

## ABOUT

### GEORGES AGASSIZ (1846–1910)

(Nephew of Louis Agassiz, 1807–1873)

and

### DAISY AGASSIZ (1877–1939)

(Daughter of Georges Agassiz and Eugénie Eilshemius)

Some excerpts from “Collected Documents, a Novel of Facts, by and about Louis Michel Eilshemius (1864–1941),” in Stefan Banz, *Eilshemius: Peer of Poet-Painters*, JRP | Ringier, Zurich 2015:

PAGE 517:

MARRIAGE OF LOUIS'S TWO SISTERS IN GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

THE NEW YORK DAILY HERALD

May 30, 1874, p. 8

“Marriages and Deaths”

Married.

AGASSIZ—EILSHEMIUS.—At Geneva Switzerland, on Friday, May 15,\* GEORGES AGASSIZ, of Saint Imier, Switzerland, Major in the Swiss army, to CECILE EUGENIE JOHANNA EILSHEMIUS, second daughter of Henry G. Eilshemius, of Laurel Hill, N.J.

HESSE—EILSHEMIUS.—At Geneva Switzerland, on Friday, May 15,\* WALTER [sic] HESSE, M.D., of Pirna Saxony, to FANNY ANGELINA EILSHEMIUS, eldest daughter of Henry G. Eilshemius, of Laurel Hill, N.J.

\* *The two couples were probably at the civil registry office that day. The official celebration was rather the next day on Saturday, May 16, 1874, as Wolfgang Hesse writes in his report about Fanny Angelina and Walther Hesse, and the discovery of Agar-Agar (see details in “1881” in this volume).*

PAGE 518:

1876

LOUIS'S BROTHER-IN-LAW GEORGES AGASSIZ ESTABLISHES AGASSIZ WATCH CO., FABRIQUE D'HORLOGERIE DU VALLON, IN GENEVA

“The establishment of the Agassiz Watch Co. goes back to Georges Agassiz in 1876. He was a son of Auguste Agassiz, the founder of the eponymous watch dealership that later became the Longines watch factory.

“When Auguste’s nephew, Ernest Francillon established Les Longines in Saint-Imier [Switzerland] in 1866, Georges Agassiz was part of the project. A year later Agassiz crossed the pond to the United States to market Longines timepieces there. After he returned, he assumed the role of financial and marketing manager at Longines. In 1876, as business was going extremely badly with his employer, he became independent, trading as the Agassiz Watch Co. His corporate mission was to finish and assemble movements of high value and quality as well as complete watches. After the introduction of new Swiss trademark laws for watch movements and cases, he created his own logo—an oval with the signature Agassiz accompanied by a fish. He apparently realized his most ambitious goals, for in 1889 the Jury of the Paris World exhibition awarded the manufacturer a gold medal for its remarkably fine movements. In 1896, the rights to the name passed to Auguste Sandoz of Saint-Imier, and with them the Agassiz fish logo.

“After the turn of the century, Agassiz started production of jewelry wristwatches. In addition, the collection comprised chronographs and pocket-watches—among them timepieces with ultra-flat movements.” (See Gisbert A. Joseph, 2005, see [http://www.avvus.de/galerie/galerie-uhren/agassiz-26469/agassiz-26469-d.html](http://shop.joseph-watches.com/joseph/members/FMPro?-db=joseph_archive.fp5&-format=branddetail.html&-lay=web&-sortfield=title_initial&katégorie=brand%20info&-max=500&-recid=12592902&-find=[accessed January 21, 2015]; see also <a href=) [accessed January 21, 2015].)

1877

#### GEORGES AGASSIZ AND J. EUGENE ROBERT\*

*They establish together a trading company for small watches in Hoboken, New Jersey, and New York, registered on July 3, 1877. (See <http://mikrolisk.de/show.php?site=280&suchwort=Agassiz&searchWhere=all> [accessed January 21, 2015].)*

*\* J. Eugène Robert's father Eugène Robert established between 1866 and 1868 the Swiss watch trading company Wittnauer in Geneva. Already in 1845 he established a watch trading company together with his brother-in-law in the United States. Later, in 1890, when Robert retired from business activities, Albert C. Wittnauer took over the firm. The company was from then on called "A. Wittnauer & Co." Wittnauer owned several agencies in the US and Canada. They sold exclusive and expensive watches from Swiss firms like Longines, Agassiz, Angelus, Stolz, Girard Perregaux, and Louis Audemars. Furthermore, he also had a watch manufacturing company under his own name. (See <http://www.avvus.de/galerie/galerie-uhren/agassiz-26469/agassiz-26469-d.html> [accessed January 21, 2015].)*

*Note: For more details about the joint venture of these two relatives of Louis, see "1907" and "1910."*

#### BIRTH OF LOUIS'S NIECE MARGUERITE (DAISY) AGASSIZ

*Daisy Agassiz, the daughter of Louis's sister Eugénie and Georges Agassiz, was born on August 2\* in Saint-Imier, Switzerland. She was a painter. She died on November 2, 1939. According to William Schack (SAH, p. 127), Louis sat for a portrait in watercolors by his niece, either in Lausanne, Switzerland, where the family lived, or in Aix-les-Bains, France, where they had a house and often spent the summer. The portrait sitting was probably in Summer 1903. The current location of the portrait is not known.*

*On the website of the Bases de données patrimoniales de Suisse romande is written the following information about her: "Née\* à Saint-Imier dans le Jura bernois, Daisy Agassiz pratiqua la peinture, l'aquarelle, le pastel et la gravure, plus particulièrement l'eau-forte, l'aquatinte et la pointe sèche. Membre du Lyceum dès sa fondation en 1913, elle collabora également à la *Revue historique vaudoise*. Elle publia plusieurs ouvrages sur la vie de peintres vaudois, peu connus du public du fait qu'ils avaient travaillé et vécu à l'étranger pendant longtemps, notamment A.-L. Du Cros, Benjamin Bolomey, François et Jacques Sablet, François Keisermann, Louis-Auguste Brun, Charles-François Knebel et François Bourgeois. Pour réaliser ces notices biographiques d'artistes suisses des 18ème et 19ème siècles, qu'elle communiqua à la Société vaudoise des Beaux-Arts, puis publiées dans la *Revue d'histoire vaudoise*, elle voyagea en France, en Angleterre, en Hollande et en Italie. Avec des eaux-fortes et des pastels, elle exécuta l'illustration des poèmes de Marguerite Lehr pour l'ouvrage "La Cathédrale de Lausanne. L'église St-François" paru en 1928 aux éditions Spes. Elle habita pendant de nombreuses années la propriété "Les Bosquets," entre les Terreaux-Bel-Air et la rue de Genève qu'elle vendit aux entrepreneurs de la tour Bel-Air. Elle meurt à Lausanne en 1939." (<https://museris.lausanne.ch/SGP/Consultation.aspx?Id=3836> [accessed January 9, 2015].)*

*\* According to this website, Daisy was born on August 2, 1878, but according to the website of the Schweizerisches Institut für Kunstwissenschaft, Zurich (<http://www.sikart.ch/kuenstlerInnen.aspx?id=4022650> [accessed January 9, 2015]), and the website of the Geneva Genealogy Society (<http://www.gen-gen.ch/AGASSIZ/Marguerite/1180778> [accessed January 12, 2015]), she was born on August 2, 1877. Finally, according to the website of the genealogy of the Fischli family ([http://www.fischli-family.ch/arbres/francais/ff\\_15.html#2](http://www.fischli-family.ch/arbres/francais/ff_15.html#2) [accessed January 12, 2015]), she was born in 1876. It's most likely that her year of birth was 1877, also because her brother Rodolphe was born in 1875.*

PAGES 559-60

1907

#### J. EUGÈNE ROBERT (B. 1833), BROTHER OF LOUIS'S MOTHER CÉCILE ELISE, DIES IN NEW YORK

##### THE NEW YORK TIMES

October 5, 1907, p. 11

"DIED"

*J. Eugène Robert, Vice Consul for Switzerland in New York, and for fifty years the Treasurer of the French Evangelical Church, died at his country home in Greenwich, Conn., on Thursday. Mr. Robert, who was an importer of Swiss watches, retired from active business about twenty years ago. He was prominently connected with nearly every French and Swiss charity in New York, being the Treasurer of the French Young Women's Home from its foundation. He was one of the most active of those interested in the work of the Swiss Benevolent Society and of the Swiss Home for Young Swiss.*

Mr. Robert was born in Switzerland in 1833, and came to New York at an early age. This city was always his home, his town house being at 48 West Seventy-first Street. Mr. Robert was also prominent in fire insurance circles, being a Director in both the Germania Fire Insurance Company and the Empire City Fire Insurance Company and the Empire City Fire Insurance Company. Edmond E. Robert of 3 Maiden Lane is his son.

[Unsigned]

*Note: Some further information about Louis M. Eilshemius's rich and influential uncle: Longines, "la marque horlogère [today owned by Swatch Group], a fait œuvre de pionnière dans le domaine dès le dernier quart du XIXe siècle. En effet, en 1878, elle 'développa son chronographe sur la base d'un brevet pris par Alfred Lugrin, qui travaillait alors pour J. Eugène Robert à La Chaux-de-Fonds; Robert était aussi le représentant de Longines à New York', peut-on lire dans le passionnant ouvrage consacré aux 125 ans de chronométrage sportif de Longines, rédigé par Lucien F. Trueb. Ce chronographe de poche simple avec petite seconde, le calibre 20H, était le premier d'une série de réalisation qui allait forger la réputation de la société.*

*"Onze ans plus tard, en 1889, le calibre Longines 19CH à compteur 30 minutes est le premier chronographe à mesurer le temps au cinquième de seconde. Il connaîtra son baptême du feu lors des Jeux Olympiques de 1896 à Athènes. La période allant de 1878 à 1940 n'a pas connu de développement majeur." (See Daniel Droz, "125 ans au service du sport. Chronométrage - Longines a fait œuvre de pionnier depuis 1878. Aujourd'hui, via Swiss Timing, la tradition se perpétue," L'express/L'impartial, February 17, 2003, p.3.) For more details, and for information about his joint venture with Louis's brother-in-law Georges Agassiz, see "1876," "1877," and "1910."*

PAGE 576:

1910

GEORGES AGASSIZ, LOUIS'S BROTHER-IN-LAW, DIES IN LAUSANNE, SWITZERLAND

THE NEW YORK TIMES

July 19, 1910, p. 7

COL. GEORGES AGASSIZ DEAD.

**Nephew of Louis Agassiz Made a Famous Collection of Butterflies.**

Word was received in this city yesterday of the death of Georges Agassiz, a nephew of Louis Agassiz, the scientist,\* last Friday, in Lausanne, Switzerland. Georges Agassiz was a Colonel in the Swiss Army, and lived at 3 Terraux, Lausanne. He was 64 years old, and one of the leading military authorities of Switzerland.

Col. Agassiz was married in 1874 to Eugénie Eilshemius of this city. Mrs. Agassiz was the daughter of the late Henry G. and Cécile Elise Robert Eilshemius of 118 East Fifty-seventh Street. In addition to his widow, Col. Agassiz is survived by a son and a daughter.

Like his distinguished uncle, Col. Agassiz was fond of the natural sciences. He was a great lover of the out of doors, and made a famous collection of butterflies, now in the Lausanne (Switzerland) museum.

\* Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz, 30/04/2001: No 3 / Agassiz, Georges (31. 1. 1846, Saint-Imier - 15. 7. 1910, Lausanne), ref, von Orbe und Saint-Imier. Sohn des Auguste (Agassiz). ∞ Cécile Eugénie Eilshemius, Amerikanerin. Collège Galliard in Lausanne, naturwiss. Stud. in Lausanne (Mitglied der Verbindung Belles-Lettres). Wiss. Forschungen in den Vereinigten Staaten bei seinem Onkel Louis (Agassiz). Ab 1870 arbeitete A. in St. Imier bei Francillon und Longines und gründete 1876 seine eigene Uhrenfabrik Agassiz Fils.<sup>1</sup> 1895 zog er sich nach Lausanne zurück. Der Insektenkundler schenkte dem Zoolog. Museum Lausanne 18'000 Schmetterlinge. Brigadier.

<sup>1</sup> Die Firma produzierte erstklassige Taschenuhren. Nach der Fusion mit der Genfer Firma Touchon spezialisierte sich Agassiz auf die Entwicklung und Herstellung besonders flacher Werke. Das flachste Werk mit 10" Durchmesser und 9/12" (entspricht 1,7 mm) Dicke würde in eine 20\$ Münze passen. Agassiz war einer der Hauptliferanten von Chronometer- und Chronographenwerke für Patek Philippe. (*Trusted Watch. Das internationale Uhrenportal*, <http://www.trustedwatch.de/wissen/persoentlichkeiten> [accessed January 12, 1915].)

*Note: For more details, and for information about his joint venture with Louis's uncle J. Eugène Robert, see "1876," "1877," and "1907."*

1913

THE NEW YORK TIMES

February 1, 1913, p. 18

“REAL ESTATE TRANSFERS”

Friday Jan. 31:

**Manhattan.**

57TH ST. 118 EAST, s s, 20x100.5; Fanny A. Hesse, widow, to Eugene Agassiz, Lausanne, Switzerland [*Fanny A. Hesse was the widow of Walther Hesse; Eugénie Agassiz, the widow of Georges Agassiz*]; Louis M. and Henry G. Eilshemius, 118 East 57th St, and others, heirs of Henry G. and Frederick E. Eilshemius, all title, C. A. G., 1-6 part. (mt \$18,000.) Dec. 23; attorney, Albert W. Seaman, 16 Exchange Place ..... \$100.

LOUIS M. EILSHEMIUS IS REJECTED FROM THE ARMORY SHOW

See *Milton Brown, The Story of the Armory Show, New York: Joseph H. Hirshhorn Foundation, 1963, p. 67. According to Steven Harvey, Eilshemius submitted five canvases to the selection committee for the Armory Show, which took place from February 17 to March 15, 1913.*