestral territory of a Swiss family. Author Kagay had used the U.S. version (published as *Swiss Surnames* on CD-ROM in 2003 by Picton Press) to geographically locate the ancestral homeland of the Kägis in the Zurich Highlands near the River Töss. This independently confirmed that R. W. Davis had got his geography right and was an early reason we credited his report.
- Franklin Keagy, *A History of the Kägy Relationship in America 1715-1900* (1899). This 675-page Kagy family history book, now available in several reprint formats, picks up Hans Kägi’s story in Colonial Pennsylvania. But it contains almost nothing about Hans’ pre-Pennsylvania life, probably its most glaring omission. And some early details in Pennsylvania also seem mistaken. (See the following article.) But it remains the essential jumping-off resource for all subsequent Kagy research in America.
- Kagay and Keagy, “The Search for Hans Kägi’s Spouse,” *Pennsylvania Mennonite Heritage* (vol. 41, no. 4, October 2018), pp. 116-129. This research article treats a major apparent error in the 1899 family history book: The identification (or rather mis-identification) of Hans Kägi’s wife in Pennsylvania. An earlier and fuller version of the published article is posted elsewhere on this website.
- Hermann & Gertrude Guth and J. Lemar & Lois Ann Mast, *Palatine Census Lists, 1664 – 1793* (Masthof Press, 1987). Examples of the census data available on Mennonites in Pfalz.
- Family History Library microfilms of original primary records from both Swiss church books and Swiss census ledgers. Mary Nelle Kaegi Douglas generously shared the copies she obtained from the Family History Library over the years of her own research on Zurich Highlands Kägis. Transcriptions are included here. Cursive copies available on request.