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**The First Hohenzollern in America:
The Saga of Charles Frederick Schlaberg Jr.
and His Adventures en Route to Minneapolis**

Hildesheim, Germany (1794-1812)

Hull, England (1812-13)

Edinburgh /Leith, Scotland (1813-28)

Montreal/LaChute, Canada (1828-67)

Waterloo, Quebec, Canada (1867-79)

Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA (1879-83)

If gravestones could speak, one of them in lot 11, section 8, at Lakewood Cemetery, Minneapolis, could speak volumes. It belongs to Charles Frederick Schlaberg, whose 1883 Minneapolis death certificate read merely: “90, white, male, born in Germany, died of old age.” But in reality, his is a saga that has provided recent researchers ongoing fascination and the occasional thrill of discovery.¹

A German Youth (1794-1806)

Charles Frederick Schlaberg Jr. (CFS) was born in Hildesheim, Germany, on January 25, 1794, the son of Charles Frederick Schlaberg Sr. and his wife, Wilhelmina Dorothea Hentig Schlaberg.² His birthplace was the ancient family residence, the Behrens-Schlaberg house or “Alt Deutsches Haus” (c. 1550-1945) on the Osterstrasse. Extensive research has been done on the history of the family’s handsome house.³

The Schlaberg parents were weavers in the flax, wool, and yarn trade. Exhibits in today’s Hildesheim museum still feature this work. So does the carved medieval inscription at the entrance of the Ratskeller in the Rathaus:



Fig. 1. Portrait of Charles Frederick Schlaberg, London, 1827, posters and prints by Thomas Phillips.

“Dut is de garenmasthe” – this is the yarn-measure. The Schlabergs were of the patrician-merchant class, as were their in-laws, the Hentigs of nearby Salzgitter. For nine centuries Hildesheimers embraced both art and commerce, and the Schlabergs were deeply involved with both.

CFS had a serious classical education at the Andreanum, a former monastery school of St. Andreas, founded in 1225.⁴ Next door the baroque altar of St. Andreas Church had been decorated in 1685 by Anthon Schlaberg, CFS’s most famous artist ancestor. The spire of St. Andreas, more than 350 feet

high, could be seen from all the approaches to the city. At the Andreanum CFS became well versed in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, augmenting his fluent everyday German and French. Indeed, according to a grandson, “Grandfather had a wonderful education. He could speak or write letters in five languages in addition to English.”⁵

CFS also played the flute, the violin, the oboe, the clarinet, and perhaps more. A granddaughter later wrote: “He was a great musician and played seven different musical instruments.”⁶ The Andreanum itself had a classical musical tradition. The world-class composer Georg Philipp Telemann studied there (1697-1700), a hundred years earlier. He was a schoolmate of CFS’s artist great-grandfather Johann Heinrich Schlaberg. Music remained one of CFS’s important diversions throughout his life.

During the impressionable years of his youth and young manhood, CFS had the unusual privilege of living successively in two of the world’s most romantic and architecturally gorgeous cities—Hildesheim and Edinburgh. This comparison has been made by others. Thus two English authors wrote in their prewar book *Edinburgh* (1938): “There are but few towns still retaining such a nucleus of medieval buildings. It was said that the High Street in Edinburgh was the loveliest street in any town of Europe, although those who

appreciate medieval houses might prefer those of Germany's Hildesheim with its wealth of exterior decoration."⁷

Hildesheim's unbroken streets of venerable medieval and Renaissance houses contained the finest assembly of gabled and timbered dwellings in Europe. The love of display and beauty lavished on these houses was part of the municipal heritage. The splendid facades of the patrician homes were the glory of the town, and the Schlaberg's Alt Deutsches Haus was perhaps the prime example. The finely sculptured friezes, elaborately carved beams, decoratively painted panels, and humorously quaint inscriptions were masterpieces of high Renaissance craftsmanship.

CFS's youthful years were also a time of exceptional intellectual and cultural creativity in Germany. Kant and Hegel, Goethe and Schiller, Mozart and Beethoven were flourishing. In 1794 Schadow completed his "Siegeswagen," which took its place atop the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin until Napoleon moved it to Paris a few years later. Politically, in 1795, Russia, Prussia, and Austria were about to contrive the third partition of Poland.

In January, 1794, when CFS was born, the Revolution was in its fifth year across the border in France. Prussia was taking part in the First Coalition's war against the French (1792-7). Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette had been executed a few months earlier. Robespierre would fall a few months later. Before long the terror in France would produce the Bonapartist reaction with profound consequences for Hildesheim and the Schlaberg family.

In 1794 George Washington, admired by Frederick the Great, was still President of the United States. Baron von Steuben, who had disciplined the American Revolutionary army, died that same year. When CFS was three years old, John Quincy Adams (a connoisseur of German literature and later the sixth American president) arrived in Berlin as the first American minister to the Prussian court. In 1800 he may have visited Hildesheim when he traveled with his wife through parts of Saxony.

In 1794, CFS's father, Charles Frederick Schlaberg Sr., was already a prosperous merchant in Hildesheim, and he remained in comfortable circumstances there until his death in 1847. A widower in his old age, he was described as a "Particulier" (a private man, independently wealthy, retired). For half a century he undoubtedly maintained close relations with his brother-in-law, John William Hentig, who served as Prussian consul in Hull, England, from 1797 to 1840. (CFS's only brother, who died in infancy in 1800, was named for this uncle.)

Consul Hentig was one of the merchant-princes of Hull. He owned a fleet of ships that were deeply involved in the Baltic trade, specializing in commercial connections with Hamburg and the German Hansa cities.



Fig. 2. The Schlberg family's Alt Deutsches Haus.

Hentig's imports from Germany often involved flax, yarn, grain, and seeds, typical products from Hildesheim.

At the height of Napoleon's power during the French occupation of northern Germany (1806-12), Hamburg was ostensibly under French control. However, Hentig had "colours of convenience," which enabled his ships to pierce the Continental Blockade and enter German ports without French confiscation. He also had a special right of space for personal use on his ships. CFS probably made use of his uncle's prerogatives when he escaped in June, 1812, presumably from Hamburg on one of his uncle's ships bound for Hull. According to family tradition, he took the precaution of hiding himself in a bale of cotton aboard ship.

In his youth in Hildesheim, CFS was surrounded by family history. Everywhere he turned he was reminded of famous forebears. The Behrens-

Schlaberg house in the Osterstrasse had been in the family for six generations. Anna Behrens, the ancestress who married Anthon Schlaberg, was a cousin of Conrad Berchtold Behrens, a close friend of the famous Leibnitz (1645-1716). More than 200 letters exchanged between them are on file in the Niedersaechsisches Staatsarchiv.

Over the previous three centuries, CFS's family tree abundantly represented all four of the classical academic disciplines—medicine, philosophy, jurisprudence, and theology. But artistic endeavors were their special concentration. For generations Schlaberg artists had been born and had died in the rooms CFS grew up in. Their artistic accomplishments were evident in the house décor, internally in the portraits and sculptured plaques picturing his ancestors, and externally in the decorative Stages of Life panels of historic figures and classical motifs in Latin or German, like the one on the facade from 1600 with a skull and hour-glass which read:

“Hodie mihi, cras tibi”
(Heute mir, morgen dir)
(To me today, to you tomorrow)

One short block away was the town square with its Roland fountain, dating from 1540, probably the decade when the first Schlaberg, the artist Jacobus, arrived in Hildesheim from Leipzig. The nearby parish church of St. Jakobi (1503), where CFS was baptized, was dedicated to the patron of traveling merchants. No fugitive could be pursued into it.

Dietrich Mente's baptismal font of 1618, then in the Martinikirche, was a family heirloom, designed and fabricated in bronze by another Schlaberg ancestor. Today it can be found in the thousand-year-old Michaeliskirche, one of the great ecclesiastical buildings of the occident and considered by UNESCO to be the most beautiful 11th century church in Northern Europe. Another Schlaberg ancestral bronze baptismal font, this one from 1592 by Mante Pelckinck, adorns the nearby Kreuzkirche.

In CFS's youth the magnificent ceiling painting of the Last Judgment could still be admired at the Martinikirche. It was Anthon Schlaberg's 17th century masterwork, unfortunately destroyed late in the 19th century when the church was transformed into the Roemer-Pelizaeus Museum to house the city's famous Egyptian collection.

Thus, Hildesheim families could be forgiven their civic pride. They could think of their 1200-year-old city the way that Matthew Arnold later thought of Oxford:

“Beautiful City so venerable, so lovely, so serene...
Whispering from her towers the last enchantments
Of the Middle Age”

The attractive town of Bad Salzgitter, a few miles away, was the home of CFS’s mother’s people, the Hentigs, already a prominent family of more than local importance.⁸ Occasionally when CFS was growing up, a young Hentig relative would come to Hildesheim to live with the Schlabergs. Thus, the 1811 enumeration shows a 10-year-old Hentig also living in the Alt Deutsches Haus. (He was probably Karl Wilhelm Hentig, born in 1801, the son of CFS’s uncle, Johann Philipp Theophilus Hentig, a merchant in Salzgitter.)

CFS probably also visited other relatives in nearby Bad Salzdetfurth, another town in Lower Saxony which today retains much of its ancient charm. And, of course, CFS was familiar with nearby Hannover, the German seat of the British kings, located an easy distance from Hildesheim.

The Prussians occupied Hildesheim from 1803 to 1806, so from age 9 to 12 CFS lived under Prussian rule. The legendary Queen Louise of Prussia stopped in Hildesheim in June, 1806. She gave silver coins with the image of her husband, King Frederick William III, to local young people, including CFS. He kept this memento throughout his life. Also surviving is the snuff box which CFS carried for many years. It too bears the profile of Frederick William III.⁹

CFS was certainly aware of his 16th century Hohenzollern ancestor, Joachim II (1505-71), the Reformation elector of Brandenburg, and thus of his direct descent in the male line from the future Prussian royal family. Over the years CFS was fond of saying: “My great-great-grandfather’s great-great-grandfather was Sigismund of Hohenzollern, Margrave of Brandenburg and Archbishop of Magdeburg, a son of Joachim II.” Recent German genealogists have confirmed this descent. (See accompanying genealogical chart.)

Throughout his adult life CFS carried with him a pocket genealogical history of his Hohenzollern-Brandenburg ancestors, published in Berlin in 1668 under the Great Elector. It highlights his ancestor Sigismund (1538-66) on page 94.¹⁰

Like his father before him, CFS was christened “Charles Frederick,” the baptismal name of their distant kinsman, Prussian King Frederick the Great, born January 24, 1712. (CFS himself was born 82 years later, almost to the day.) His father, CFS Sr., was born in 1764, when King Frederick, a world figure after seventeen years of war, was at the pinnacle of his fame. He had commanded the best army in Europe and had created the Prussian core of the future German Empire. When CFS was born in 1794, this greatest of the

Prussian kings had been dead only eight years, but his legacy was already in danger.

Hildesheim under French occupation (1806-12)

After Napoleon's defeat of Prussia at Jena in 1806, Hildesheim became part of the new Kingdom of Westphalia, ruled by Jerome Bonaparte, Napoleon's brother. For six years French troops occupied Hildesheim, and at times as many as twenty officers were billeted upon the Schlabergs for sustenance. CFS was only twelve years old when his city was first occupied by this foreign army, and for the next six impressionable years, French officers were quartered in his house and fed at his father's table. In a sense, CFS learned, early in his life, how to accommodate to adversity.

The French colonel who resided with the Schlabergs in the Alt Deutsches Haus came down to breakfast one morning in June 1812, announcing that the French would soon be leaving for Russia. He invited the young CFS to join the invasion, along with Hildesheim's other 18-year-olds. Not surprisingly, CFS was disinclined to do so. One of his grandsons has written: "My grandfather was smuggled off to Scotland to escape the draft."¹¹

Another grandchild of CFS thought there was an additional incentive. In 1937 she wrote that her grandfather "was a large man, six feet tall, and quite a frisky guy. He attended a farewell French military ball held in Hildesheim before the French departure. At the ball one of grandfather's sisters was insulted by a French officer, and grandfather in turn slapped his face. A price was promptly set on grandfather's head."¹² If true, this episode must certainly have strengthened CFS's determination to escape.

In any event, CFS somehow managed to leave Hildesheim and made his way to one of his uncle Hentig's ships, which was then providentially anchored in Hamburg. There he was smuggled aboard for the trip to Hull in England.

There is a final story from June 1812. It happened that the Schlabergs' resident French colonel had been a member of the entourage at the coronation of Napoleon and Josephine at Notre Dame in Paris in 1804. After the ceremony they had given him a framed plaque adorned with their metallic profiles, gilded crowns, and Napoleonic bees.

The colonel had brought this memento with him to Hildesheim. He asked the Schlabergs to keep it for him, saying that he would retrieve it when he returned from Russia. He never returned. Years later this Napoleonic coronation keepsake found its way to CFS in Scotland. It still survives.¹³

CFS in England and Scotland (1812-28)

CFS, then age 18-19, stayed in Hull with his uncle's family for a year or more (summer 1812 to summer 1813). Notably their next-door neighbor was Hull's then-member of Parliament, William Wilberforce, the famous adversary of the slave trade. CFS was godfather at the christening in Hull of his cousin George Hentig in June 1813. While in that city he also began seriously perfecting his English.

In Hull as well, he became acquainted with a few of his uncle's business associates like James Scott, an underwriter for some of the Hentig shipping concerns. Scott appears again in the Schlaberg story at the time of the CFS bankruptcy in Leith, Scotland, in 1824. There was also a close coastal shipping connection with ships departing every Wednesday and Saturday from Leith to Hull.

In 1828 CFS writes of having been in "this country (Scotland) for the past fourteen years." Probably he first lived in lodgings in Edinburgh from 1814 to 1818. The city directories in Edinburgh/Leith begin to list him thereafter, from 1819 to 1829. His office address was 97 Constitution Street, Leith-- also the office address for the Augustus Muller Co., where CSF was a partner. This Leith building still exists. The Muller Company also had offices in London and Hamburg.

For a description of Leith in the Schlaberg years (1813-1828) see *The Life and Times of Leith* by James Scott Marshall, published by Donald, Edinburgh, 1985.

In 1819 Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, the widower of the recently deceased heir-apparent to the British throne, Princess Charlotte of Wales, came to Edinburgh to officiate at the opening of the new construction of Leith Walk. From 1822 to 1828 CFS's residence was at Springfield on fashionable Leith Walk. All the early legal documents refer to his residence as #1 Springfield—a large and impressive three-story structure. Later, after his bankruptcy, he and his family moved to an adjoining building, #8 Springfield.

At the time of Leopold's visit, CSF had in his possession two charcoal sketches of Leopold and Charlotte, drawn by Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands, a Hohenzollern whom the Schlabergs may have known earlier from her years in Berlin. Eleven years later, in 1830, Leopold became the first king of Belgium. So his portrait uniquely turned out to be one of the first king of Belgium drawn by the first queen of Holland. The portraits came with CFS to Canada in 1828.

In 1980 these portraits were exhibited at the Library of Congress in Washington as a part of the celebration of 150 years of Belgian independence.

The visiting King and Queen of Belgium admired them. In 2008 they were donated to the King Baudoin Foundation. They are currently displayed in the BELvue museum in Brussels, which is located next to the royal palace and focuses on the history of Belgium.

CFS may have met Leopold before his 1819 visit to Leith. CFS certainly saw him again in 1827 during his own visit to Claremont, Leopold's country house near London. At that time CFS played the violin together with Leopold, and CFS was given one of Princess Charlotte's music stands (distinctly labeled "Claremont"). This royal relic also found its way to America with the Schlabergs.¹⁴

A century later the oldest grandson of CFS recalled his grandfather recounting that when King George IV ascended the throne in July 1821, he attended the coronation dinner held in the king's honor at the Exchange Hotel in Leith.¹⁵ On this occasion a new stanza was added to "God Save the King," and decades later CFS could still sing it to the applause of his grandchildren:

"O! grant him long to see
Friendship and unity
 Always increase:
May he his scepter sway,
All loyal souls obey,
Join heart and voice, huzza!
 God save the King."¹⁶

The following year, 1822, was historic for Edinburgh itself. The city witnessed the first royal visit to Scotland since the Stuarts. CFS served as a macer in the procession of King George IV from Holyrood House to Edinburgh Castle. A contemporary print, autographed by CFS, shows the macers leading the procession.¹⁷ CFS also witnessed the King's arrival ceremonies, which included a gala appearance in Constitution Street opposite his office in Leith.

1822 was probably also the year when CFS married a Scottish widow, Rebecca Wilson Gilchrist. Her first husband, Gilchrist, has not yet been reliably identified. They had had a son born July 15, 1812, named Thomas Gilchrist, whose costly silver christening cup, bearing London hallmarks, still exists. It carries the inscription "I hope to speed."¹⁸

A CFS granddaughter has written: "My mother often told me that my grandmother (Rebecca Wilson Schlaberg) was a beautiful woman. In her youth she was known throughout Fifeshire where she lived as 'pretty Miss

Wilson'. And would you believe it, my mother has told me that I looked like her. Now wouldn't that frost you!"¹⁹ A marble profile of Rebecca, probably dating from her Gilchrist marriage, has survived and attests to her beauty.²⁰

Three children were born to CFS and Rebecca in Scotland: Charles Frederick III in 1823, Wilhelmina Elizabeth in 1824, and John James in 1825.²¹ Young Thomas Gilchrist, then age 16, joined CFS, Rebecca, and the three younger children in their migration to Canada in 1828. Later Thomas Gilchrist, enlisted in the British forces, fought in the Crimean War, caught the cholera, and "went home to Scotland to die." In his memory the army sent the Schlabergs a gold embroidered "sabre-touche" from Gilchrist's artillery regiment.²²

Also descended from the Wilsons is a sword, definitely of 1814-15 vintage, which, according to a son of CFS, was carried by a relative, one John James Wilson, in the battle of Waterloo. This name is not listed in the Waterloo Roll Call, however, which invites some doubt either about the name or about the provenance.

In any event the sword was treasured in the Wilson family and was brought to Canada by CFS's father-in-law, John Wilson, in 1830. Arguably he himself was the John James Wilson. (This would be consistent with Scottish naming patterns. The second son, John James Schlaberg, would have been named for his maternal grandfather.)

The victory of Waterloo was a cause for great public celebration in Edinburgh/Leith, with banquets and fireworks in which CFS participated. Another of his possessions which has survived is a first edition of Sir Walter Scott's poem on Waterloo.²³

The years that CFS resided in Scotland were the years of Edinburgh's Augustan Age. Becoming known as "the Athens of the North," the Scottish capital was at the pinnacle of its architectural and intellectual repute. On Castle Street Sir Walter Scott was writing his *Waverley Novels*. Edinburgh's glorious New Town was designed and built.

Both Leith Walk and Constitution Street, where CFS lived and worked, also came in for contemporary praise. Thus, the "Topographical Statistical and Historical Gazetteer of Scotland" reported: "Leith Walk is of pleasing appearance, romantically overhung by the northern slope of Calton Hill, covered with verdure, terraced with promenades, and surmounted by its gorgeous architectural structures. In South Leith the mansions and villas are so numerous that to notice all would be tedious and to notice few would be invidious.

"Spacious and beautiful, Leith Walk rises in a gentle, almost imperceptible, and very regular ascent—alternately edified with neat houses or splendid mansions and ruralized with nursery grounds or openings to the fields. It

commands over all its length one of the most superb views of the Calton Hill, and the waving surface and outline of Edinburgh.”

Such sentiments were echoed in the “Topographical Dictionary of Scotland” by Samuel Lewis: “The more ancient part of Leith, situated between Kirkgate Street and the river, consists chiefly of narrow lanes and alleys of mean houses, inhabited only by persons of the lowest order. But that portion of the town which is of more modern date is uniformly built containing handsome houses. The public buildings are of elegant character. Leith Walk, in a noble line of approach from Edinburgh, is thickly interspersed with stately mansions surrounded by pleasure grounds and numerous villas inhabited by opulent families.”

The war with Napoleon had actually been good for Leith. During the war it was the only port in Scotland that served European ports. It continued to flourish in the immediate postwar years.²⁴ But in 1822 a depression occurred that bankrupted many. Some ship disasters contributed to the misfortunes of Schlaberg. We still lack the full details of his financial troubles, but the main outlines are clear.

The 1824 CFS Bankruptcy

The Augustus Muller Company, of which CFS was a partner in Leith, had London and Hamburg branches and had close associations with the London, Rotterdam and Hamburg shipping line. At that time its vessels (“packets”) had German names: *The Rhine, Leipsic, Hamburg, Frankfurt, Brunswick, and Hannover*.

The Muller Company may also have had a close relationship with the Hentig enterprises in Hull. At least one contemporary ship sinking coincided with the widespread financial crisis in 1822, and the Muller firm went bankrupt. There were lawsuits involving James Scott (originally from Hull?): Scott v. Muller, 16 November, 1822, and Scott Jun. v. Muller and Co., 31 May, 1823. Augustus Muller, CFS’s partner, quickly absconded to London, leaving CFS to fend for himself in extensive court proceedings.

The bankruptcy documents (CS 239-S/40/29) are to be found at the West Registry House, Charlotte Square, Edinburgh.²⁵ They disclose that the trustees and creditors of Muller & Co. sought sequestration at the end of 1822. This was an action of “Cessio bonorum” where, if completed, the bankrupt would give up all his property including future acquisitions. In effect he would be working for his creditors. Lawyers were lined up on both sides of the proceedings.

In the absence of his partner, CFS defended himself, denying any personal fault, and claiming that acts of God like ship sinkings were beyond his control.

After much testimony a settlement was finally reached in August 1823, with the creditors accepting CFS's offer of composition at six pence per pound. He petitioned for discharge and exoneration in December 1823, but there was a delay in payments to creditors and lawyers for "expenses." In this connection, on May 19, 1824, a messenger at arms charged CFS at 1 Springfield to appear on June 16 before Lords of Council and Session at Edinburgh. "This warning was left within his dwelling house with a servant."²⁶

In 1825 the Edinburgh Directory listed "C. F. Schlberg, late merchant of Leith, 8 Springfield, Leith Walk." "John Wilson, builder" was living at the same address. In 1826 CFS resumed a commercial role in Leith. Now he was apparently in business for himself and the directory again styled him "merchant in Leith." In 1827-8 he was listed as "C. F. Schlberg, merchant, 8 Springfield". "John Wilson, mason" was also living there. The last address entry for CFS in Scotland was in the Edinburgh/Leith Directory for 1828-29: "C. F. Schlberg, merchant, 8 Springfield." This time there was no mention of Wilson.

In 1825 the wealthy George Elder of Kirkcaldy became surety for the payment of CFS's debts. He and his sons later became important financiers in Australia. He may have been a special friend or associate of Rebecca Schlberg's Wilson family, who also seem to have had close connections with Kirkcaldy, north of Leith in Fife.²⁷

There is anecdotal evidence that CFS successfully appealed to his father in Hildesheim for the financial assistance that ultimately paid off the obligations of Muller & Co. If so, however, the arrangements must have been made by mail rather than in person. In 1824, in the midst of CFS's bankruptcy crisis, his mother died in Hildesheim. Despite these two plausible incentives for CFS to return to Germany, he did not do so. It is possible, of course, that he was legally constrained from leaving Edinburgh at that time.

Yet it is noteworthy that during his entire fifteen Edinburgh years from 1813 to 1828, CFS never saw Germany again, despite the fact that during this same period it was relatively easy to go back and forth by sea in the frequent and regular traffic from Leith to Hamburg.

Possible family friction resulting from the bankruptcy may have damaged the father-son relationship and also played a role in the decision not to return. Of course, after his marriage to a Scottish woman and subsequent responsibilities for a family of four children, as well as resident Wilson relatives, his domestic obligations alone could explain the decision.

In any event, whatever losses his father may have suffered in helping CFS to emerge from bankruptcy, they apparently did not seriously undermine the father's overall financial situation.

According to a CFS granddaughter, there were advertisements in the newspapers in both Scotland and Canada that reached CFS after his father's death in 1847, notifying him that a considerable fortune awaited him if he would return to Hildesheim to claim it.²⁸ CFS was by then a widower, 53 years old, still supporting a 16-year-old daughter and an 88-year-old father-in-law. Perhaps there was even another deterrent: by 1848 revolutions had broken out in Germany. Whatever the reason, CFS persisted in his decision not to return to his homeland.

Religious Affiliations

After 1815 Hildesheim became part of the Kingdom of Hannover, ruled over by the King of England. As a part of the Hannoverian establishment, Schlaberg was probably associated in 1818 with the founding of the church of St. Paul's and St. George's at York Place, Edinburgh. Sir Walter Scott himself was instrumental in organizing this church. It served those Scottish Anglicans who were not Scottish enough to be Presbyterians, but who also were opposed, as devout Hannoverians, to the Jacobite leanings of the Scottish Episcopal church.

All of the Schlaberg children were baptized shortly after their births by the Rev. Dr. William Gardiner, LL.D., York Place. This Episcopal divine is listed in the Edinburgh directories for more than two decades as a "teacher of languages." He seems to have taught at the Academy associated with St. Paul's and St. George's, and in all probability, he was employed by CFS when he first arrived in Edinburgh to help him master his English.

Dr. Gardiner's role in performing the baptisms of the Schlaberg children in private, rather than in church, is perhaps explained by the differences in church affiliation between CFS and his wife in their first years of marriage. Rebecca Wilson Gilchrist Schlaberg was a Presbyterian, as were her parents, the Wilsons.

Rebecca's father, John Wilson, and his (probable) brother, William Wilson, lived with the Schlabergs in Leith Walk from 1824 to 1828. In Leith the Wilsons (and perhaps earlier the Gilchrists) attended the nearby South Leith Church, also located on Leith Walk, a Presbyterian church with an especially colorful history.²⁹

By 1830 in Canada all the Schlaberg family appear to have been Presbyterian regulars. For the next eight years the only Scottish Presbyterian church in the LaChute, Quebec, area was the church of that name at St. Andrews. It seems probable that Rebecca Wilson Schlaberg and perhaps her father, John Wilson, were buried in that churchyard. It dates from 1818.

The next oldest Presbyterian church in the LaChute area is St. Mungo's at Cushing, founded in 1838 and located in Chatham township on the banks of the Ottawa River. This is the church where CFS's Schlberg and Lowe grandchildren were baptized in the 1840s and 1850s. Lemuel Cushing, a pioneer businessman for whom Cushing is now named, and the Reverend William Mair (1793-1860), a locally prominent mid-century minister, were associates and friends of CFS.

In Canada in the late 1850s, however, after the deaths of his wife and her father, and the departure of the sons of CFS for the United States, CFS reverted to the Anglican faith. He probably attended services at the Anglican church in St. Andrews. When the Schlbergs first arrived in that neighborhood, the rector of that Anglican church was the Rev. Joseph Abbott, whose son Sir J. J. C. Abbott later became Prime Minister of Canada. CFS was certainly an Episcopalian in Waterloo in Quebec's Eastern Townships in the 1860s and 1870s, as well as in Minneapolis at the end of his life.

Some Unexpected Treasures

Two important treasures from Schlberg's Edinburgh years came to light only in the 1980s, when the attention of American descendants was called to their existence. The first was a magnificent portrait of CFS painted in London in 1827 by Sir Thomas Phillips of the Royal Academy. Phillips was a renowned portraitist of the Lawrence school. He had previously painted Napoleon, William Blake, Sir Walter Scott, Lord Byron, George IV, and a host of other celebrities. Phillips had Scottish connections through his wife. He had visited Scotland as a possible successor to Raeburn, the Scottish national portraitist who died in 1823. Instead, he remained in London and had a steady stream of Scottish sitters. His 1827 portrait shows CFS at the height of his revived fortunes, triumphant over his tribulations, and looking like a prototype Mr. Darcy from Jane Austin's *Pride and Prejudice*.³⁰

The second relic was CFS's original Adam mantelpiece from his house at Springfield, Leith Walk. Dating from the 1780s or 1790s, this mantelpiece may have previously belonged to his wife's Wilson forebears, who were contemporaries of the original Robert Adam. Like the portrait, the mantelpiece had been left by CFS as security for his lawyers in Edinburgh in 1828 and had been subsequently warehoused there. Both items were released by the court of equity in the 1980s, and a CFS great-great-grandson was able to purchase them. The Adam mantelpiece is also now in the Yale Art Gallery collection.

Surviving as well are two sets of historic plaques representing the earliest Schlberg-Hohenzollern ancestral couple, Archbishop Sigismund

of Magdeburg and his (1560s) companion, Anna Schlaberg. The original Renaissance plaques were part of a dozen or more that later decorated the Hildesheim dining room of the Alt Deutsches Haus. They were created by a Schlaberg artist grandson of the original couple around 1600. John William Hentig obtained one set of originals from Hildesheim and had another set copied in 1821-22. Now also at Yale, the four plaques were wedding presents for CFS and Rebecca and went to Canada with the Schlabergs.³¹

The 1828 Migration to Canada

Unfortunately, the 1825-27 revival of CFS's fortunes did not last. The late 1820s were times of rapid prosperity and rapid declines. CFS enjoyed and suffered both. Before the year 1827 was over, he again apparently faced an uncertain financial future. His legal obligations had mounted, despite certain financial gains he obtained in a lawsuit that was decided in his favor in May 1827 (*Schlaberg v. Barclet*.)

On February 5, 1828, CFS wrote from Springfield, Leith Walk, Edinburgh, to The Right Honourable William Huskisson, Secretary of State for the Colonial Department in London, inquiring about emigration to Upper Canada, its benefits and conditions. This letter is still in the Colonial Department files. It reads:

Right Honourable Sir: I hope you will excuse me that I take the liberty of troubling you with this letter, but as I am anxious to have some views of mending my fortune for the sake of my small family, I use this freedom. I humbly request you to have the goodness to inform me if His Majesty's benevolent Government grant to settlers in His Majesty's North American Possession of Upper Canada some small portion of ground, either free or on what consideration, and also, if in case of need, the Colonial Government assist settlers for the first year, and on what conditions.

I am a native of His Majesty's Kingdom of Hannover, married to a woman of this country, and besides her my family consists of three boys and a daughter. During my residence here these last 14 years I have in the course of my business lost all my property, and having no prospects of mending my affairs here, I am anxious to employ the few means left me to remove to a country where it is more likely that I may have a living for myself and family than here.

I humbly trust that you will excuse the freedom I use in troubling you with my concerns, when your valuable time is most likely occupied by weighty State affairs, but by assisting me to gain

a settlement in Upper Canada, you are securing to His Majesty's Service some dutiful and loyal subjects.

I remain with the greatest respect, Right Honourable Sir, Your most obedient Servant, Charles Frederick Schlaberg

CFS also retained a pamphlet printed in London in 1815 entitled "A Topographical Description of the Province of Lower Canada." He marked pages 100-2, which rhapsodically described the Seigniory of Argenteuil: "Perhaps through all the upper part of the District of Montreal, no tract will be found of greater fertility, or possessing more capabilities of being converted within a few years into a most valuable property. The land is rich in nearly every part of it, while the different species of soils are so well varied as to afford undeniable situations for raising abundant crops of every kind."

Migration to Canada was "in the air" at the time, and CFS, his wife Rebecca, her son Tom Gilchrist, and the three young Schlaberg children set sail for Quebec. A goat, to provide milk for the children, accompanied them on board. After some weeks at sea, they arrived in Quebec and quickly went on to the bustling frontier metropolis of Montreal, where they spent their first months in Canada.

In September and October 1828, while in Montreal, CFS bought 1200 acres of land in Chatham at a sheriff's sale and 180 acres more in Stone's Gore, LaChute/St. Andrews, the Seigniory of Argenteuil, District of Montreal. In these deeds for land purchased in the Scottish Ottawa River settlements CFS is referred to as "Charles Frederick Schlaberg, Gentleman of Montreal." In an 1855 document he is called "Charles Frederick Schlaberg, Esquire." In another in 1859 he is styled "Charles Frederick Schlaberg of St. Hermas, Gent."³²

Early Years in LaChute (1829-54)

As advertised, the LaChute and Chatham rural areas turned out to be among the most fertile and attractive farmlands in Lower Canada. The rich pastureland was conducive to dairy farming. The old Scottish town of St. Andrews (today St. Andre) was the earliest community and trading center. It was visited weekly, sometimes daily, by the Schlabergs in the early years. In the 1830s the Schlaberg children received their schooling at St. Andrews Academy.

Montreal was only forty miles away, and it remained the commercial and governmental hub for the next forty years for CFS and his family. The Montreal Gazette was the newspaper which kept them in touch with the

outside world. In the 1820s a line of covered stages drawn by four horses regularly linked St. Andrews with Montreal.

Improvements on the LaChute properties were sufficient for the Schlaberg family to move there perhaps as early as 1830. They were certainly already there that June, when Rebecca's father, John Wilson, arrived in Quebec City from Scotland. He wrote asking that they send his grandson Tom Gilchrist to find him at McKenzie's Hotel, "a Scotch House across the water from Quebec." There is detailed information about this place in the local histories.

The next year the Schlabergs' fourth child, named Rebecca for her mother, was born at LaChute on June 11, 1831.

There is evidence that CFS's son, CFS III age 15, and the latter's older half-brother, Tom Gilchrist age 25, fought for the British authorities against the local French peasants in the Papineau Rebellion of 1837. The Carillon Barracks was the headquarters for the British-organized militia. Bitter fighting broke out between government troops and those whom the British called "rebels." The French histories, of course, refer to them as "patriots."³³

There is no question which side the Schlabergs supported. CFS III and Tom Gilchrist quickly joined a voluntary battalion of militia. "One with Britain, Heart and Soul, one Life, one Flag, one Throne." Gilchrist subsequently enlisted in the British army and fought in the Crimea, as mentioned earlier.

It is noteworthy that as CFS moved from Hannover first to Scotland and then to Canada, his sovereign remained the same. From 1812-37 the successive kings of England—George III, George IV, and William IV—were simultaneously rulers of Hannover, Scotland, and Canada.

The Carillon Barracks today houses the museum for the Argenteuil Historical Society. It contains many rooms and exhibits from the 1830-70 period showing everyday life in the area at the time the Schlabergs lived there.

CFS's own excellent French, of course, served him well throughout his decades in French-speaking Quebec. Indeed, some of his signatures on LaChute legal documents keep the French spelling of his middle name: "Charles Frederic Schlaberg."

In 1830 CFS had a house and barn on his farm—lots 1 & 2, Stone's Gore, LaChute, "six acres in front, 30 acres in depth." In December 1830 he sold the first portion of his Chatham land. In 1833 his Stone's Gore improvements had expanded to include a house, barn, stables, and other buildings.

By the 1980s all that was left of the original property was a pantry-shed which had been attached to the barn. Its timbered ceilings were at least 150 years old, the remaining relics of the first CFS buildings. His large original

barn had been taken down in the 1970s, when the property was appropriated by the Canadian government as part of securing the over-flight rights for landings at Mirabel International Airport.

The 1842 census showed CFS living on 180 acres or arpents of land, 50 of them improved. Bushels per year were: wheat 5; barley 20; oats 150; "pease 18"; Indian corn 10; potatoes 150. There were 7 meat cattle, 7 horses, 12 sheep, and 6 hogs.

A decade later in the agricultural census of 1851, CFS had a lot of 90 acres, 80 under cultivation (30 with crops, 50 as pasture, and 10 under "wood or wild"). 10 acres of wheat were producing 100 bushels; 10 acres of oats 100 bushels; and 5 acres of potatoes 100 bushels. Also listed were: 5 tons of hay, 6 pounds of wool, 2 milk cows, 1 calf, 2 horses, 1 pig, 100 pounds of butter, and 300 pounds of pork.

CFS sold more of his Chatham land in 1833 and 1835, continuing a process which gradually reduced his Chatham holdings over the years.

Throughout the 1840s, letters to the Schlabergs from abroad are addressed to "LaChute, Seigniorie of Argenteuil, by St. Andrews, Lower Canada, North America."

Meanwhile the CFS household ranks were thinning. His wife Rebecca died in 1838. Their daughter Wilhelmina, age 20, married James Lowe, age 25, in April 1845. CFS gave them 100 acres in Chatham "as dower" on June 30. The eldest son, CFS III, almost 24, married Anne Turner in 1847. His father thereupon gave half of his LaChute property to CFS III.

1849 saw the birth of CFS's two eldest grandsons. John James Schlaberg, son of CFS III, was baptized in a double baptism with his cousin, James Lowe Jr. The christening was held at St. Mungo's, Chatham, on December 24, 1849, the day before Christmas, in the presence of the entire family. The celebrated Rev. William Mair officiated. The great-grandfather, John Wilson, was present. The three living grandparents (CFS and David and Jean Lowe), as well as all the then living aunts and uncles, were there. It was the last big multi-generational family gathering.

Soon afterwards, in 1850, CFS's second son, John James, left for California and the Gold Rush. Consequently, the LaChute census of 1851 showed CFS living only with his father-in-law, John Wilson, age 88, and daughter Rebecca, age 20, at what was now called "Bethany, Brown's Gore, LaChute." (A neighbor girl, Eliza Williston, lived with them as a household helper or "apprentice.") John Wilson died in his nineties, two years later, in 1853.

CFS sold more of his Chatham land in 1851. In 1852 James Lowe suggested that CFS might want to sell his farm to him, James Lowe, and continue to live there with the Lowes. CFS agreed. On March 22, 1853, there

was an elaborate deed of donation from CFS to James Lowe, and CFS moved in with his daughter and son-in-law, who now owned the old Schlaberg farmstead. In 1853 CFS also sold more of his Chatham land.

Like his younger brother John, CFS III and his family had also moved to the States in 1850, living for a time in Wisconsin, Illinois, and finally Iowa. In 1853 Rebecca Schlaberg, CFS's youngest daughter, also left home for the States to stay with her brother CFS III and his family. She met and married Ezekiel Lewis in Iowa in 1856-57.

Family Troubles (1855-67)

Back in LaChute during the 1853-55 period, friction soon developed between CFS and his temperamental son-in-law, James Lowe. As early as July 30, 1855, James formally wrote to his father-in-law (who was living in the same house!) as follows:

“Mr. C. F. Schlaberg. My dear Sir: I hereby give to you warning that without fail you will be prepared to leave my board and lodgings on or before the 20th December next. On or before that date I will be prepared to pay all arrears due by me to you, even should I be forced to make a sacrifice. Neither you nor any other man shall have it in his power to say that I withheld or tried to quibble anyone out of his rights. All that is necessary to say is that I permit you to take your money and provide for yourself. James Lowe, the humble Scotch ploughman of LaChute.”³⁴

According to some of his papers, despite CFS's “donation” of 1853, James Lowe did not actually buy the Schaberg farm until November 24, 1855. The purchase price was 350 pounds sterling, consisting of 250 pounds cash and 100 pounds in a loan from CFS. The latter became a “bailleur de fonds” (a sleeping partner, money lender) for the 100 pounds due. At the time of the expulsion of CFS from the Lowe household, this loan was still outstanding. Over the years CFS had, in addition, regularly used the proceeds of his Chatham property sales to augment his own living expenses and subsidize the Lowes.

As James Lowe's financial problems grew in the 1850s, the frequency of his visits to the “Bee Hive” increased. This was a tavern on LaChute's Main Street operated by one Alvah Burch, and Lowe has left his posterity frequent written references to his seeking solace there.³⁵

From 1855 on there is considerable evidence in the James Lowe papers of financial arguments with his father-in-law. Wilhelmina, the wife and daughter, was caught in the middle of this extended controversy. In order to pay off CFS, Lowe proceeded to borrow money from others and so became indebted to third parties in LaChute.

On March 11, 1859 he transferred back to CFS certain obligations due from the sale of Lowe's Chatham land (Wilhelmina's dowry from CFS in 1845). CFS in turn picked up Lowe's debts and advanced more funds to his son-in-law. In 1860 Lowe confessed to owing CFS 132 pounds and agreed to pay it a year later. As security he pledged the whole of the old Schlaberg farm.

In 1861 James Lowe was indebted to Lewis Stalker for \$800. CFS agreed that he could mortgage the farm, giving Stalker precedence over CFS's own claim. In 1865 Lemuel Cushing was owed 70 pounds by James Lowe. Cushing assigned it to CFS for the same amount of money. The farm was mortgaged as security again. James Lowe owed more money in 1866 and there are more debt transactions. CFS allowed him to pledge the farm to the creditors, taking precedence over CFS.

In his "Sketches of LaChute" in the *Watchman* newspaper from December 10, 1886, F. C. Ireland wrote: "A quarter century ago whisky was a much more common and fashionable thing than it is today. Even at funerals whisky was passed around with the bread and cheese." In *A History of LaChute* (1964) G.R. Rigby adds: "Farmers accepted payment in whisky for their grain. Liquor was locally distilled and consumed at bees, cattle fairs, and elections. A Temperance Society was organized in 1833."

James Lowe's scribbled notes regularly connected his drinking with his depression and self-pity over his father-in-law. For example, typical notations in 1866 read: "August 10-15: Inebriatus bre vis est. Mental aberrations and physical debility." "October 2-4: Did nothing useful this week. Drunk whisky." "October 19: Schlaberg made service on my stock." "November 1-8: Passed this week in drunkenness, grief, and despair. Cause: old Schlaberg's inhumanity to me, James Lowe." "November 11: At home. Mental aberrations." James continued to berate his wife Wilhelmina for her occasional visits to her father.³⁶

In 1867, while James Lowe and his eldest son were seeking their fortunes in California, his transcontinental letters continued to excoriate his wife for keeping in touch with her father. Unfortunately we have no written testimony from either Wilhelmina or CFS that provides us with their side of this story.

More James Lowe debts to CFS were notarized in 1867, in his absence in California. On May 2 of that year, on instructions from her husband, Wilhelmina sold the family farm for \$2600. \$1724 of this amount went to pay claims and taxes. The balance of \$876 was paid to the Lowes, and with those funds the Lowe family finally left Canada for Iowa in 1868.

CFS's later Canadian Years (1860-79)

The census of 1861 shows CFS residing in St. Hermas, where he had lived

since leaving the Lowes six years earlier. He was living alone and described as a “bourgeois with one male helper.” Since 1856 he was making a new life for himself as a tutor of classical languages and literature to Henry and Nancy McCrea, the minor children of the deceased Abraham McCrea. In his notebooks James Lowe objects when his wife visits her father at St. Hermas.

CFS may also have lived in St. Andrews itself at some point in the mid-1860s. He certainly visited often. It was there that he and his friend, Gaspar de Coligny Thibaudiere Denys de la Ronde, played their flutes on the riverbank on summer evenings. De la Ronde, the local notary in St. Andrews from 1825 to 1882, was also, like CFS, a descendant of European royalty. The Canadian frontier brought many paradoxical elements together, but none perhaps stranger than these two transplanted scions of ancient ruling houses.³⁷

In addition to his Hohenzollern ancestry, CFS himself was also a direct descendant of King Christian I of Denmark (1448-81), who organized the 1473 expedition of discovery that sent another CFS ancestor, the Hildesheimer Didrik Pining (1430-91), on his voyage of exploration to Newfoundland waters twenty years before Columbus. This exploit had been funded by King Alfonso V of Portugal (1438-81), a direct ancestor of de la Ronde.³⁸

So nearly four hundred years later, two old men, descendants of the two kings who sponsored a pre-Columbian exploration of North American shores, were spending long Canadian evenings together making music on de la Ronde’s back veranda and enlivening the pleasure boating on the North River at St. Andrews.

No musical instruments survive from this period, but a pistol and a double-barreled shotgun that belonged to CFS do. They are among the few remaining relics of his tumultuous life in the Ottawa River settlements.³⁹

De la Ronde’s notarial records show that he was constantly consulted to witness various local transactions. They contain many references to the Schlabergs and Lowes, including all their property transactions, sales, leases, donations, dower arrangements, and “anticipations of obligation.”⁴⁰

The biggest local event of the period was the 1860 visit of Queen Victoria’s son, the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII), during his state visit to Canada. He came to Carillon to speak, and CFS and the Lowes were all present to hear him.

After the outbreak of the American Civil War, Rebecca Schlaberg Lewis, her husband Ezekiel, and their family returned to Canada. They resumed living in Waterloo, Eastern Townships, Quebec, where Silas Lewis from Vermont, an ancestor of Ezekiel, had been the first 18th century settler. CFS probably lived with the Lewis family intermittently in the early 1860s, even before he joined them there for good in 1867. Frederick Schlaberg Lewis, a

CFS grandson, has written that CFS “lived with us for nearly 20 years.” Since CFS died in 1883, he may have lived with the Lewis family before 1867.⁴¹

Waterloo has a street and bridge named for Lewis. The high Victorian house that was built and lived in by Ezekiel and Rebecca Lewis, their children, and CFS, can still be seen at 948/950 West Street. Ezekiel participated in the construction of the substantial St. Luke’s Anglican Church in Waterloo, which opened in 1870. Ezekiel’s father had been an Episcopal cleric, and the Lewis family members were all active parishioners there, including CFS.

The baptismal certificate of John Henry Lewis can be found in this church, signed in 1869 by CFS, who was his grandfather and godfather. In nearby Lennoxville is the Bishop’s College School. In the 1860s it had a military academy where Frederick Schlaberg Lewis was enrolled.

From 1867 to 1883 CFS lived with the Lewis family, first in Waterloo, and finally in Minneapolis. These were among his most congenial years. Frederick Schlaberg Lewis (1859-1954) was 31 when CFS died. As the oldest Lewis grandson, he remembered his grandfather with affection, admiration, and respect. His sister, Mabel Lewis Benson, has also written: “Grandfather lived with us for nearly 20 years. I remember him very well. He was highly educated and certainly a grand old man. He was proud of his relationship to Queen Victoria.”⁴²

Resuming the European Connections

“A man who leaves his home rarely understands what he is giving up. He may become aware of his loss only when its realization gladdens his later life.”

Gustav Freytag (1816-95)

Despite his clouded relationship with his Lowe son-in-law, CFS’s later life was certainly gladdened by his ultimate efforts to regain contact with Europe. During the 1860s, when he was living alone as a tutor in St. Hermas, Quebec, CFS made deliberate efforts to resume his German and British connections. By then all of his siblings in Germany had died. However, he may well have been in touch with the family of his closest sister, Wilhelmina Schlaberg Burchtorff (1795-1858). Of his five sisters, she was nearest CFS in age. There survives (at Yale) a Biedermeier portrait of her (circa 1830, after Kugelgen) which must have been sent to CFS by her or one of her children.⁴³

Unfortunately, CFS’s own letters and diaries were all lost during his various family moves and, worst of all, in a Lewis family fire after his death. Today we can only piece his life’s story together from circumstantial, usually documentary, evidence like baptismal records, lawsuits, mortgages, and deeds. Some of his impressive library books, in several different languages,

have gradually been reassembled from various descendants. They testify to his linguistic, musical, historical and literary interests. He seems to have been a man of many talents. The written recollections of those grandchildren who knew or were told about him confirm this impression.

The 1861-71 decade saw the rise of Prussia and the emergence of a united Germany under Hohenzollern leadership. CFS had left Germany at the nadir of Hohenzollern fortunes, but a half century later the family had risen to momentous new heights. The recreated German empire had risen like a phoenix from the ashes of his youth.

CFS, this Hohenzollern scion on the frontier, was naturally absorbed by the European news that reached him through the Canadian and American press. In January 1871, when King William I of Prussia was proclaimed German Emperor at Versailles, CFS treated his neighbors to rounds of brandy at Waterloo's largest hotel.

Schlaberg's colorful career as an exotic shirttail relative apparently attracted the curiosity of the royal recipients of his letters. In any case they responded generously. Thus, CFS wrote to Queen Victoria after the death of Albert, and in return he subsequently received from Windsor Castle the five successive authorized volumes on the life of the late Prince Consort, each autographed by Her Majesty.

Incidentally, her inscriptions themselves show evidence of royal progress. Volume I is inscribed "from Victoria Regina, Osborne, Aug. 2, 1875." The next year, after Disraeli had engineered her proclamation as Empress of India, she quickly took the title of "Queen-Empress." Hence volume II is inscribed "from V. R.e.I., Feb. 1877."⁴⁴

Even more gratifying, after the German victories in the Franco-Prussian war, CFS opened a correspondence with the liberal Crown Prince Frederick William of Prussia, Queen Victoria's favorite son-in-law (1830-88). He was later the ill-fated Kaiser Frederick III of Germany, who died prematurely of cancer after a short reign of three months.

The Crown Prince sent CFS a large cabinet photograph of himself, autographed in English, mounted in a presentation frame. Shortly before CFS's own death in 1883, Frederick William also sent a handsome bust of himself, sculpted by Alexander Tondeur of the Berlin Academy. It was proudly displayed in the Lewis house in Minneapolis in the early 1880s.⁴⁵

When the Lewis family decided in 1879 to move to Minnesota from Waterloo, Quebec, CFS, then age 85, moved with them. He spent his last four years in their home on Blaisdell Avenue, Minneapolis. He died there on October 10, 1883 three months short of his 90th birthday. His funeral was held at St. Mark's Episcopal Church (now Cathedral) the next day, and burial followed in Lakewood Cemetery.

The death of CFS occurred during the week of the bicentennial celebration (1683-1883) of the first German immigrants' arrival in America. The Minneapolis Freie Presse on October 13th published a lengthy poem by Friedrich Gerhard containing the lines:

“Wohl koennen wir mit Ahnenstolz
Auf diese Ahnen blicken,
Die nimmer, stark und unverzagt
Gebeugt den Mannesruecken.”

(Well may we look with pride
At the strength of our ancestors,
Who, strong and undaunted,
Never bent their backs.)

Still an Enigma

After his death, the descendants of CFS discarded or dispersed much of what remained of his German heritage in America. Some important items were sold for financial reasons by his daughter Rebecca, who was left desolate in 1883 with the nearly simultaneous deaths of her husband, father, and sister. What survived elsewhere was often consigned to the attics during two 20th century world wars.

It is only in the last fifty years that interest in who the Schlabergs were and what they did has been rekindled on both sides of the Atlantic. Painstaking research by professional historians and genealogists in Canada, Scotland, and Germany has pieced together exotic elements of an elaborate multi-generational family history, so much so that today we know a great deal more about both the ancestors and the descendants of the Schlabergs than we do about CFS himself.

At the end of the day, CFS remains an incomplete personality, a figure of mystery, his character mostly hidden and still subject to conjecture. We know that he had more than his share of personal adversities, narrow escapes, and business hardships. His beautiful wife's early death and his subsequent half-century as a widower must have steeled him to life's disappointments. Often a victim of circumstances, he seems to have borne his misfortunes with fortitude.

Fate interceded at each major turning point in his life to carry him further away from his roots. He was an *Einwanderer*, an intrepid émigré with an apparent taste for new adventures. Often engulfed by forces beyond his control, he moved away with resolution from one unhappy scene to the next.

From what little we know of his personal characteristics, he seems to have been a proud and persistent person, intellectually gifted, whose long-suffering nature was combined with a certain stubbornness.

Unlike millions of other 19th century German emigrants, CFS came to Canada as a Scot, with a Scottish wife and Scottish children, and settled by choice in a Scottish settlement on the Ottawa River. He had no German community to cling to in Scotland or Quebec. He was the only German of origin and language in the family or in the area. His children grew up in Scotland and Canada speaking only English.

All three children married non-Germans. Wilhelmina had a Scottish husband, CFS III had an English wife, and Rebecca married a Yankee transplanted to Canada from New England. Of the many grandchildren of CFS, none married into families of German extraction. His family became a totally assimilated American one within a single generation.

Twenty-five years after Schlberg's death, his great-grandsons fought Germany in World War I as American soldiers, many of them unaware of their intriguing German background. Most of them never knew, or no longer remembered, or during the war had a stake in not remembering, their German origins. In 1918 few regarded it as an event of family significance when Kaiser Wilhelm II went into exile and the Hohenzollern empire collapsed.

There was a brief revival of interest during the interwar period. A CFS grandson, Dr. Thomas Lowe of Pipestone, Minnesota, obtained by purchase and gift most of the remaining items that had been divided in 1884 between CFS III and his sister Rebecca Lewis after their father's death.

Dr. Lowe also restarted some correspondence with Europe. In 1929 he sent the ex-Kaiser, as a 70th birthday present, Beveridge's two-volume biography of Abraham Lincoln. There is a certain poignancy over the former monarch being introduced to Lincoln late in life in exile at Doorn. The gift was duly acknowledged along with an autographed photograph, "hand tinted by His Majesty."⁴⁶ But with the rise of Hitler, interest in the German connection soon lapsed again.

In World War II, Schlberg family landmarks in both Britain and Germany were destroyed. The Nazi Luftwaffe decimated Hull, and with it Uncle John William Hentig's Georgian mansion where CFS had first taken refuge in 1812-13. The vengeful British fire-bombing of Dresden in February 1945 was followed by the destruction of Hildesheim by British planes the next month. Over 500 ancient *Fachwerk* houses, including the Schlbergs' Alt Deutsches Haus, were reduced to ashes within minutes. With the war all but over, the pointless destruction of these treasures provided a Gone-with-the-Wind denouement to the Schlberg story. Prussia itself was "abolished" by the Allied Control Commission.

Over the generations some 500 Schlberg descendants have scattered to thirty states across the United States. However, there remains a large concentration of them in the Upper Midwest, especially in Minnesota. The Minneapolis Art Institute displays a magnificent Renaissance chest, dedicated to Schlberg's memory. It was produced in Nuremberg or Augsburg around 1600 and was once owned by the celebrated 19th century German artist Leo von Klenze.

Most of the items in the Schlberg family collection mentioned in this article are now at Yale University in the Hohenzollern-Schlberg-Hughes collection. Ancient maps, manuscripts, and some 300 letters from the German royal family can be found at the Beinecke Library.

Scores of Hohenzollern-Schlberg related books are catalogued at the main (Sterling) Library at Yale. The Yale Art Gallery has the lion's share: historic medals and coins, porcelains and bronzes, prints and etchings, portraits and sculptures. Items of British origin—the Phillips portrait of CFS, the Adams mantelpiece from Edinburgh, memorabilia from Queen Victoria and her father, the Duke of Kent, are at the Yale Center for British Art.

Although much has been discovered about the circumstances and the externals of his long life, Charles Frederick Schlberg, the man himself, largely remains an enigma. Perhaps, against the odds, some of his lost papers will still emerge from unknown hiding places to flesh out what we know of this latter-day Minnesotan. But the chances are that we now know all that will ever be known about him.

Shortly after the first World War, the Canadian humorist Stephen Leacock wrote an amusing book entitled *The Hohenzollerns in America and Other Impossibilities*. But there was already a Hohenzollern in Lakewood Cemetery, Minneapolis, an immigrant who happened to have withstood fifty Canadian winters as well.

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Notes

¹ For the definitive genealogical account see Hans Schlotter, "Die 'kunsterfahrenen' Maler Schlberg in Hildesheim: Nachkommen des Magdeburger Erzbischofs Sigismund, Markgraf von Brandenburg" *Norddeutsche Familienkunde* 2 (1988), *Zeitschrift fuer Niederdeutsche Familienkunde*, 316-19.

² For CFS birth (January 25, 1794) and baptism (January 30, 1794), see Evangelical Lutheran church records, Hildesheim.

The First Hohenzollern in America

³ *Album von Hildesheim* (Berlin: Globus Verlag, c. 1900) contains an especially large and spectacular photograph of the Schlabergs' Altdeutsches Haus.

Adolf Zeller, *Die Geschichte der Wohnbaukunst der Stadt Hildesheim*, (Hannover, 1913), reprinted in *Kunstdenkmaelerinventare Niedersachsens*, by H. Th. Wenner (Osnabruck, 1980), contains photos of the Schlaberg house on the cover and p. 29. See interior and exterior descriptions on pp. 33-34 and 58-83.

Hildesheim einst und heute (Gerstenberg, 1975), has a photo of the Schlaberg house with details of celebrated carvings on the high Renaissance facade, pp. 82-83.

Aber die Bilder bleiben: Fotografische Impressionen aus Alt-Hildesheim (Gerstenberg, 1988), contains photos of the Schlaberg house with detailed facade and text, pp. 30-31.

Wolfgang von Duisburg, *Das War Hildesheim* (Turnier Verlag, 1981) (Federzeichnungen). An etching is captioned: "Das Altdeutsche Haus mit seinem einzigartigen Giebelbau aus der Bluetzeit deutscher Holzbaukunst im 16 Jahrhundert."

⁴ For the Andreanum also see *Hildesheim: Ein Lesebuch*, ed. Diethard H. Klein (Husum Verlag, 1989), 19: "Wie Hildesheim, so is auch meine jetzige Heimat—Oxford. Vergleiche draengen sich auf. Meine Schule, das Andreanum, hat eine ununterbrochene Tradition seit der ersten Haelfte des 13 Jahrhunderts. Sie ist zwei Jahrzehnte aelter als das aelteste Oxforder College, und es gab eine Zeit im spaeten Mittelalter, wo Hildesheim, als Kulturzentrum beruehmter als Oxford war."

⁵ Frederick Schlaberg Lewis (CFS grandson) letters to author (1938). Hughes papers.

⁶ Mabel Lewis Benson (CFS granddaughter) letters to author (1938). Hughes papers.

⁷ See *Edinburgh* by Sacheverell Sitwell and Francis Bamford (Faber and Faber, 1938).

⁸ Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, the Hentigs were a family of distinguished statesmen, ambassadors, lawyers, professors, and businessmen. Thus, during the empire, Otto von Hentig was Bismarck's personal attorney, the author of the first compiled German patent code, and Minister-Regent of Saxe-Coburg Gotha. His well-known son, Werner-Otto von Hentig, was leader of the German wartime mission to Afghanistan in 1916-17, Consul-General in San Francisco 1928-32, and Ambassador to Indonesia in the 1950s. See the author's "The German Mission to Afghanistan," *German Studies Review* 25.3 (Oct. 2002): 447-76.

⁹ Both items are in the Hohenzollern-Schlaberg-Hughes collection at the Yale University Art Gallery.

¹⁰ This Pocket book is still in the author's possession.

¹¹ Frederick Schlaberg Lewis (CFS grandson) letters to author (1938). Hughes papers.

¹² Wilhelmina Lowe Stine (CFS granddaughter) letter to author (1937). Hughes papers.

¹³ In the Hohenzollern-Schlaberg-Hughes collection at the Yale University Art Gallery.

¹⁴ The Claremont music stand is still in the author's possession.

¹⁵ See D. Robertson, *The Bailies of Leith* (Charles Thomson: Leith, 1915) 21-25.

¹⁶ Frederick Schlaberg Lewis (CFS grandson) letters to author (1938). Hughes papers.

¹⁷ The original print is still in the author's possession.

¹⁸ In the Hohenzollern-Schlaberg-Hughes collection at the Yale University Art Gallery.

¹⁹ Wilhelmina Lowe Stine (CFS granddaughter) letter to author (1937). Hughes papers.

²⁰ In the Hohenzollern-Schlaberg-Hughes collection at the Yale University Art Gallery.

²¹ Certificate in author's possession, signed by Rev. Dr. William Gardiner of Edinburgh who baptized them.

²² In the Hohenzollern-Schlaberg-Hughes collection at the Yale University Art Gallery.

²³ The Waterloo sword and Scott's Waterloo poem are in the possession of a CFS descendant, Cameron Nordholm of Menlo Park, California.

²⁴ For a description of Leith in the Schlaberg years (1813-28) see James Scott Marshall, *The Life and Times of Leith* (Edinburgh: Donald Press, 1985).

²⁵ The Schlaberg bankruptcy papers are all in the West Registry House, Edinburgh. See *Index of Acts and Decrees 1821-29. Cooper & Scott v. Schlaberg* (1825 box.) and *Schlaberg v. Barclet* (1827-28).

²⁶ See n. 25.

²⁷ See n. 25.

²⁸ Wilhelmina Lowe Stine (CFS granddaughter) letter to author (1937). Hughes papers.

²⁹ See especially James Scott Marshall, *The Church in the Midst: South Leith Parish Church Through Five Centuries* (Edinburgh: Edina Press, 1983).

³⁰ See Google advertisement for purchase of CFS portrait reproductions. (Select “Charles Frederick Schlaberg--Yale Center for British Art--Fine ART America. Litz Collection.”) Currently available: canvas print, framed print, art print, acrylic print, metal print, wood print, greeting card, and phone case—all carrying currently available reproductions of the Thomas Phillips portrait of CFS.

³¹ The Sigismund-Anna plaques are in the Yale collection.

³² See records in Archives National de Quebec – (*Lower Canada Period: Sales of Land*) and *Land Records* in the Public Archives, Ottawa, for the purchase of Chatham land by CFS in 1828. See also land records in St. Andrews, LaChute, and St. Jerome.

³³ See *The Rebellion of 1837 in Upper Canada: Documents*, ed. Colin Read and Ronald Stagg (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1905).

³⁴ For originals of James Lowe’s poetical diatribes about CFS, see “Thomas Lowe Hughes: the James Lowe Family Papers,” Box 2, Minnesota Historical Society, St Paul, MN.

³⁵ See n. 34.

³⁶ See n. 34.

³⁷ See Notarial Records (“de la Ronde—Donations”) Archives, St. Jerome, Quebec.

³⁸ See the author’s “The German Discovery of America: A Review of the Controversy over Pining’s 1473 Voyage of Exploration,” *German Studies Review* 27, 3 (October 2004): 503-26.

³⁹ CFS’s Canadian pistol and shotgun are now in the possession of another CFS descendant, William Cosper, of Colorado Springs, Colorado.

⁴⁰ See Notarial Records (“de la Ronde—Donations,”) Archives, St. Jerome, Quebec.

⁴¹ Frederick Schlaberg Lewis (CFS grandson) letters to author (1938). Hughes papers.

⁴² Mabel Lewis Benson (CFS granddaughter) letters to author (1938). Hughes papers.

⁴³ CFS’s sister’s portrait is at the Yale Art Gallery.

⁴⁴ CFS’s volumes from Queen Victoria remain in the author’s possession.

⁴⁵ Both the Crown Prince’s cabinet photo and Tondeur bust are at the Yale Art Gallery.

⁴⁶ See the ex-Kaiser’s correspondence in the Hohenzollern-Schlaberg-Hughes collection at Yale’s Beinecke Library.