



## Switzerland: Compiled Genealogies

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FamilySearch

### JULIUS BILLETER'S RESEARCH

- Fully researched the surname in a parish, including citizens residing in other parishes
- 3,000 family surnames, recorded on approximately 72,500 pages
- Total of 2,000,000 individuals

### RESOURCES FOR FINDING RESEARCHED SURNAMES

- FamilySearch Catalog – search by surname. These will include family books compiled by Julius Billeter on specific surnames. The FamilySearch Catalog does not include information on the microfilmed handwritten notes.
- FamilySearch Wiki – growing database of parishes, some including information on researched surnames for the parishes.
- Published guides; available at the Family History Library
- Basel Genealogical Society, [www.ghgrb.ch](http://www.ghgrb.ch), has the original Billeter notes; their website has a database of all surnames and parishes in the Billeter collection
- List of cantonal codes found at: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cantons\\_of\\_Switzerland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cantons_of_Switzerland)

### ACTIVITY

Go to the Basel Genealogical Society's website at [www.ghgrb.ch](http://www.ghgrb.ch). Find the Billeter collection.

1. One record states that Anna Wegmüller was a citizen of the parish of Vechigen, in Canton Bern. Is there a Billeter genealogy that could be of assistance? \_\_\_\_\_

Now, go to the FamilySearch Catalog at [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org).

2. Is the Wegmüller family genealogy found in the FamilySearch Catalog, specifically for the town of Vechigen in Bern? \_\_\_\_\_

One ancestor, Wibratha Walser, was a citizen of Wald, in Canton Appenzell. Go to the FamilySearch Wiki page for Wald parish, Appenzell, Switzerland, or to the Billeter surnames binder, and answer the following questions:

3. Is the Walser family genealogy found in the Family History Library? \_\_\_\_\_
4. If so, what is the film number? \_\_\_\_\_

## **GENEALOGIES IN SWITZERLAND – STRENGTHS**

- Extracted the surname in all available parish church records (including “outside” baptisms); few “missing” family members. The exception to this is for citizens who were born outside the parish – only those citizens registered in the home parish show up in Billeter’s genealogies.
- Family groups are usually accurate.
- Many of the genealogies are indexed in the International Genealogical Index.

## **GENEALOGIES IN SWITZERLAND – WEAKNESSES**

- No source citations
- Quality of research varies widely
- Invented birthdates for people he could not easily identify
- Transcription errors
- No event locations
- Generational connections can be very problematic

## **THE PROBLEMS THAT BILLETER FACED**

- Names are common in ancestral parish
- The information in parish records could be minimal
- The records Billeter had access to were typically limited to parish records
- The sheer volume of research he undertook meant he had to do quick research.
- Example
  - Four Hans Schmids, born 1700, 1702, 1704, and 1706
  - Four Hans Schmids, married 1724, 1728, 1730, and 1731
  - Billeter assumed they were married in the same order they were born (meaning, Hans Schmid born 1700 marries 1724, Hans born 1702 marries 1728, Hans born 1704 marries 1730, and Hans born 1706 marries 1731)