“Observations on the Swiss Genealogical Research of Julius Billeter in Comparison with Original Bernese Vital Records”

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Julius Billeter (1869-1957), a Swiss genealogist who returned to his native homeland from the United States and spent many decades engaged in researching Swiss families, compiled genealogical records of over 2700 clans. His research notes are in private possession in Lucerne, but have been microfilmed by the Genealogical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Utah and are available through its branch library system throughout most of the western world. With the help of a secretary his notes were typed into large-format books in register form, in which family units appear chronologically, usually covering a time span from the early 16th century to the latter 19th or even early 20th century. The record books are divided into columns under the following headings: Names, Born, Where Born or Where From, Died, and Relationship. Virtually each family unit appearing in a Billeter record is cross-referenced to that of the paternal grandparents, as well as to those of the sons who married and established new family units. The families recorded in a single Billeter register are generally from one community of origin, i.e., the place where that clan holds rights of citizenship.

Swiss citizenship is based on inherited rights maintained in a specific community, known as a community of origin (Heimatort/Lieu d’origine). Vital records of all persons who maintain rights of citizenship in any given community are therefore, at least in theory, recorded in that community of origin, regardless of where a person lived or an event took place. Because this system has been in effect for over three centuries, the community of origin of a Swiss person or family enables one to compile not only the ancestral line of an individual but quite literally to compile a record of an entire family or clan who all bear the same surname and maintain rights of citizenship in a given community. Because the community of origin is a records center for virtually an entire clan, it is not an impossible task to compile a register of any clan in any given community, and through the aid of the often detailed entries in the parish registers establish the relationship of a majority of the families to each other. Billeter did that very thing in his work, and his completed product was a beautiful record of a clan which gave every appearance of being accurate, authoritative and complete.

In comparing numerous Billeter records with the original Berneseparochial registers and other vital records, I have come to the conclusion that at least five major areas of discrepancy appear consistently throughout those records which he compiled of families who were natives of Switzerland’s Canton Bern. First, from Billeter’s notes it is apparent that he only extracted names and dates from the parochial registers and evidently ignored such important augmenting facts as age at death, relationships, and actual place of residence, i.e., for example, the name of the area or farm. Second, only as an exception did he indicate when an event (christening, marriage or burial) took place outside of the community of origin. Third, through limiting his extracts to only the community of origin, which is generally the case in his records, incomplete records of families who had moved from their community of origin were compiled because they did not include events which for one reason or another had not been registered in the community of origin. Fourth, by
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grouping the earliest identified heads of families together and forming one or a few family groups, consisting usually only of brothers who were allegedly sons of a Mr. and Mrs. X, i.e., whatever surname the record is, the impression is given as though all members of the clan are descended from one common ancestor, whose given name is often not known, regardless as to when the parish registers begin, that period of time in Canton Bern being as early as the 1530’s and extending to the late 17th century. Finally, fifth, inasmuch as sufficient information for positive genealogical identification of some individuals was lacking in the parish registers and registers of citizens, their exclusive use led to erroneous relationships, which through the use of other parish-level records could often have been correctly determined.

A typical example of the confusion of data which is found in the records of Bernese clans compiled by Billeter is that of the genealogical identification of Hans Roth (1809-1873), a native of the alpine community of Grindelwald, who settled in the Jura mountains of Canton Neuchâtel, where he will have a large posterity. According to the Roth family record compiled by Billeter, Hans Roth was born out of wedlock to Anna Burgener and Hans Roth on 23 February 1809. The same record indicates that the father, Hans, was born on 20 September 1761 and married twice, first to Anna Moser, for whom no marriage record was noted, and secondly to Elisabeth Gyger, whom he married on 11 May 1816, allegedly in Grindelwald. Billeter’s record further states that Katharina Roth, born 29 November 1796, was the only legitimate child of Hans Roth and Anna Moser. No children were born to Hans Roth’s second wife, Elisabeth Gyger.

The original christening record of Hans Roth states that he was christened in Grindelwald on 26 February 1809. No date of birth is recorded. His birthdate of 23 February is recorded in the Grindelwald Register of Citizens. Hans’ parents’ names are recorded in the original christening record as: Hans Roth, Christian’s son, “unter der Salz”, the acknowledged father, and Anna Burgener, Christian’s daughter, “Hinter der Kirche”. This information coincides with the data recorded in the Grindelwald Register of Citizens, which was established during Hans Roth’s lifetime. The christening record therefore clearly establishes the parentage of Hans Roth, as well as also stating the names of both grandfathers and the important fact as to the place of residence of the parents.

Billeter maintains that Hans Roth’s father was married twice. The original marriage record of Hans Roth and Elisabeth Gyger is recorded in Frutigen, where they were married in 1816, the registration of which was sent back to Grindelwald and recorded in the parochial registers as well as the register of citizens. Both of those records state that Hans Roth, Christian’s son, was “in Frutigen”, thereby indicating that he was living there at the time of his marriage in 1816. A search of the parish registers in Frutigen proves that only one Roth family who were citizens of Grindelwald was residing in Frutigen early in the 19th century. Elisabeth Gyger died in Frutigen in 1838 and was followed in death by her husband, Hans Roth, in 1850. The original 1850 death record in Frutigen states that Hans Roth was 55 years of age, thereby proving that he is identical with the Hans Roth who was christened in Frutigen on 11 June 1797, the twin son of Christian Roth and Katharina Klopfen. The original marriage record of Christian Roth and Katharina Klopfen in Grindelwald in 1796 states that Christian Roth was living “am Wols” and that Katharina Klopfen was living in Frutigen, thereby establishing the residence of Christian Roth in Grindelwald prior to his moving to Frutigen, where his posterity remained. These records thus prove that the Hans Roth who married Elisabeth Gyger is not identical with the Hans Roth living “unter der Salz” in Grindelwald, and is therefore not the father of Hans Roth who settled in the Neuchâtel Jura.

In Billeter’s record no marriage date is noted for Hans Roth’s alleged first marriage to Anna Moser. No marriage was recorded for Hans Roth and Anna Moser in the Grindelwald parish registers. The christening record of Katharina in 1796 states that she was the illegitimate child of Hans Roth, “im Grund”, and Anna Moser. Her godparents included Margaretha and Elisabeth Roth, both residing “im Grund”, and sisters of the infant’s father. This re-
cord thereby eliminates this Hans Roth "im Grund" as being identical with Hans Roth "unter der Sulz" who fathered Hans, born out of wedlock in 1809.

Billetter stated that the father of Hans Roth born in 1809 was Hans born on 20 September 1761. The parish registers of Grindelwald include the christening (not the birth – Billetter rarely differentiated between dates of birth and christening) of Hans on 20 September 1761, the son of Christian Roth residing at "Sueblatten" and Anna Müller. Inasmuch as research indicates that this Roth family were at "Sueblatten" for many years, it is also certain that the Hans christened on 20 September 1761 is not identical with the Hans Roth "unter der Sulz" who was the father of the illegitimate son born in 1809.

Up to this point in the research, it has been established that Billetter combined data of three distinct Hans Roths, i.e., Hans Roth who lived in Frutigen but originated from Grindelwald, "am Wahr"; Hans Roth, who lived in Grindelwald "im Grund" and fathered an illegitimate daughter by Anna Moser; and Hans Roth, who was born and raised at "Sueblatten" in Burglauenen on the outskirts of Grindelwald; and called this composite Hans Roth the father of the Hans Roth who was born out of wedlock in 1809. One of these men could only be identified as having been the father of the illegitimate Hans Roth if it could be proved that he had moved to the farm "unter der Sulz"; thereby eliminating the possibility of any other Roth family having lived there at that time.

Inasmuch as the original christening record from 1809 states that the father of the child was Hans Roth who lived on the Grindelwald farm "unter der Sulz," a search was made to determine if a Roth family lived on that farm. The Grindelwald marriage register includes the marriage record of Christian Roth "unter der Sulz" and Verena Bohren, Bartholomäus' daughter, who married there in 1773. Seven children were born to them between 1774 and 1791, six of the christening records stating that Christian Roth was living "unter der Sulz." The fourth child, Hans, christened in Grindelwald on 1 February 1778, is therefore identical with the Hans Roth, Christian's son, "unter der Sulz," who was the acknowledged father of Hans Roth born in 1809.

Therefore, the record of this Roth family compiled by Billetter used data pertaining to four individual families, rather than just one, which in turn falsifies the correct relationships within all four families as they appear in the Billetter record. Billetter's record of the family of Christian Roth and Verena Bohren, does indicate that Verena's father was Bartholomäus Bohren. That fact is established in the marriage record of Christian and Verena, which Billetter obviously consulted in order to include such information in his register. However, by not having noted the name of the farm "unter der Sulz" which was also recorded in the original marriage record, Billetter was not able to correctly compile the record of the Roth family "unter der Sulz," and because of that omission he presumably inadvertently distorted the genealogical data of the three branches of the Roth families, "am Wahr," "im Grund," and at "Sueblatten."

Another example of inconsistency is found in the record of the Roth clan in the death dates of Christian Roth and his wife, Verena Gorner, who married in 1733. Billetter states that Christian died on 26 April 1766 and Verena died on 20 October 1767. The original 1766 burial record (Billetter also neglected to differentiate between death and burial dates) states that Christian Roth was a husband some 60 years of age, residing "auf der Flüh, hinter Itramen." The original 1767 death record states that Verena Gorner was the "wife [not widow] of Christian Roth, auf dem Hubel," thereby establishing the fact that Christian Roth who married Verena Gorner in 1733 resided "auf dem Hubel" and was still alive when his wife died in 1767. Furthermore, the burial record of Verena Ammeter in 1782 states that she was the widow of "the late Christian Roth auf der Flüh, hinter Itramen."

As has been shown, any supplementary information in any given entry in the parish registers – christenings, marriages or burials – must be evaluated along with all of the extracted data pertaining to a clan in order to be certain that the proper relationships are reconstructed among the families within the clan. Because Billetter neglected to extract anything but names and dates, as evidenced by his original notes and the typed results of his
research, he was unable to accurately compile records of families within a clan.

Bernese registers of citizens were begun on a local basis approximately 1823/5. A record of each family unit who maintained rights of citizenship in the community was established at that time. However, children or parents who were already deceased, were generally omitted from that record. Experience has shown that the records of stillborn children and children who died prior to christening and therefore were only recorded in the parochial burial registers have been omitted in the Billeter compilations, evidently because he did not consistently extract data from the burial registers after the beginning of the local register of citizens.

The second general area of discrepancy which consistently appears throughout Billeter’s records of Bernese families and is genealogically very misleading to those who do not have the opportunity to verify the Billeter compilation from the original vital records, is the fact that the actual places of birth/christening, marriage and death/burial outside of the community of origin were only noted by Billeter as an exception. In a certain sense one may not criticize Billeter on this point because following the column in which birth dates were noted, the next column is entitled “Where Born or Where From”. In nearly all instances only one place name appears on a page under the foregoing column heading. Therefore, a person using a Billeter compilation is led to believe just what Billeter stated, i.e., that everyone appearing on that page unless otherwise noted, was “born” or “from” the community whose name appears at the top of the column. Billeter himself stated on the title page of each of his compilations that “all persons not otherwise marked are of the above noted town”, i.e., community of origin. In that sense Billeter was correct, in that the persons whose names are recorded in his registers are all “of”, meaning literally “citizens of”, in the purely Swiss legal sense of the term, the stated community of origin. Billeter obviously translated directly from German when he said “of” a specific community of origin, as legally, the word “von” in Switzerland, is used to refer exclusively to the community of origin, which was not necessarily, and as of the mid-eighteenth century indeed quite rarely, the community of residence. Persons not familiar with this peculiarity and the unique form of Swiss citizenship being based on a community level are therefore misled by the English terminology “where born or where from” which appears on all of Billeter’s records. They commonly assume that all vital events recorded on any given page of a Billeter record occurred in the community named at the top of the page.

Because in his own notes he neglected to record the actual places where events occurred, Billeter unfortunately made the mistake of erroneously reconstructing families as though they had indeed all lived together in one community. This often resulted in errors of relationships which extended over several generations within any given patrilineal branch of a clan, or even of individual branches being incorrectly merged into a common line. An example of this problem has already been mentioned in the case of Hans Roth, Christian’s son, “am Wolf” in Grindelwald, whose father married there in 1796 and moved to Frutigen, where his wife had resided prior to her marriage, and where they remained with their posterity. By not having included the actual place where events occurred, Billeter thereby confused Hans Roth, Christian’s son, “in Frutigen”, with the Hans Roth, Christian’s son, “unter der Salz” in Grindelwald.

Another example of this problem is found in the compilation of the Dällenbach clan which maintains citizenship in the Bernese communities of Otterbach and Aeschlen, both of which are in the ecclesiastical parish of Oberdiessbach. Although all of the christenings, marriages and burials of those clan members who actually resided in their community of origin where they maintained rights of citizenship took place in the church at Oberdiessbach, only the names of Aeschlen or Otterbach appear on the 113 typewritten pages of the Dällenbach record. The name Oberdiessbach appears only twice in the entire record, and then only in reference to the place of origin of women who married into the Dällenbach family. Nearly half of the over 100 christening entries of Dällenbach children recorded in Oberdiessbach between 1700 and 1750
took place in a church other than at Oberdiessbach. In nearly all instances those families who had children christened in churches other than Oberdiessbach were permanently living outside of the ecclesiastical parish in which their community of origin was located. Nevertheless, Billeter has assumed immediate but erroneous relationships between families who, for example, were known to have lived in the Emmental region and families who had been in the Bernese Jura and lake region for many years.

Closely related to the foregoing area of discrepancy in the Billeter compilations is what I have called a third major problem, viz., the limitation of extracts pertaining to a given clan to only those records registered in the community of origin. During the late 17th century poor laws in that part of Switzerland under Bernese dominion had been implemented, resulting in a stricter control of citizenship rights. By this time it became necessary to report incidents of vital statistics, particularly christenings and marriages, to the pastor of the parish in which the community of origin was located. This system of registering the births, actually christenings, of non-resident citizens did not function smoothly until well into the 18th century. And, only since unified civil registration has existed throughout the Confederation of Switzerland since 1 January 1876, has the system functioned as it was meant to originally.

The registration of births/christenings, and also marriages and deaths/burials, which were sent back to the pastor of the parish of origin, provide indispensable information as to where further research must be conducted in order to compile a complete and accurate record of any clan. Without searching the vital records of all communities where members of a clan were known to have lived (at least through 1875), it is impossible to compile an exhaustive, definitive genealogy. For example, among the 29 Dollenbach families who had children christened between 1700 and 1750, records of further children were found for five families in the parishes where they were residing. In most cases, such records pertain to children who died before reaching adulthood. However, often the records of female births/christenings were not even sent back to the parish of origin for registration, presumably because upon marriage, a woman assumed the citizenship rights in the community where her husband already maintained them.

Another case of an incomplete family in the Billeter record is that of Bartholomäus Martig (1718-1793), a miller who was a citizen of the Bernese parish of St. Stephan, and his wife, Barbara Ludi. Billeter listed six children in his record, allegedly all born in St. Stephan between 1748 and 1762. Complete dates of birth were only given for three of the six children. A search of the parish registers in St. Stephan indicated that the eldest child, Katharina, was actually christened in Lenk in Simmental, a neighboring parish to St. Stephan. Only the two youngest daughters, who were christened in 1760 and 1762, were actually christened in the church at St. Stephan. Because of the indispensable information that the family had at least for a time been in Lenk, where Katharina was christened in 1748, a search of the parish registers was conducted there. The christening records of three heretofore unknown daughters, twins in 1749 and another daughter in 1750, were found in Lenk. Furthermore, the christening record of the eldest son, Bartholomäus, was located in Lenk and therefore a specific date of christening was established, as opposed to merely the year of his birth which appeared in Billeter’s compilation. The christening records of two further sons, also heretofore unknown, were located in the same parish in 1752 and 1755. The christening of the next son, Johannes, was found in 1756, as opposed to the approximated year of 1751 which Billeter had assigned to him. The christening record of the next daughter, the last of the nine Martig children who were christened in Lenk in Simmental, provided her actual date of christening, rather than the approximated year of her birth which appeared in Billeter’s record. Therefore, the complete family of Bartholomäus Martig and Barbara Ludi consisted of eleven children, nine of whom were christened in Lenk in Simmental, as opposed to the six children whom Billeter identified from the parochial registers in St. Stephan.

The registration of vital statistics of events which
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occurred outside of the country, whether it be Switzerland, or the ancient Republic of Berne, was only noted in the parish of the community of origin upon the request of the individuals concerned, sometimes many decades after the event occurred. Strangely enough, not all of the records of such events in foreign countries were registered in the Bernese parish of origin were extracted by Billeter and included in his compilations. This has been particularly noted, for example, among the peasant cheesemakers who emigrated from the Bernese Oberland and settled in Russia throughout the 19th century. Both the parish registers as well as the register of citizens (Bürgerregister/Burgermel) often include notations made by pastors or other officials concerning emigration from the community of origin. Billeter compiled a record of the Brawand clan who were citizens of Matten near Interlaken in the heart of the Bernese Alps, but failed to note a comment made about Peter Brawand (1801-1856), about whom was recorded in the Matten Register of Citizens that in the spring of 1833 he sent notification from Copenhagen to the civil authorities in Matten of his intention of immigrating to the United States. No further vital records for Peter are found in Switzerland. However, Peter Brawand did not immigrate to the USA until 23 years later. In 1833 he was married in Hillerod to Maren Sophie Larsen Wiberg (1803-1853), a native of Nakskov, and widow of Johannes Benz (1791-1834), a stone mason from Wallisellen in the Swiss Canton of Zurich, who had been working in Copenhagen. Peter and Maren Sophie became the parents of three daughters, one born in Hillerod and the others in Copenhagen. After the death of his wife in Copenhagen in 1833, Peter took his two surviving daughters to Switzerland to visit his relatives. In 1856 they departed for America, where Peter and his eldest daughter died crossing the plains as Mormon Pioneers.

The fourth major area of concern in using Billeter's records is that he often tried to reconstruct families in a time period where insufficient information was recorded. The first family unit in the Grindelwald Roth register is that of Peter Roth, allegedly born "about 1490", and his wife, whom Billeter has called Mrs. Peter Roth, allegedly born "about 1491". Billeter lists four sons of this couple: Hans, born "about 1514"; Peter, born "about 1515"; "Johgi-Jakob", born "about 1516", and Marti, born "about 1518". The parish registers in Grindelwald begin in 1557 and often indicate the given name of the fathers of the bride and groom. Therefore, apparently, only for this reason, the four aforementioned children, all of whom at the time of their marriages were called sons of a Peter Roth, were grouped together as alleged brothers. In other words, Billeter made the unfounded assumption that there was only one Peter Roth in Grindelwald at that time having children. Another similar case in the Roth register is that of the alleged family of Hans Roth, born "about 1514", and his wife, Anna Rieder, born "about 1516". Billeter assigns them seven children with "about" dates, all of whom marry, and therefore whose fathers' names are stated, plus two children who were christened after the registers began. In spite of the fact that Hans is such a common given name, Billeter has assigned eight children who lived to maturity to the same couple. There simply is no proof that the eight children who married were all sons and daughters of the same Hans Roth, to say nothing of the Hans Roth who married Anna Rieder.

An even more extreme example of this type of fantasy is found in Billeter's record of the Stucki clan of Diemtigen. The first family in the record consists of Mr. Stucki and Mrs. Stucki, for whom no other information is given, and their alleged children: Jakob, born "about 1540"; Hans, born "about 1546"; Michel, born "about 1548"; Benedikta, born "about 1552"; and Gilgen, born "about 1553". These five children then appear in Billeter's compilation as parents, but with no other information which further identifies them. There simply is no proof that Jakob, Hans, Michel, Benedikta and Gilgen were really brothers and sister.

The fifth area to which attention must be paid is that of using all available records, at least on a parish level, rather than limiting the reconstruction of relationships within the clan to only that information which can be gleaned from the parish registers and register of citizens. As has been already
stated, Billeter unfortunately did not even use all of the information recorded in these two basic sources. Had all of the notations contained in these sources been evaluated, fewer errors in the relationships among and within family units would have been made. However, parish registers and registers of citizens do not always contain enough information to accurately identify some individuals. This is especially the case with illegitimate children and children with common names in an area where the pastor neglected to record other identifying information such as the name of the farm or the father's occupation or title. In some such cases it is impossible to genealogically identify the individual from extant sources. However, the use of other local primary records, if such exist, can often result in a more complete identification.

In the record of the Dällenbach clan which has already been cited, Barbara Dällenbach, who was christened in Oberdiessbach on 12 May 1763, is recorded as being the illegitimate daughter of Christian Dällenbach (1737-1820) and Verena Schindler, the widow of Beat Bigler. According to the original christening record, Barbara's mother was the *wife* of Bendicht Bigler, a citizen of Allmendingen, rather than the widow of a Beat Bigler. Billeter arbitrarily assigned a Christian Dällenbach as Barbara's father, viz., Christian Dällenbach who was married in Trub in 1763 to Maria Scheidegger, and following her death, to Barbara Jenni. Insomuch as illegitmitacies came under the jurisdiction of the parochial consistory court, it is logical to consult the minutes of the court's proceedings when trying to establish the genealogical identity of the parents. In the case of Barbara Dällenbach, the court minutes state that Christian Dällenbach acknowledged the paternity of the child, but that he was in extremely poor circumstances and was already burdened with nine living children. That fact proves that the Christian Dällenbach who fathered Barbara was not Christian Dällenbach (1737-1820) who married for the first time in the year that Barbara was born, but instead a Christian who already had nine living children by then. Upon evaluating the other Christian Dällenbach family units, only one meets that criterion, viz., Christian Dällenbach (1707-1776), the husband of Elisabeth Kiener, by whom he had twelve children between 1729 and 1751, nine of whom were still living in 1763.

Another example of augmenting the parish registers with other primary sources is that of the identification of Peter Mani, a citizen of Schwenden in Diemtigen, who was married in Aubonne in 1740 to Susanna Kohli, a citizen of Wahlern. Billeter lists seven children of that union and states, in a rather extraordinary exception, that the family lived in the Aubonne district. The christening records of nine children are recorded in the parish of Burtigny. In three of those records, Barbara Mani, sister to the infants' father, was recorded as a godmother. Christian Mani, a brother of the infants' father, was recorded as a godfather in four of the Burtigny christening records. Even though Billeter had the correct death date for Peter Mani, viz., 17 May 1773, which death record stated that Peter was a husband somewhat over 66 years of age, he approximated his year of birth to be "about 1708" and arbitrarily assigned him to the family of Christian Mani and Margaretha Wrenn, who, however, did not have a daughter named Barbara. In evaluating the extracts of the other Mani families of Schwenden, the family of Johannes Mani and Barbara Neuenschwander showed them as being parents of six children, including Peter, christened in Amsoldingen in 1706, but not recorded in the Billeter register because his christening was not sent back to Diemtigen for registration; Barbara, christened in Diemtigen in 1709; and Christian, christened in Diemtigen in 1718. The only Peter who appeared in the Billeter register who could have been considered as a possibility was Peter Mani (1718-1794), the son of Peter Mani and Christina Fafri. However, a parochial census, a rare historical record in the Bernese region, taken by the pastor in 1775, states that Susanna Kohli (1719-1813) was a widow, thereby proving that she was not married to Peter Mani (1706-1773).

In conclusion, it should be pointed out that although they must be used with extreme caution, the family records of Bernese clans compiled by Julius Billeter are very valuable in comparative genealogical research.
cal studies. Billeter’s extracts of individual births/christenings provide a nearly perfect framework for the basic family units in any given clan. The format is excellent and because the finished product looks so good and is easy to follow and understand, most people who use the Billeter records are under the impression that his genealogies are accurate and complete. This is especially the case for those who have no opportunity to compare his compilations with the original records. Because of his reputation as a successful genealogist, some other would-be Swiss professionals have followed his methods and format in compiling their own records, unfortunately often with the same quality of results.

In using some 10% of Billeter’s completed records, it has been the experience of the author that each of them has contained numerous cases of erroneous genealogical relationships, invariably based upon at least one of the five main points discussed above. The examples cited in this discussion were intentionally chosen from a small number of clans, in order to emphasize the diversity of problems within the compilation of any given clan. The basis of this initial investigation was limited to clans native to the Bernese region. Before the criticisms which apply to Billeter’s Bernese compilations can be generalized to apply to all of his work, further studies and comparisons must be made of his work in other areas, where other documents supplementary to the parish registers and registers of citizens may be available, for example, in the Zürich region, where those parishes which historically fell within the jurisdiction of the Zürich church kept so-called Population Registers as of 1633/4, and later, Registers of Households.

It is hoped that even though Billeter’s genealogies were limited almost exclusively to Germanic-speaking Switzerland, the foregoing discussion can serve as a caution for accepting his published or professionally-looking typed genealogies of Bernese families as being necessarily accurate, authoritative and complete.