

The Swiss Colony of New Glarus

By John Luchsinger*

In the northern part of Green County, Wisconsin, about sixteen miles north of Monroe, the county-seat, and about twenty-five miles southwest of Madison, is situated the little village of New Glarus. This village, as well as the township in which it lies, was so named after the canton and town of Glarus in eastern Switzerland, of which place the inhabitants are natives or their descendants. Pleasantly located on the west bank of Little Sugar River, on sloping ground, and in the midst of varied, rather rough, yet pleasing scenery, it presents a romantic and somewhat un-American appearance, owing to the diversified style of its buildings, and its plain yet queer church tower, unlike any other outside of the old country. The houses are mostly built on the border of the streets, there being no sidewalks for foot passengers, nor space in front for shade trees. The village contains about fifty dwellings, with barns and other out-buildings. There are two churches, two school-houses, a grist and sawmill run by water power, a large cheese factory, a brewery, three stores and four hotels and saloons.

The population is about two hundred. A physician, a minister of the Swiss Reformed Church, and two school-masters reside in the place, and attend to the medical, religious, and educational wants of the people. There are, besides, artisans, mechanics and laborers of all trades and occupations needed by a community of

* The writer of this paper, Hon. John Luchsinger, was born in the canton of Glarus, Switzerland, June 29th, 1839; was brought by his parents, while yet a child, to the United States in 1845, first settling in Syracuse, N. Y., and the same year removing to Philadelphia, where young Luchsinger received his education in the Jefferson grammar school. He settled among his countrymen at New Glarus, Wisconsin, in 1856, where he has held various town offices, and served in the legislature in 1873, 1876, 1877, and 1878, with credit to himself and usefulness to the people.