

# LIGIA GRISCHA

## A SUCCESSFUL SWISS COLONY ON THE DAKOTA TERRITORY FRONTIER

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In 1877 a small group of Swiss immigrants from the Graubünden canton formed a cooperative with another Swiss group in Stillwater,

Key Words: Catholicism, immigration, Irish, migration, preadaptation, settlement, South Dakota

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Minnesota, to begin a colony in eastern South Dakota. These settlers founded the Badus Swiss colony on the open prairie in Lake County, Dakota Territory (later South Dakota), based on cooperative rules written in Switzerland in 1424. This settlement was one of the last Swiss colonies created in the United States during the great nineteenth-century European migration, and one of the westernmost Swiss settlements in the United States.

There were two major factors that contributed to the Badus Swiss colonists achieving their goals of individual self-sufficient family farms and assimilating into American society. First, cultural preadaptation (i.e., organizational bylaws) provided the colonists with the knowledge and skills in its formative years to create a colony. The history, organization, institutions, and artifacts of the Badus colony reveal cultural traits that were present in their home country. Second, its affiliation with a nearby Irish settlement hastened Swiss assimilation, compared to what it would have been had the Swiss remained an isolated group. Both immigrant groups were Roman Catholic, which facilitated a bond based on the common religion.

[GPQ 32 (Fall 2012): 247–60]

This account begins with an explication of the theoretical concept of preadaptation, followed by a description of the Swiss migration to the United States and the Dakota Territory, the Badus colony, and a nearby Irish settlement. We then detail the social organization of the settlements, focusing especially on the Catholic church and its influence on both the Swiss and Irish settlers and how the church brought the two groups together.

#### PREADAPTATION

The concept of preadaptation has its origin in biological evolution, but has more recently been applied in several cultural contexts.<sup>1</sup> It is defined here in terms of an organism benefiting from a previously existing, nonadaptive capacity when confronting a novel condition. These include the consideration of cultural traits contributing to the rapid colonization of the upland U.S. South by European-American settlers, the predisposition of nations to align with the (former) Soviet Union or Communist China, the complex of preadapted traits that originated with the Finnish Savo-Karelian immigrant population in the settlement of the Midland American frontier, and Irish immigrant family structure and masonry skills enabling settlement in the antebellum South.<sup>2</sup> Preadaptation also plays a key role in the emerging fields of evolutionary and cultural psychology in that it provides a theoretical model for linking the concepts of differential transmission and survival of traits (biological or cultural) and context (cultural and physical environment), the areas of focus of evolutionary and cultural psychology, respectively.<sup>3</sup>

According to Bock's definition of biological preadaptation, a trait or capacity would be preadaptive if it is selectively neutral or subject to selective pressure based upon a functional role different from its current role. Bock provides a clear illustration of this transition in which there are two distinct selective regimes—an initial regime that produces a *preadaptation* and a second selective regime that contributes to *postadaptation*.<sup>4</sup> In this context, a trait would

evolve (or drift if selectively neutral) under one set of selective forces related to a specific functional role, and then with a shift in function would become subject to a second set of selective forces related to that second function. This definition translates into the following requirements for biological preadaptation: To be considered preadaptive, a specific trait or capacity must (1) exist prior to its use within a particular environment or context; (2) play a *new* functional role within that context; and (3) be subject to *new* selective pressures that relate to that added functional role.

This biological definition is somewhat more restrictive than the common use of the term *preadaptation* in the cultural contexts cited above. A distinction between the biological and cultural applications of the concept of preadaptation is illustrated in the definitions provided by Jordan:

Viewed from this perspective, the European immigrants entering colonial North America introduced adaptive strategies that were immediately tested by the new physical environment. This leads naturally to the concept of *preadaptation*, involving trait complexes possessed in advance of migration which give its bearers a competitive advantage in the new setting [emphasis in original].<sup>5</sup>

and by Newton:

The best approach seems to lie in exploring the spread of the Upland South culture from the point of view of cultural preadaptation, an argument that the most important adjustments to a new environment develop *before* entering the new environment; the theory of preadaptation further argues that preadaptive traits arose through normal "selection" in the old environment, were adaptive there, and were but fortuitously adaptive in the new environment.<sup>6</sup>

In both instances the emphasis is on the existence of a set of cultural traits that had been adaptive within a particular environmental

context and proved adaptive in a new context. A second dimension of the cultural preadaptation concept identified by Bock, Jordan, and Newton is the idea that a particular group possessed a particular set of cultural traits that enabled them to occupy new environments more effectively than other groups that might have also attempted to migrate into those regions.<sup>7</sup> It is this “competitive advantage” inherent in these preadapted groups that may explain the success of those groups in settling areas previously only sparsely occupied by other European-American populations.

The use of the term *preadaptation* in our analysis is consistent with its use in the cultural preadaptation studies we cite here, and it forms the theoretical foundation for this study.

#### SWISS MIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES

The Swiss immigrant population, like many European immigrants, had limited opportunity in their home countries and hoped for a better life in the United States. Many of the immigrants from Switzerland came to America because of limited landownership opportunities at home (due to family land divisions over many generations) and because males were conscripted to long military duty. Schelbert states that the reason for each instance of migration is specific to the Swiss district and township of origin, though there are three general reasons: (1) “new opportunities which white expansion had forcibly created on other continents,” (2) the relative ease of transportation, and (3) the industrialization of Western Europe, which destroyed old ways, especially affecting farmers and skilled craftsmen.<sup>8</sup> Conscription and the limited opportunities in industrialized cities may have been specific district issues that prompted the Badus Swiss to migrate.<sup>9</sup> According to Schelbert, unlike most immigrants, many Swiss colonies were part of a well-organized migration that included local emigration associations:

More than any other European country during the great trans-Atlantic migrations,

Switzerland depended on highly organized emigration associations that sponsored the founding ‘colonies.’ Potential immigrants joining such a colony were required to subscribe to statutes and abide by the rules of social organization that often included sharing common property and collective decision making on important issues.<sup>10</sup>

Schelbert points out that one of the difficulties in researching Swiss migration is “[the] Swiss in South Dakota as in the United States in general, have been almost invisible [in government statistics and local histories]. . . . Swiss and Swiss-Americans are viewed mostly as being either of German, French, or Italian origin.”<sup>11</sup>

#### SWISS MIGRATION TO THE DAKOTA TERRITORY

Ostergren studied the settlement of South Dakota by Europeans between 1870 and 1915.<sup>12</sup> By examining decennial U.S. Census records, he shows how the state was populated east to west during three distinct migration periods: 1868–1873, 1879–1886, and 1902–1915. In his study he provides a map of the state with demarcation lines of the westward migration based on each census. The 1880 census demarcation line (north–south) goes through the middle of Lake County, which corresponds with the time period and location of the Badus Swiss and Nunda Irish. Ostergren adds, “The bulk of east-river country underwent settlement during the period 1879–1886, a period of national prosperity that coincided with the approach of railroad construction along the eastern boundary of South Dakota.”<sup>13</sup> This is almost the exact time period of the Badus colony formation and dissolution.

Though South Dakota and other frontier states were originally populated by “Old Americans,” they “soon gave way to the foreign-born, who seemed to be more disposed to permanent settlement.”<sup>14</sup> The immigrants from this “Great Dakota Boom of the 1880s” came from diverse European locations. Many

of these immigrants lived in the United States for some time before they headed to the Dakota frontier, though others traveled west immediately upon their arrival. It appears the Badus Swiss fell into both categories. The first group to arrive was part of an 1854 migration of "several Swiss families, some 150 people in all, [who] went to the United States; they all hailed from the Canton Graubünden, more precisely . . . the Ligia Grischa [region]."<sup>15</sup> This group splintered and some of them found work in Stillwater, though these established Swiss did not form a colony in Stillwater. The latter group headed west and met the established Swiss in Stillwater soon after they arrived in the United States. There is no evidence to suggest the two Swiss groups prearranged their meeting, but with their cultural history of organization, and both groups being from the same canton and region, it is not hard to imagine the meeting was planned.

#### THE LIGIA GRISCHA

The Ligia Grischa was a set of organizing laws and a preadapted cultural institution that facilitated the Badus colony's success. The institution dates back to a form originating in the Ligia Grischa region of Switzerland in 1424. The original Ligia Grischa or Graue Bund (Grey League) was one of three leagues that combined to form a free state in what is now Switzerland's Canton Graubünden. The significance of the Ligia Grischa to the success of the Badus colony is linked to the creation of Swiss identity during the early formation of the Swiss federation of states.

The Swiss confederation was one of many states that arose in Europe following the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire. While princely houses grew into the German states through inheritance, conquest, and marriage, Switzerland had its origins in the voluntary union of small communities to form a republican federation. This union undertook the political obligations of the former imperial government. The three forest cantons, Uri, Schwyz, and Unterwalden, united by treaty

and defended their independence through victory over Leopold of Austria in 1315. Other cantons joined this core group to counter the ever-present threat of Hapsburg domination, "and thus prepared an asylum for republican ideas in the midst of monarchical and feudal Europe."<sup>16</sup>

This original treaty, or perpetual league, was "concluded for the proper establishment of quiet and peace."<sup>17</sup> While pledges of mutual aid for defense are primary in the treaty, a later section rejects any judge "who shall have obtained his office for any price, or for money in any way whatever, or one who shall not be a native or a resident with us."<sup>18</sup> As to dissension between any confederates, the most prudent among them was to come forth to settle the dispute as seemed right to them.<sup>19</sup> This concept is echoed in the provisions of the Ligia Grischa of Badus colony, which stated that disagreements between members had to be settled by the society and nobody could seek justice elsewhere.

The Grey League was one of three leagues formed in ancient Raetia, now central and eastern Switzerland. Formed of communities between the source of the Rhones and the forest of Flims, they agreed to protect one another and to settle disputes by a board of arbitration of three men.<sup>20</sup> The Grey League was the first of the three leagues in Raetia to join the Swiss confederacy, signing a perpetual pact with Glarus in 1400. Around 1450 the three leagues drew closer together to form a federated state. Because the Grey League was better organized and played a leading part, the entire area became known as the Grey League.<sup>21</sup>

The Badus Ligia Grischa's articles of cooperation specified length of existence, membership, dues, judicial and estate settlements, expulsion, and quitting (see Appendix). For example, each member paid five dollars to join the cooperation and monthly dues of one taler (German currency equal to one U.S. dollar), plus ten taler in June 1875. Legal disagreements between members could *only* be resolved by the cooperative; a member could not seek outside

legal resolutions.<sup>22</sup> These conditions echo provisions of the first perpetual league of the original three forest cantons of Switzerland.<sup>23</sup>

In naming their union the *Ligia Grischa*, the Swiss immigrants invoked a cultural institution whose republican ideals and rejection of outside interference brought the community together and helped them to survive the early years. Even though rejection of outside interference was an ideal of the original *Ligia Grischa*, the Badus Swiss members had to be open to meet one of their goals, assimilation into American culture. This openness also allowed them to establish a bond with their neighbors, the Nunda Irish, based on their common religion.

This organizational preadapted trait was essential to the colony's founding, and the short duration of the *Ligia Grischa* does not diminish its importance. The union was actually built for dissolution. In fact, a few years sooner than expected it met an unstated goal of self-sufficiency for each homestead.<sup>24</sup> As DeRungs states, "With united forces [the *Ligia Grischa*] want to keep pace with the spirit of the modern times and to promote the private interest of everybody."<sup>25</sup> This statement also attests to another unstated goal of the *Ligia Grischa*: assimilation. Immigration groups often face intense assimilation pressures, though the Swiss wanted to "blend as quickly as possible into the given society."<sup>26</sup> Perhaps Pauley explains these unstated goals best: "[T]he Badus Swiss wanted its union to be similar to other American ethnic societies, which benefited all group members, and gave each homesteader others upon whom to rely."<sup>27</sup>

#### THE BADUS COLONY

In 1877 the *Ligia Grischa* sent ten individuals from Stillwater to prospect land in the Dakota Territory, which was similar to the common practice of the German Russians (also known as Germans from Russia).<sup>28</sup> Propaganda may have prompted the group to prospect the Dakota Territory for land. Stillwater, on the Minnesota-Wisconsin border, was a major

recruiting area for western territories. Milton states,

Early [Dakota] agencies, with their own interest at heart, provided some exaggerated advertising about Dakota, and territorial officials sent speakers to more heavily populated areas to extol the opportunities of Dakota and to praise the land in the face of counterpropaganda which made good use of the cold winters, hot summers, grasshoppers, and wild Indians.<sup>29</sup>

The counterpropaganda was to keep travelers from leaving their current location. For example, Iowa newspapers described the Dakota Territory as barren, desolate, and godforsaken.<sup>30</sup> This propaganda and counterpropaganda may have influenced the Badus Swiss, but probably the draw was cheap land provided by the Homestead Act of 1862 and the Timber Culture Act of 1871. Trewartha speculates, in his study on the Swiss colony in New Glarus, Wisconsin, that the land was not selected based on sentimentality, but on usefulness and diversity, "a mixed prairie-forest area."<sup>31</sup> The Badus Swiss seemed to use similar reasoning, though their land was less diverse, lacking a wooded area.

Kingsbury states, "[The prospectors] picked out claims for thirty families, most of whom removed to the state in the spring of 1880."<sup>32</sup> The majority of the settlers created homesteads around the lake soon-to-be-named Lake Badus. In 1878, prior to the mass settlement, ten Swiss families settled in the northwestern corner of Lake County, Dakota Territory (see Fig. 1). These first settlers traveled by train from Stillwater to Luverne, Minnesota, then traveled approximately one hundred miles by wagon train (through Sioux Falls and Madison, Dakota Territory) to reach their homesteads.<sup>33</sup> Each male settler twenty-one years of age or older received a homestead claim and a tree claim, together totaling 320 acres (half a section), though according to McIntosh, most tree claims in the Middle West were not adjacent to the homestead and many did not make it to patent status.<sup>34</sup>



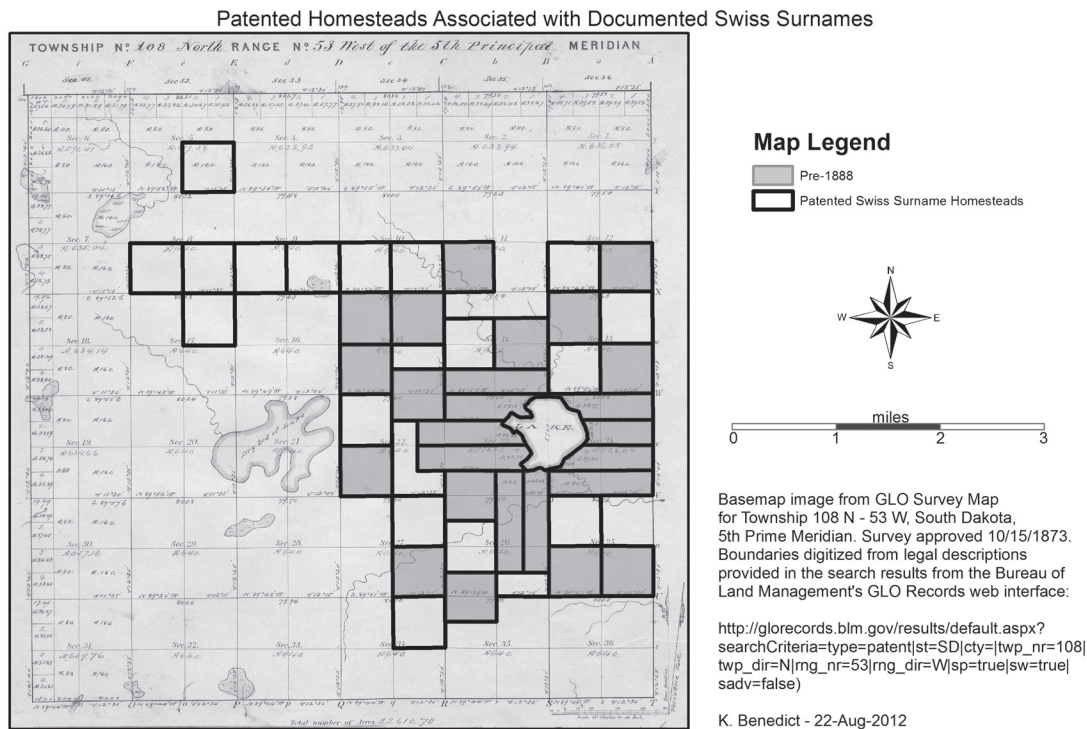


FIG. 1. Locations of patented homesteads for the Township encompassing Lake Badus. Homesteads patented prior to 1888 are highlighted while others are represented by unfilled outlines. The map is based upon a digitized copy of the 1873 GLO plat map for the referenced Township and Range with the patented homesteads superimposed upon the historic plat map..

The colony, the school, and eventually the township were named Badus in “remembrance of Piz Badus (better known as Six Madun), a towering peak over the small Lake Toma.”<sup>35</sup> The Swiss colonists, who spoke Romansch, remembered that Piz Badus (in central Switzerland near Andermatt) overlooked summer pastoral lands where they took their cows to graze.<sup>36</sup> Kingsbury speculates, though the prairie may have reminded the Swiss of their home pastoral lands, the wide-open spaces and lack of mountains and trees must have been a shock to them.<sup>37</sup>

The homesteads covered twenty-five square miles of gentle rolling prairie, with a small lake in the center, in the northwest corner of Lake County.<sup>38</sup> The lake is described by the National Park Service as follows:

Lake Badus, located at the eastern edge of the agriculture district, is the primary geographical feature. The shallow, stream-fed lake covers approximately 320 acres. Battle Creek, an intermittent stream, feeds into, and drains from, Lake Badus.<sup>39</sup>

The Badus homesteads were quarter-sections but were divided into “80 rods by one mile in order to provide shoreline for everyone,” and helped keep the settlers close together.<sup>40</sup> Locating the Swiss farmsteads close to the lake benefited their dairy production and general water needs, but the Swiss had to travel much farther to maintain their crops. The Nunda Irish, on the other hand, centrally located their farmsteads on their claims so they would have equal access to their land.<sup>41</sup> Most of the Badus

colony farms were a quarter-section (160 acres), but a few had huge farms, a quarter-section plus eighty acres.<sup>42</sup> According to Dooley, the farms in Badus were self-sufficient until the 1940s. Each farm had a flock of chickens, a few hogs, twelve to fourteen milk cows, twenty head of cattle (or fewer), and gardens. Dooley's description matches closely the National Park Service survey:

Each farmstead typically includes one house, one large barn, one or more smaller barns, one or more chicken coops, one or more grain silos, and a shelterbelt. Many of the farmsteads also include a single wood granary, a single brooder house, one or more loafing sheds, and/or a well house.<sup>43</sup>

Once the settlers arrived at the Badus colony they worked cooperatively, which allowed some men to build the colony's buildings and later their houses, while the other colonists would tend the carpenters' fields. This is a good example of cooperation preadapted from the original Ligia Grischa whereby members pledged mutual aid and defense. According to Dooley, the Badus Swiss were a tight-knit group with good leaders, and they worked well together.<sup>44</sup> Also, "[t]he Swiss were a happy people and provided their own entertainment."<sup>45</sup> In Dooley's assessment, the Swiss were better organized than the Irish because of the formation of the cooperative.<sup>46</sup>

Most settlers built sod houses until timber was available or affordable. The colony house was built in 1878, and included a small store and post office. In addition, it was a place of entertainment and was used for temporary housing. The colonists' frame houses and barns used rocks from the fields as their foundations. A little cement was used to bond the rocks together. Once the railroad came to Ramona, some farmers purchased manufactured houses from Sears or other sources.<sup>47</sup>

Because the land around Lake Badus was sloped, the Swiss immigrants were able to build their barns into the hillsides, similar to the way they did in their native country:

Swiss farmers tended to build barns more suitable for dairying. The barns were likely to have a hillside location so that the lower level would provide an entrance for the dairying cattle. The upper level had a hay door wide enough for a hay rack to be driven into that level.<sup>48</sup>

Thus, the cows could walk into the barn and the farmer could use a horse team to pull a wagonload of hay into the "loft." The hay could be off-loaded on both sides of the loft. This design was much more efficient for their needs compared to barns typical of the area, which used a pulley system to raise hay into the loft. This type of barn, variously called a bank barn or Sweitzer barn, has been identified by Ensminger as having originated in Switzerland, including Canton Graubünden.<sup>49</sup> Bank barns (with forebay) dating to the late 1800s have been found in Pennsylvania and throughout the Midwest. On a trip to Switzerland, Dooley visited houses that used a similar design, but the house and barn were one structure with the "basement" as the barn.<sup>50</sup>

Whether brought directly from Switzerland or picked up along the way in their migration to South Dakota, the bank barn built by the Badus Swiss was a preadapted concept that aided their survival as a colony. The design was labor efficient for storing hay, and by virtue of its partial earth enclosure it provided a measure of protection against the harsh South Dakota winters.

In addition to rough winters, the colony also fought other natural disasters. In 1879 a prairie fire burned all the frame houses (not the sod houses) and wood supply. After the fire, the colony only had twisted hay bundles and cow chips for fuel. In 1880 and 1888 the area was hit with major blizzards, which killed many cattle. The farmers also had to battle with weeds, drought, and grasshoppers. In addition, the colony house burned down in 1884.<sup>51</sup> Despite all these setbacks, most of the Ligia Grischa members became self-sufficient and were eventually able to gain patent status for their land, thus meeting one of the league's primary goals.<sup>52</sup>

## THE NUNDA IRISH SETTLEMENT

A group of Irish settlers arrived in the area about eight months before the arrival of the Badus Swiss. The Irish settled the area of what is now Nunda. Nunda, formerly Prairie Queen, is six miles east of the Swiss settlement. The Swiss group settled around a lake and the Irish settled on higher ground.<sup>53</sup>

According to Ostergren, “[the Irish] were not known as agriculturalists in the Upper Midwest, and seldom established homogeneous enclaves. . . . Rather, their distribution was ubiquitous.”<sup>54</sup> Though the Irish were not farmers, the Nunda Irish group set out from Burr Oak, Iowa, mostly likely at the behest of the Catholic bishops in Minneapolis–St. Paul. Father John Ireland, among other bishops, appeared to have three motives in populating the frontier with Irish immigrants: (1) “to return to small, rural, religious, oriented communities on the land,” (2) to “rescu[e] Catholic immigrants, especially the Irish immigrants from the slums of the eastern cities,” and (3) to rescue orphans from destitution in large cities.<sup>55</sup> Kemp describes how Bishop Ireland formed the Irish Emigration Society and then made the society more inclusive to further these Catholic church goals:

[He] changed the name of the colonization organization from the Irish Emmigration [sic] Society to the Catholic Colonization Bureau . . . to include various ethnic groups; German, Swiss, Belgians, and French, which were involved with the Irish in the Catholic Colonization effort in the West.<sup>56</sup>

The inclusive approach by Bishop Ireland no doubt helped these two Roman Catholic immigrant groups, the Badus Swiss and Nunda Irish, form a positive attitude toward each other. Most significantly, the two groups built St. Ann’s Church in Badus Township (Fig. 2).

## RELIGION IN THE COLONY

In 1884 the Badus Swiss and the Nunda Irish formed a corporation, more than likely

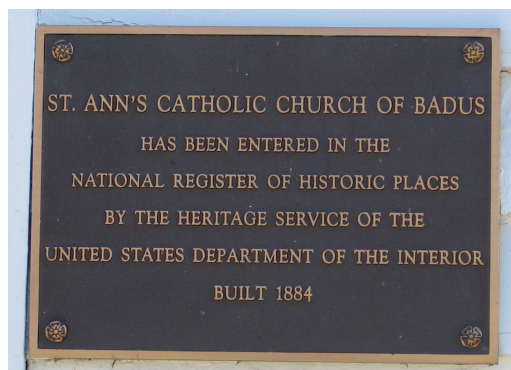


FIG. 2. Plaque on St. Ann’s Catholic Church of Badus built in 1884 by the Badus Swiss Colony and Nunda Irish settlement.

mediated by the Catholic Colonization Bureau, to build St. Ann’s Church.<sup>57</sup> The church cost the colonies three thousand dollars. The timber was shipped from Stillwater to Volga, South Dakota (the closest railroad station), via Luverne, Minnesota.<sup>58</sup> The costly expenditure showed the importance of the church to the two communities. The church became the religious, social, and economic center for both colonies. Ostergren states that for many immigrants, “[the church served the] essential purpose of solidifying the ethnic settlement into a focused community . . . [and] church services were held in ethnic languages.”<sup>59</sup> But by forming a corporation for the church and attending services together, the Badus Swiss and Irish Nunda did not follow this pattern of ethnic exclusiveness. Services were most likely in Latin and English, not Romansch, suggesting that at least some of the Badus Swiss adults already knew English (and their children were learning English in school). Prior to the building of St. Ann’s Church, the first confirmation took place in the schoolhouse in 1882 and included both Swiss and Irish children.<sup>60</sup> With the church as the center of social and religious activities for the two ethnic groups, it is highly unlikely the two groups would have stayed culturally exclusive.

The common religion was a strong bond that brought these communities together, and the two communities got along fine.<sup>61</sup> Even though



the Swiss were the dominant group, St. Ann's first regular priest, Father Flynn, was Irish, and was known as a binding force. Prior to Father Flynn's arrival in 1881, "Father Brogan, of Sioux Falls, SD, made periodic visits to the settlement on his regular circuit."<sup>62</sup> Father Flynn organized sports competitions (mainly baseball) among the various groups in the region.<sup>63</sup> Plus, there were many marriages between the two groups.<sup>64</sup> The Swiss provided the extra work needed for church services (e.g., grave digging) because they were much closer to the church. In 1881 the church had 100 adult adherents, in 1884, 350 adherents from 100 families, and nine years later it had 300 adherents.<sup>65</sup> The relationship between the two groups likely meant that the Badus Swiss, who were farmers, helped the Irish novice agriculturalists gain the necessarily skills and knowledge for their new occupation and lifestyle.

In 1898 St. William's Church was built in Ramona to accommodate the town's growing population, which was spurred on by the railroad company's decision to build a station in Ramona and the establishment of line businesses that followed. The Catholic communicants were split between St. William's and St. Ann's, and eventually St. William's eroded the number of St. Ann's communicants. St. Ann's held regular services until 1965, and today it is used for special occasions (e.g., weddings and funerals) and hosts an annual celebration on St. Ann's birthday in July.<sup>66</sup>

#### SCHOOLS IN THE COLONY

The colony was incorporated by the Dakota Territory in 1880, and soon after, it built a school on the east side of Lake Badus. According to Berther, "[the Swiss b]eing a religious people and valuing the importance of education for the children, they built a school-house as one of the first buildings."<sup>67</sup> Later, in 1884, the settlement was incorporated in Lake County and became known as the Village of Badus. When a settlement incorporated in a county and built a school, the county would supply the teacher.<sup>68</sup> Most likely the

instruction in the Badus village school was in English, which would have helped the Ligia Grischa meet its unstated goal of blending into American society. Other country schools were built on other farmsteads in Badus Township, but East and West Badus were the main schools. The school also doubled as the Swiss and Irish colonies' church until 1884, when St. Ann's Catholic Church was built. The original school burned down in the 1940s.<sup>69</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

The Badus Swiss colony, having formed in 1875, succeeded in its two main goals: becoming individually self-sufficient and integrating into American culture. Our analysis used the cultural preadaptation definition that Jordan and Newton applied to Europeans migrating to the United States. As we have seen, the Badus Swiss possessed a particular cultural trait, the Ligia Grischa organization structure, that enabled them to occupy a new environment, the Dakota Territory, more effectively than other groups that also attempted to migrate into the region. This "competitive advantage" was inherent in the Badus Swiss; in naming their union the Ligia Grischa, these Swiss immigrants invoked a cultural institution whose republican ideals and rejection of outside interference brought the community together and helped them to survive the early years. The Badus Swiss used the Ligia Grischa to establish the colony and help each member become self-sufficient, because in this form of organization, each member's success is bound to another's. Even though rejection of outside interference was an ideal of the original Ligia Grischa, the Badus Swiss members had to be open to meet one of their goals, assimilation into American culture. This openness also allowed them to establish a bond with their neighbors, the Nunda Irish, based on their common religion. In Ostergren's assessment, "most [of] South Dakota's early twentieth century rural immigrant society [was] socially and culturally ethnic, but economically American."<sup>70</sup> Although the Badus

Swiss were economically American, their close relationship with the Nunda Irish suggests an alternative to Ostergren's argument. Bishop Ireland's Catholic Colonization Bureau brought the two ethnically diverse communities together to build St. Ann's Church in Badus, which became the center of religious and social activities for the two communities. Their shared faith may have been the original basis of the cooperative they formed to build the church, but the historical record suggests the bond extended beyond the church. Their children most likely attended the same schools in Badus and were baptized together, and marriages between members of the two communities furthered the bond.

More importantly, the organization and agricultural knowledge of the Badus Swiss mostly likely benefited the Nunda Irish. Ostergren described most Irish immigrants on the frontier as agricultural novices, so it is reasonable to assume that the bond between the two groups, formed initially by religion, later extended to the farmsteads as well. According to Dooley, the Swiss were better organized than the Irish, most likely because of the Ligia Grischa and their agricultural past. This competitive advantage helped each Ligia Grischa member become self-sufficient, which allowed the organization to dissolve four years sooner than initially written in the bylaws.

With the new railroad station in Ramona, and eventually a competing Catholic church in Ramona, the Village of Badus started its slow decline as the social and religious center of Badus Township. As of 2012, Badus Township is not counted as a specific location by the U.S. Census, but it comprises thirty-six families.<sup>71</sup> The majority of the people in Badus Township live in Ramona, which has fewer than two hundred people and the average age is over fifty years old.<sup>72</sup> The Nunda area reached its population peak of 206 people in 1920, and now its population has dwindled to less than fifty residents in the town of Nunda. As we have seen, the Badus Ligia Grischa was built for dissolution, which occurred eleven years after its formation.<sup>73</sup> This dissolution most likely

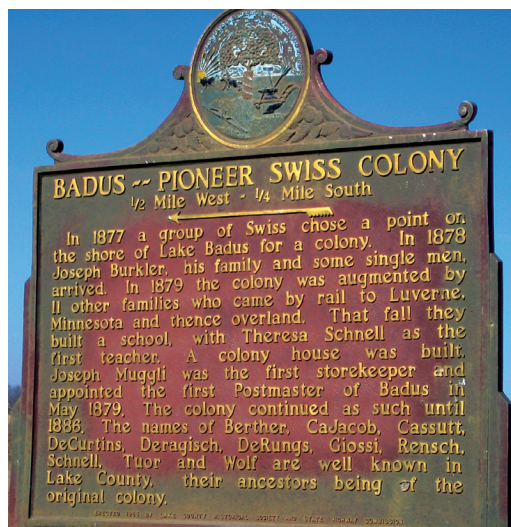


FIG. 3. Badus Swiss Colony historical marker on US 81, erected in 1965 by the Lake Country Historical Society and State Highway Commission.

meant that the organization's unstated goals of self-sufficiency and assimilation, highlighted by Schelbert's research and by the personal stories of DeRungs and Pauley, were reached. Today, the Badus Swiss Colony is gone, and the only physical reminders are St. Ann's Church and a roadside historical marker (Fig. 3).

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Delmer Dooley is a resident of Ramona, SD. His mother was a descendent of the Badus Swiss and his father a descendent of the Nunda Irish. He has a PhD from the University of Missouri (1964) in Agriculture Education and finished his career as the executive director of the Near East Foundation in 1982. He is a local historian, retired farmer, and still publishes articles about tractors. He was the driving force behind the NPS survey, which designated Lake Badus as a Rural Agricultural Historical District.

#### NOTES

1. Walter J. Bock, "Preadaptation and Multiple Pathways," *Evolution* 13, no. 2 (June 1959): 194–211; Walter J. Bock, "The Role of Adaptive Mechanism

in the Origin of Higher Levels of Organization," *Systematic Zoology* 14, no. 4 (December 1965): 272–87; Ernst Mayr, "The Emergence of Evolutionary Novelty," in *Evolution after Darwin: The University of Chicago Centennial*, vol. 1: *The Evolution of Life*, ed. Sol Tax (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 349–80. As Stephen Jay Gould notes, the term preadaptation has been "fading from use" (131) in the face of criticism within the evolutionary biological community, though the term *exaptation* (1232–33) is proposed as an alternative that better captures the concept of an existing form having a beneficial effect in a new selective context. *The Structure of Evolutionary Theory* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002), 1229–46.

2. Milton Newton, "Cultural Preadaptation and the Upland South," *Geoscience and Man* 5 (June 10, 1974): 143–54; Ernest S. Easterly III, "Global Patterns of Legal Systems: Notes toward a New Geojurisprudence," *Geographical Review* 67, no. 2 (April 1977): 220; Terry G. Jordan and Matti Kaups, "Folk Architecture in Cultural and Ecological Context," *Geographical Review* 77, no. 1 (January 1987): 52–75; Terry G. Jordan, "New Sweden's Role on the American Frontier: A Study in Cultural Preadaptation," *Geografiska Annaler, Series B, Human Geography* 71, no. 2 (1989a): 71–83; Terry G. Jordan, "Preadaptation and European Colonization in Rural North America," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 79, no. 4 (1989b): 489–500; Karl Raitz, "Rock Fences and Preadaptation," *Geographical Review* 85, no. 1 (January 1995): 50–62.

3. Paul Rozin, "Towards a Cultural/Evolutionary Psychology: Cooperation and Complementarity," in *Evolution, Culture, and the Human Mind*, ed. Mark Schaller, Ara Norenzayan, Steven J. Heine, Toshio Yamagishi, and Tatsuya Kameda (New York: Psychology Press), 9.

4. Bock, "Preadaptation and Multiple Pathways," 208, fig. 5.

5. Jordan, "New Sweden's Role on the American Frontier," 78.

6. Newton, "Cultural Preadaptation and the Upland South," 144.

7. Bock, "Preadaptation and Multiple Pathways"; Jordan, "New Sweden's Role on the American Frontier"; and Newton, "Cultural Preadaptation and the Upland South."

8. Leo S. Schelbert, "New Glarus, Microcosm of Historical Traditions," in *New Glarus 1845–1970: The Making of a Swiss American Town*, ed. Leo S. Schelbert (Glarus, Switzerland: New Glarus Microcosm, 1970), 9.

9. Martin Berther, "Badus Colony: Address by Martin Berther," in *History of Lake County*

(Madison, SD: Lake County Historical Society, 1995), 189; Steven D. Hoelscher, *Heritage on Stage: The Invention of Ethnic Place in America's Little Switzerland* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), 27.

10. Schelbert, "New Glarus," 9.

11. Leo S. Schelbert, "Swiss in South Dakota: A Preliminary Sketch," *SAHS Historical Society Review* 37, no. 3 (2001): 4.

12. Robert C. Ostergren, "European Settlement and Ethnicity Patterns on the Agricultural Frontiers of South Dakota," *South Dakota History* 13, nos. 1–2 (1983): 55–58.

13. Ibid. "East River" and "West River" refer to east and west of the Missouri River, a divide that began during the formation of the state and still exists today. East River is generally better suited for crops, and West River is better suited for livestock. The exception to this westward expansion is the Black Hill, in the southwest corner of the state, which was populated by people coming from the south and west.

14. Ostergren, "European Settlement and Ethnicity Patterns."

15. Schelbert, "Swiss in South Dakota," 10.

16. Wilhelm Oechsli, Eden Paul, and Cedar Paul, *History of Switzerland, 1499–1914* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1922), 2.

17. W. D. McCrackan, *The Rise of the Swiss Republic: A History* (New York: H. Holt, 1901), 87.

18. Ibid., 88.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid., 207.

21. Oechsli, Paul, and Paul, *History of Switzerland*, 2.

22. *Historical Record of St. Ann's Roman Catholic Church: 100th Anniversary, 1884–1984* (Ramona, SD: self-published, 1981), 26–31.

23. McCrackan, *Rise of the Swiss Republic*, 88.

24. *Historical Record of St. Ann's*, 3. Ligia Grischa's first bylaw states it is to exist for fifteen years.

25. Elizabeth DeRungs, "The Ligia Greischa Colony," in *Pioneer Days in Lake County*, ed. P. E. Tyrrell (Madison, SD: Karl E. Mundt Historical and Educational Foundation, 1980), 93–94.

26. J. Kay and J. Hornsby, "On Articles by Meinig, Jordan, and Hornsby: The Future of Historical Geography in the United States," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 80 (1990): 618–23; Schelbert, "Swiss in South Dakota," 4.

27. Rebecca Pauley, *The Ties That Bind: The History of the Pally/Palli/Pauley Family* (Madison, SD: self-published, 1983), 5.

28. George W. Kingsbury, "Frank J. Tuor," in *South Dakota: Its History and Its People*, ed. George Martin Smith, vol. 3 of *History of Dakota Territory* (Chicago: S. J. Clarke, 1915), 678–79; Schelbert, "Swiss in South Dakota," 9; Ostergren, "European

Settlement and Ethnicity Patterns," 69. The Badus settlement was the first of three major Swiss colonies in South Dakota. The others were the Swiss Mennonites from Russia and the Swiss Benedictines of St. Meinrad, Indiana.

29. John R. Milton, *South Dakota: A Bicentennial History* (New York: Norton, 1977), 85.

30. Ibid.

31. G. T. Trewartha, "The Green County, Wisconsin, Foreign Cheese Industry," *Economic Geography* 2 (1926): 296; Terry G. Jordan, "Between the Forest and the Prairie," *Agriculture History* 38, no. 4 (1964): 215.

32. Kingsbury, "Frank J. Tuor," 678–79.

33. Berther, "Badus Colony," 189.

34. C. Barron McIntosh, "Use and Abuse of the Timber Culture Act," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 65, no. 3 (1975): 347–62; Delmer Dooley, interview by Quinn, October 2006. Only one original tree claim is thought to exist in the north part of the Badus Township.

35. Schelbert, "Swiss in South Dakota," 10.

36. Donald Deragisch, interview by Quinn, Ramona, SD, November 12, 2006.

37. Kingsbury, "Joseph Muggli," in *History of Dakota Territory*, 684.

38. Berther, "Badus Colony," 189.

39. U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form [for Lake Badus Rural Agricultural Historic District]* (Washington, DC, 2003), section 7, 1.

40. Pauley, *The Ties That Bind*, 6; Kingsbury, "Frank J. Tuor," 678–79.

41. Delmer Dooley, interview by Quinn, Ramona, SD, November 5, 2006.

42. Deragisch interview.

43. National Park Service, *National Register of Historic Places [Lake Badus]*, section 7, 1.

44. Dooley interview, October.

45. Emil Lorijs, "Early Immigration Settlements Near Oldham, South Dakota," *Heritage of the Great Plains* 21, no. 1 (Winter 1988): 17.

46. Ibid.

47. Dooley interview, November.

48. National Park Service, *National Register of Historic Places [Lake Badus]*, Section 7, 1.

49. Robert F. Ensminger, *The Pennsylvania Barn: Its Origin, Evolution, and Distribution in North America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 203.

50. Dooley interview, November; DeRungs, "Ligia Greischa Colony," 93–94.

51. Berther, "Badus Colony," 188.

52. U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, *General Land Office Records*, <http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov> (accessed October 12, 2012).

53. Bill McDonald, *The Nunda Irish* (Stillwater, MN: Farmstead Publishing, 1990), 55; Dooley interview, November 2006. Dooley speculates that the Irish were tired of living in damp areas in Ireland and wanted dry land, so they were content to have the higher-ground settlements in Lake County versus the lake region where the Swiss settled.

54. Ostergren, "European Settlement and Ethnicity Patterns," 73.

55. David Kemp, *The Irish in Dakota* (Sioux Falls, SD: Rushmore House, 1992), 3, 89, 107.

56. Ibid., 89. Ireland was the bishop of the Diocese of St. Paul, whose jurisdiction included the Dakota Territory east of the Missouri River. Ireland contracted with railroad companies to create colonies in Minnesota and the Dakota Territory, but his efforts hardly aimed at colonizing the territory.

57. McDonald, *The Nunda Irish*, 150.

58. *Historical Record of St. Ann's*, 5.

59. Ostergren, "European Settlement and Ethnicity Patterns," 75, 77, 80.

60. Berther, "Badus Colony," 188.

61. Dooley interview, November; Berther, "Badus Colony," 189.

62. Berther, "Badus Colony," 188.

63. *Historical Record of St. Ann's*, 24. Regular church services were held every Sunday and once a year in July on St. Ann's birthday.

64. Dooley interview, November.

65. *Historical Record of St. Ann's*.

66. Ibid.

67. Berther, "Badus Colony," 188.

68. Ibid.

69. Ibid.

70. Ostergren, "European Settlement and Ethnicity Patterns," 79.

71. Deragisch interview.

72. U.S. Bureau of Census, Population and Housing, 2010. Total Population in Occupied Housing Units, South Dakota, (SF1), Table H10. <http://factfinder2.census.gov> (accessed October 12, 2012).

73. Donald D. Parker, *History of Our County and State [Lake County]* ([Brookings, SD]: South Dakota State College, 1960); U.S. Census.



## APPENDIX

### LIGIA GRISCHA BYLAWS

1. The Ligia Grischa fixes the period of its existence for 15 years.

2. In this society can only be accepted persons from 12 to 60 years, who show in their life a good behavior.

3. Every member must pay \$5.00 on entering the "Ligia Grischa" and signing the statutes. He must also pay 1 Taler every month and on the 5th of June 1875 another 10 Talers.

4. Every member who enters after the foundation of the "Ligia Grischa" is obliged to pay the same capital plus 5% more than the members who joined at the foundation of the "Ligia Grischa." This has the advantage to increase the percentage and "the Ligia has the rights every year."

5. If one other co-member should leave the Ligia Grischa before the period of 5 years he only gets the capital which he has paid monthly and also this one without any interests.

6. Should one or other co-member die; his relatives have the right to maintain his membership with its rights, if they engage themselves to comply with the statutes that have been made. But if the heirs prefer to put out his name (withdraw his membership), they have to give notice within 9 months after his death, in which case they get all the money due to them according to the financial balance of that year, except the 15 dollars paid at the beginning. The Ligia Grischa always reserves a period of three months to pay such rights.

7. Should a member not fulfill the obligations that the statutes prescribe, the Ligia Grischa gives a term of 6 months and afterwards he will be expelled and all his rights are taken away.

8. Disagreements between members of the Ligia Grischa have to be settled by the society itself and nobody shall have the right to look for justice elsewhere. In difficult cases the man can choose three members out of the Ligia Grischa and also the Ligia will choose three men and they will have the full competence to settle the quarrel.

9. The Ligia Grischa holds the meeting every first Monday of the month at 8:00 in the evening. Absentees without sufficient reasons pay 25 cents and if this should happen often 35 cents every time. As sufficient reasons are regarded absence from town, illness, being alone in business and other cases, which the society regards as sufficient and justifiable.

10. The officials and their obligations.

- 1.) President and Vice-President
- 2.) Actuary (registrar) and Vice-Actuary
- 3.) Cashier
- 4.) A committee of three members

11. Each official has to be elected with "ticket" (written vote) and must have the majority of 2/3 in order to be validly elected. Each official keeps his function for one year. (He is elected) on the first Monday of May and takes his function on the first of June.

12. The officials are obliged to read the account (rendering of the account) in detail in front of the Ligia Grischa, so that everybody knows how things are, and this has to be done every six months of each year at the first meeting of May and November.

13. The president is the first man of the Ligia Grischa and he has the right and the obligation to keep order in all the meetings, as well as the general obligations of a president. All the laws, which are made, get their validity for the future only when the president, as well as all the documents, notes, papers of the Ligia Grischa sign them. The actuary must also sign these.

14. The president has the right to convoke an extra meeting when he finds this to be in the interest of the Ligia Grischa. If five members ask the president in a written petition for an extra meeting, the president is obligated to hold a meeting.

15. The president has to be responsible of everything that the Ligia Grischa confides to him, for instance the seal etc.

16. When in a vote two times the number is the same on both sides, the president has the right to give the decision.

17. The Vice-President has the same authority as the president when the president is absent.

18. The actuary is in charge of all the books, the protocol as well as all accounts and has to deal with all the necessary correspondence of the Ligia Grischa.

19. At every meeting the actuary has to read to the assembly the names of the members and to register the absentees. He has also to read the protocol or the decisions taken at the last meeting, he has to read to the assembly all reports and dealings between the meetings, for instance notes, insurances, etc. for his work the actuary gets a thaler per month.

20. The cashier has to receive all the money of the Ligia Grischa. He has also to give guarantee (insurance) of two members of the Ligia Grischa both of which have the value of 500 dollars. The cashier has to give the actuary a receipt of all the money he gets from the Ligia Grischa.

21. The cashier has not the right to keep in his house (or cash desk) more than 60 dollars, but he has to put it (in a bank) with interest with the



best guarantee he can find. With the advice of the Committee and the officials he has the right to loan money as far as they find it suitable for the Ligia Grischa, without being obliged to bring the matter before the assembly.

22. The Committee is obliged to control the books and all accounts from time to time whenever they find it necessary. Should a member of the Committee not be able to assist one or the other meeting, the two other members present have the obligations and the right of absence.

23. General Rules

In an assembly every member that will propose a matter, has to ask the president for the permission to speak and he has to explain his proposal as short as possible and to keep to the subject.

24. Should a member after the meeting has begun, propose something which does not belong to the subject and should then arise trouble, for instance drunkenness etc., the president is strictly obliged to maintain the order and, if necessary, to tell them to leave the meeting. If they insist and have some reasons to go on with their proposal, they must do it in a written petition for the next meeting.

25. All the members of the Ligia Grischa have to observe these laws and statutes which have been set up here, and to become a full member of the Ligia Grischa they have to sign with their proper hand.

Reprinted from *Historical Record of St. Ann's Roman Catholic Church: 100th Anniversary, 1884–1984* (Ramona, SD, 1981), 32–34.