

Life story : emigration from Switzerland and immigration to New Zealand in 1956/1960

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Life Story

Emigration from Switzerland and Immigration to New Zealand in 1956/1960

Margrit Lousie Imfeld and Rinaldo Werner Rust
(Born 1935, married 2nd August 1960)



Our background:

Margrit (Gritli) enjoyed a Catholic upbringing in Lungern, Obwalden as the third daughter of a family with six girls and one boy. Her father worked as part of a dynasty of Rail employees on the Luzern-Interlaken narrow gauge-cogwheel line. Gritli achieved a diploma in Children's and Maternity nursing and experienced employment in a private practice.

Rinaldo, the fourth son of Cecile and Leo Rust, grew up under precarious economic circumstances in a 'peasant' dairy farming family. The family owned four cows and farmed on five hectares of pre-alpine pasture in Neu St. Johann, Obertoggenburg in Eastern Switzerland. I also had a Catholic upbringing which shaped my life similarly to Gritli's.

Rinaldo's emigration with his Parents 1956

In 1953 two of my brothers (Leo and Hanspeter) found employment in New Zealand on a fellow Swiss immigrant's dairy farm. With letters, photos and tape recordings being sent to us promising an easier life in New Zealand, my parents' forward thinking pointed towards immigrating to New Zealand. This thought was filled with hope, heart ache and joy, with homesickness diminishing as the years went by. This



resolution is worthy of a separate chapter in a 'Book of Memories'. My parents' final decision to 'go or not to go' rested on my shoulders. The deciding factor in 1955 was that they would go if Rinaldo went with them, since he could speak some English. My apprenticeship at the 'Gemeindeverwaltung in Nesslau' finished in 1955 and military service 'Rekrutenschule' followed, allowing me to help plan my parent's emigration to New Zealand. My plan was to stay for three years and then return to Switzerland to follow my chosen path, gaining proficiency as 'Grundbuchverwalter'.

The shock of leaving the emotionally-attached and much loved mountainous surroundings of the Saentis, Churfürsten, and Speer, with the valley and its villages below, was drastic. Loosing close bonds held with my sister Hannelore, brother Ernst and his wife Theres, other relatives left behind, as well as a whole array of local friends (Church Choir, shooting club, jodelling club, gymnastics club and professional career friends), was such that home-sickness set in on arrival to New Zealand. The chances for me working as a clerk in an office proved impossible, but the prospects as a dairy farm worker were good, and I could earn good money, something which was high on my priority list since I had arrived penniless. Working with the Swiss work ethic, it was inevitable to earn the respect and friendship of our Kiwi farm owner employers. The planned return trip by boat (S.M. Rangitoto) from Auckland to England via the Panama Canal, after farm working for three years in NZ, became a reality in June 1959. After some weeks holidaying with old friends, the reality of Swiss living and working, together with the implications of a cold and wet autumn with a 'never-ending' European winter, made me forget the home sickness I experienced so deeply during the past three years in NZ.

Margrit and Rinaldo's emigration and life in New Zealand in 1960

1959 to 1960 -- after working as an office clerk back in Erlenbach, Switzerland for one year, I met and married Gritli (Imfeld), sister-in-law to my eldest brother Ernst Jacob Rust. Our intended journey to NZ was scheduled for August 1960, leaving from Basel, sailing to Rotterdam and arriving in Wellington. Part of this journey on the "William Ruys"

will stay in our memories for sure. It was in the Indian Ocean that we encountered a large cyclone and as it was impossible to sail around it, the captain was forced to go through it. It was a harrowing experience lasting two hours sailing into the middle of the cyclone, and a further two hours passing through the other side of the cyclone. I seemed to be the only passenger who chose to stay 'on deck' and in that time observed members of the crew preparing the life-boats and filling their tanks with petrol!

Disembarking in Wellington on 13th September 1960, we were not only welcomed by family members, but also by windy, rainy and cold weather. This was most bewildering to Gritli who remembered my earlier tales of so much fine weather at springtime in New Zealand. After collecting our luggage, we discovered that the wharf workers' union would not allow the workers to unload our Austin 80 car because it was in an uncovered hold on the boat. Waiting for our transport meant we had to shelter for three nights and days, so we chose the Salvation Army's "Peoples Palace", waiting for the rain to stop so that the union workers could begin to unload again. This experience is well remembered, as it added to the recent expense of marriage and travel costs. After seeing snowflakes fall one night while in Wellington, we finally managed to leave on a warm September's day, arriving and settling in with my parents who were share-milking with my brother on a Swiss/Kiwi's dairy farm near Whakatane.



Thanks to my brother's rugby connections, I found a suitable farm job at Tamahere near Hamilton. My employer and I enjoyed listening to opera music while milking 94 cows in a walk-through shed on his 100 acre dairy farm. Gritli and I lived in a welcoming farm cottage, where we had a vegetable garden and

Life Story continued

some chooks. Wages were modest, but milk, meat and some Huntly coal to keep us warm was freely available. Coal was also used to provide hot water for the cow-shed in those days. Gritli had many new experiences and one big disappointment was the wooden stove/coal range that appeared to her impossible to use. I promised we would only stay until I found a job with an electric stove. However, we experienced three wonderful years in that house, and we will never forget the best chocolate cakes made by that coal range. Gritli had become well accustomed to it, and almost regretted leaving it behind when we moved to the next farm working job.



Life in New Zealand for Gritli required her to learn a new language and share in some strange experiences. She was, and still is, somewhat shy by nature and preferred me to engage in conversation on her behalf. We soon realised this was a mistake, and she eventually took 'the plunge', allowing herself to be taken for a shopping trip to Cambridge with our kind farm owner's wife. Finding the German to English dictionary of little use, Gritli had to use sign language to convey the things she wished to purchase.

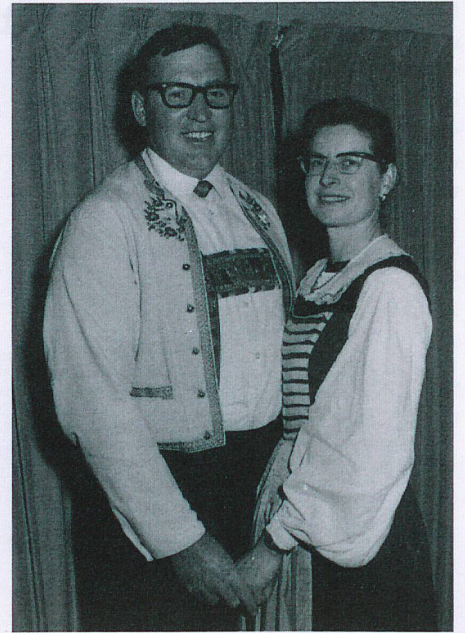
Our first daughter, Christine was born in 1961, and after two years our son, Noldy came along, providing much practice for Gritli to implement her Swiss trained knowledge as maternity and children's nurse. Neighbours refrained from saying, but must have found it strange, that Gritli never consulted the Plunket organisation as was the usual thing to do. Those were the days when you allowed yourself to discipline your offspring at an early date - the play pen was useful as a 'holding pen' and the purpose-built leather harness prevented your 'darling' from running wild, or grabbing things off the shelf in the modern self-help shop.

In 1963 my second farm worker's job took us back to Houchen Road, the town supply farm I had been working on as a single man from 1956 to 1959. During those years, delivery of town milk

in cans on trucks gave way to milk-tanker collection as we know it today. Trials in growing blueberries were conducted by Rukuhia Research station on Houchen's farm at that time. In 1966 we were offered a 50/50 sharemilking job at Te Kowhai on the land where in 1971 the retirement village was built. Some five years later we moved up the road in Te Kowhai, where we share-milked for a further six years. Our third and fourth daughters, Barbara and Heidi were born during our years in Te Kowhai. Friendly neighbours, a quality Primary School with discipline and a learning ethic based on the three R's, made us very happy. We felt well integrated into the local community, and our involvement in various organisations was welcome and fulfilling. Years of singing, dancing and enjoyment as members of the Hamilton Swiss Club, together with the comradeship of farm discussion-group activities and indoor bowling, as well as participating in our Church choir, gave me a welcome balance to the ups and downs of the unpredictable share milking life. The most rewarding, and for 30 years enduring, hobby of mine was listening to short-wave radio direct from Switzerland (available around the clock and in several languages). This was the fore-runner of today's internet. News and discussions 'from home' and from Germany and Austria gave farming life a welcome balance, since I never really wanted to 'milk cows' in the first place. In connection with listening to short-wave radio, I had the good fortune to win a return trip to Muenster in Germany with a week's holiday in Munich paid for as well. This was quite an unforgettable experience for Gritli and myself, worthy of a special chapter, too voluminous to print here.

As time went by, Gritli overcame her shyness, joining Woman's Institute of Federated Farmers, and found herself involved with kindergarten, school and scouts. We are grateful when farming and family allowed for several journeys back to Switzerland for Gritli, more so than for me, since Gritli's parents lived until 1987 and are now buried in Lungern. However my parents, Leo & Cécile Rust, are both buried in Whakatane Cemetery.

In 1975, after attending a farm manager's course in Hamilton, our name was drawn first in a ballot distributing some spare land held by Lands & Survey, giving us a chance to purchase some 52 hectares of dairy land in Arohena, south of Te Awamutu. It was hard-going at first with many improvements needed, but within



30 years we managed to pay back all loans, and working as a family with the help of our four children, managed to eradicate most of the weeds that had infested the lovely volcanic ash-soil. We were well advised to have cobalt mixed in with the fertiliser and by that time we knew how to counteract eczema and bloat. We enjoyed and participated in various local organisations such as the Arohena Primary School committee and Hall Society, were part of the small but active Catholic community, and deepened our faith by participating in the local inter-denominational Bible study group.

A good opportunity to sell the farm arose in 1995. We purchased a life style block on the farm our son had bought in Te Pahu between Te Awamutu and Hamilton. Now we were living in the shadow of Mount Pirongia and enjoying the new semi-rural farming district. Our house was built to our own specifications, and since it was built on an elevation, it lent itself to have the Swiss and the Kiwi flags flying on many a beautiful day. Some great Rust family gatherings were held and with some grandchildren growing up next door, our Te Pahu happiness lasted for 15 years.



For a few years I took on part time work, feeding calves, occasional milking, and a round of artificial cow insemination for Livestock Improvement. Later on I did a bit of voluntary work for the local primary school as bus driver and teaching 'Bible in Schools'. In 1997 I took on my voluntary duties as editor for the SWISS SOCIETY'S HELVETIA magazine. Together with Beatrice Leuenberger as president of the Swiss Society, and a chosen team of wonderful helpers, this challenge became easier as time went on. It was the time when pencil, ruler and correction-pen gave way to computer work, and finally I could use my touch-typing skills I learned earlier during my office apprenticeship in Toggenburg. The five year term for HELVETIA ended in 2002 when it was handed on to the Taranaki Swiss Club.

In 2010 our son with his wife and family purchased our Te Pahu property and



we retired to our present address in Dixon Rd, Hamilton. Once again we found wonderful neighbours and as Gritli developed some health problems, we valued the proximity to the nearby hospital, the shops and the Church.

In 2015 we celebrated our 80th birthdays with all of our four families, including our twenty grandchildren. In 2016 our first great-grandchild was born, giving us great joy. The recent 60th anniversary celebration of the Hamilton Swiss Club marked our sixty years living in our home country of choice. The memory of the 'founders' meeting' in May 1956 at Te Rapa hall is still with me to this day.

Looking back over our lives, we are grateful for God's providence that gave us such a colourful life with family, friends and acquaintances.

Written by Rinaldo Rust



Zug uses Bitcoin



In a world first, the Swiss town of Zug in central Switzerland began accepting the cryptocurrency Bitcoin as payment for government services on a trial basis. The Zug municipality made the decision at its meeting on May 3 and the pilot started July 1 2016 and was soon changed to a permanent policy.

Bitcoin payments up to a value of CHF200 (\$205.8 or 0.44 XBT) will be accepted for standard government services.

The authorities claim they wanted to lead by example in a region that has recently become a hub for the financial technology (Fintech) sector in the country.

The self-appointed "crypto valley" of Switzerland hosts around 15 companies specialising in blockchain technology that underpins Bitcoin.

The town's mayor Dolfi Müller announced that Zug is open to exchanging ideas with such companies.

Müller recently pointed out that even in this digital age, the use of bitcoin is still rare. Nonetheless, the program still has a huge symbolic effect, which could make Switzerland — and 'Crypto Valley' Zug, in particular, synonymous with Fintech and innovation. In Zug, bitcoin payments are now available for dentistry services, trustee services, and some government services. As of November 11, 2016, the purchase of bitcoin is available around the clock at the Swiss Federal Railway. This makes Switzerland a country with the densest network of Bitcoin vending machines or 'Bitcoin ATMs'. Customers can purchase bitcoin between 20 to 500 Swiss Francs' worth at train ticketing machines. All that is needed is a local phone number and a bitcoin wallet.

Swiss info.ch and <http://bitcoinist.com/zug-swiss-bitcoin-payment-permanent>

Proverb:

**"Jedes Problemlì het zwöi siite:
die fauschi ond üsi."**

Every problem has 2 sides : the wrong one and ours.