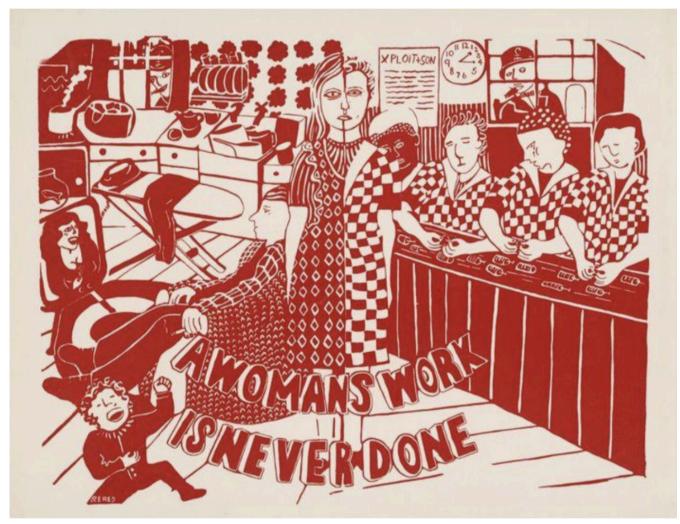
From HOUSE to FACTORY FLOOR



A Woman's Work is Never Done, See Red Women's Poster, 1976

FROM THE HOUSE TO THE FACTORY FLOOR

Women's Labor in Canton Glarus

Fei LI

The urgent crisis of care labor demands our attention!

While women and men nowdays share care work more equally, the capitalist system continues to undervalue reproductive care work in favor of productivity and efficiency. This essay explores the historical labor of women in Canton Glarus and how domestic care work has evolved over time. By examining women's labor, it becomes clear that reproductive care work is essential for both genders to exist as natural beings. To solve the crisis of domestic care, we can socialize and collectively conduct the enclosed domestic care work through transforming the domestic and public spaces.

Pre-Industrial Era: The Power of Commons for Female Solidarity

In the fourteenth century, the villages in canton Glarus were bustling with activities. The lush valley floor was a perfect spot for the peasants to settle, with its small and large alluvial cones of streams and runnels. The villages were abuzz with people going about their daily activities, and the location had many advantages. There was ample space for housing and farming, and the meadows and pastures nearby were perfect for grazing livestock¹.

The valley was dotted with farms and farm groups, surrounded by fields that supplied peasant households with a variety of crops. Wheat, oats, barley, millet, and flax were the major crops that were grown in this fertile land². These farms were often enclosed by wooden fences and small farms, marking them as private estates (Figure 01). On the other hand, the shared common land of local cooperatives, known as "allmen pasture", was an essential resource for the rural communities.

The "Allmend" or "Allmende" was the Swiss, Austrian, and German term used to refer to common pastures or common land used for communal purposes. The allmend was an important resource for the communities, providing grazing land for livestock, wood for fuel and building, and other resources like water and herbs. These lands were often managed by a collective group of farmers or villagers, and regulations were put in place to ensure fair and sustainable use of the resources³.

As the farming season progressed, the benefits of this common landuse system became clear. When one strip of land was affected by weather conditions or pests, the other strips could still thrive, ensuring a more stable harvest for all. The communal use also allowed for a manageable work schedule. Each strip required attention at different times, which prevented the overburdening of individual peasants and led to a more sustainable and efficient use of labor resources. But perhaps the greatest benefit of the communal system was its democratic way of life. All decisions related to planting, harvesting, and animal husbandry were made by peasant assemblies, where everyone had a voice. This fostered a sense of collective responsibility and ownership, and encouraged a more equitable distribution of resources. The commons also provided a space for festivals, games, gatherings, and other forms of peasant solidarity and sociality to thrive⁴.

For peasant women, the social function of the commons was especially important, as they had less social power and were more dependent on the commons for their subsistence and sociality. The commons served as the center of social life for peasant women, where they convened, exchanged news, sought advice, and developed their own viewpoint on communal events, distinct from that of men (Figure 02). The commons provided a space for women to come together and build solidarity, which was vital for their overall well-being and quality of life⁵.

The pre-industrial division of labor in Canton Glarus, much like in other pre-modern societies, was heavily influenced by gender roles and social norms. Men were primarily responsible for physically demanding field work, while women had to juggle various tasks such as helping with the field work, tending to animals and vegetable gardens, cooking, child-rearing, and other caregiving duties (Figure 03). During this period, women were largely dependent on their families and husbands. While the family worked together as one economic unit, the husband had significant power and control over the family, with legal concepts like "marital power" (Eheherrschaf) granting him complete authority over his wife's property, decisions, and actions⁶.

Hösli, Jost. Die Bauernhäuser des Kantons Glarus. Basel: Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Volkskunde. 1983, 9.

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Figure 01: Mathäus Meriian the Elder, General View of Glarus, 1642, Etching



Figure~02: Women~Planting~Out~Potatoes, 19th~Century, Swiss~National~Museum~

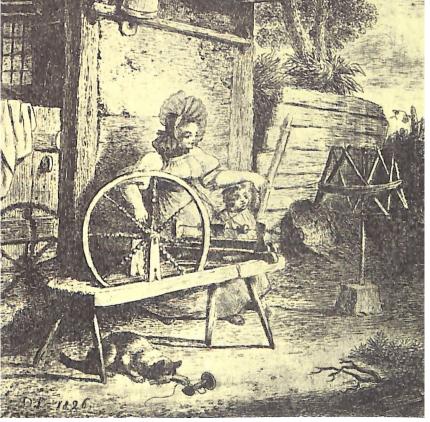


Figure 03: Daniel Lafond, Spinner, 1763-1831, Etching



 $Figure\ 04: Two\ Women\ at\ Work\ in\ the\ Parlour:\ One\ at\ the\ Spinning\ Wheel, the\ Other\ at\ the\ Loom, about\ 1890, Swiss\ National\ Museum$

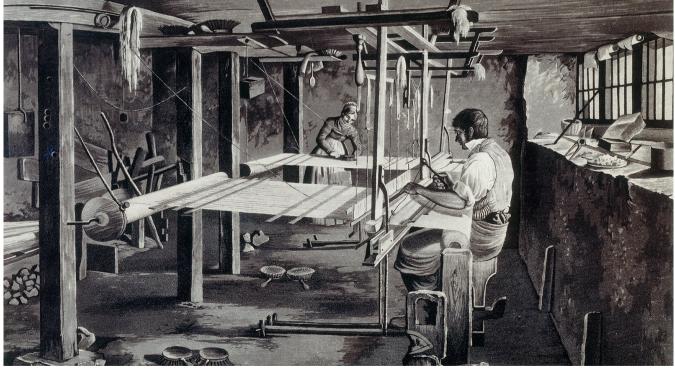


Figure 05: View into a weaving cellar, Print by Johannes Schiess, around 1850, Swiss National Museum

Proto-Industrial Era: Women's Economic Independence through the Cottage Industry

In the 18th century, middle Europe was plagued by inflation, poverty, and the aftermath of wars. Peasants in Glarus were struggling to make ends meet. That's when Andreas Heidegger stepped up. He was elected deacon in Glarus in 1714 and invited spinners from Zurich to come to the valley as teachers, hoping to provide a new source of income for the population¹. Within just five years, cotton handspinning spread throughout the valley (Figure 03, 04). It quickly became one of the most important source of income for the peasants, second only to livestock farming². The popularity of hand spinning was followed by hand weaving, which further promoted farming alongside professional farming as the population grew. A new form of cottage industry was emerged that changed the economic landscape of Glarus.

Unlike the textile making in the pre-industrial time, when peasants work more independently at home with a finished product, with a small scale of exchange. During the proto-industrial period, home based textile making became a component of a new manufacturing system. Cottage Industry at that time was part of a larger system of manufacturing that involved many people working together to produce goods on a much larger scale than before. Textile production was transformed from small scale cottage industry into a factory-based system that relied on home-based workers to spin, weave, and finish textiles³. In 1798, one third of the whole population in Glarus were working in the textile Industry. Glarus became one of the most industrilsied region in the whole european⁴.

Proto-industrialisation brought about a significant change in Glarus in the way how economy worked. No longer was it solely reliant on the land to support households. Men and women alike were able to produce goods at home and receive wages in exchange for their efforts. It was a big departure from the pre-industrial peasant way of life.

For women, this meant that they could earn wages independently, giving them a newfound sense of freedom and independence. However, the work was tough and physically demanding, requiring long hours of labor, and the wages were often low and seasonal. In addition, it was difficult to distinguish between domestic work of caring and cottage industry work, as they were often performed within the same space during the whole day.

¹ Hösli 1983, 22 2 Hösli 1983, 22

³ Arx, Rolf von, Jürg Davatz and August Rohr. *Industriekultur im Kanton Glarus : Streifzüge durch 250 Jahre Geschichte und Architektur*. Chur: Südostschweiz Buchverlag, 2005, 13-14

⁴ Hösli 1983, 22

Industrialisation and Devaluation of the Domestic Care Labour

By the end of first half of 19th century, the cottage mills that were once decentralized had been almost completely replaced by a more efficient mechanical-driven fabric system. As a result, the land of Glarus had transformed into a heavily industrialized area with an industrial landscape that included factories, trough towers, canals, railway lines, new residential quarters, and factory owners' villas (Figure 07). Glarus had shifted from a subsistence to a money-economy, where only production for the market was considered a value-creating activity, and the reproductional labor was deemed valueless. Only the small part of reproductive labor available on the market was paid for, which resulted in the devaluation reproductional labor¹.

In the metropolitan areas, where the city expanded significantly during that time, women were confined to their homes due to their familial obligation. They were responsible for taking care of the children, giving birth to children, and had limited mobility to leave their villages and work in factories, making them bound to reproductive labor. In Glarus, on the contrary, both men and women worked in nearby factories and earned wages based on their productivity. However, women were confined to their reproductive responsibilities and, on average, earned less than male workers. In addition to paid work, women were often occupied with household and caring for children, the sick, and the elderly. This double burden was less experienced by men in Glarus.

Disciplinary Punishments and Diseases

The first working bell in glarunerland was set up by the printing entrepreneur Edigius Trümpy on the factory roof². The bell signaled the start of another disciplinaried day for the textile factory workers, most of whom were women.

Day after day, they worked long hours, sometimes up to 12 hours a day, performing physically demanding tasks that left their bodies disciplined and exhausted. They stood for hours on end, manipulating heavy materials and performing repetitive motions that often led to strain and discomfort in their hands, arms, and back.

The fibers, dyes, and chemicals used in the weaving process created dust and fumes that caused respiratory problems and skin irritation (Figure 06). The women had to endure these hazards with limited protective clothing or ergonomic equipment³. Despite the dangers, the workers persevered, driven by a force that Deleuze Guattari once described as "free action," unleashing the power of repetition as a machinic force that multiplies its effect and pursues an infinite movement (Figure 08).

For female textile workers, the health hazards extended beyond physical strain and discomfort. Exposure to lead and solvents could lead to decreased fertility, miscarriage, and birth defects. Pregnant women were at increased risk for complications related to their pregnancy, such as preterm labor or low birth weight. In Canton Glaurs, the number of early deaths of children was higher than other places, and the miscarriage rate was also higher, at 28.5% for factory children in the first year compared to 8.2% for the general population and 0.97% for wealthy women. Despite the risks, the women often returned to work too soon after giving birth, due to poverty and a lack of leave for caring for their newborns⁴.

Regulations were put in place to prevent workers from leaving their jobs without giving notice, and factories were prohibited from hiring workers who had left another factory without notice⁵. For the women who toiled day after day in the textile factories of Glarunerland, the struggle for safe and humane working conditions continued without an end.

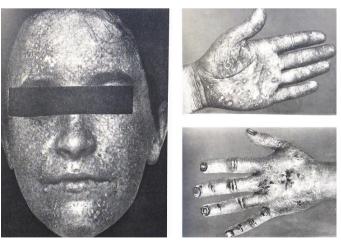


Figure 06: Eczema on the Face of a Female Worker in the Printing Mill and Skin Disease Caused by Dycyanide and Formalin, 1927, Atlas der Gewerblichen Gesundheitspfllege

¹ Federici 2004, 71

² Max, Lemmenmeier. "Alltag der Glarner Tuchdruckereiarbeiter im 19. Jahrhundert." In Arbeitsalltag und Betriebsleben. Zur Geschichte industrieller Arbeitsund Lebensverhältnisse in der Schweiz. Verlag Rüegger, 1981, 107.

Thomas Sommerfeld, *Atlas der gewerblichen gesundheitspflege*. Berlin: Preussigche Verlagsanstalt, 1927, 71.

⁴ Max 1981, 113 5 Max 1981, 107

Status of Women in Factory and in Marriage

In the textile factories, most workers had a specific role in the production line. Unfortunately, women faced a harsh reality: they were given fewer opportunities for advancement and often found themselves confined to less skilled positions. Even female supervisors were limited to managing only other women and not allowed to manage male workers⁶.

As they received wages independent of their husbands, women began to gain more independence. This was a significant change from the agricultural and cottage industries, where women were paid as part of a family package and had limited financial freedom. Although women were paid less than men, they were still able to sustain themselves and chart their own paths in life. In Glarus, a canton in Switzerland, women were particularly known for their strength and resilience compared to women in other regions.

With their newfound independence, the divorce rate in Glarus was higher than in other parts of Switzerland⁷. Without a husband, women in Glarus were still able to thrive and provide for themselves. Even the children also enjoyed greater independence and started working at a younger age than children in other regions⁸. They tended to marry earlier and become more self-sufficient.

As a result of these changes, the traditional paternal authority over wives and children began to diminish. New forms of relationships between spouses and parents and children emerged during the industrial era.

- Max 1981, 107
- 7 Max 1981, 115
- 8 Max 1981, 116

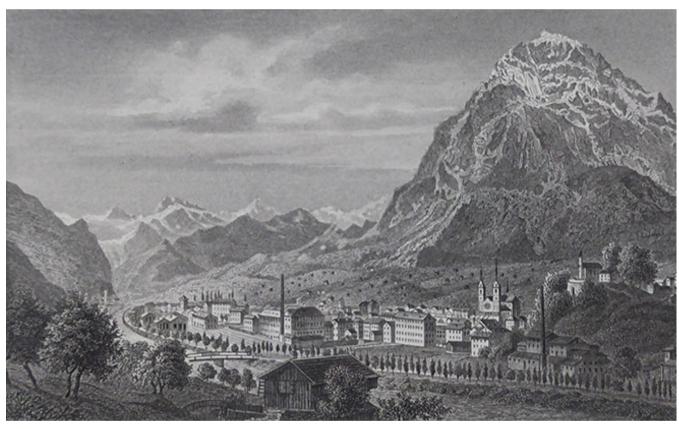


Figure 07: Glarus at the Peak of the Textile Industry, L. Rüdisühli, 1867, Steel Engraving



Figure~08: Young~Woman~Winding~Bobbins~on~Wheel~in~the~Loom~Shop, Blanket~factory~1898, Witney, Oxfordshire,~Historic~England~Archive~Inches Figure~08: Young~08: Young~08



Figure 09: See Red Women's Workshop: Feminist Poster 1974-1990.

Post-Industrial Eva, Domestic and Care Crisis

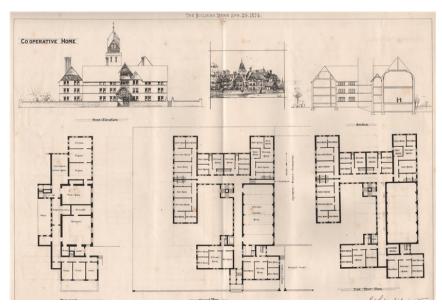
In the middle of the 20th century, Glarus was no longer just a hub for the textile industry. The town had diversified, with metal, building materials, timber, and food businesses contributing to the local economy¹. Women, who had previously been limited to working in factories near their homes, were now fighting for equal rights and the chance to share domestic responsibilities with their male partners. But as society shifted towards individualism and self-sufficiency, a new problem arose. Care work, especially for women, became an even greater burden in this neoliberal society.

Nancy Fraser, in her article "Contradictions of Capital and Care," explains that social care is essential for economic production in a capitalist society. Without the work of nurturing and caring, the economy simply cannot sustain itself (Figure 09). But this type of work is time-consuming and can limit the caregiver's mobility, making it difficult to participate in leisure activities and social life.

Although we live in a society that values liberal individualism and gender equality, reproductive and caring work are often viewed as obstacles to advancement, hindering our freedom. This view has led to a systematic separation of human beings from one another, as we prioritize profit over connections with others.

But caring work should not be the responsibility of women alone. It is a collective responsibility that should be shared equally by all genders. By breaking down the barriers between domestic work and care and the public sphere, we can work towards a more equitable and compassionate society. This means prioritizing caring for each other rather than chasing efficiency and productivity all the time.

The domestic work of caring is now conducted in the closed private sphere of the household, which can be lonely and exhausting. However, we can learn from pre-industrial societies, where people shared domestic and caring responsibilities together in communal spaces, building stronger relationships and communities. By changing our domestic living environment and the communal space in cities, we can tackle the social crisis of care (Figure 10).



 $Figure~10: E.~W.~Godwin,~Plans~for~a~Cooperative~Home~with~Kitchenless~Apartment~but~General~Dining~Room~and~Lounge,\\ 1874$

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Daily Lives of Women Across Time

Four Generations' Women in the House Brunnen, Glarus

Hoi, Zäme!

I am Anna. My daily life is quite diverse, I would say.

I wake up early in the morning, before the sun even rises, and stretch my limbs before getting up from my straw-filled bed. I need to get breakfast ready for my family before we all head out to work. I would start my day by gathering firewood and kindling to fuel the fire. I would then light the fire and wait for it to heat up before I could start cooking. This could take a while, especially on cold and damp days. As I light the fire in our stone hearth, I start to feel the warmth of the flames spreading throughout my home.

As the embers glow, I pour some milk into a pot and set it on the fire to heat up. While the milk is warming, I knead the bread dough and shape it into loaves. By the time my family wakes up at 6:00 AM, the bread is baking in the oven, and I am ready to serve them a hot breakfast of milk porridge and fresh bread. Despite the early hour and the hard work, the satisfaction of feeding my family keeps me going.

Once breakfast is ready, my family and I gather around the table and eat together. We are grateful for the food that sustains us. After we've finished eating, I grab my basket and head out to the fields or the barn to tend to our animals.

I milk the cows and goats, feed them, and make sure they have enough water. The pigs need to be checked regularly to ensure they are healthy and have plenty of food and water. In addition to the animals, I need to tend to the vegetable garden, which requires weeding, watering, and harvesting. It's a tough job, but it's rewarding to see the fruits of my labor in the form of fresh produce that feeds my family.

And then there's the cherry tree - a special part of our farm that we take great care of. In the spring, I need to prune the tree, removing any dead or damaged branches. During the summer, I need to keep a watchful eye on the ripening fruit and protect it from hungry birds or insects. And when the cherries are finally ripe, I need to harvest them quickly before they spoil.

The sun is at its highest point in the sky when I stop for a brief rest and eat a simple lunch of bread, cheese, and vegetables. I take a moment to catch my breath and admire the beauty of the surrounding countryside. It's peaceful here, but life is tough.

After lunch, I return to my work in the common fields of pasture, working with other men and women in our village. We worked the land in strips, which meant that if one strip was affected by bad weather or pests, the others could still thrive, ensuring a more stable harvest for all. We all worked together to make decisions about planting, harvesting, and animal husbandry. We were a true democracy, where everyone had a voice, even though our husbands are the one who made decisions finally.

When we women are together, we talk about everything from the weather to our families to the latest gossip in the village. We share tips and tricks for cooking, farming, and managing our households. Sometimes, we even sing together as we work, our voices blending in harmony with the sounds of nature around us.

As the sun began to set and the workday drew to a close, I headed back to my humble abode. Though I was tired from a long day in the fields, I was excited to prepare a special meal for my family. It was a rare occasion for us to have a big dinner, as our meager resources often limited our options.

Cooking itself was a physically demanding task. The pots and pans we used were often made of cast iron or copper, which were heavy and unwieldy. I had to be careful not to burn myself on the hot surfaces or spill boiling water on my skin. Preparing food was also time-consuming. We didn't have pre-packaged or pre-chopped ingredients,

so I had to do everything by hand. This meant peeling and chopping vegetables, grinding spices, and kneading dough for bread.

In order to preserve our food, I had to be resourceful with what we had. We didn't have refrigerators, so I had to find ways to keep our food fresh. Sometimes, I would preserve meat and fish by smoking them, or I would pickle vegetables to keep them from spoiling.

Cooking was not just a matter of necessity, but also of creativity. I had to find ways to make our meals tasty and nutritious with very limited ingredients. I would use herbs and spices that we grew in our garden to add flavor to our meals. I also had to be resourceful with what we had. For example, if we had leftover bread, I would make it into a pudding or bake it into a casserole.

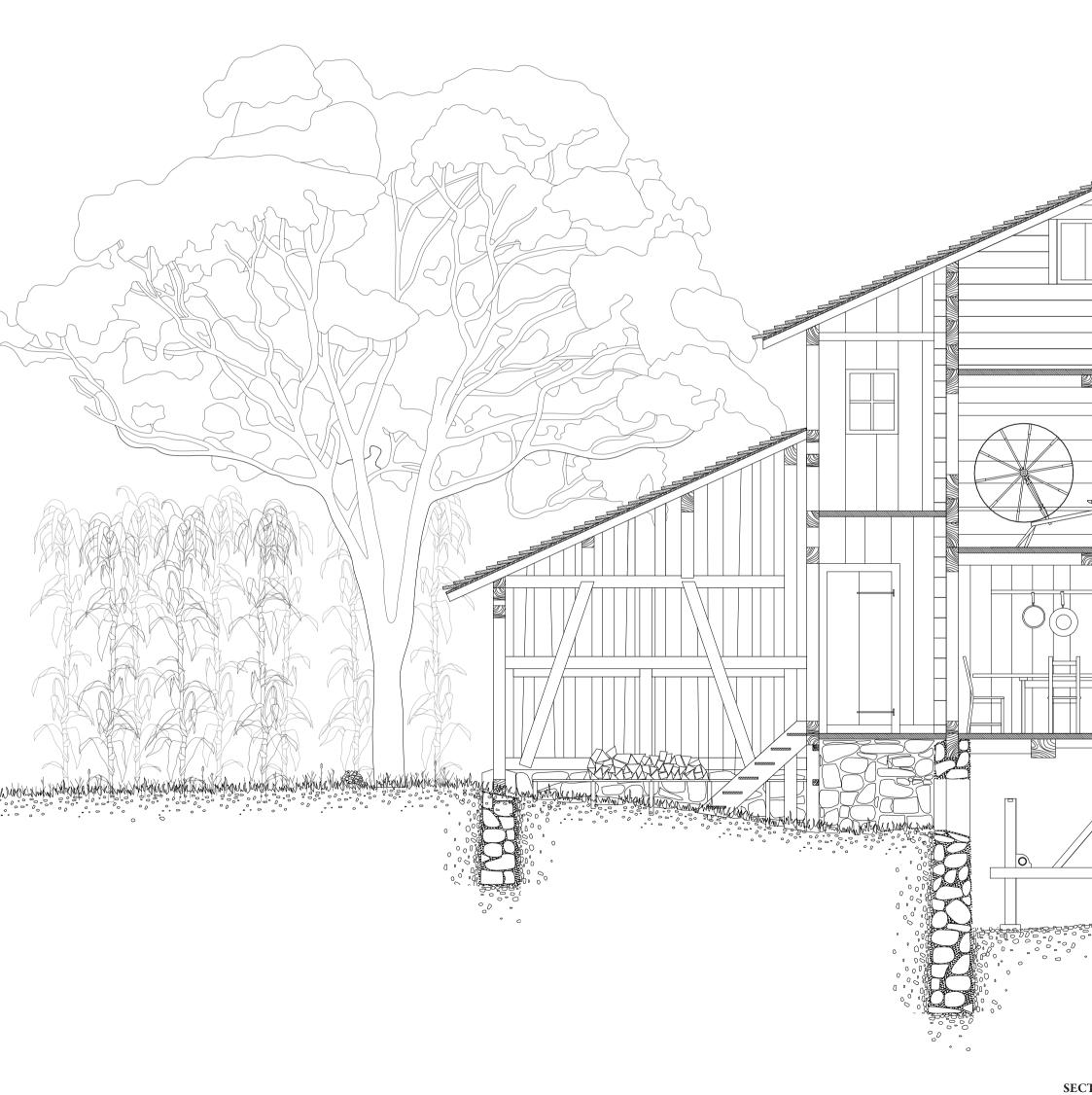
Once again, we gather around the table and eat together. Dinner is simple, but it's enough to fill our bellies. During the dinner, we talked about the family staffs. We were talking about which vegetables should we plant in our yard next season. My husband is the one who makes decisions. My husband was a hardworking man who cared deeply about our family's well-being. He had a deep knowledge of farming and animal husbandry, and he used that knowledge to make the best decisions for our farm. I trusted him to do what was best for us. But sometimes I am frustrating that I have so little to say in matters that affected us all. But it was simply the way things were.

After dinner, I spend some time sewing or spinning wool or flax. It's a welcome break from the hard physical labor of the day, and I find it soothing to work with my hands.

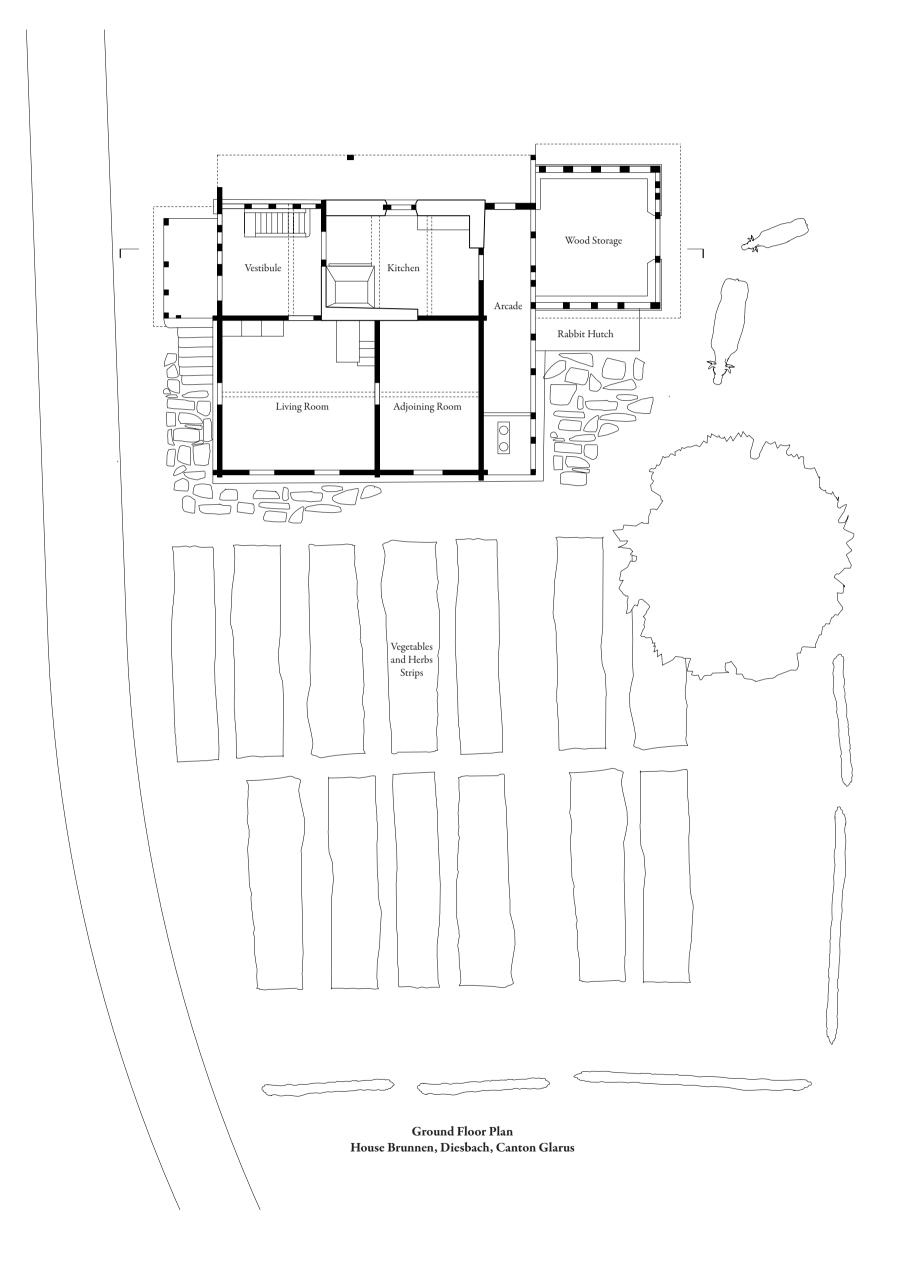
Finally, it's time for bed. I'm exhausted from the day's work, but I know that tomorrow will be just as challenging. I fall asleep very quickly after the whole day's hard work.

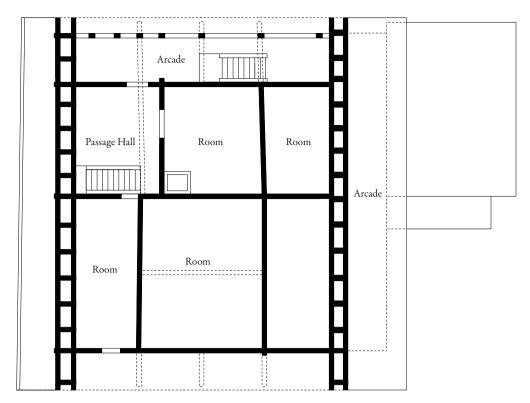


Anna Hefti, 17th Century

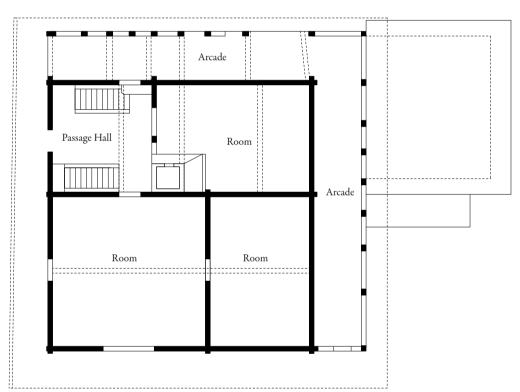




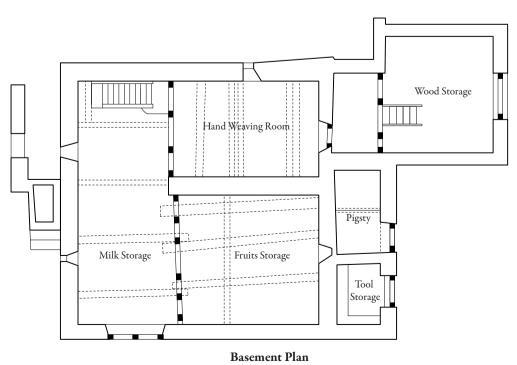




Roof Floor Plan



First Floor Plan



0m 2.5m

Grüezi Mitenand!

I am Fiona, my life is a never-ending dance. From sunup to sundown, my days were filled with a litany of tasks. I tended to our garden, cared for our animals, wove textiles with my husband, and raised our five children. It was enough to make a person's head spin, but I wouldn't have had it any other way.

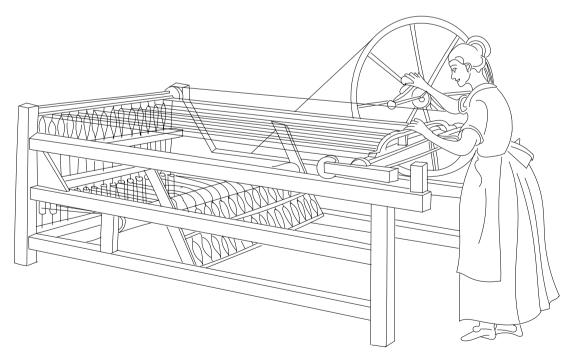
You see, after several years of honing our weaving skills, our cottage textile business had become our bread and butter. It wasn't always smooth sailing, mind you. We had our share of ups and downs, and my husband and I didn't always see eye to eye on our selling strategies. He preferred to sell to our neighbors, who he'd known since childhood, while I thought it was smarter to keep our eyes on the prize and maintain a stable relationship with the bigger printing mill. But hey, that's just how the cookie crumbles sometimes.

Despite our occasional differences, we were a well-oiled machine when it came to working together on the weaving machines. We knew each other's movements and techniques so well that it was almost like we were two halves of the same person. We had become quite the dynamic duo over the years, and our finished products were always top-notch.

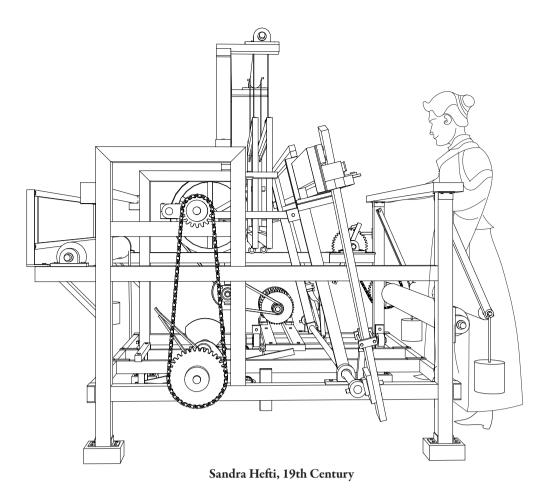
Thanks to the success of our little textile enterprise, I was able to start earning my own wages by selling the cloth. I had my own stash of savings and could buy clothes for myself and my little ones without having to get the green light from my husband. It was a small victory, but it made me feel like a regular old Susan B. Anthony.

After our five kids were finally tucked in for the night, I'd settle in for some quiet time with my embroidery hoop. I'd picked up some tricks of the trade from a nearby women's community and was getting pretty darn good at it, if I do say so myself. We were even having a small exhibition the following Friday, where I could swap stories and share some laughs with some other ladies in the same boat.

Life wasn't always a picnic, but it was a heck of a ride. As a woman living in the 18th century, I had to put my nose to the grindstone to make my way in the world, but I wouldn't have had it any other way.



Fiona Hefti, 18th Century



Salut! I am Sandra. I wake up at 5 am every morning, even before the sun has risen. I have to be at the weaving mill by 7 am, and it takes me about half an hour to get there on foot. After I prepared the breakfast, my husband and two children are still asleep. I grab a piece of bread, put on my work clothes, grab my lunch pail, and head out the door.

The walk to the mill is always the same - quiet and solitary. I pass by a few other women who work in the mill, but we don't stop to chat. We're all focused on getting to work on time.

When I arrive at the mill, I clock in and head straight to my station. I work on the weaving machines, and my job is to feed the fabric through them. It's a monotonous job, but it requires precision and attention to detail. I have to make sure the fabric doesn't get tangled or caught in the machine. If it does, it can cause a lot of damage and delay production. I was quite familiar with the job, since I was a child, I helped my family weaving in our cottage weaving mill.

The machines emit a deafening noise, and the air is permeated with the pungent odor of oil and fabric. Engaging in this labor is physically arduous, requiring me to remain on my feet for extended periods. To shield myself from the airborne dust and fibers that incessantly swirl about, I wear a mask. Nevertheless, I find myself coughing and wheezing by day's end. I recall vividly the experience from five years ago when I was carrying my first child; my lungs were affected by the constant coughing, and I lost my child after several days.

Lunchtime is the only break we get, and it's usually only 30 minutes. I eat my lunch quickly and try to rest my feet for a few minutes. Sometimes, I catch up with some of the other women from the mill, but we have to be careful not to talk too loudly or for too long.

After lunch, it's back to work. The afternoon is usually the busiest time, and the machines seem to be working faster and louder than ever. I can feel the strain on my eyes and hands, and I try to push through the pain. I know that if I slow down, I'll fall behind and risk being disciplined.

By the time my shift ends at 6 pm, I'm exhausted. My feet ache, my hands are sore, and my throat is scratchy from all the dust. I clock out and start the long walk home. The sun has already set, and the streets are dark and empty. I picked the children from the old lady, who is taking care of the children for the family who works in the textile factory.

When I arrive home, my husband is waiting for me. I cooked the dinner for them, and we all sit down to eat together. We talk about our days, but I can't help but feel like I don't have much to contribute. My life is consumed by the mill, and there's not much else to talk about. After dinner, my husband continue work on the hand weaving machine in the basement, I am preparing the lunch for the next day.

Sometimes my husband complained that I didn't bring the hot meal on time to him, He doesn't know that how stressful a women is, who need to juggle between cooking, weaving and taking care of the two children. For him, it seems that taking care of the children are just part of relaxing, because when he was with the children, they play together. It is a moment he got released from the weaving machine. But for me it is another job, I need to pay a lot of energy to take attention to the children, so that they are not get injured or something. Cooking cleaning taking care of children are for me not fun, they are daily routine and hard work, together with weaving, I feel I never got a peaceful time for myself.

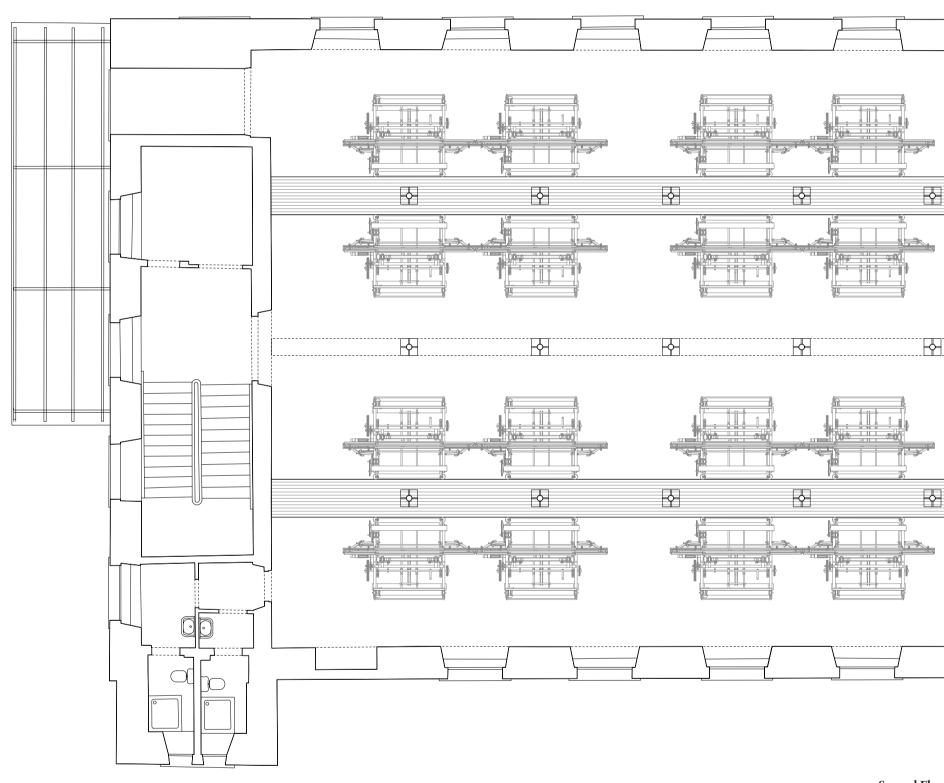


SECTION Weaving Mill Legler Textile Factorials



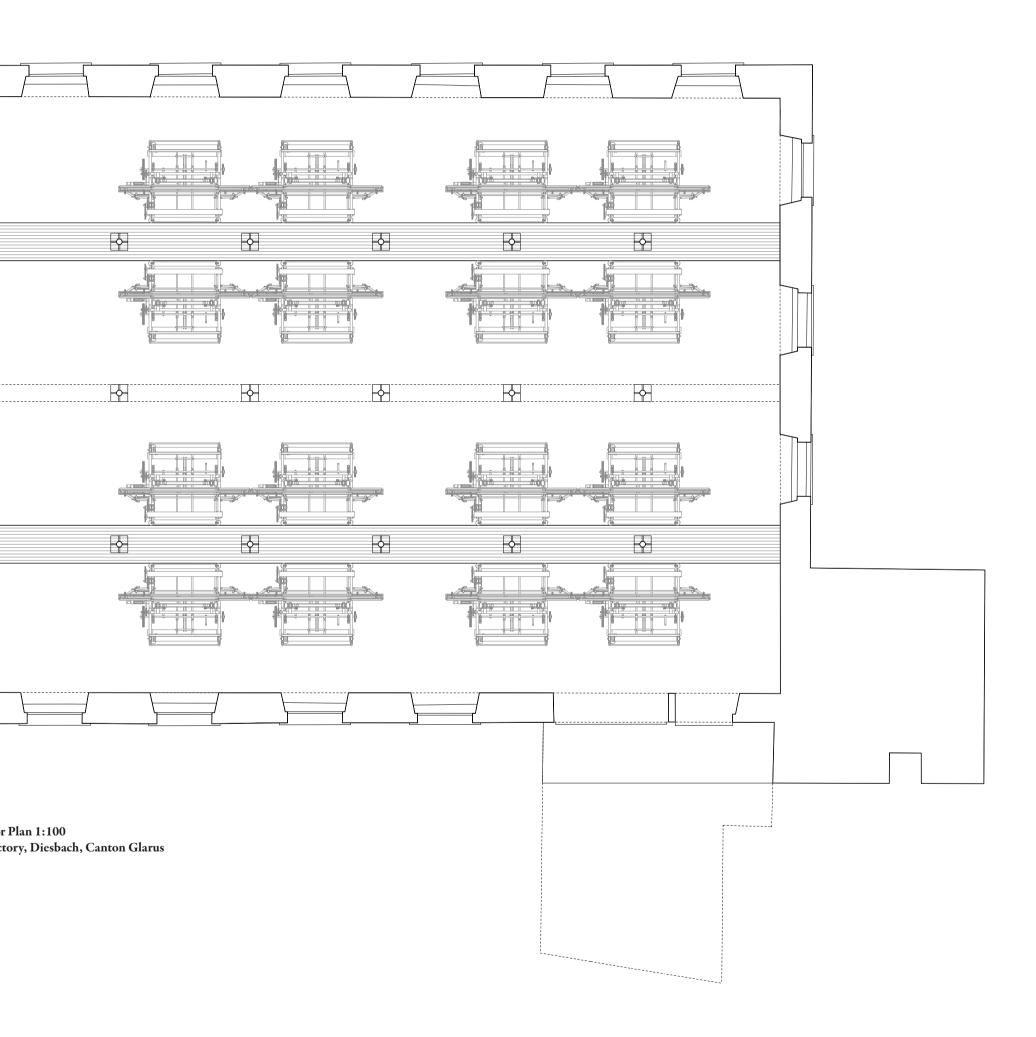


N 1:100 ctory, Diesbach, Canton Glarus



Second Floo Weaving Mill Legler Textile Fac





Hi, I am Monika.

Every morning, I rise before the sun, determined to make it on time for my long commute from Glarus to Zurich. The journey is a grueling one, taking me an hour and a half to complete, with the train and bus often crowded with other commuters. As I board the train at 6:30 am, I'm surrounded by a sea of people, each one lost in their own world, trying to make it to their destination on time.

As an architect, I'm grateful to have the freedom to choose my career, unlike my parents and grandparents who were limited to the textile industry in my hometown. But the daily grind takes a toll, both mentally and physically. I spend my time on the train and bus, going through my emails, reviewing project plans, and making to-do lists, all the while trying to mentally prepare myself for the day ahead.

My husband Ben and I have two children, and we have divided the household and child-rearing tasks equally between us. Most of the time we eat ready-made meals and only cook on the weekends. Although I love to cook and enjoy cooking, I am exhausted by the time I get home every day because of the long commute. We try to outsource most domestic tasks to outside service providers to maximise time for our careers, but the high cost of childcare means we can't afford another child. Despite our best efforts, we still argue about who takes care of the household more.

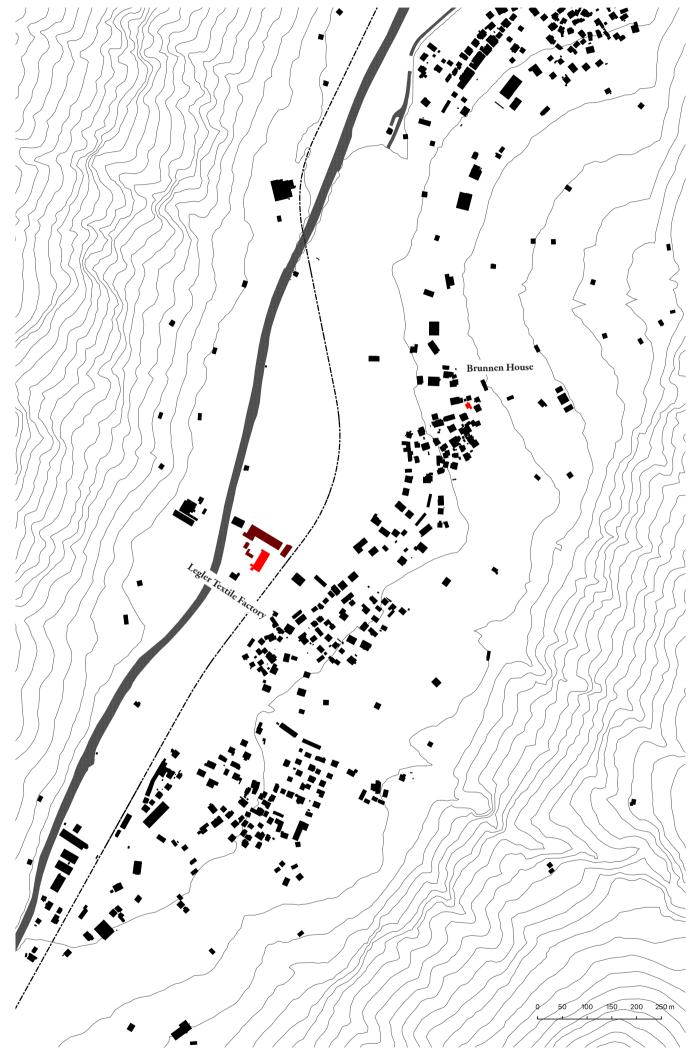
At the end of the day, I'm exhausted, mentally and physically drained from the demands of my job and the responsibilities of motherhood. I long for a day when I can balance both without sacrificing anything. But for now, I continue to push through the challenges, trying to find small moments of joy in both aspects of my life.

As I step off the train and make my way to my office in Zurich, I'm reminded of the sacrifices I've made to get to where I am today. The long hours, the endless meetings, and the constant juggling of responsibilities have taken their toll on me. But I'm determined to succeed, to be a successful architect and a loving mother, even if it means sacrificing some of my personal time for self-care.

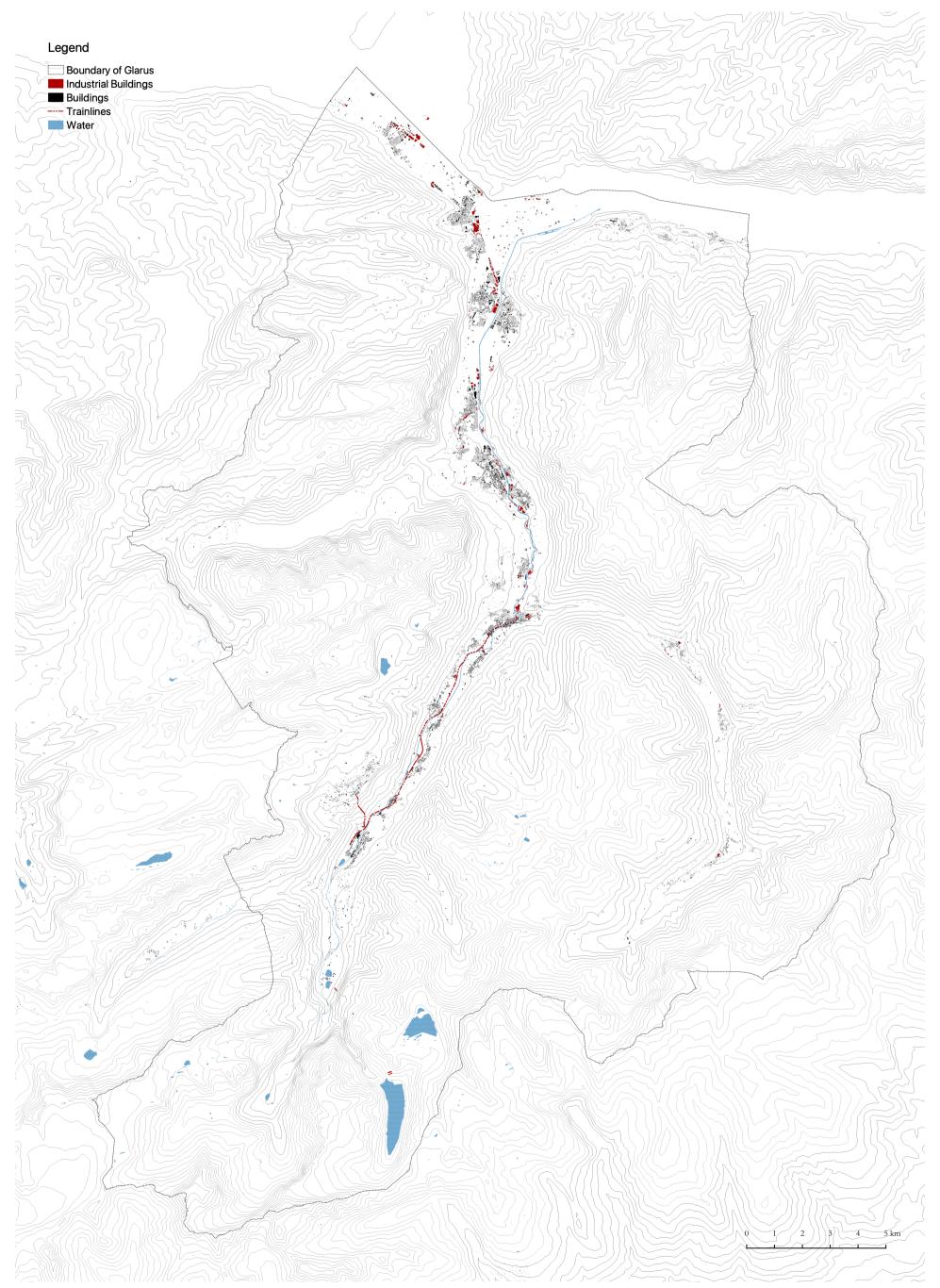
Although my life may be different from that of my mother and grandmother, who spent much more time on their days working in the textile industry and households, I still find myself feeling tired and worn out at the end of the day.



Monika Landolt, 21th Century



Diesbach, Canton Glarus



Industrial Relics in Canton Glarus