Chapter 2
Updated December 2009

The Pünters of Switzerland Prior to 1850

This chapter documents the history of the Pinter family of Bureau County, Illinois, prior to their arrival in Illinois. This chapter will establish that the family has its roots in Switzerland, specifically the village of Stäfa, found in the canton of Zurich. Stäfa still exists today. It can be found on the northeast shores of Lake Zurich more towards the lower end of the lake. Stäfa is green and is not in the Alps. The elevation of Stäfa is only about 408 meters (1339 feet) above sea level.

Both this chapter and Chapter 3 contain additional information about the village of Stäfa.

This family in Switzerland was actually named Pünter (with the umlauted u) in the days before Heinrich’s arrival in America.

Most of the data in this chapter supporting the family history comes from old Stäfa church records that were photographed and converted to microfilm by volunteers of the Mormon Church.

If there was any doubt that Switzerland is the home country for Heinrich, it was put to rest upon the discovery of Henry Pinter’s certificate of baptism. This certificate contains the following information, actual spellings:

- Father: Heinrich Pinter
- Father is from: Stäfa, Canton Zurich, Switzerland
- Mother: Elisabeth Pinter
- Mother is from: Forstining Langericht Ebersberg, Bayern
- Name of Child: Heinrich (no middle name indicated)
- Birth date: 8 May 1852 in LaSalle County.
- Date of baptism: 20 May 1853, Selby Tsp
- Witnesses: Franz and Therese Obele
- Pastor: Ritter
- Date Certificate was prepared: 21 October 1864

This certificate is in Appendix C of this book.

This chapter will also establish that Heinrich Pinter’s wife Elizabeth Hohenbrunner (Henry and Jacob’s mother) has roots in Bavaria, Germany. More information about Elizabeth Hohenbrunner Pinter will be found at the end of this chapter.
Introduction To The Research Method

Before reading about the family’s origins in Switzerland, you should be familiar with how this information was obtained.

The Mormon Church (Later Day Saints) has an extensive genealogy Web site on the Internet and it is provided free of charge for family research. For example, they have placed photographic images of the entire 1880 US census on line.

They also have a Web site called the International Genealogical Index (IGI) which is found at www.familysearch.com. This Index is a compilation of the work of many volunteers who, in previous years, have visited churches worldwide and microfilmed pages of church records books. They then made these microfilms available to the general public at their Family History Centers. In addition they then digitized this information and placed this data online in the IGI.

Both the volunteer transcriptions and the microfilm records of actual church records were researched for this book.

The Research Process

Elizabeth Hohenbrunner, believed to be Heinrich Pinter’s wife, is buried in the Church on the Hill (COH) cemetery near Princeton, Illinois. The following phrase is inscribed on her headstone:

“Wife of Heinrich Puenter” (actual spelling on the headstone).

Heinrich Pinter is also buried in the same cemetery. His headstone spells his name Heinrich Pinter.

I entered the name Puenter into the IGI on-line search engine and I began to find references to Switzerland, specifically Stäfa in the canton of Zurich, under the name Puenter (or Pünter), not Pinter, Bender, or Binder. I then found a Heinrich Pünter born (or christened) 17 August 1810. This date matched the date on Heinrich’s gravestone in the COH cemetery.

The recorded data unfortunately lacked pedigree information so it was nearly impossible to determine the parents of an individual.

Then, I learned that one could request microfilm of actual church record books from the Mormon Church and view them at various Family History Libraries (FHL) across the country. I researched further and found that there was a selection of films available for Stäfa, so I ordered them. The FHL allows you to borrow these films for a small fee per month each and renew them almost indefinitely.
The records referred to in this chapter are microfilm images of actual church records for the Evangelisch Reformierte Kirche Stäfa (translation: Reformed Evangelical Church of Stäfa). The entries in the records were apparently made at the time of the event (i.e., for a birth) and updated later (i.e., for a death). The handwriting is in some cases very legible, but in some cases a combination of document age and poor hand writing coupled with the fact that it was written in 18th and 19th century German script and then photographed on microfilm make some entries difficult to read.

One set of films supposedly had birth, christening and death data for various periods in Stäfa’s history, but I found these films impossible to read due to the German language and poor penmanship and poor film quality.

The other film, however, was a goldmine of information. This was a 35mm film reel, some 3 to 3.5 inches in diameter, and it was fully loaded. It contained hundreds of microfilm photos of actual handwritten Stäfa church records. The church record entries were manually entered in German and included much information about Stafa families such as parents and children’s names, marriage dates, and birth and death dates. Copies of some of these pages are included in Appendix C of this book.

This film is referred to by the number FHL INTL Film (2061026) and has the following titles of each of the 6 sections of the film.

Haushaltungsrodel (1779) 1699 - 1793
Haushaltungsrodel (1774) 1686 - 1779
Haushaltungsrodel (1765) 1684 - 1775
Haushaltungsrodel (1820) 1735 - 1876
Haushaltungsrodel (1805) 1719 - 1819
Haushaltungsrodel (1793) 1707 – 1805

Haushalt literally translates to the English word “household”
Haushaltung literally translates to “housekeeping”
Haushaltungsrodel is an early register of the occupants of each household.

After viewing this film which contains photos of the actual church record books (not transcribed information), I found a family entry that included the birth of Heinrich Pűnter on 17 August 1810. This date matches the recorded birth date of our Heinrich Pinter.

A Note on the Surname Pinter

Note: The surname of the family being tracked in the Stäfa records is actually spelled Pűnter (with an umlauted u) in the church records. There were no names in the microfilmed records spelled Puenter or Pinter. Possibly, the volunteers who inspected and
documented these microfilmed records resorted to spelling the name Puenter as a translation of Pünter since they perhaps had no way to type or enter the umlauted u (ű). There can be no doubt that the village of Stäfa was heavily populated with Pünters. It was a popular name there.

Caveats

Please note this as you read:

It is somewhat of an assumption that the Heinrich mentioned above is our Heinrich. There are three reasons why this assumption is probably correct:

1. The birth date of Heinrich Pinter as found on his headstone (17 August 1810) matches the record of Heinrich Pünter as found in the microfilm.

2. Henry’s certificate of baptism and Heinrich’s death certificate both indicate that Heinrich’s birthplace was Stäfa, SW.

3. I did not see that birth date, associated with the name Heinrich Pünter, appear in any other place in the records.

Heinrich’s Grandparents

Note: details of the family prior to this generation can be found in the Addendum titled Addendum – Expanded Swiss Connection.

Refer to Appendix C of this book for images of church records that support the following information.

According to the Stäfa Church register, one Johannes Pünter was born on 19 May 1737 (Johannes would be Heinrich’s grandfather as you will see later).

Johannes married Elizabeth Meili (Heinrich’s grandmother) on 31 October 1773. He was 36 years old at this time. She was about 27 when she married Johannes. Elizabeth was born in the town of Bubikon, canton of Zurich, on 17 December 1746. Bubikon is about 5 miles to the northeast of Stäfa.

Interesting Note: There is a town along the north shores of Lake Zurich named Meilen. One could wonder how the names Meilen and Meili relate, if at all?
Johannes and Elizabeth had at least 10 children according to the following incomplete table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Born</th>
<th>Died</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Johannes Pünter</td>
<td>19 May 1737</td>
<td>29 Jan 1809</td>
<td>Married: 6 September 1805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Meili</td>
<td>17 Dec 1746</td>
<td>24 Mar 1834</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johannes</td>
<td>2 May 1775</td>
<td>8 Nov 1827</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>17 Aug 1776</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>13 Aug 1777</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hans Jacob</td>
<td>8 Aug 1779</td>
<td>apparently</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hans Jacob</td>
<td>6 May 1781</td>
<td>23 Jan 1843</td>
<td>Father of Heinrich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katherina</td>
<td>14 July 1782</td>
<td>apparently</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susanna</td>
<td>15 Sept 1783</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hans Heinrich</td>
<td>11 Jan 1785</td>
<td>apparently</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria</td>
<td>10 Feb 1788</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heinrich</td>
<td>29 Sept 1789</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The unknowns above stem from the poor legibility of the record.

**Heinrich Pünter’s Immediate Family**

Continue to refer to Appendix C.

One of Johannes and Elizabeth’s children was Hans Jacob Pünter (spelled Jakob in the church records book). Jacob was born 6 May 1781 in Stäfa, Zurich, Switzerland according to the above table. Jacob is Heinrich’s father. Jacob married Regula Wyssling on 6 September 1805 (or 8 Oct 1805). Regula Wyssling was born on 12 September 1779 in Stäfa. She was therefore 26 at her marriage to Jacob. Jacob was 24. There are no readable marriage records for Stäfa so we can only assume the marriage was in Stäfa.

About six and one half months later, on 25 March 1806, A. Barbara (Anna Barbara?) was born to Jacob and Regula. Note that the church records only refer to her as A. Barbara. Anna Barbara was Heinrich’s sister.

Then a boy, Hans Jacob, Heinrich’s brother, was born on 14 May 1808. Jacob’s name was crossed off in the records which may mean he died later but there is no evidence of when he died.
Heinrich was born about 2 years after Jacob on 17 August 1810. This is clearly noted in the records.

Regula, Heinrich’s mother, died on 3 February 1814 at the age of about 34. The details of her death are unknown. Heinrich was about 3 ½ years old at that time. His sister was about 8 years old and his brother was about 6.

According to the church records, Jacob remarried. His new wife was Magdalena Furrer. She was born 1 July 1787 in the town of Fischenthal, canton of Zurich. She and Jacob married on 25 July 1814. Jacob was 33 years old, Magdalena was about 27. Heinrich was nearly 4 at that time. The records clearly refer to Frau 1 (wife 1) and Frau 2 and which children were born to each woman. Heinrich and his sister Anna Barbara and brother Jacob were born to Frau 1, Regula Wyssling.

The villages of Fischenthal, Bubikon, and Stäfa, all in the canton of Zurich, can be seen on the map which is in Appendix C.

Jacob and Magdalena had at least one child together, Jacob, Heinrich’s half brother. Jacob was born 17 September 1815. Heinrich would have been almost 5 years old at the time. There are no other notes in the records regarding other children.

The following chart summarizes this blended family:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Born</th>
<th>Died</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hans Jacob Pünter</td>
<td>6 May 1781</td>
<td>23 Jan 1843</td>
<td>Married: 8 Oct 1805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regula Wyssling</td>
<td>12 Sept 1779</td>
<td>3 Feb 1814</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna Barbara</td>
<td>26 Mar 1806</td>
<td>7 Mar 1836</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hans Jacob</td>
<td>14 May 1808</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heinrich</td>
<td>17 Aug 1810</td>
<td>12 Jan 1900</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hans Jacob Pünter</td>
<td>6 May 1781</td>
<td>23 Jan 1843</td>
<td>Married: 25 July 1814</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magdalena Furrer</td>
<td>1 July 1787</td>
<td>3 Sept 1841</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob</td>
<td>17 Sept 1815</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is one interesting note on the records (in German and difficult to read) that suggests that Jacob and Magdalena and family moved to Bavaria in 1817 when Heinrich was about 7 years old. This phrase was found on the church records:

“…nach Bayern ins 1817” (which translates to “...to Bavaria in 1817”)

This is consistent with various accounts that say that Heinrich went to live in Bavaria some time during his life. Since Jacob and Magdalena’s death dates are recorded in the Stäfa records, it is not known how this occurred considering that that may have moved
out of Stäfa and into Germany. Perhaps they moved back to Stäfa, or perhaps somehow the church was notified of their deaths while in Bavaria.

Historic Notes:

“Population growth and famine were two important factors which forced hundreds of thousands of Swiss to emigrate during the 19th century. In particular there were waves of emigration in 1816-17, 1845-55, and 1880-85. Most emigrants went to North America, but Swiss Colonies were established all over the world”.

Source: http://www.swissworld.com

“Switzerland is a small, mountainous country lacking in agricultural land, and until comparatively recently, it was unable to feed all its inhabitants. This inevitably lead to as continual stream of emigration over the years with major waves after the great famine of 1816-17…”

Source: http://jeanmarc.vonallmen.club.fr

Heinrich’s father, Jacob, died on 23 January 1843 at the age of about 61. It is not clear where he was living at the time of his death but his death date is recorded in the Stäfa records.

Heinrich’s sister Anna Barbara died at a very young age on 7 March 1836. She was about 30 years old at her death. Little is known about this woman in terms of her own family, children, etc.

Nothing is known about Hans Jacob and Jacob, Heinrich’s brother and half-brother.

Magdalena, Heinrich’s step mother, died on 3 September 1841 at the age of about 54.

Heinrich died in the United States, Bureau County, Illinois on 12 January 1900 at the age of 89, the longest to live of all the members of his immediate family.

The Family of Regula Wyssling (Heinrich’s mother)

(Note that I am unsure as to the exact spelling of the name Wyssling. I have also seen the name spelled Wyssling and Wyslig and Wysling. I feel certain these are variations of the same name as opposed to being different families. Wysling seems to be the correct spelling in the actual historic records but in modern day Stäfa the spelling is Wyssling).
Andreas Wyssling (Heinrich’s gggrandfather) of unknown birth date, married Marie Bodmer, date unknown. They had at least one son, Heinrich Wyssling, born 11 November 1711, died 4 Feb 1759.

Heinrich Wyssling then married Margreth Itschner on 7 November 1748. She was born in 1709, died 23 April 1766.

Heinrich and Margreth Wyssling had at least one son, Hans Jacob Wyssling, born 10 March 1750, died 23 January 1805. Hans Jacob was Heinrich’s grandfather on his mother’s side.

Hans Jacob Wyssling married Susanna Oetiker on 19 January 1779. Susanna was born to Hans Jacob Oetiker and Ester Daendliker on 5 September 1752, christened 10 September 1752, and died 29 August 1784.

The following children were born to Hans Jacob and Susanna:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Born</th>
<th>Died</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hans Jacob Wyssling</td>
<td>10 Mar 1750</td>
<td>23 Jan 1805</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susanna Oetiker</td>
<td>5 Sept 1752</td>
<td>29 Aug 1784</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regula</td>
<td>12 Sept 1779</td>
<td>3 Feb 1814</td>
<td>Heinrich’s mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heinrich</td>
<td>29 Oct 1780</td>
<td>5 May 1782</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob</td>
<td>7 Dec 1782</td>
<td>25 April 1783</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regula Wyssling, daughter of Hans Jacob and Susanna, is the mother of our Heinrich Pünter.

Susanna died 29 August 1784. On 11 January 1785, Hans Jacob Wyssling remarried. His new wife was Barbara Pünter, born 23 July 1761. It is not known if or how Barbara Pünter is related to the Pünter family described above.

Hans Jacob and Barbara had three children as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Born</th>
<th>Died</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hans Jacob Wyssling</td>
<td>10 Mar 1750</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara Pünter</td>
<td>23 July 1761</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rudolph</td>
<td>16 Oct 1785</td>
<td>3 Dec 1849</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabetha</td>
<td>23 Jan 1787</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara</td>
<td>15 Aug 1790</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Pedigree diagram including the Pünter and Wyssling families is contained at the end of this chapter.
Heinrich and his Family’s Life in Stäfa

This part of this chapter will attempt to establish some details about life in Stäfa, Switzerland in the time frame up to and after Heinrich’s birth. Of course, it may be impossible to determine exactly how life was in that time frame. At best, maybe all we can do is speculate about life in this time frame based on various historical accounts.

The Town of Stäfa and the Canton of Zurich

Stäfa is located on the northeast bank of Lake Zurich. It has a size of about 8.59 km$^2$ today, (3.3 mi$^2$) and it has a current population of only about 12-14000 people (12,305 in 2007). The population in the 17th and 18th centuries is unknown. The local dialect is Swiss-German and is specifically known as Stäfe. English language information on the web is limited, but here are two contemporary facts:

- They are known for their production of wines, particularly Riesling-Sylvaner, Rheinriesling, and Clevner (Pinot noir).
- A major hearing aid company, Sonova (formerly Phontak), is headquartered there today.

The canton of Zurich is located north of the Alps but not by much. Maps show that the Alps begin just south of the southern-most part of the Lake. The canton of Zurich is about 1729 km$^2$ (668 mi$^2$) in size and about 30 percent of the canton is forest land. Eighty percent of the land in the canton is considered as productive today. Most of the canton is made up of shallow river valleys which drain towards the Rhine to the north of the canton. The idea that Switzerland might be completely mountainous is incorrect. Stäfa is only about 408 meters (1339 feet) above sea level and is situated on the shores of Lake Zurich.

Today, most of the land is cultivated. In earlier times, most of the land was probably considered cultivatable but in all probability is was not. While there is considerable manufacturing in the canton today, in earlier times silk and cotton weaving were important. Perhaps Heinrich and his family grew cotton or otherwise were in the textile business in some way.
Brief History of Switzerland (See Chapter 3 for more history)

The following paragraphs are a very brief history of Switzerland. They are intended to show that the country endured a considerable amount of strife and war in the time frame of the life of Heinrich and his parents and grandparents.

The area of Switzerland was a part of the Holy Roman Empire for many years. In 1648, via the Treaty of Westphalia, the Swiss Confederacy attained legal independence from the Empire although they had been independent for all practical purposes since the Swabian War in 1499.

Over time, the Confederacy congealed into 13 cantons, including Zurich. Various revolts and wars occurred in the time frame between 1648 and 1797 as the people revolted against such things as currency devaluation and an authoritarian environment which suppressed public opinion.

Switzerland became caught up in the French Revolutionary War in the late 18th century. As the revolutionary armies rolled eastward, Switzerland became involved in a war with Austria. In 1798, Switzerland was overrun by the French and the Confederation collapsed. On 12 April, 1798, the Helvetic Republic was proclaimed by Napoleon. Switzerland became a battlefield of the French Revolutionary Wars and this culminated in the Battle of Zurich in 1799. Napoleonic’s forces established a centralized state and abolished the concept of the independent canton. Coup attempts occurred to rid Switzerland of the ideals supported by the French, but these coups mostly failed.

Local resistance along with financial problems caused the republic to begin to fail. Napoleonic brought in more troops in 1803 and ultimately introduced a new order to the land through the Act of Mediation. The centralized Helvetic state was abolished and partial sovereignty was restored to the cantons. The new state lasted until 1815. In 1815, the Congress of Vienna fully established Swiss independence and the European powers agreed to recognize Swiss neutrality. The period of time after 1815 is now known as the Swiss Restauration.

During the Restauration, the free cities of Switzerland gained more power, but this was not acceptable to the rural population. Rebellions and violent conflicts occurred until about 1847. At this time, after much of the hostilities between religious factions had ceased, the modern state of Switzerland was formed by the first Federal Constitution.

One can only wonder the extent to which the Pünter family was affected by the strife and wars that occurred in their homeland. Did they fight in these wars? Was their life style essentially isolated from these conflicts? Were they involved or did they manage to remain out of the mainstream of war, accidentally or on purpose?

What did they do in this time frame? Perhaps they were simple farmers. Perhaps they raised animals for local sale and consumption. Perhaps they raised cotton or produced
silk. Perhaps they simply existed and were self-supporting, toiling daily on their farms raising the essentials needed to sustain their life.

Perhaps they lived a life of poverty. It is written that Switzerland, in reality, lacked the land required to feed all its inhabitants during its early history. This resulted in a continuous stream of emigration. Major waves of emigration occurred in 1816 and 1817 during the great famine, and other waves occurred in the periods 1845-55 and 1880-1885. Church records suggest that Heinrich and his family left Switzerland in 1817 to go to presumably Bavaria in Germany. Perhaps they were caught up in the poverty and famine that gripped their country in this time frame and simply decided to abandon their home land for a better life in Germany.

There is more historical data regarding Switzerland in Chapter 3.

**Pedigree Diagram**

The last page of this chapter is a pedigree diagram of the Pinter and related families up to and including the birth of Heinrich. Chronologically, the diagram flows from right to left and is typical of pedigree diagrams with younger generations shown on the left of the diagram.

**Names**

If you have not already noticed, the given names that appeared most often in the Stäfa church records were:

Jacob  
Heinrich  
Regula  
Elizabeth  
Johanne  
Magdalena  
Anna  
Barbara

One of the more confusing aspects of researching families in Switzerland was the extensive use of the names Jacob and Heinrich (or Henry). In later chapters you will see that the Pinter family of Bureau County continued that tradition.

Now we know the source of our many of our given names.
**Elizabeth Hohenbrunner**

Elizabeth’s death record in the COH records indicate she was born in Aitersteinering in Germany on 3 August 1813.

However, the baptismal certificate for her first born child Henry suggests another town: Forstinning. Specifically, the location of her birth as written on the certificate is:

Forstinning Landgericht Ebersberg, Bayern.

Langericht is German for “higher (provincial) court”. So, the translation of this might be: “Forstinning in the higher court (or county) of Ebersberg in Bavaria”.

The complete address of Forstinning is:

- Country: Germany
- State: Bavaria
- Government district: Oberbayern (Upper Bavaria)
- Administrative office (aka County): Ebersberg
- Municipality: Forstinning

Aitersteinering is another smaller village less than a mile to the east of Forstinning. It is referred to as local district. In fact, Google Maps refers to the town this way:

Aitersteinering, Forstinning, Germany.

This location is about 15 miles east of Munich.

One could probably conclude that she was born in Aitersteinering which has a legal political association with Forstinning.

Today, Google Maps of this area show it to be quite flat and green. It has the appearance from the air of that of Illinois, an endless patchwork of cultivated fields.

It is interesting to note that there are a number of villages in this area whose names beginning with the letters “Hohen”. There is in fact a village named Hohenbrunn.

See Appendix C for a map of this area of Bavaria.

While the author found considerable information about Stäfa and the Pünter family in the Evangelical church records as recorded in the Mormon Church IGI web sites and microfilm records, a similar search of the name Hohenbrunner (and its spelling variations) resulted in nothing found in any country. This is probably so because the Mormons recorded only Catholic Church records in Forstinning and these records exist only for the period after 1850. The Catholic religion was prevalent in this area in the early 19th century. Elizabeth left Germany in or before 1850.
Regarding Elizabeth’s arrival in the America, a search of genealogy.com’s International and Passenger Records resulted in one record found, as follows:

Name: Elizabeth Hohenbrunner  
Port: New York City  
Date: 1848  
Permanent entry number: 1893459  
Source annotation: Emigration to North America from the government district of Oberbayern (Upper Bavaria) 1846-1852. From the state archives of Oberbayern in the Hauptstaatsarchiv at Munich.

There is no way to prove today if this is or is not our Elizabeth.

**Brief History of Bavaria, Germany**

The following is an abbreviated history of Bavaria up to 1848. The content was taken from the free online encyclopedia Wikipedia and was edited to reduce the length and level of detail. This time frame was chosen because this is the time when Elizabeth would have been growing up in Aitersteinering/Forstinning and it is also the time frame when she and Heinrich, who was also probably living in this area (perhaps they were even married), decided to go to America (1848/50). Of course, we don’t know the extent to which they were affected, directly or indirectly, by this history:

The **Kingdom of Bavaria** (German: Königreich Bayern)  
The Kingdom of Bavaria was a German state that existed from 1805 to 1918. Elector Maximilian I Joseph of the House of Wittelsbach became the first King of Bavaria in 1805. The monarchy would remain held by the Wittelsbachs until the kingdom's dissolution in 1918. Most of Bavaria's modern-day borders were established after 1814 with the Treaty of Paris, in which Bavaria ceded Tyrol and Vorarlberg to the Austrian Empire while receiving Aschaffenburg and parts of Hessen-Darmstadt. As a state within the German Empire, the kingdom was second in size only to the Kingdom of Prussia. Since the unification of Germany in 1871, Bavaria has remained part of Germany to the present day.

In 1805, the Holy Roman Empire recognized Maximilian I's claim to be King of Bavaria, officially changing the Electorate of Bavaria to being the Kingdom of Bavaria. The new kingdom faced challenges from the outset of its creation. It relied on the support of Napoleonic France and had to change its constitution in accordance with France's wishes. The Kingdom faced war with Austria in 1808 and
from 1810 to 1814, lost territory to Württemberg, Italy, and then Austria. However with the defeat of Napoleon's France in 1814, Bavaria was compensated for some of its losses, and received new territories such as the Bishopric of Würzburg, the Archbishopric of Mainz (Aschaffenburg), parts of the Grand Duchy of Hesse, and in 1816, Palatinate from France.

On 26 May 1818, the constitution of the Kingdom of Bavaria was proclaimed. The parliament would have two houses, an upper house comprising the aristocracy and noblemen, including the high-class hereditary landowners, government officials and nominees of the crown. The second house, a lower house, would include representatives of small landowners, the towns and the peasants. The rights of Protestants were safeguarded in the constitution with articles supporting the equality of all religions, despite opposition by supporters of the Roman Catholic Church. The initial constitution almost proved disastrous for the monarchy…… the debacles lessened and the state stabilized with the accession of Ludwig I to the throne following the death of Maximilian in 1825.

In 1825, Ludwig I ascended to the throne of Bavaria. Under Ludwig, the arts flourished in Bavaria, and Ludwig personally ordered and financially assisted the creation of many neoclassical buildings and architecture across Bavaria. Ludwig also increased Bavaria's pace towards industrialization under his reign.

The **European Revolutions of 1848**

These revolutions, known in some countries as the **Spring of Nations** or the **Year of Revolution**, were a series of political upheavals throughout the continent. Described by some historians as a revolutionary wave, the period of unrest began on 12 January 1848 in Sicily and then, further propelled by the French Revolution of 1848, soon spread to the rest of Europe.

Although most of the revolutions were quickly put down, there was a significant amount of violence in many areas, with tens of thousands of people tortured and killed. While the immediate political effects of the revolutions were
reversed, the long-term reverberations of the events were far-reaching.

Alexis de Tocqueville remarked in his *Recollections* of the period that "society was cut in two: those who had nothing united in common envy, and those who had anything united in common terror."

Great Britain, the Kingdom of Poland, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Principality of Serbia and the Russian and Ottoman Empires were the only major European states to go without a national revolution over this period.

These revolutions arose from such a wide variety of causes that it is difficult to view them as resulting from a coherent movement or social phenomenon. Numerous changes had been taking place in European society throughout the first half of the 19th century. Both liberal reformers and radical politicians were reshaping national governments. Technological change was revolutionizing the life of the working classes. A popular press extended political awareness, and new values and ideas such as popular liberalism, nationalism and socialism began to spring up. A series of economic downturns and crop failures, particularly those in the year 1846, produced starvation among peasants and the working urban poor.

Large swathes of the nobility were discontented with royal absolutism or near-absolutism.

Both the lower middle classes and the working classes wanted liberal reform. The revolutions of 1848 were an expression of this sentiment. While much of the impetus came from the middle classes, much of the cannon fodder came from the lower. The revolts first erupted in the cities.

**Urban poor**
The population in French rural areas had rapidly risen, causing many peasants to seek a living in the cities. Many in the bourgeoisie feared and distanced themselves from the working poor, who had shown their muscle in 1789. The uneducated, teeming masses seemed a fertile breeding ground of vice. Urban industrial workers toiled from 13 to 15 hours per day, living in squalid, disease-ridden slums. Traditional artisans felt the pressure of industrialization, having lost their guilds. Social critics such as Marx became
popular, and secret societies sprang up. At the time of the Revolution, there was widespread unemployment as a result of an economic crisis that began in 1846, and workers agitated for the right to vote and for state subsidies to the major trades.

The situation in the German states was similar. Prussia had quickly industrialized. Worker living standards had dropped; alcohol consumption had gone up in the 1840s. During the decade of the 1840s, mechanized production in the textile industry brought about inexpensive clothing that undercut the handmade products of German tailors. Reforms ameliorated (improved) the most unpopular traditions of feudalism, but industrial workers saw little immediate gain from the emerging socio-economic system of capitalism and the accompanying social changes.

**Rural areas**

Rural population growth had led to food shortages, land pressure, and migration, both within Europe and out from Europe (for example, to the United States). Population concentration led to disease, especially cholera, which contemporary scientists had not yet connected with contaminated water supplies. In the years 1845 and 1846, a potato blight, originating in Belgium, caused a subsistence crisis in Northern Europe. The effects of the blight were most severely manifested in the Great Irish Famine (where it was combined with rack-rents and concurrent export of cash crops), but also caused famine-like conditions in the Scottish Highlands and throughout Continental Europe.

Aristocratic wealth (and corresponding power) was synonymous with the ownership of land. Owning land at this time was practically synonymous with having peasants under one's control, often duty-bound to labor for their masters. In a problem mirroring that of slaveholders in the United States, a principal aristocratic problem was controlling one's laborers. Peasant grievances exploded during the revolutionary year of 1848.

**Revolution in the German states**

The "March Revolution" in the German states took place in the south and the west of Germany, with large popular
assemblies and mass demonstrations. They primarily demanded freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, arming of the people and a national German parliament.

Following the Revolutions of 1848 and Ludwig's low popularity, Ludwig I abdicated the throne to avoid a potential coup, and allowed his son, Maximilian II, to become the King of Bavaria. Maximilian II responded to the demands of the people for a united German state by attending the Frankfurt Assembly, which intended to create such a state. Maximilian II stood alongside Bavaria's ally, the Austrian Empire, in opposition to Austria's enemy, the Kingdom of Prussia, which was to receive the imperial crown of a united Germany. This opposition was resented by many Bavarian citizens, who wanted a united Germany, but in the end Prussia declined accepting the crown and the constitution of a German state they perceived to be too liberal and not in Prussia's interests.