

BARUCH SCHLEISINGER WEIL

By: Steve Simon

Based upon original research by Jim Mann and Bob Anderson



12.7A LG Baruch Schleisinger Weil.

Baruch Schleisinger Weil, the man who founded Slinger, was born Baruch Schleisinger in the Jewish section of Strasbourg, Alsace, France on June 29th, 1802. The overlapping Jewish, French and German cultures of his background and birthplace were reflected in his name: Baruch is the Hebrew word for "Blessed." His last name, he pronounced in the French manner: Schleisinger (pronounced Shlay-zing-er, as opposed to the germanic Sles-sen-ger) and Weil (pronounced Wheel, as opposed to the more common Why-el). Although much of Baruch's early life is still somewhat shrouded in mystery, he clearly had a colorful and eventful life before, during, and after his years in Slinger, or as he called it, Schleisingerville.

There are legends that in France Baruch was a Brigadier General in the Army, or that he raised horses for the French Cavalry. However, by his own account: "I was born a poor boy, and by my own unaided industry, energy and good conduct,

became the principle in a large mercantile establishment."¹ Before he emigrated to the United States, he had divorced his first wife in France, whom he described as "a wicked and designing woman."² This divorce and the accompanying scandal were apparently the motivating factors in his decision to seek a new life in America.³

In May 1843 Baruch Schleisinger emigrated to the United States with his adult son Jules Schleisinger. They initially lived in New York City and then moved to New Orleans before finally settling in Wisconsin in 1845.⁴

The Schleisingers either emigrated with, or met in the United States, another Jewish family from Alsace, the Weils. Jim Mann is of the opinion that they traveled together from France. I believe it is more likely that the two families either met or were reunited in New Orleans, which at that time had a large French national population. It is a well established story in the Weil family that one of the Weil daughters, Eliza, was originally courted by Baruch's son Jules Schleisinger. In any event, Baruch and Eliza were married in 1845.⁵ By all reports it was a happy match despite the 22 years difference in their ages; their marriage produced six children. Upon getting remarried Baruch expanded his last name, later saying "I added the name of my present wife to my own, a compliment often paid by Frenchmen to their wives." He also took the step of having this change authorized by an act of the State legislature.⁶

According to Jim Mann: "The two plus Jules came to Washington County on November 1, 1845. A month later Schleisinger Weil platted the Village of Schleisingerville and built the first store and home in the town. Largely due to his efforts the LaCrosse Railroad (later the St. Paul) was laid out through Schleisingerville in 1855."⁷ To celebrate the arrival of the railroad, Baruch hosted a party for area residents and officials from the railroad. It was widely reported that everyone had such a good time at the party, even the railroad officials missed their own return train to Milwaukee.

Over the next forty years Baruch devoted himself to a variety of business ventures and to politics. He was elected to both the State Assembly and State Senate repeatedly, and was instrumental in setting the boundary between Washington and Ozaukee Counties. In 1856 the Governor appointed Baruch a Brigadier General in the State militia.

¹Baruch Schleisinger-Weil, quoted in the Milwaukee Daily Sentinel, July 8, 1858.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴A Brief History of the Weil Family by Robert Anderson, 1955, aprox. Privately Printed. Bob Anderson is Professor Emeritus, School of Education, Harvard University.

⁵A History of the White House at Big Cedar Lake, Jim Mann, 1993. Privately Printed. Jim Mann is a distinguished man of Letters.

⁶Baruch Schleisinger-Weil, quoted in the Milwaukee Daily Sentinel, July 8, 1858.

⁷Ibid.

WOLF ***E.H. WOLF & SONS***

414 Kettle Moraine Dr. South • Slinger
644-5030



In 1941 Roy K. Wolf and Laura Wolf moved to Slinger, Wisconsin and Roy K. Wolf started as a Standard Oil Agent in the Slinger area. Roy Wolf retired in 1970 and his son, Edward became the agent. In 1976 Amoco Oil changed their agents to jobberships. At that time E.H. Wolf & Sons became a corporation. M.A. Wolf Trucking was incorporated in 1984 as the petroleum transporter for E.H. Wolf & Sons, other marketers and service stations.

The heating and cooling department was established in 1978, This is managed by son-in-law, Jeff Herther. With the new tank laws that are now in effect son-in-law Robert Troeller is state certified to handle tank installation and removal. Both sons are also involved in the family business. Craig Wolf is the business manager and Eddie Wolf, Jr. manages the service stations we supply.

Ed's dream of revitalizing the abandoned railroad depot became a reality in 1985. In March of 1986 the offices of E.H. Wolf & Sons and M.A. Wolf Trucking were moved from Ackerville to the relocated and remodeled Slinger depot. As the business continues to grow remodeling of the "old" freight room was just completed to accommodate more office facilities.

One of our first employees, Gordon Lofy, now our route delivery manager, has 20 years of employment with E.H. Wolf & Sons. The two companies employ about 35 people.

Ed and Minette, his wife, and their employees are committed to the petroleum industry by providing customers with quality products and service while preserving our environment. In continuing his commitment to the petroleum industry, Ed will serve as the President of the Petroleum Marketers Association of Wisconsin for the next year.

In 1858 Baruch made national news when a libelous article about him was published in the National Police Gazette, the 19th century equivalent of today's tabloid television shows. On July 8, 1858, The Milwaukee Sentinel, which had originally reported the Police Gazette story, printed a front page apology to Schleisinger Weil and devoted a third of a page to his detailed denials of the various charges. Although these false rumors never completely died after they were refuted, Baruch was subsequently returned to Madison by the voters.

By the 1860s B. S. Weil had Big Cedar Lake's first house erected on the west side of the lake, near the corner of Highway 144 and County K. He moved his growing family there from Slinger, although he maintained his various interests in the Village. His children attended the country school house, which was located on what is now the northeast corner of Arthur Road and Highway 144. Although the Weil's lake home was undoubtedly a modest house by today's standards, contemporary descriptions refer to it as a "fine country home."⁸ It was here that the Weils hosted European nobleman Prince Paul von

⁸The Story of Washington County by Carl Quickert, 1923.
Sited by Jim Mann.

OBITUARY of B.S. WEIL

DIED YESTERDAY IN CHICAGO AT THE AGE OF 91.

HE WAS ONE OF WISCONSIN'S BEST KNOWN
GERMAN-AMERICANS.

HE WAS THE FOUNDER OF SCHLEISINGERVILLE AND
REPRESENTED HIS DISTRICT REPEATEDLY IN THE
ASSEMBLY AND STATE GOVERNMENT.

Baruch Schleisinger-Weil died yesterday forenoon at the home of his son Eugene in Chicago at the age of 91. He was one of the earliest settlers in Wisconsin.

The real/right name of the deceased was Schleisinger. After his marriage to the daughter of a well-known Rabbi and explorer named Weil, he then added Weil to his original name-or Weil for short at times.

He came from Strasburg in Alsace where he was a horse trader/buyer for the French government and a leader for King Louis Philip. He was also a member of the French deputy chamber. Before the fall of the King, he left his homeland and came first to New Orleans where he stayed for a short time and by undertaking a large clothing business lost a lot of money. In 1845 he came to Washington County to what is now Schleisingerville and was to be named after him. He bought over a thousand acres on the southern end of Cedar Lake and parceled it, and in a short time it increased in value. He built a villa near the lake.

Weil was always an eager and respected politician and did so as a Democrat. He was a member of the first Senate of the State of Wisconsin and helped with the State constitution. In 1853, 1856 and 1857 he was a member of the State Senate. In the years 1852, 1871, 1872, 1873 and 1880 he was in the Assembly from Washington County. In the later years he was the oldest member of the legislature corporation. Mr. Weil

Wurtenburg during the Prince's tour of the United States. It was a tragic loss when their country home burned down about 1880. Weil never rebuilt the country house, although his daughters later built adjoining summer homes on the site, one of which still stands today. Baruch's West Bend "city" house is also standing today on 8th Avenue, just north of Highway 33.

Eventually Baruch Schleisinger Weil and family moved to Milwaukee, where a sizeable Jewish community was developing. He died at his son's Chicago home on March 26th, 1893, at the age of 90. Today there are over 70 direct descendants of Baruch and Eliza Schleisinger Weil. About half of the Weil descendants live within 100 miles of Slinger, and the rest are scattered throughout the United States. Almost all of them, regardless of where they live today, make it a point to return to Slinger at least once each summer.

(Steve Simon is a great great grandson of B. S. Weil. Jim Mann is a great grandson of B. S. Weil. Bob Anderson is a great great grandson of both Moses Weil, Baruch Schleisinger Weil's father-in-law, and William Wightman, one of the four founders of West Bend.)

reached the age of 91 years and was always cordial and charitable. In his marriage to his second wife, they had three sons and two daughters who are all in Chicago.

He, like no one else, faced the trust and reliance of the Germans in Washington County; and his name, like some other spirited people, was found in every farm house. He was small of stature but had an iron-like constitution and kept it until very old. Unfortunately, he began losing the sight of his laughing black eyes; and in his last hours was finally robbed of his strength. When at some time the history of Wisconsin will be written, the name of Baruch Schleisinger-Weil will stand out; and his name will be placed first as a German-American with a city named in his honor.

(This obituary was translated from German by Joe Wening, with assistance from Mary Rank, as it appeared in a German Milwaukee midweek paper dated March 29, 1893.)



JM Grave site of Baruch Schleisinger Weil born June 29, 1802; died March 26, 1893 and his beloved second wife Eliza Weil born June 12, 1824; died October, 20, 1910, located at Greenwood Cemetery, 2615 W. Cleveland Ave., Milwaukee.