SOUFFLENHEIM AND ALSACE

Robert Wideen : 2024

Soufflenheim Genealogy Research and History
Alsace ▪ Bas-Rhin ▪ France
www.soufflenheimgenealogy.com

Soufflenheim and Alsace during the 18th and 19th centuries. By Michael J. Nuwer. More writings by Michael Nuwer are found at: https://sites.google.com/view/nuwerfamilyhistory/home

Pottery Merchant in Soufflenheim, Henri Loux

CONTENTS

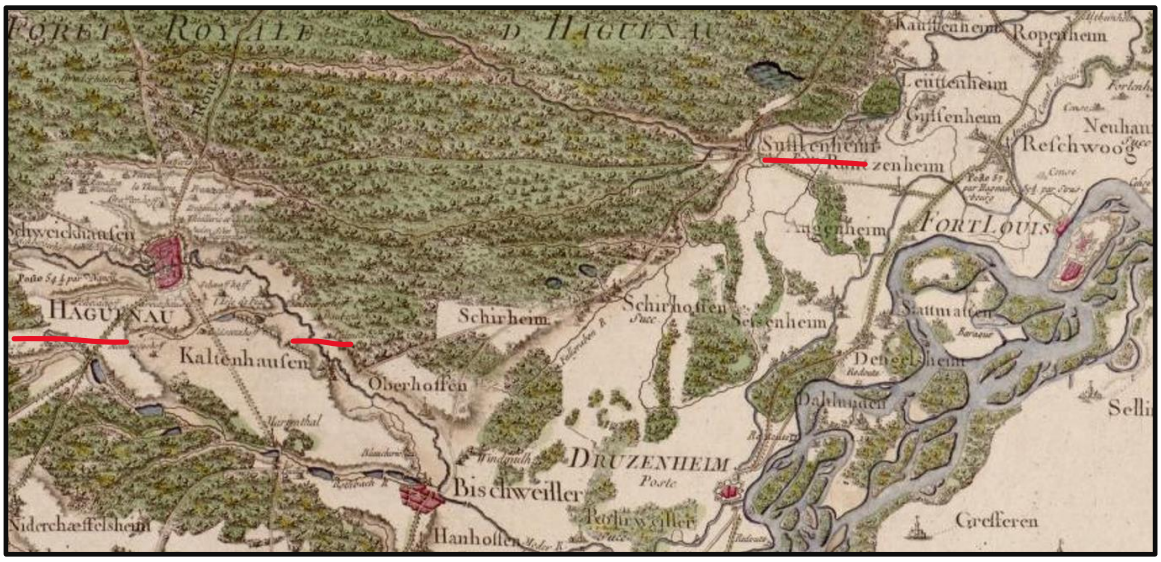
SOUFFLENHEIM, A BRIEF HISTORY

By Michael J. Nuwer, November 2024.

Published November 9, 2024 by Généalogie Alsace, Le site du Cercle généalogique d'Alsace, section Île-de-France, https://genealogiealsace.wordpress.com/blog/

Soufflenheim is located in the historical and cultural region of Bas-Rhin, Alsace. The city of Strasbourg is 37 kilometers south of Soufflenheim, Lauterbourg and the German border are 25 kilometers north of the town, and the city of Haguenau is 14 kilometers west of Soufflenheim. The Rhine River is about 10 kilometers to the east.

Soufflenheim's village cluster is sandwiched between the Haguenau Forest and the North Ried (also known as the Petit Ried). The Ried spreads over a narrow strip along the Rhine River and was formed by the river's once meandering behavior. The Ried is an alluvial wetland consisting of marshes and meadows that were prone to flooding in any given year. Soufflenheim's village cluster is on a terrace above the Ried, a location that protected the residential cluster from flooding on the Rhine plain. The town's agricultural fields are located to the south and east of the village and are primarily in the Ried.



Cassini map showing Soufflenheim and Haguenau, 1767
Source: https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=167&r=0.55,0.114,0.332,0.118,0

To the west and north of Soufflenheim is the thick Haguenau Forest, the largest undivided forest in France. These woodlands are on the terrace above the Ried. Two rivers cross the village: the Fallgraben and the Eberbach, both of which drain the Haguenau Forest. The residents of Soufflenheim have used the forest for many centuries to collect dead wood, to glean acorns, and to graze their pigs. The forest is also a source of clay used by the potters of Soufflenheim.

The Origins of Soufflenheim

Archaeological surveys have found evidence of settlement at Soufflenheim dating from the eighth century. The town first appeared in history during the High Middle Age. In 1147, an official Papal letter by Pope Eugene III granted an estate (“grangia”) to the Cistercian Abbey of Neubourg. That land is now Soufflenheim.

The Cistercian order was founded in 1098 at the monastery of Citeaux in Burgundy. It emphasized simplicity and manual labor for its monks, and it is considered by many historians as an important medieval reform of Benedictine monasticism. The Cistercian order grew rapidly under Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, and it had established hundreds of monastery houses by the time of his death in 1153.

One of these houses, the Abbey of Neubourg, was founded in 1133 at Dauendorf, a small village east of Haguenau. These monks came into possession of land at Harthouse (a hamlet in Haguenau), Laubach, and at Soufflenheim. It was this land that Pope Eugene III granted in 1147.

The Cistercian monks encouraged the development of farms, barns, stables, fields, meadows, and pastures at their Soufflenheim estate. The three-field system was introduced, and a crop rotation was practiced among the fields. Agricultural development by the Abbey attracted immigrants from Baden and Swabia. These new-commers settled at the estate, and leased land from the Abbey. The settlers built

houses, barns, and hay sheds on the terrace above the Ried. These structures became the village of Soufflenheim.

In 1334, the town of Soufflenheim was sold to the imperial city of Haguenau and became an imperial village. As such it fell under the Bailiwick of Haguenau and was a dependent of the Schultheiss (or provost) at Haguenau. The city of Haguenau thus held the seigneurial rights to Soufflenheim. These were, first, the right to use and enjoy the properties, and second, the right to give orders and prohibitions. The residents at Soufflenheim were thereby subject to the orders of the city Schultheiss and were required to serve him in the same way as the city's burghers served the Schultheiss.

The Thirty Years' War

At the end of the sixteenth century, the historical evidence suggests that the material situation of Soufflenheim's residents was good. That situation, however, ended as the seventeenth century unfolded. The prosperity that marked the end of the sixteenth century was broken by the devastation of war.

The Thirty Years' War broke out in 1618. In November 1621, Lutheran troops under the leadership of Ernest von Mansfeld invaded northern Alsace. They captured Lauterbourg and occupied Haguenau in December 1621.

In 1622, Soufflenheim was looted and burned by von Mansfeld's troops. The town hall fell prey to the flames, and all the documents held in the building were destroyed. This is why little is known about the early history of Soufflenheim. The looting by von Mansfeld's troops ruined the village and it was impossible for the villagers to generate income (in money or in kind) to pay their taxes.

Ten years later, in 1632, Swedish troops under the leadership of Gustaf Horn invaded Alsace. Armies of the Holy Roman Emperor and the King of France confronted the Swedes and Alsace became a theater of war for years to follow. Again, villages were looted and burned, as the Swedish army ravaged the entire province. The war caused famine, plague, and suffering. The years 1635 to 1639 were particularly deadly and Soufflenheim's population was decimated.

Repopulation and Rebuilding

The Treaties of Westphalia signed in 1648 finally ended the Thirty Years' War. Among other things, the treaties awarded most of Alsace to the Kingdom of France. The status of Haguenau (an imperial city) and its dependencies remained ambiguous until 1679 when, under the Treaties of Nijmegen, the ten imperial cities of Alsace were annexed to France and the French King became the undisputed sovereign over Haguenau and Soufflenheim.

The long war had ravaged and depopulated most of Bas-Rhin. More than a third of the population had disappeared and the new French administration faced an enormous rebuilding task. To help repopulate Alsace, Louis XIV recruited foreigners. He encouraged immigration by granting settlers land to clear, timber for construction, and tax exemptions for up to six years. Settlers from Switzerland, Baden, Swabia, and Bavaria came to Soufflenheim as well as other Alsatian towns and villages.

The Battle of the Pandours was commemorated in 1760 with a copperplate engraving titled:
"Retranchemens de Suffelsheim, forces le 23. aoust 1744 le Prince Charles oblige de repasser le Rhin"
Source: https://pictures.abebooks.com/inventory/31504730076.jpg

The rebuilding process was, however, strained by the new wars of King Louis XIV (r. 1643-1715). The Franco-Dutch War (1672-1678), the War of the Grand Alliance (1689-1697), and the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714) generated additional economic burdens on Soufflenheim. During these wars, the village was required to provide money and military supplies for the King's armies, depleting any surpluses that could be used for local rebuilding.

A generation later, during the War of the Austrian Succession (1740-1748), the village was again taxed and required to provide military supplies. Soufflenheim also became a battlefield of that war. In early June 1744 Prince Charles of Lorraine led an Austrian army of 60,000 troops into northern Alsace. Haguenau was captured, Saverne was attacked, and the fortress at Fort Louis was besieged.

French troops led by Maréchal de Noailles mounted a counter offensive. The French army entered Alsace through the Saverne Pass on 13 August, and on 23 August 1744 engaged the Austrian army at their Soufflenheim encampment near the road to Schirrhein. In what is known as the Battle of the Pandours, the Austrian army was dislodged from the encampment and lost 2,000 troops in the battle. Later that day, in a second engagement, this time east of the town, the Austrians lost another 1,200 troops. The invading army was thereby forced back across the Rhine.

Throughout the eighteenth century, Soufflenheim remained an agricultural community. The three-field system established by the Cistercian monks continued to shape the agricultural land, but modifications were also introduced. In addition to grain and hay, the agricultural fields at Soufflenheim produced root crops and legumes. Legumes were notable for their nitrogen-fixing root nodules. They collect available nitrogen from the atmosphere and store it in these nodules. When the plant was harvested, the uncollected roots break down, making the stored nitrogen available to future crops. For this reason, legumes played an important role in crop rotations.

Other crops found in eighteenth century Soufflenheim included beets and potatoes. The potato was a New World product that was brought to Europe in the sixteenth century. By the end of the sixteenth century it had been introduced into the Franche-Comté, the Vosges of Lorraine, and Alsace. A century later, it was widely cultivated across southwestern Germany and eastern France.

Potatoes had a significant effect on European demographics. The product yielded about three times the calories of grain from the same amount of land and was more nutritious. Moreover, potatoes grew in a wide variety of soils and climates. These factors significantly improved agricultural production in the Early Modern era. For the local populations, potatoes were cheaper than bread, just as nutritious, and did not require a special mill for grinding.

Potters of Soufflenheim

Today, Soufflenheim is famous for its pottery. Craftsmen have been manufacturing pottery at Soufflenheim since the earliest days of the town. The first historical record to mention the existence of a community of potters in Soufflenheim was in 1442. However, well before that date Emperor Frederick Barbarossa (r. 1155-1190) had granted Soufflenheim residents the perpetual right to dig clay free of charge in the Haguenau Forest, suggesting pottery was being manufactured in the twelfth century. The emperor also gave the Soufflenheim residents usage of felled trees and wood that was not used for construction purposes. Access to the clay and wood from the nearby forest favored the development of pottery making at Soufflenheim.

The potter's wheel was the main tool of the craft. Propelled by a foot pedal, shapes were formed on the wheel by the craftsman molding the clay. The clay objects were then air-dried, painted, and fired in a kiln.

Archaeological evidence found in the central part of Soufflenheim includes clay bowls, plates, and pitchers that were manufactured at the town. These items were similar to items still manufactured today by Soufflenheim potters. The Soufflenheim municipal accounts record the town's purchase of cups and pots in 1684 and again in 1685, while archaeologists have found a vase bearing the date 1402.

Another important product made in Soufflenheim was the earthenware stove (*poële*). These objects have been used for heating indoor spaces in the Germanic regions of Europe since the Early Middle Ages. Ceramic tiles were fastened to the traditional Alsatian stove. The tiles increased the radiation of the heat and decorated the stove. The heat efficiency of the device was better than that of an open-fire hearth, and thus the earthenware stove reduced fuel consumption.

The Soufflenheim municipal accounts suggest that the manufacture of stove tiles was an important part of the pottery business. In 1698, for example, a local potter was paid 2 florins, 5 sous for a stove and in 1714, another potter received 4 florins for the manufacture of a stove. In 1769, one young woman's dowry stipulated, among other things, that her "mother can continue to live in the house her life long, with place in the main room and near the stove for her warmth …"

By the end of the fifteenth century potters in Alsace had organized their own guild and the potters of Soufflenheim were members of the guild. Under the guild's regulations, only registered potters could produce and sell pottery items, while unregistered potters were only allowed to sell their products at fairs. These regulations remained in effect at Soufflenheim until the French Revolution.

The French Revolution

The French Revolution erupted in 1789. This rebellion against noble privileges did not, however, have deep roots in Alsace. The abolition of noble privileges on 4 August 1789 had an effect on the population, but the Revolution's most immediate effect in Soufflenheim was in its relation to the Catholic Church. The Revolution was not confined to a rebellion against the nobility, it also rebelled against the privileges and power of the Church. Only three months after noble privilege was abolished, Church property across France was confiscated and nationalized by the state.

The following summer the Revolution again took aim at the Church. On 12 July 1790 the Civil Constitution of the Clergy was passed into law. This law had great significance in towns like Soufflenheim. It sought to put the France Catholic Church under the control of French society. Key provisions included the local election of bishops and priests, the payment of their salaries by the state, and the requirement that electors sign an oath of loyalty to the constitution. The effect of this law was to eliminate the authority of the Pope over the appointment of clergy. As a result, a schism was created, resulting in a "constitutional church" that was subservient to the state and an illegal and underground Church loyal to the Papacy.

This religious crisis erupted in all corners of France, and it was particularly acute in Alsace. It was through this law that the Revolution was most keenly felt by the inhabitants of Soufflenheim. Most priests in Alsace refused to take the oath (they were known as "refractory priests"), and they were supported by the vast majority of the population. Priests who swore the oath typically found themselves unwelcome by local congregations.

Local and regional government was, however, increasingly sympathetic to revolutionary ideas. These officials condemned and prosecuted refractory priests, to the great displeasure of the faithful. In July 1791, for example, the Mayor of Sessenheim, Soufflenheim's neighbor, arrested several refractory priests. On 24 July, residents of Soufflenheim, led by their mayor, marched to the neighboring town in an effort to free the jailed priests.

At this time, the parish priest at Soufflenheim was pastor Ignace Lemfried. He refused to take the oath required by the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. The assistant pastor, Félix Rumpler, also refused. In September 1792 the French government forced both clerics to leave the country. They spent the next 13 months in Baden. The government also closed Saint Michael's church at the end of 1792 and church property was sold at an auction.

Among the town's residents who expressed their support for pastor Lemfried and the other refractory priests was the schoolteacher, Jean Mockers. Because he expressed his opinions openly, he was removed from his teaching responsibilities and imprisoned. Tensions between the Revolution and the population at Soufflenheim continued into 1793. In that year Saint Michael's church was plundered and partly burned. It was during this event that many sacramental records were destroyed. Almost all the burial records were lost, while the baptism records before 1748 and marriage records before 1743 were also lost. In addition, the sacramental register containing marriages between 1754 and 1783 was lost. As a result, the surviving sacramental records are limited to:

- Baptêmes: 1748-1792
- Mariages: 1743-1754, 1783-1792
- Sépultures: 1788-1793.

In autumn 1793, Revolutionary France went to war with the monarchs of Austria and Prussia. Austrian troops invaded northern Alsace, and by October they had occupied Haguenau. A counter offensive was made by the French Army of the Rhine which forced the Austrians to retreat and by the end of December the invaders had abandoned French territory.

Many residents in Bas-Rhin had welcomed the Austrians as liberators and they feared retribution by the French government. Thus, thousands of residents fled Alsace with the Austrian army and took refuge in the Palatinate or Baden. Between 40,000 and 50,000 people fled Bas-Rhin. This event is known as the *Grande Fuite* (or the "Great Flight" in English). Soufflenheim records identify the names of about 90 residents who fled during the Great Flight. These refugees found themselves in a difficult situation. They lived poorly in foreign places while waiting for an opportunity to return home, which was not possible until 1795.

The Simon family from Soufflenheim offers an example. Henry Simon, his wife and children, his father-in-law (Joseph Sensenbrenner), and his brother (Sebastien) all fled Soufflenheim and took refuge in Schwarzach, Baden. The winter of 1794 was hard on the family. Henry Simon's father-in-law died there in January 1794, while Henry Simon, his wife Anna Sensenbrenner, and one of his children, also died at Schwarzach—all three in March 1794. Sebastien Simon took care of his brother's surviving children while they spent another year in exile.

After the fall of Robespierre and the establishment of a new government, the Directory, the Civil Constitution of the Clergy was repealed and religious tensions in Soufflenheim began to calm down. In January 1795 a decree by the new government granted refugees the ability to return home. Documents identify about 70 people from Soufflenheim who requested the return of their confiscated property. Sebastien Simon along with his brother's surviving children were among those who returned to the town. Jean Mockers also returned to Soufflenheim and in 1799 he was reinstated as schoolmaster and organist.

During the years of the Revolution, Soufflenheim had gained the reputation of not being "sufficiently revolutionary." For this reason, the administrative center of the canton and the meeting place of its citizens were assigned to towns with much smaller populations—Roeschwoog and Sessenheim respectively. "This adversity on the part of the [regional] authorities," writes Sittler, Elchinger, and Geissert, "was mainly due to the loyalty of the inhabitants to the church."[1]

Three Churches and the Old Cemetery

Soufflenheim was a Catholic community. In 1841, the census counted a population of 2,886 residents, with only 27 non-Catholics living in the town. The Reformation never took hold in the Bailiwick of Haguenau. Early attempts by Protestantism to gain importance there were halted when the Jesuits come to the city in 1567 and stopped the progression of Lutheranism. Haguenau's authorities remained Catholic and Catholicism was retained in Soufflenheim.

Saint Michael's Catholic Church in the center of Soufflenheim is about 190 years old. The first Mass in that building was held in 1830. The Catholic parish, however, was established in the Middle Ages. The earliest written evidence of the parish was recorded by the Abbey of Neubourg when the population paid

a tithing to the church in the year 1245. This record is taken as the earliest proof of the church's existence.

Because fire destroyed Soufflenheim's town hall and medieval archive in 1622, the date of construction and the location of the medieval church are not known. Nevertheless, town records from the seventeenth century reference the church. Moreover, in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries constant maintenance work on the structure of the medieval church was recorded in municipal accounts. Tiles, bricks, and windows were purchased by the town for repairs to the bell tower, the roof, and other parts of the church in the years between 1664 and 1756.

The 1755 retaining wall in the foreground; The Oelberg (old cemetery) above the wall; and Saint Michel's Church (The "New Church") in the background. Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Soufflenheim-St_Michael-02-gje.jpg

In 1761 the town decided to build a new church. Construction began the following year, and the church was consecrated in 1766. This is the building we now refer to as the Old Church. It was located on the Oelberg (the "Mount of Olives" in English). The Oelberg was a hill or mound in the center of Soufflenheim on the north side of the Grand Rue and west of the Rue du Moulin. Today, the Oelberg is a terrace supported on the east side by a retaining wall seven meters high (23 feet). This wall was originally built in 1755, and the 1766 church was erected inside the wall.

The land surrounding the 1766 church was the town cemetery. Written sources from 1717, 1746 and 1752 identify the Oelberg as the location of the town cemetery. Moreover, the retaining wall constructed in 1755 was originally intended to surround the cemetery (although for what purpose remains unclear). This means that many of our ancestors were buried within the Oelberg.

Soufflenheim experienced tremendous population growth at the end of the eighteenth century, and by 1820 the 1766 church was too small to service the larger population. Construction of a third church, the present one, was approved by the town and work began in 1825. The project was completed in 1830 and it was consecrated in 1831. The New Church is located a block west of the Oelberg. Once the New Church was in full operation, the Old Church in the Oelberg was demolished (in 1833) and the materials were reclaimed for the construction of a new school building. Many of our ancestors were baptized and married in the Old Church or in the medieval church, both of which have been demolished.

After the demolition of the Old Church, the Oelberg was leveled and graded creating the open space terrace we see today. The Oelberg continued to serve as a cemetery and the land on which the Old Church stood was used for burials. In 1874 Soufflenheim transferred its cemetery outside the center of the town and the cemetery at Oelberg was decommissioned.

The Nineteenth Century

In the early part of the nineteenth century, Soufflenheim's population grew significantly. In 1800 the population stood at 1,549 people. By 1836 it had almost doubled to 2,964. This same phenomenon was witnessed in towns and villages across Bas-Rhin. Improved agricultural productivity during the eighteenth century, resulting in part from the use of legumes and potatoes, led to declining mortality in the nineteenth century. At Soufflenheim, population growth leveled off after 1836 and hovered around 3,000 residents for the remainder of the nineteenth century.

During the nineteenth century, Soufflenheim, like the rest of France, was struggling with the convulsions brought about by industrialization and large-scale, factory production. Before the French Revolution the residents of Soufflenheim engaged in subsistence farming (agricultural activities intended for self-consumption, not for commercialization) and, at the same time, the farmers were occupied in various cottage industries. Subsistence farmers practiced trades such as bakers, butchers, shoemakers, sawyers, carpenters, masons, tailors, etc. in order to earn money that could be used to purchase goods not manufactured on a farm. Goods like cast iron cooking pots, for example. In the words of Sittler, Elchinger, and Geissert: "it's important to remember that many artisans also farmed. They were therefore farmer-craftsmen."[2]

The transition to modern industrial employment was exceptionally slow for the residents of Soufflenheim. The social situation in Soufflenheim before 1850 was described as "far from brilliant." There were many people "threatened with hunger … due to the lack of employment." In small towns like Soufflenheim, the new Europe increasingly favored specialization and was determined to destroy the farmer-craftsman.[3]

On the one side, the widening of markets and the distribution of inexpensive factory produced goods from Britain and Prussia reduced the demand for items made by the local cottage industries. On the other side, employment alternatives to cottage work required relocations to urban places like Bischwiller or Mulhouse where factory jobs were concentrated.

Soufflenheim did attempt to join the new Europe. The presence of potters and the availability of clay in the forest encouraged the construction of brick and tile factories which offered industrial employment for residents. One such factory was built in 1825, a second in 1835, and a third in 1847. But Soufflenheim faced a difficult time in the face of modern market competition even in this line of business. Factory production required wide geographic markets, but Soufflenheim's location was a disadvantage when it came to accessing those markets.

> The Strasbourg-Haguenau-Wissembourg railroad [completed in 1855] was 10 kilometers away. This meant that the products of the ceramics industry had to be transported by horse-drawn carriage to Bischwiller. When the Strasbourg-Lauterbourg railroad was built in 1876, Soufflenheim once again found itself in a blind spot. Products had to be transported to the nearest station, Sessenheim. [A railroad station was not located in Soufflenheim until 1895.[4]

As the industrial world took root during the nineteenth century in cities across Europe, Soufflenheim was bypassed and remained an agricultural community that produced crops primarily for self-consumption.

Even the traditional pottery industry was feeling the pressure of industrialization. As the nineteenth century was ending, factory production of enamel and aluminum utensils reduced demand for the clay products made at Soufflenheim. In this context, Léon Elchinger, a Soufflenheim native and son of a potter, spearheaded a drive toward items with an artistic focus. The potters of Soufflenheim incorporated new methods and new chemical combinations to produce decorative and artistic ceramics. These new practices provided a means for Soufflenheim's potters to adapt to industrial competition and sustained the craftsmen for much of the twentieth century.

A Potter's Workshop, 2009.
Source: https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soufflenheim#/media/Fichier:Soufflenheim-Potier(4).jpg

Notes

[1] Cette adversité des autorités est provoquée surtout par la fidélité que gardent les habitants à l'église.

[2] Il faut cependant retenir que de nombreux artisans exploitaient aussi des terres. Ils étaient donc artisans-paysans.

[3] La situation sociale n'est pas brillante à Soufflenheim

Mais, suite manque de travail, de nombreuses personnes sont menacés de famine.

[4] La voie ferrée Strasbourg-Haguenau-Wissembourg (1855) était a 10 kilomètres. Il fallait donc transporter les produits de l'industrie céramique par voitures à chevaux vers Bischwiller. Quand plus tard, en 1876, la voie ferrée Strasbourg-Lauterbourg fut construite, Soufflenheim se trouva une fois de plus dans un angle mort. Il fallait donc acheminer les produits vers la station la plus proche, Sessenheim.

Sources

Lucien Sittler, Marc Elchinger and Fritz Geissert, *Soufflenheim Une cite à la recherche de son histoire*, Societe D'Histoire Et D'Archeologie Du Reid Nord, 1987 https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/c0db0dfe-27d2-4632-889f-eeb26fbb14e1/downloads/Part%201%20Good%20reduced%2011-10-21.pdf

Maxime Werlé, et al., *Soufflenheim, Cimetière Oelberg*, Pôle d'Archéologie Interdépartemental Rhénan, 2009. https://www.calameo.com/books/003725038de72cadc9ab6

Paul Elchinger, *Soufflenheim La Cite des Potiers : Aus der Vergangenheit des Töpferstädtchens*, Modern Graphic Jean Claude Beck, 1978.

Cercle généalogique d'Alsace, section Île-de-France, *Les Seigneuries Alsaciennes* https://genealogiealsace.wordpress.com/2021/08/11/les-seigneuries-alsaciennes/

Cercle généalogique d'Alsace, section Île-de-France, *Le Kachelofe, Poêle de Faïence Traditionnel Alsacien* https://genealogiealsace.wordpress.com/2022/01/08/le-kachelofe-poele-de-faience-traditionnel-alsacien/

Robert Wideen, *Soufflenheim Genealogy Research and History* https://soufflenheimgenealogy.com/

Brian J. Smith, *Soufflenheim* http://www.smithancestry.com/places/souff/soufflenheim.htm

Wikipedia, Soufflenheim https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soufflenheim

JOURNEY TO LE HAVRE

By Michael J. Nuwer, September 2022

The Emigrants of Alsace, Theophile Schuler, 1861, Strasbourg Museum of Fine Arts

The overland journey from Soufflenheim to Le Havre, the major port of departure for emigrants from Alsace to the United States and Canada in the first half of the 19th century.

Journey to Le Havre

Many of our Alsatian ancestors immigrated to North American in the years between 1828 and 1861. Historians have noted that, a great many of the German and Alsatian emigrants of this period, sold their house with its patch of land to raise the money for their journey. Land prices throughout southern Germany had increased due to decades of population growth, which presented an opportunity for the freeholder. As one historian explained:

> The price of land [in southern Germany] was disproportionately high to the income it produced. But the same high land prices which prevented the small farmer from acquiring enough land to feed his

> family made it possible for him to move it; he might be able to liquidate his inadequate holding at a price enabling him to cross the sea to America and buy a larger farm. … (Mack Walker, *Germany and the emigration, 1816-1885* (1964), Chapter 2)

The cost of moving from Alsace to North America, both the money cost and otherwise, was relatively high in the period between 1828 and 1861. Immigrants faced a break with their home, often a difficult journey, and an uncertain future. This may have been the most important single experience they faced.

The costs of immigration included more than the cost of the trans-Atlantic passage. They included the income that was forgone before an immigrant could earn a living in their new homeland as well as the degree of uncertainty they were prepared to accept. Subsistence farmers who immigrated to North America would have lost a full year's supply of food. If the immigrant left at the start of a season, the crop that would have fed their family in the upcoming year was never planted. If they left after a harvest, the food could not be carried with them to their new homes. Thus, money was needed to buy replacements, at least a year's worth of food.

The immigrant also faced a long journey once aboard the sailing ship. The average length of the Atlantic crossing was about forty-four days to New York, although some ships sailing from Liverpool arrived in thirty-five days. The occasional ship could arrive even quicker, or the voyage could run into calm wind conditions and be delayed for a number of weeks.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, most German and Alsatian immigrants left the continent of Europe from either Le Havre in France or Bremen in northwestern Germany. Both cities had a direct and growing trade with the United States. Bremen was the main European port for deliveries of tobacco arriving from Baltimore while Le Havre was the main port for raw cotton deliveries to the continent. During the early part of the nineteenth century the cultivation of cotton, and its export to Europe, grew tremendously in the United States. U.S. ships arrived at Le Havre carrying raw cotton that was used in the French cotton textile industry, which was located in the northwest around Lille and Rouen and in Alsace around Mulhouse and Colmar.

The owners of these vessels then sought revenue from the return trip to the United States. The empty ships at both Le Havre and Bremen were quite willing to carry a return cargo of German immigrants. Thus, the passengers filled empty space after a ship delivered its primary, non-human cargo.

Scheduled passenger service across the Atlantic Ocean was not available in those days. Therefore, upon reaching Le Havre, the immigrants often had to wait anywhere between one and six weeks for an available ship. Since the cotton trade from the United Stated originated in New York City or New Orleans, these were the two ports that received the most immigrants.

So, for the residents of Alsace who intended to immigrate, the first leg of their journey involved getting to Le Havre. The Port of Le Havre was about 430 miles from Strasbourg – it was roughly 310 miles to Paris and another 130 miles to Le Havre. Emigrants traveled by foot and cart (or, if sufficiently wealthy, stage lines) to the port city on the English Channel. A railroad from Strasbourg to Paris was completed in 1852, but the development of rail transportation for immigrants was not so rapid as might have been expected.

By stagecoach, it took five to six days to travel from Strasbourg to Paris and then another two or three days to Le Havre. For immigrants who moved their possessions in covered wagons, the journey to Le Havre took several weeks. Raw cotton arriving at Le Havre was transported overland by freight wagons to the factories in Haut-Rhin. Immigrants from Alsace and southern Germany would use the same transportation back to Le Havre.

Thus, in the 1830s and 1840s, and for many immigrants in the 1850s, the trip from Alsace to Le Havre took at least two weeks, and often much longer. Some details of this trip across France can be ascertained from historical maps that show the geography of the journey. These are known as the Cassini Maps of France.

The Cassini Maps of France

The Cassini Maps of France were created in the eighteenth century and were the first topographic maps of the Kingdom of France. Four generations of the Cassini family used geodesic triangulation to create these maps. Between 1750 and 1790 the map makers divided France into 180 rectangles and set out to make a comprehensive map of the Kingdom.

The maps were a true historical innovation and represented a decisive technical advance. These were the first maps based on geodesic triangulation. The project began in the late seventeenth century. The first task was to lay out the Meridian of Paris, a line running the length of France from Dunkirk in the north to Perpignan in the south and taking into account the curvature of the Earth. It was determined by using geodesic triangulation and astronomical measurements. Jean-Dominique Cassini began work on the Meridian in 1683 and his son, Jacques Cassini, completed it in 1718.

Two additional lines parallel to the Paris Meridian were also created. One was to the west towards Nantes, the other to the east, towards Lyon. Next, seven lines perpendicular to the meridian were established. Two lines north of Paris and four lines south of Paris. The seventh perpendicular passed through Paris and extended from Brest on the Brittany peninsula to Strasbourg on the Rhine River.

Triangulation of the perpendiculars began with the Brest-Paris-Strasbourg line in 1733. By 1744 the perpendiculars were complete. Linking the large areas of land between the perpendiculars to the main grid was the next step. These large spaces were triangulated by teams of engineers who had participated in the earlier surveys. The geodesic grid of France was finally completed in 1783 by Cesar-Francois Cassini, the grandson of Jean-Dominique Cassini.

Detailed maps of France were built from the geodesic grid. Beginning in the 1750s, trained engineers were sent throughout France to survey the land. These engineers were equipped with measuring instruments that had the resolution of one minute of a degree. They obeyed the strict rules of triangulation: observe the three angles of the triangles, form verification triangles, and perform 360-degree horizon scans. Elements of the landscape that were measured included towns, villages, castles, churches, chapels, and hamlets. Rivers, marshes, forests, and all the main roads were also surveyed.

From these surveys, 180 individual maps were created. Each sheet represented an area 78 × 49 kilometers (about 48.5 × 30.5 miles). The maps were engraved in copper, printed in black and white, and water colored by hand. It is generally agreed that these maps are among the most significant achievements of the European Enlightenment. The level of precision of the road network, for example, is such that, when superimposed with today’s satellite photos, the maps display a spectacular correspondence.

Thus, a journey along these maps can trace the path our ancestors took from their homes in Alsace to the Port of Le Havre. The pages below attempt to provide a guided tour on the Cassini maps of that journey.

Maps for the Journey

To trace the route from Alsace to Le Havre I consulted 12 Cassini maps. These documents are available at two different websites. The first set of maps is hosted at the Library of Congress. They were surveyed and published in various years between 1755 and 1768. The individual maps were hand colored on uncut sheets of heavy paper. Internet links to the “LOC” maps are provided in the narrative. Reference details are given in Appendix 2.

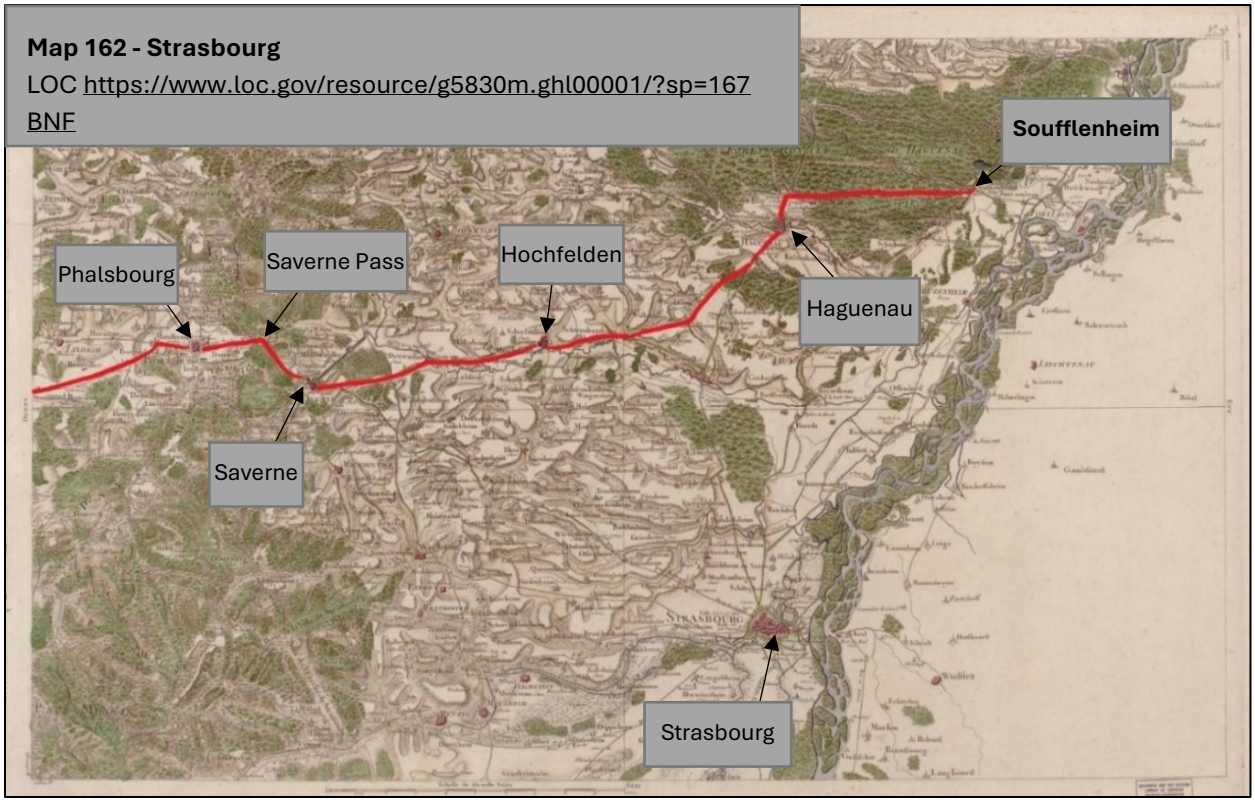
A second sets of Cassini maps is available from the National Library of France (*Bibliothèque nationale de France*). This map-set was made from the same surveys as the Library of Congress maps. However, they were colored somewhat differently and mounted differently. Each map in this collection was cut into 21 rectangles and glued on a canvas of jute so that it could be easily folded and transported. Internet links to the “BNF” maps are provided in the narrative and reference details are in Appendix 2.

A third set of Cassini maps were published in 1815. These are known as the New Edition (*Nouvelle édition*). They included updates and new information which was not on the original eighteenth century map sets (like roads that were built after the 1750s). These maps are black and white with no coloring. They are located at the National Library of France website. Links to the specific maps are provided in Appendix 2. The resolution of this map-set is not as high as the two eighteen century sets, and so they do not zoom as clearly. Nevertheless, they are very useful given that they were published within a few decades of the mass emigration period (1821-1861). Unfortunately, this map set is incomplete. There are two sheets I have not been able to locate.

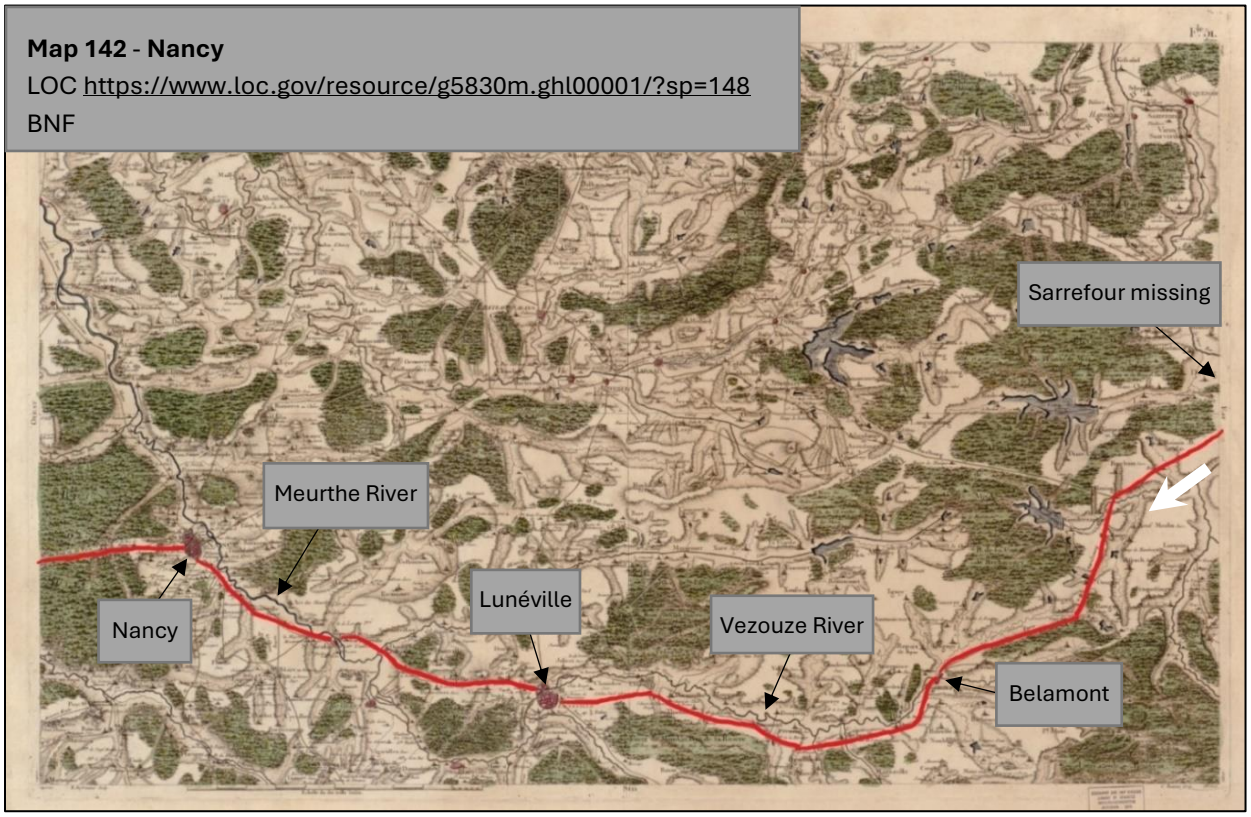
Digital copies of the Library of Congress maps were edited to trace the route our ancestors took from Alsace to Le Havre. A red line was used to mark the roads traveled and labels were added to show major places, rivers, and the like. These maps are reproduced on the next few pages so that the reader may have an overview of the route to Le Havre. In the pages following the maps, a narrative of the route is presented.

The edited maps do not zoom as well as the original maps, and the reader cannot see the amazing detail of the Cassini maps using the copies presented here. Thus, web links to the online versions of the maps are also provided and readers are encouraged to explore the originals.

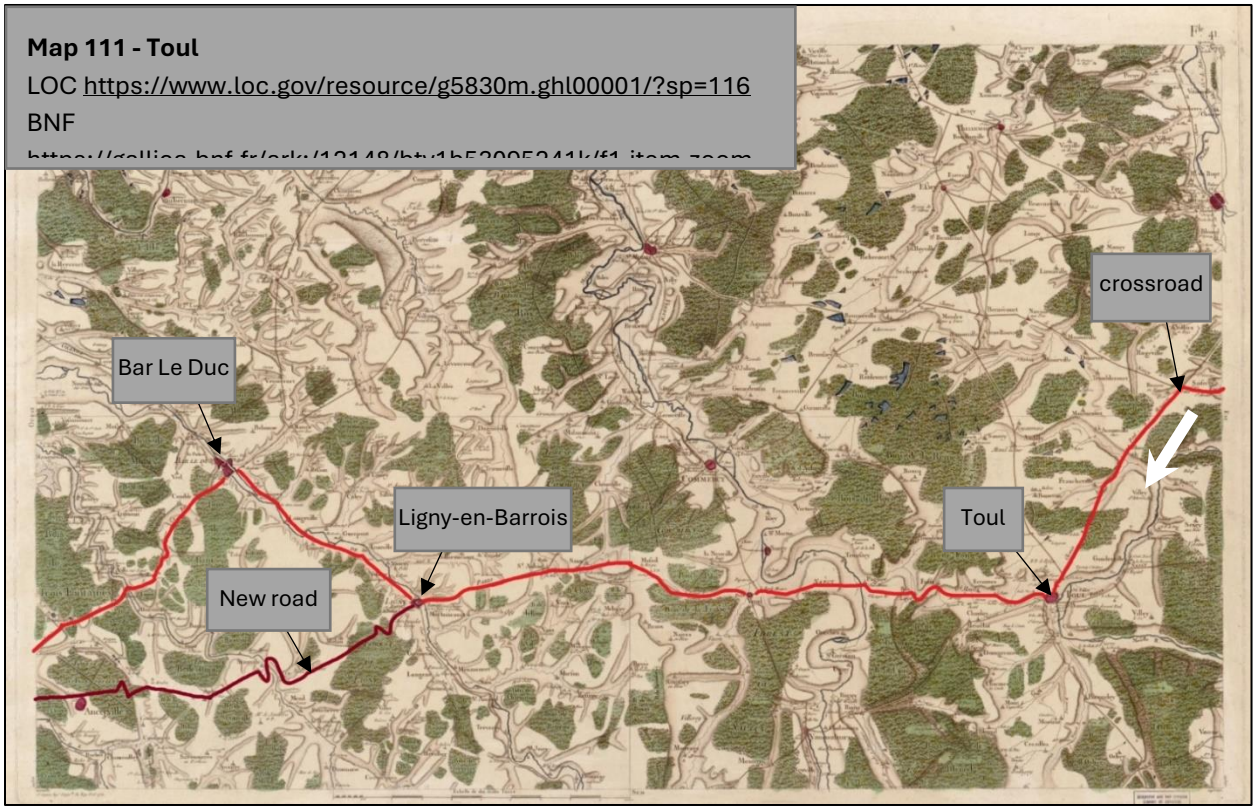
Map 162 - Strasbourg
LOC https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=167
BNF

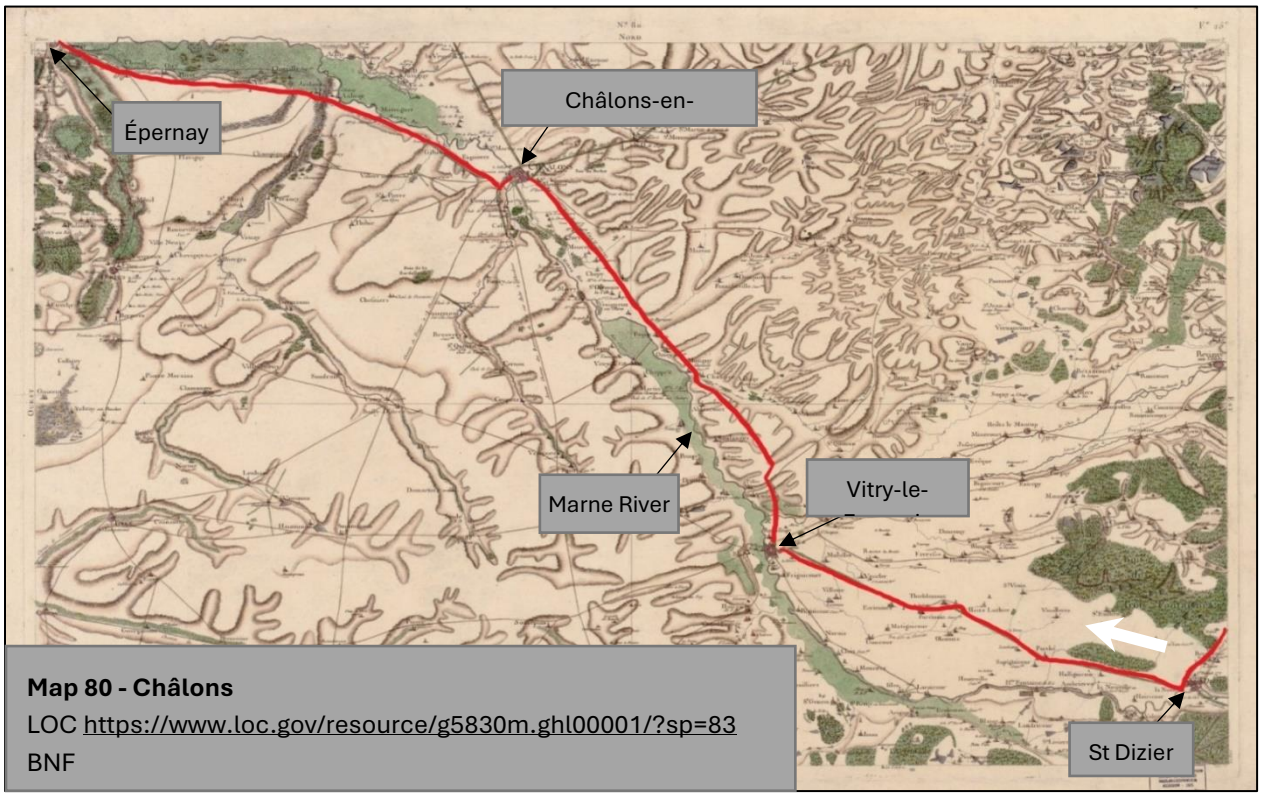


Map 142 - Nancy
LOC https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=148
BNF



Map 111 - Toul
LOC https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=116
BNF

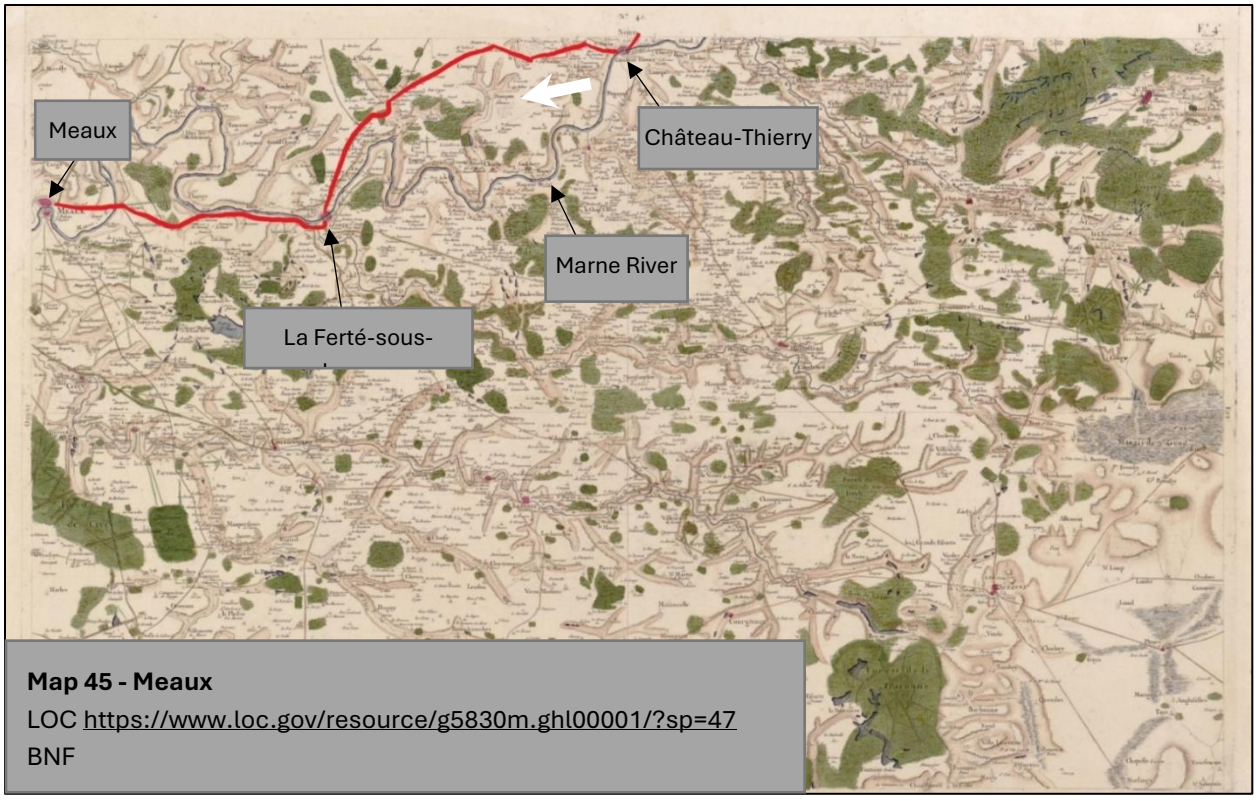




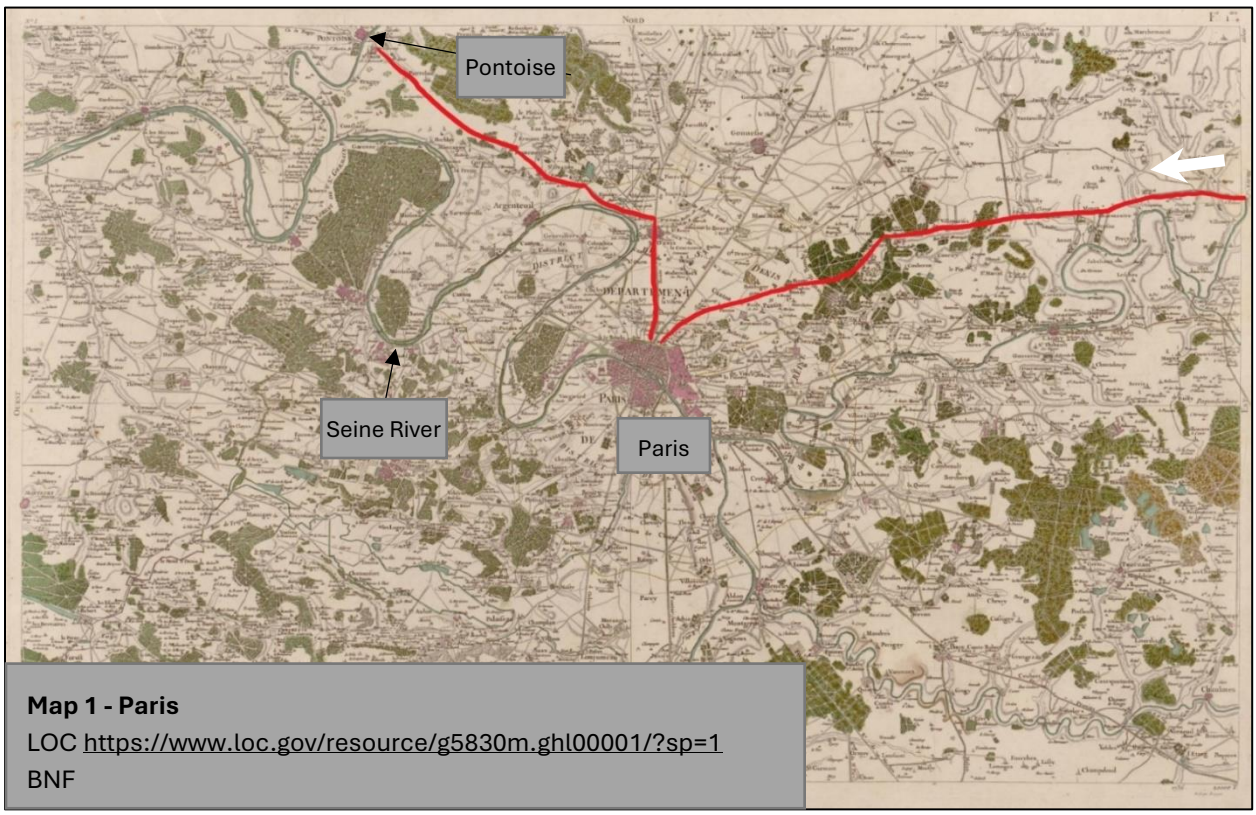
Map 80 - Châlons
LOC https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=83
BNF

Map 79 - Reims
LOC https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=82
BNF

Map 44 - Soissons
LOC https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=46
BNF

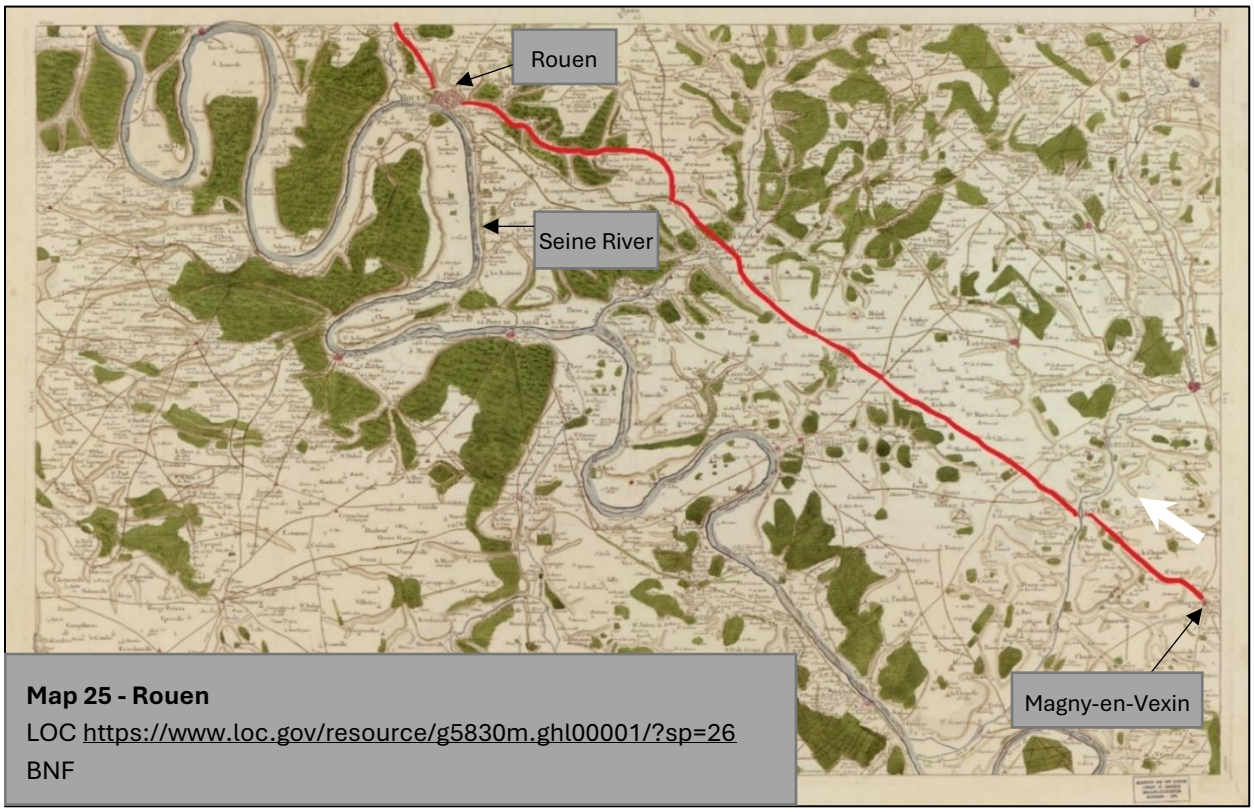


Map 45 - Meaux
LOC https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=47
BNF



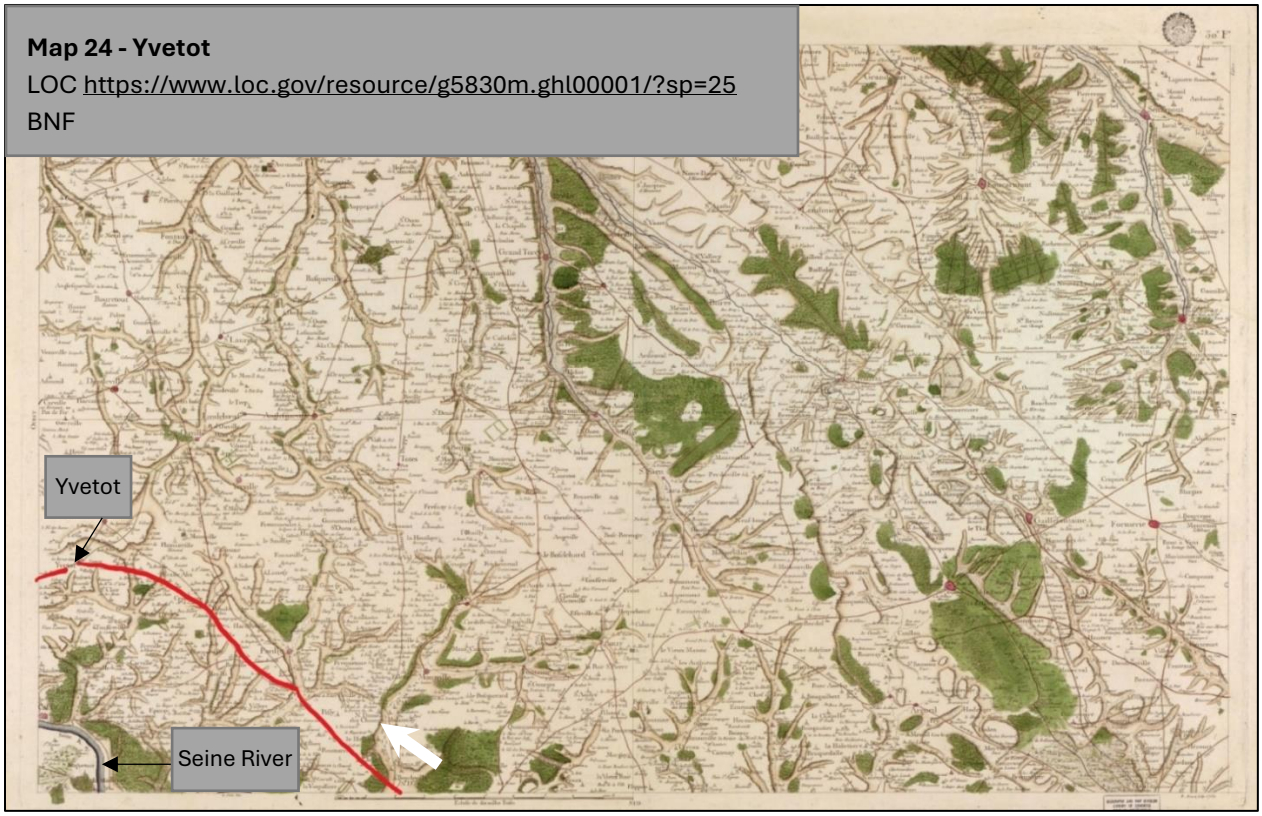
Map 1 - Paris
LOC https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=1
BNF

Map 2 - Beauvais
LOC https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=2
BNF



Map 25 - Rouen
LOC https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=26
BNF

Map 24 - Yvetot
LOC https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=25
BNF

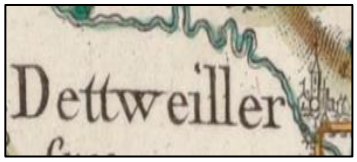


Map 60 - Le Havre
LOC https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=63
BNF

Map Symbols Referred to in the Text

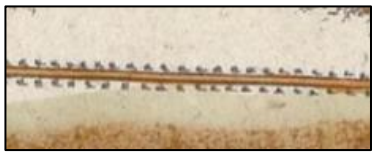
City (*Ville*)
Name written in capital letters

Town (*Bourg*)
Name written in large roman letter



Village
Name written in normal roman letters

Paved walkway or road without trees

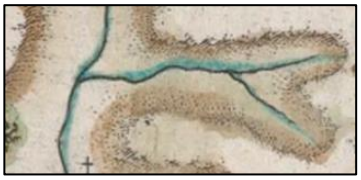


Paved tree-lined walkway or road

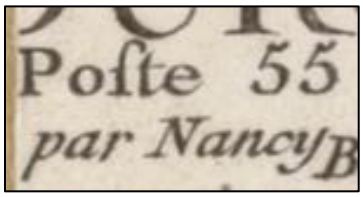
Dirt walkway or road

Woods or forest

River



Valley with river or stream



Number of posts (*Pofte*) from Paris by way of Nancy

Grape vines

Swamp or marsh

Many more symbols used on the Cassini maps are described at the following links. These legends are in French and may require translation to English or another language.

- http://cassini.ehess.fr/fr/html/4_pop_1.htm
- http://www.stephanebonneel.com/images/Photos%20grand%20format/CASSINI2.jpg
- http://www.cgbrie.org/pages/dossiers/legendes-des-cartes-de-cassini.html

Google translator, French to English

- https://translate.google.com/?sl=fr&tl=en&op=translate

A Narrative of the Route to Le Havre

My ancestors left Alsace from Detwiller (1832), Hermerswiller (1840), Soufflenheim (1843 & 1844), Kutzenhausen (1846), Roeschwoog (1847), and Dörrenbach (1847). All left the European continent onboard sailing ships that departed from the Port of Le Havre.

Gustave Brion, Paysans des Vosges fuyant l'invasion de 1814
(Peasants of the Vosges fleeing the invasion of 1814)

Gustave Brion's 1867 painting depicts Alsatian peasants leaving their homes when military forces of the Sixth Coalition invaded France. The tide of the Napoleonic Wars turned after a disastrous French invasion of Russia in 1812, resulting in the loss of much of Napoleon's army. In October the following year, Coalition armies from Austria, Prussia, Sweden, and Russia decisively defeated a reconstituted Grand Army of the French. The Coalition drove Napoleon out of Germany and invaded France in 1814. The remaining French army was defeated, Paris was occupied, and Napoleon was forced to abdicate on 11 April 1814. The peasants in Gustave Brion's painting were fleeing this invasion, but I imagine a similar scene, well after Napoleon's exile, when entire families of Alsatian emigrants left their homes and traveled to Le Havre.

My paternal ancestor, John Nuwer, traveled from Soufflenheim to Le Havre in the summer of 1843. He was 24 years old and traveled with his new wife, Catherine Kieffer, who was the same age. They traveled with Jean Kieffer (John Nuwer's father-in-law), who was 59 years old and his second wife Barbara Voegele, who was also 59. Also in the group was Jean's son, Laurent Kieffer (aged 32), Laurent's wife, Catherine Schmuck and a second son, Alexander Kieffer, who was 28 years old. Jean Kieffer's niece by marriage, Therese Messner (age 17) and Barbara Voegele's nephew, Alois Thomas (age 16) made the journey to America as well. Thus, a group of nine travelers, seven adults and two teenagers made the journey to Le Havre.

Jean Kieffer's youngest son, John Kieffer (aged 20), had already left Soufflenheim for America in the spring of 1843. The genealogist Brian Smith has identified 38 residents from Soufflenheim, including John Kieffer, who journeyed together to Le Havre and boarded the *Catherine* to sail to New York City.

Traveling as a family or with a larger group was common for emigrants from Alsace. John Nuwer's parents and siblings, a family group of four, made the journey in 1844. The Andrew Nichter family, a group of seven, traveled together with the John Brunck family, another a group of seven, from Dörrenbach in 1847. From Soufflenheim in the same year, three families traveled together. The Voegele family of nine, the Halter family of seven and the Zinger family of eleven individuals.

The following pages describe the journey of emigrants from their homes in Alsace to the Port of Le Havre on the Normandy coast. Members of my family with the "Nuwer" surname originated at Soufflenheim and so I used that town as the starting point for the journey. But all who left Alsace did so through the Saverne Pass, regardless of their town of origin.

Readers can follow this journey as an interactive exploration by using the internet links in the subsequent pages. The links will take you to the appropriate Cassini maps. The first link, labeled "Route," is a digital image of the map with the route marked in red—the same image as presented above. This link is followed by two links to the original maps. The first is to the Library of Congress's collection (LOC) and the second is to the collection at the National Library of France (BNF). These are slightly different versions of the same maps. They are water colored differently, mounted differently, and in some cases, errors were corrected on one or the other. The reader should decide for themself which version is preferred.

Map 162-Strasbourg
Route: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1L-PLcKxI4RvHrUvknBGwHyxN3CFwvnmn
LOC (image 167): https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=167
BNF: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b530952082/f1.item.zoom

To leave Alsace, all travelers had to cross the Vosges Mountains. The Saverne Pass (*Col de Saverne*) was the lowest and shortest natural passage through the Vosges and funneled travelers from Alsace to the rest of France. This pass was near the town of Saverne. On the Cassini map (no. 162), "Route de Paris" was written on the road through the pass, and it was through this pass that raw cotton was transported on wagons into Alsace and onto Colmar and Mulhouse. So, everyone who traveled to Le Havre, went to the town of Saverne on the east slope of the Vosges Mountains and then through the pass to Phalsbourg.

On map 162 of the Cassini collection the route from Soufflenheim to Haguenau then to Hochfelden and on to Saverne is plotted. The distance between Soufflenheim and Haguenau was 14 kilometers (9 miles) which took about 3 hours to walk. Haguenau to Hochfelden was another 20 kilometers (12 miles), which was a 4 hour walk. The distance between Strasbourg and Hochfelden was a bit shorter, 30 kilometers (19 miles) which could be walked in 6.5 hours. Thus, there was almost no difference in terms of distance for our ancestors who began their journey to Le Havre at Soufflenheim or at Strasbourg.

However, many immigrants during this time period originated from places north of Soufflenheim. Following the Napoleonic Wars, the northern boundary of France and thus of Alsace was set at Wissembourg and many of the emigrants were from the surrounding district. Wissembourg is on map number 161. From Wissembourg, crossing the Vosges mountains to the west or to the north was no easy task. So, emigrants originating in the north (and those living in the German territories beyond) still used the Saverne Pass to leave Alsace. The distance between Wissembourg and Hochfelden via Haguenau was 50 kilometers (31 miles), which was a walk that took 10.5 hours. Lauterbourg to Hochfelden was 58 kilometers, a 12 hour walk. Thus, emigrants coming from the very north of Alsace

added at least an extra day to the length of their journey to Le Havre, while those coming from the German territories on the left bank of the Rhine added even more days.

Some emigrants purchased space on the freight wagons that hauled cotton and were returning to Le Havre. The wagon driver may have then acted as their guide. Perhaps the driver helped the Alsatians communicate in French along the way. There are many details of the journey that remain unclear.

According to the Cassini map (no. 162), the road from Haguenau to Saverne was a paved path lined with trees. The two parallel lines represent the road. A shaded road on the maps represented a paved path while an unshaded road represented dirt. The dots along the road represented the trees.

The iconic French road lined with evenly spaced trees dates to at least the mid eighteenth century. Under the reign of Louis XIV (1643-1715), France was taking steps to becoming what we know today as a unified nation state, and it was known then that a good road system was needed to facilitate economic, administrative, and military activities within national boundaries.

During the reign of Louis XV (1715-1774), France embarked on an extensive road building campaign. The main roads were widened to at least 39 feet, and many to 63 feet. Furthermore, engineers replaced the old winding roads with straight lines to reduce travel time and make them easier to maintain. Roadbeds were finished with gravel, sand, or earth. On the main roads, ditches were dug along both sides to ensure good drainage and prevent them from becoming waterlogged and boggy. Finally, along many roads a row of evenly spaced trees were planted on both sides. The trees would provide shade to travelers on their journey. The Cassini maps identify and differentiate the roads that were paved from those that were unpaved. (Source: “Tree lined Roads in France,” https://poitoucharentesinphotos.wordpress.com/2013/07/28/tree-lined-roads-in-france/)

By the 1750s, France (or at least northwestern France) had the most modern and extensive road network in the world. There was regular stagecoach service on all the main roads to and from Paris, even as far as Toulouse, Lyon, and Marseille in southern France. With improvements in the roads and in the suspension of the coaches, travel time improved dramatically between 1750 and 1780. In the former year it took a coach at least 11 days to get from Paris to Strasbourg, but in the latter year it took only 5 days.

At Saverne, the Cassini map states “Pofte 51 par Nancy.” This means that Saverne was 51 posts from the city of Paris by way of Nancy. Strasbourg was 55 posts from Paris by way of Nancy and $55^1/_2$ by way of Mentz. The Cassini maps identified the number of posts from Paris for every city. A city (*ville*) was identified on the maps with its name written in capital letters. By contrast, the names of towns (*bourg*) were written in large roman letters. The distance between each post was not an exact measurement, but they were roughly 9 to 10 kilometers (5.5-6 miles) apart.

Leaving Saverne, the road was paved but there were no trees lining it. That road entered a forested patch as it proceeded up the mountain pass. When the traveler exited the forest, they could see the town of Phalsbourg and they had entered Lorraine.

Travel Distance and Time Between Major Places

Place	To	Kilometers	Hours Walking	Posts to Paris
Soufflenheim	Haguenau	14	3	
Haguenau	Saverne	35	7.5	
Saverne	Phalsbourg	10	2	51
Phalsbourg	Sarrebourg	20	4	$49^1/_2$
Sarrebourg	Lunéville	55	11	$47^1/_2$

Lunéville	Nancy	28	6	41 1/2
Nancy	Toul	24	5	38 1/2
Toul	Ligny-en-Barrois	46	9.5	36
Ligny-en-Barrois	St Dizier	31	6.5	31 1/2
St Dizier	Vitry-le-François	30	6.5	27
Vitry-le-François	Châlons-en-Champagne	32	6.5	24
Châlons-en-Champagne	Épernay	32	6.5	20
Épernay	Dormans	24	5	16
Dormans	Château-Thierry	23	4.5	13
Château-Thierry	La Ferté-sous-Jouarre	27	5.5	10
La Ferté-sous-Jouarre	Meaux	18	4	
Meaux	outskirts of Paris	41	8.5	5
Paris	Pontoise	27	6	
Pontoise	Magny-en-Vexin	28	6	3 1/2
Magny-en-Vexin	Rouen	63	13	
Rouen	Yvetot	36	7.5	14
Yvetot	Lillebonne	21	4.5	
Lillebonne	Le Havre	32	7	23 1/2

Travel distances and times were computed from Google Maps. Directions between places were computed in kilometers and walking was selected as the mode of travel. Google assumes a person walks three miles per hour. Routes are slightly different today, but, for purposes used here, do not appear to have changed significantly.

Link to the map: https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1gJFdmPGc6poE3Ql0l-RNrVLTkN0Oa4Y

Phalsbourg lies high on the west slopes of the Vosges Mountains. It was 42 kilometers (26 miles) from Strasbourg, 103 kilometers (64 miles) from Nancy, and 440 kilometers (273 miles) from Paris. The Cassini map tells us that Phalsbourg was 49 1/2 posts from Paris. At Phalsbourg the traveler entered the historical and cultural region of Lorraine. Geographically, most of the historical province sits on a highland plateau, the Lorraine Plateau. It is bounded on the east by the Vosges Mountains and on the west by the plains of Champagne. The emigrant traveler must cross this plateau from east to west.

The Lorraine Plateau is composed of arched “cuesta” ridges that extend in a north-south direction. Geologists describe a cuesta as an asymmetric hill or ridge with a gentle slope on one side and a steep slope on the other. These hills and ridges were divided by clay and sandy depressions which were drained by rivers of the Meuse (or Maas), Moselle, and Rhine basins. Thus, much of Lorraine was forested and hilly, with beech and oak groves found on the ridges. The route to Paris avoided the ridges and traversed the basins.

Map 142 - Nancy
Route: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Tk8hq1Jjvm4NIJ-zhDGOtgWMo-HPbBl4
LOC (image 148): https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=148
BNF: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b530952171/f1.item.zoom

After leaving the town of Phalsbourg, the Saar River valley was the first to be traversed. (The French name is Sarre Valley.) Sarrebourg was at the southern end of the valley, at the headwaters of the Saar River. The town was halfway between Strasbourg and Nancy. In 1841, the population of Sarrebourg was about 2,300, which was somewhat smaller than the population of Soufflenheim (about 2,900).

Note that there is an error with map 142 hosted by the Library of Congress (LOC, image 148). Sarrebourg is missing altogether from that copy of the map. The image hosted at the National Library of France (BNF) has corrected that error. Thus, on the BNF map one can clearly see one of Lorraine's forested ridges just north of Sarrebourg (the green shaded area) and streambeds both to the north and to the south of the ridge. The road stayed in the valleys and proceeded southwesterly to Belamont.

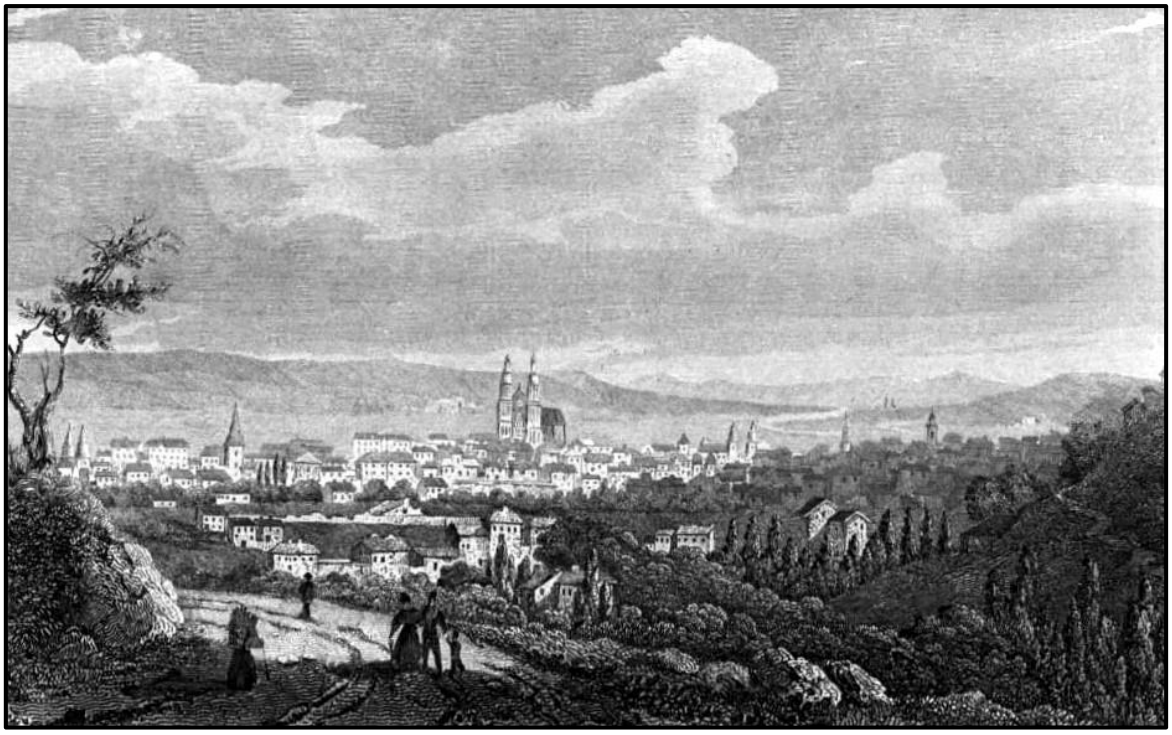
Also note that upon entering Lorraine, trees no longer lined the road. The eighteenth-century maps depict the road to Paris through the entire length of Lorraine without lined trees. However, between the 1750s and 1815 trees were planted along these roads. The 1815 versions of the Cassini maps show tree-lined roads all the way to the western boundary of Lorraine.

At Belamont, the road to Paris crossed the Vezouze River and continued to Lunéville. Lunéville was 92 kilometers (57 miles) west of Strasbourg. It was a large city with a population of about 12,300 in 1841. This was a bit larger than Haguenau which had a population of 10,300 in the same year. Lunéville was renowned for its royal earthenware factory. The factory was founded around 1730 and produced prestigious Lorraine earthenware for the Royal family.

Although Paris was still 365 kilometers (227 miles) to the west, Nancy was only 28 kilometers (17 miles) up the road. At Lunéville the Vezouze River converged with the Meurthe River and at St Nicolas the road to Paris follows the Meurthe River to the city of Nancy.

Nancy, which was $38^{1}/_{2}$ posts from Paris, had a population of almost 36,000 in 1841. It was one of the largest cities on the journey to Le Havre. Only Paris and Rouen were larger. Strasbourg was almost twice the size with a population of just over 70,000, thus Nancy was the largest place between Strasbourg and Paris. Nancy was the capital of the Duchy of Lorraine until its annexation to France in 1766. The city then became the provincial capital of Lorraine. Nancy was also made the seat of a bishopric in 1778.

It is unclear where our ancestors obtained the food they consumed along the way. They may have carried food with them and prepared meals at the roadside. But there were no ready-made meals in those days. Before 1860 our ancestors would have needed basic ingredients to prepare their meals—flour, potatoes, eggs, salted meat, carrots, cabbages, and the like. Perhaps a small barrel of sauerkraut was on their wagon. However, preparing meals from basic ingredients was time consuming, and making bread, which was the staple of every meal, would have been a great challenge on the roadside. So, maybe meals were purchased from innkeepers along the way.



Nancy, Lorraine 1838

Similarly, it is not clear where the emigrants spent the night. Did they stay at establishments in the major towns or somewhere else? We can say with a high degree of certainty that they did not stay at the hotels. Those establishments were for the wealthy and too expensive for the lower middle-class emigrants. There were, however, coach inns all the way to the port. The route was, after all, the main road to Paris, (both Strasbourg to Paris and Le Havre to Paris) which made it a well-traveled route with services for travelers of all classes. The historian Andre Corvisier provides the following description of temporary housing conditions at Le Havre in 1840.

> The accommodation of emigrants awaiting departure is a serious problem. The less fortunate sleep in the street, on the floor, or up makeshift tents on the banks of the streets and sidewalks of St. Francis and Notre Dame [two neighborhoods in the city]. … Those who have two francs a day, can find accommodation among innkeepers of St. Francis and Our Lady, who specialize in taking care of immigrants.

Conditions along the main road to Paris may have been similar with some travelers accommodated by innkeepers in the cities and towns, while others spent the night in tents along the road.

Map 111 - Toul
Route: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Pm00FEG6FAbIiBm4XznB4Mm4VX9NGkKK
LOC (image 116): https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=116
BNF: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53095241k/f1.item.zoom

From Nancy, the road to Paris turned west and entered a forested region (*Bois de Hayes*). On the other side of this forest was a crossroad and the road to Toul. The distance between Nancy and Toul was about 24 kilometers (15 miles). The town, with a population of 7,000 in 1841, was located on the left bank of the Moselle River. Toul boasted a beautiful stone bridge. After the Duchy of Lorraine became part of France in 1766, the Bishopric of Toul was transferred to Nancy, and Toul declined as a major center.

From Toul the road to Paris ran west to Ligny-en-Barrois, which was on the Ornain River. This stretch of the journey was difficult as the road twisted and turned while crossing many rivers and streams.

The next leg of the route was a bit less clear. The Cassini map (no. 111) shows the road from Ligny-en-Barrois turning northerly to Bar Le Duc, a city larger than Haguenau with 12,500 residents in 1841, and then turning southernly to St Dizier. However, the Cassini map was published in 1759 and in the decade after 1766 the main road from Paris to Nancy was modified. A direct path was built between St Dizier and Ligny-en-Barrois which thereby bypassed Bar Le Duc. The new road was shown on the 1815 new edition map (no. 111). This new road shortened the walk from Ligny-en-Barrois to St Dizier by 2 hours. It was probably the route our ancestors used, but there were two significant hills they needed to ascend.

Map 80 - Châlons
Route: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1oCBpvt2wBLLSfT8yoSB-GO7EpHxsOPzE
LOC (image 83): https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=83
BNF: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53095244x/f1.item.zoom

Whichever route our ancestors followed, the next place on their journey was St Dizier, a town of 5,700 residents in 1841. St Dizier was approximately halfway between Paris and Strasbourg, 27 posts from Paris and 28 posts from Strasbourg. At St Dizier, our ancestors had left Lorraine and entered the historical and cultural French province of Champagne. Champagne consisted mostly of flat plains interrupted by low hills and by the valley of the Marne River. The Marne was one of the longest river in France and the main tributary of the Seine.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the economic life of St Dizier was marked by viticulture (i.e., the production of grapes). The town was also a very old and important center of French metallurgy. From St Dizier, the emigrant's route followed the Marne River in a northwesterly arc across Champagne and all the way to Paris.

Vitry-le-François was 30 kilometers (18.5 miles) northwest of St Dizier. This town of 7,700 residents in 1841 was about 140 kilometers (87 miles) from Nancy and 227 kilometers (141 miles) from Paris. Vitry-le-François was a flat region which was covered with field crops, meadows, ponds, and poplar groves.

The geographical location of Vitry-le-François made it a place of passage for armies since the Middle Ages, thus this town was built in 1545 as a fortress. It was surrounded by walls and ramparts with eight bastions. It also had a citadel and ditches with running water from the river. These fortifications were completed in 1624. The Cassini map (no. 80) clearly shows the orthogonal plan inside the fortress walls and the ramparts surrounding the town.

Châlons-en-Champagne was 32 kilometers (20 miles) up the road from Vitry-le-François. The town was located on the Marne River. This was the largest town in Campagne that our ancestors would visit. The population was 14,100 in 1841. From 1615 to 1789 the intendants of Champagne sat in Châlons. An intendant was the King's local representative in a district. In the centuries before the Revolution, wool and leather were produced in this area. Wood, grain, wine, and sheep were carted from Châlons as far as Paris to supply the city's needs.

Goods that were carted from Châlons-en-Champagne to Paris in the eighteenth century were hauled primarily by two-wheeled carts. It is not clear whether our emigrant ancestors relied on two-wheeled carts or four-wheeled freight wagons to haul their belongs. Contemporary images of emigrants at the Le Havre docks suggest that many families traveled with a few chests or trunks holding their belongings. My case study of the Jacob Demmerle family found that this family of nine left Le Havre in June 1833 with "four chests and one illegal cast of wine."

Châlons-en-Champagne, 1838

While Gustave Brion's painting (reproduced above) suggests that carts were used to move these belongings, both carts and wagons were in use well before the eighteenth century. Carts, however, were often preferred. The main problem with wagons was their turning radius. When turning, the front wheels of the wagon often collided with its side. The small distance between the front wheels and the bed of the wagon thus made the turning radius very large and increased the amount of space needed for a turn. Carts, by virtue of their two-wheeled structure, did not face this problem. Combined with their lighter weight, carts were long preferred over wagons for many uses.

Diderot's *Encyclopédie* (1751-1772) provides support for the importance of the carts over the wagons. The entry for wheelwrights (*charron*), the maker of carts and wagons, depicts a chassis for a coach and three types of carts (an ordinary cart, a dump cart, and a flat-bed cart), but there is no depiction of a wagon.

Regardless of whether carts or wagons were used, both vehicles were designed for hauling freight, not people. The driver of both carts and wagons walked alongside the vehicle, in the center of the road, and would steer the vehicle from its side.

From Châlons the road to Paris followed the Marne River another 32 kilometers (20 miles) northwesterly to the town of Épernay (map no. 79). With a population of almost 6,000 residents in 1841, this was another town that was twice the size of Soufflenheim.

Map 79 - Reims
A tiny stretch of road in the lower left corner.
Route: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1yl4qveJ8E1y8ENyRM84aX2EvZjOYIltw
LOC (image 82): https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=82
BNF: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b530951918/f1.item.zoom

Épernay was located in the heart of the Champagne wine region and most of its modern history was linked to the sparkling wine. The Marne River valley allowed the cultivation of vines on the hillsides and numerous vineyards had been located here since the Middle Ages. The Cassini map (no. 79) clearly shows some of these vineyards just north of Épernay, on the hillsides above the marshes of the Marne River. More vineyards can be found east of the Montagne Forest and all the way north to the city of Reims.

Champagne (the beverage) was developed here in the eighteenth century. Its production gave a strong economic boost to Épernay. Many mansions owned by the great champagne houses were built between the second half of the eighteenth century and the end of the nineteenth century. From Épernay, the traveler saw vineyards along the road for another 80 kilometers (50 miles).

Map 44 - Soissons
Route: https://drive.google.com/file/d/12z-GzhelaeLbVbl-a5Y3zIILhg6ounHG
LOC (image 46): https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=46
BNF: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b530951505/f1.item.zoom

Dormans, the next town along the road (map 44), was 24 kilometers (15 miles) from Épernay. It was smaller than Soufflenheim, with 2,100 residents in 1841. Dormans was also a wine-making town located in the heart of the Marne Valley and was one of the major champagne producers by the early nineteenth century.

Dormans was followed in 23 kilometers (14 miles) by Château-Thierry (map no. 45), which had a population of almost 5,000 residents in 1841. From Château-Thierry, Paris was another 109 kilometers (68 miles) away.

Map 45 - Meaux
Route: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1E4fvlwsiOnDpFUG_Ip3BUv2NPlSzvI5T
LOC (image 47): https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=47
BNF: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53095173b/f1.item.zoom

View of Château-Thierry from the top of the hills of the Marne.
https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ch%C3%A2teau-Thierry#/media/Fichier:Panorama_Chateau-Thierry.jpg

To the reader who is a member of the Nuwer family tree, our relative Henry Stephan, grandson of the immigrant Frank X Nuwer and the proprietor of Stephan's grocery store in Lancaster, New York, returned to Château-Thierry as a member of the United States Army during the First World War. Henry Stephan was an infantry soldier in the Second Battle of the Marne which was fought during June and July 1918. The town of Château-Thierry was a main site of the battle and was partially destroyed. Henry's grandfather had passed the town in 1844.

After passing Château-Thierry, the Marne River took a number of twists and turns through a hilly region. The road to Paris by-passed this terrain by running well north of the river, on a flat plateau above the water. The road came back to the river at La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, where it crossed to the water's south side.

La Ferté, which had a population of 4,100 in 1841, was famous for millstones used for grinding flour. In 1814 a British naval officer, Norwich Duff, observed:

> [We] ... left Meaux a little before seven and, after passing through a fine country for five leagues, arrived at La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, a neat little town on the banks of the rivers Marne

> and Morin, where we breakfasted. This town supplies the greatest part of France with mill stones, which are considered the finest in Europe. The banks of the river and each side of the road were covered with them as we passed. ... The road from La Ferté to Château-Thierry (seven leagues) is very hilly but the scenery very fine. (Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/La_Fert%C3%A9-sous-Jouarre)

Meaux was only about a 4 hour walk from La Ferté. At Meaux the traveler was no longer in Champagne, they had entered the historical province that contained Paris, Île-de-France. Meaux had a population of 9,000 in 1841, and it was only 41 kilometers (25.5 miles) east of the center of Paris (5 posts according to the Cassini map).

Map 1 - Paris
Route: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1EvKTpIc5Ypo5H6U7ig8fMb2mX6t17Fbn
LOC (image 1): https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=1
BNF: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53095162g/f1.item.zoom

The Paris of the 1840s was not the Paris of today. In the middle of the nineteenth century, the center of Paris was viewed as overcrowded, dark, dangerous, and unhealthy. When our emigrant ancestors passed through Paris on their way to Le Havre, the density of the city's population was extremely high. The streets were very narrow, and wagons, carriages, and carts could barely move through them. Disease spread very quickly in these conditions.

The French social reformer Victor Considerant wrote in 1845 that "Paris is an immense workshop of putrefaction, where misery, pestilence, and sickness work in concert, where sunlight and air rarely penetrate. Paris is a terrible place where plants shrivel and perish, and where, of seven small infants, four died during the course of the year." (Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haussmann%27s_renovation_of_Paris)

Between 1853 and 1870 Napoleon III and his minister, Baron Haussmann, rebuilt the city center. They created the wide downtown boulevards and the squares where the boulevards intersected, imposed standard facades along the boulevards, and required that the facades be built of the distinctive cream-grey "Paris stone." They also built the major parks around the city center. But this was all done after our ancestors passed Paris.

We don't know whether our ancestors entered the city or simply went to the outskirts. The emigrant traveler still had another 130 miles before arriving at the Port of Le Havre.

From Paris, the road to Le Havre ran northwesterly. The first town on this road was Pontoise, which had a population of 5,419 in 1841. The town was located on the right bank of the Oise River, about 25 kilometers (15.5 miles) northwest of Paris. Today Pontoise is one of Paris' northern suburbs.

Historical Pontoise was located in the province of Vexin, which was one of the classic feudal domains of France. The County of Vexin was then controlled by about 400 large estates. Eighty percent of the territory was ploughed, and a three-year rotation was based on the alternation of wheat, oats, and fallow land. Wheat production in the seventeenth century reached remarkable yields. Grazing was also important, with around 30,000 sheep and more than 7,000 cows. In the nineteenth century, the potato was extensively cultivated, and the production of sugar beets triggered the construction of sugar factories and distillation factories.

Map 2 - Beauvais
Route: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-Uv-D_Vs3NPfsk4XO9BvMgOPJvh75PtP
LOC (image 2): https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=2
BNF: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53095201x/f1.item.zoom

Map 25 - Rouen
Route: https://drive.google.com/file/d/10396PPVVIA44cnqlge2OsO5mSfJwrEpZ
LOC (image 26): https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=26
BNF: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b530951611/f1.item.zoom

From Pontoise the road took the traveler 28 kilometers (17 miles) to Magny-en-Vexin (map no. 25). This town of only 1,500 residents in 1841 was located on the old Roman road from Paris to Rouen called Chaussée Jules-César. In Early Modern times, the town was an urban center of a very rural region. In the sixteenth century Magny became a stop for the stagecoach line between Paris and Rouen. The importance of travelers to the town was illustrated in 1765 when a planned layout of the main road avoided the city. This provoked strong protests, especially from the owners of the coaching inns. The residents won their case, and the main road crossed the town.

The next place on the journey to Le Havre was Rouen, the capital of the historical province of Normandy. It was 118 kilometers (73 miles) northwest of Paris. Taking account of all the places on the entire journey from Strasbourg to Le Havre, Rouen was second only to Paris in terms of population. In 1841 that number was 96,000 residents. Originally, the city was on the right bank of the Seine, but, by 1750, it included both banks of the river.

The Port of Rouen was historically one of the most important in France. At the end of the fifteenth century Rouen experienced an economic boom fueled by draperies, silk, metallurgy, and fishing. The fabrics were sold in Spain, which supplied the raw wool, and the Medici made Rouen the main point of resale for Roman alum. Fishermen from Rouen sailed as far as Newfoundland to fish for cod and the Baltic to fish for herring. The salt used in drying the fish was imported from Portugal and Guérande.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, Rouen became the main French port for trade with Brazil, mainly for drapery dyes. The workshops of Rouen used dyes directly imported from the New World, the red drawn from the bark of Brazilwood, the blue coming from indigo. Alum was a mineral that allowed the fixing of pigments on textiles. It was monopolized by the Papacy throughout the Middle Ages, Renaissance, and Early Modern era.

Rouen early 1800s

In the early nineteenth century, when our ancestors were passing through the city, Rouen was known as the “Manchester of France.” The city was one of France’s main centers for cotton textile manufacturing. Spinning and weaving mills, dying, printing, and bleaching works, were located there. A British traveler in the late 1780s, Arthur Young, described Rouen as a “great ugly, stinking, close and ill-built town, which is full of nothing but dirt and industry.” One can only wonder what opinions our ancestors formed of this place. (Source: https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rouen)

Map 24 - Yvetot
Route: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-6vk6PvA_WJGqnFHg3mHkduT4A_V1sVN
LOC (image 25): https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=25
BNF: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53095160k/f1.item.zoom

From Rouen, the road to Le Havre proceeded to Yvetot, a town of 9,100 residents. Located in Normandy, Yvetot was 36 kilometers (22 miles) northwest of Rouen. The prosperity of the town was linked to its status as a tax haven in the seventeenth century, and to the expansion of cotton spinning mills and fabric manufacturing in the early nineteenth century.

From Yvetot, Le Havre was only 53 kilometers (33 miles) away. The final leg of the journey took the traveler to Lillebonne which was located on the right bank of the Seine River, 32 kilometers (20 miles) upstream from Le Havre. The town supported a population of almost 3,700 residents in 1841. It was on the stagecoach line from Le Havre to Rouen. Lillebonne was also an industrial place in the early nineteenth century. The principal industries were cotton spinning and the manufacture of calico and candles.

Map 60 - Le Havre
Route: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1J-4DGLHnlOuEwuj_BWRgJuGNVtcLNeIu

LOC (image 63): https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=63
BNF: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53095165t/f1.item.zoom

The road to Le Havre then passed Harfleur, a small town of 1,600 in 1841. Before the Port of Le Havre was built in the sixteenth century, Harfleur had been the principal seaport in northwestern France for some six centuries. Le Havre is only 5 kilometers (3 miles) downstream.

Le Havre is located on the shore of the English Channel (or La Manche as the French called it) and at the mouth of the Seine River. Due to its location on the Channel coast, days without wind were rare. The history of the city was inextricably linked to its harbor. In the eighteenth century, as trade from the West Indies grew for France and Europe, Le Havre began to grow.

The end of the Napoleonic Wars allowed a revival of commerce and economic activity across all of Europe, and Le Havre was part of that process. The harbor received coffee and cotton from the Americas; wood, coal, and wheat by coastal ships from northern Europe; wine and oil from the Mediterranean.

Growth of the city's population lead to the appearance of new working-class neighborhoods within its walls. Many of the laborers were clustered in the unhealthy neighborhoods of Saint Francis and Notre Dame where epidemics of cholera, typhoid and other diseases caused hundreds of deaths between the years 1830 and 1850.

Le Havre also become the "thoroughfare of emigration from Switzerland and the South of Germany to the United States." It was noted in an 1841 by an official from Le Havre that, "Here, no distinction is made between German and Alsatian emigrants, they are all just called Swiss." Although some of these emigrants were arriving on coastal ships from northern German ports, most of them arrived by foot and on returning freight wagons from the eastern parts of France.

Before the introduction of scheduled passenger service across the Atlantic, it was necessary for emigrants to make arrangements for passage directly with the captains of a vessel. "During the sailing season," writes the genealogist Kathi Gosz, "there were … always several thousand persons waiting to leave. They could be obliged to wait for weeks, partly in lodging houses, partly outdoors. A German colony of innkeepers, shopkeepers and brokers materialized to service them." (Source: "A Look at Le Havre, a Less-Known Port for German Emigrants" http://19thcenturyrhinelandlive.blogspot.com/2011/10/look-at-le-havre-less-known-port-for.html)

The following is a description by one historian of the situation at Le Havre when emigrants arrived.

> For many individuals, the entire trip from their home to the United States was not very pleasant, and often proved more expensive than it needed to be. Not only did it take a while to get to the embarkation port but once there, the potential immigrants had to deal with "runners," individuals who would meet the arriving groups and try to steer them to particular boardinghouses. At times, the runners would simply grab a person's luggage and take it to a boardinghouse, regardless of the individual's desires. Then, the rates actually charged at the boardinghouses were often higher than the runners had promised. If not paid, the immigrant's luggage would not be returned. Sometimes, prepaid tickets were not honored, or the immigrants were told they needed to pay more on fully paid tickets.
>
> (Source: Raymond L. Cohn, *Mass Migration Under Sail: European Immigration to the Antebellum United States*, (2009), Chapter 6.)

Families of Emigrants Camped at the Port of Le Havre. From a drawing made in Le Havre by M. Ernest, 1848.
Source: https://iseeancestors.com/comm/2017/05/30/father-of-immigration/

The journey from Soufflenheim to Le Havre described in the above pages offers details about the route our ancestors followed. From the roads traveled it is possible to estimate how long it took our ancestors to walk to Le Havre. Assuming people walked at a pace of three miles per hour, it would have required 146 hours to walk from Soufflenheim to Le Havre. But there is much that remains unknown. It is not clear how many hours per day our ancestors walked. Although they probably did not spend ten hours per day on the road, we don't know whether they walked six hour, or eight hours, or some other amount. If they walked eight hours a day, every day, the journey could have been completed in 18 days (2 weeks and 4 days). If they walked six hours a day, their journey would have taken 24 days (3 week and 3 days). And this does not account for delays of any kind, like broken wagons, church attendance, bad weather, or some other delay.

And, of course, upon arriving in Le Havre, the journey to America for our immigrant ancestors was nowhere near its end. The trans-Atlantic crossing and the journey inland to western New York, Canada, Ohio, and other places further west still lay ahead.

The Emigrants of Alsace, Theophile Schuler, 1861

Alternate Routes to Paris

In “Journey to Le Havre” I explored the route Alsatian emigrants traveled to the Port of Le Havre. That route took the emigrants from northern Alsace, through the Saverne Pass to Lorraine, Champagne, Paris and on to Le Havre. All emigrants from the districts around Strasbourg and Haguenau would have certainly used this route. Emigrants from the area around Wissembourg most likely used it as well.

There were, nevertheless, other routes through the Vosges Mountains and some emigrants might have used these alternative routes. Moreover, emigrants originating from the northern parts of Lorraine and from the German states north of Lorraine would have traveled a different route to Le Havre.

Between 1828 and 1861 the primary source of “German” emigration was from northeastern France (Alsace and Lorraine) and southern German states (Baden, Württemberg, the Rhenish Palatinate, Rhenish Prussia, and Hessen). If these emigrants left Europe from the Port of Le Havre, they had to first travel to Paris. Thus, the route from Paris to Le Havre was the same for all these points of origin. Getting to Paris, however, could be accomplished on somewhat different routes.

Below I consider two alternative routes to Paris in the pre-railroad era. The first originated in Haut-Rhin and merges with the Strasbourg to Paris route at Lunéville. The second route originated in north Lorraine and merged with the Strasbourg route at Châlons-en-Champagne.

The Southern Route

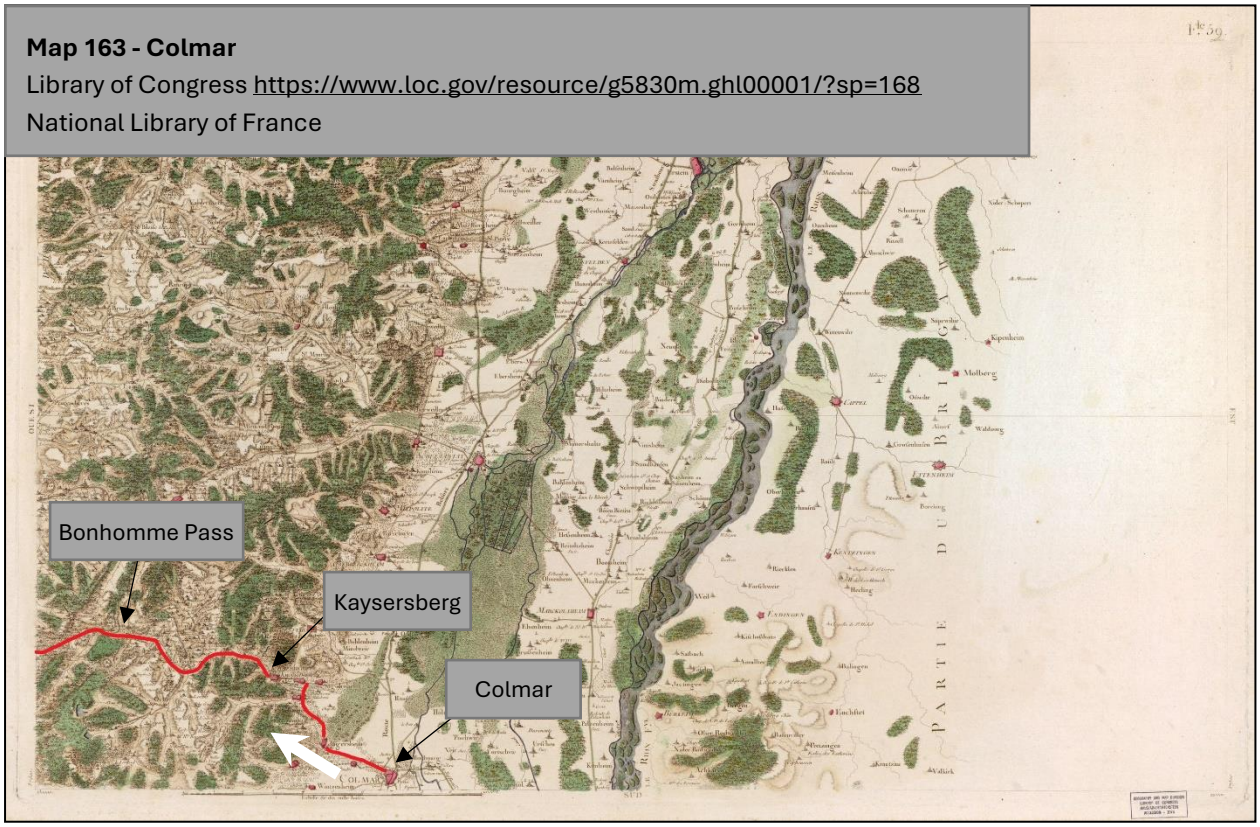
Many immigrants in my family tree originated from Bas-Rhin and certainly used the Strasbourg to Paris route when they left Alsace. But there are a few branches in my tree that originated from other areas of France. One example is the Sebastian Gundy family which arrived in New York Harbor in 1846. The family was from a very small village in Haut-Rhin named Fulleren, which was south of Mulhouse. Fulleren is found on map 165 of the Cassini collection. Sebastian Gundy traveled with a large group of people. They included his wife and eight children, his brother, Joseph, and Joseph's wife, and Joseph's brother-in-law, Stephen Kagler, Stephen's wife, and their six children. A group of 20 people in total.

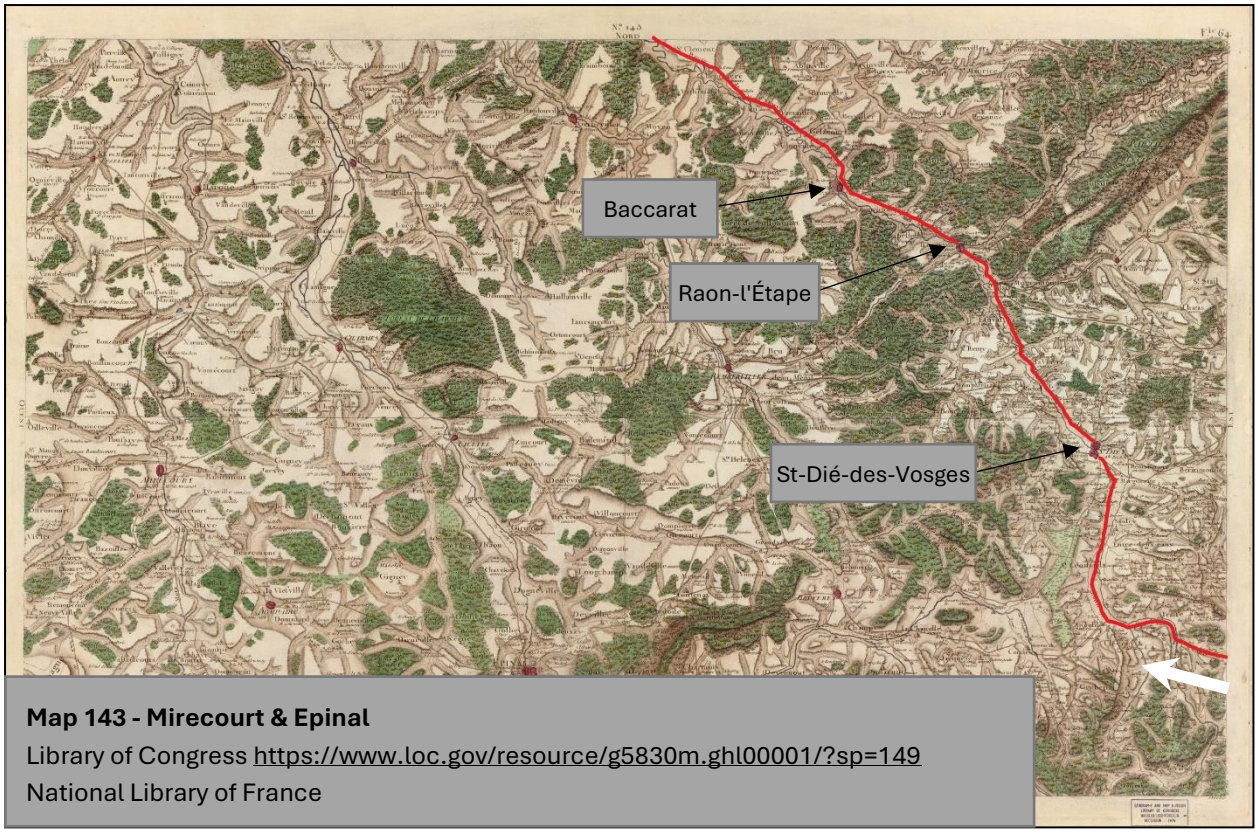
From Fulleren this group may have used the Strasbourg to Paris route on their journey to Le Havre. They would have traveled north to Colmar and then continue along the Rhine River valley to the Saverne Pass. There was, however, an alternative route this group of emigrants may have followed. At Colmar, the alternate route went west through the Vosges Mountains to Saint Dié (Saint-Dié-des-Vosges, today), then north to Lunéville where it merged with the Strasbourg to Paris route.

From Colmar, it was 85 kilometers (53 miles) to Saverne and another 85 kilometers from Saverne to Lunéville. This distance would have required about 34.5 hours of walking time, or four to five travel days. Using the alternate route, it was 106 kilometers from Colmar to Lunéville. This could have reduced the travel time by 12.5 hours (about two days). What is unclear, however, is the quality of the roads through the mountains. The High Vosges Mountains were much more rugged than the route through the Saverne Pass.

The Vosges Mountains form the boundary between the Alsace plain and the Lorraine plateau. These mountains run in a northeast direction from the Burgundian Gate in the south (also known as the Belfort Gap) to the Börrstadt Basin in the north, which is in Germany. The southern portion of this mountain range is often called the High Vosges, and the Saverne Pass is the natural dividing line between this segment and the segment north of the Pass called the Northern Vosges.

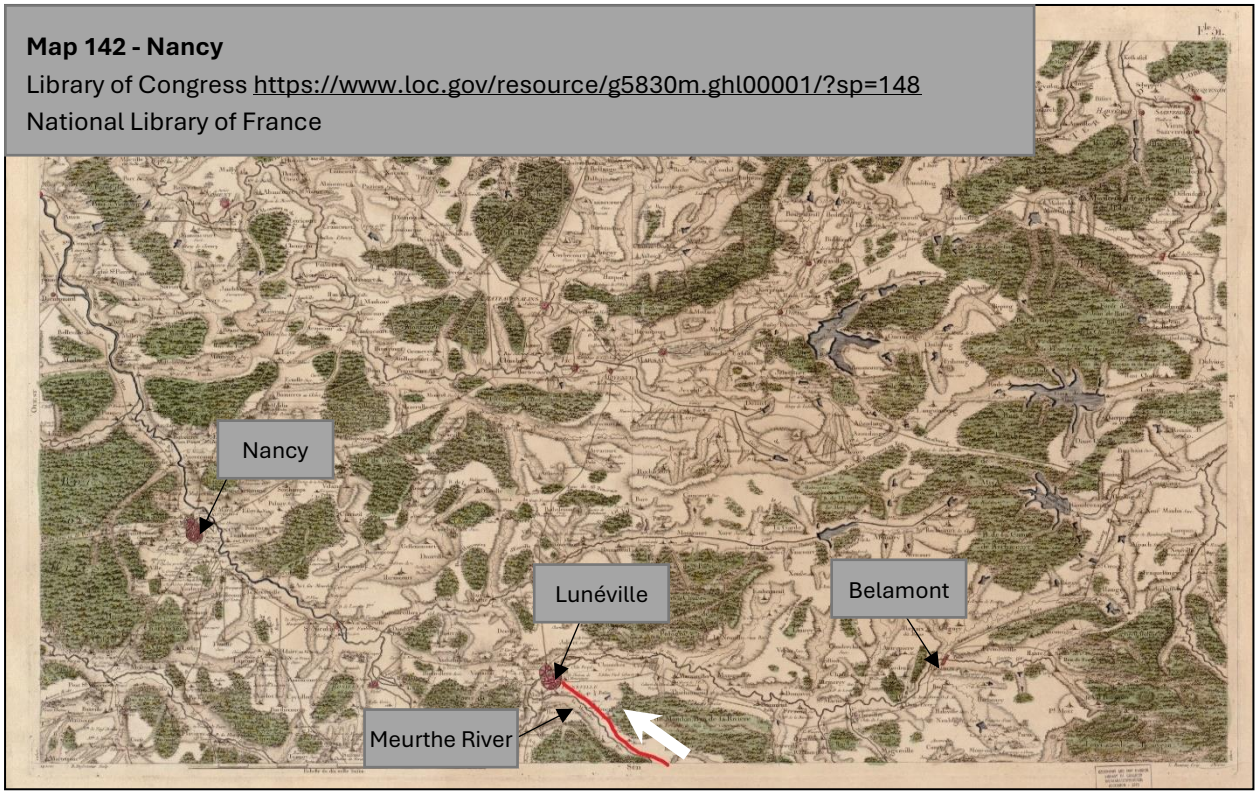
Map 163 - Colmar
Library of Congress https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=168
National Library of France





Map 143 - Mirecourt & Epinal
Library of Congress https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=149
National Library of France

Map 142 - Nancy
Library of Congress https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=148
National Library of France



The Burgundian Gate south of the Vosges Mountains is relatively flat terrain. It marks a divide between the drainage basins of the Rhine River (which flows to the North Sea) and the Rhône River, which flows to the Mediterranean Sea. The Burgundian

Gate is also the boundary between the historic regions of Burgundy to the west and Alsace to the east.

Although the first railroad from Paris to Strasbourg was built through the Saverne Pass, an alternative route was considered. That alternative would have gone from Paris to Dijon, then through the Burgundian Gate to Mulhouse and north to Strasbourg. By 1870, both railway lines had been built, but the line through the Saverne Pass was constructed first. https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ligne_de_Paris-Est_%C3%A0_Strasbourg-Ville

A useful map of the Upper Rhine Plain
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Upper_Rhine_Plain#/media/File:Rhinegraben_sat.jpg

A traveler from Haut-Rhin wishing to reach Paris could enter the High Vosges Mountains at Kaysersberg (map 163), which was only about 10 kilometers (6.5 miles) from Colmar. Here the road would take them over the mountains and onto the Lorraine Plateau.

Image of Kaysersberg
https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaysersberg#/media/Fichier:Panoramic_view_of_Kaysersberg_02.jpg

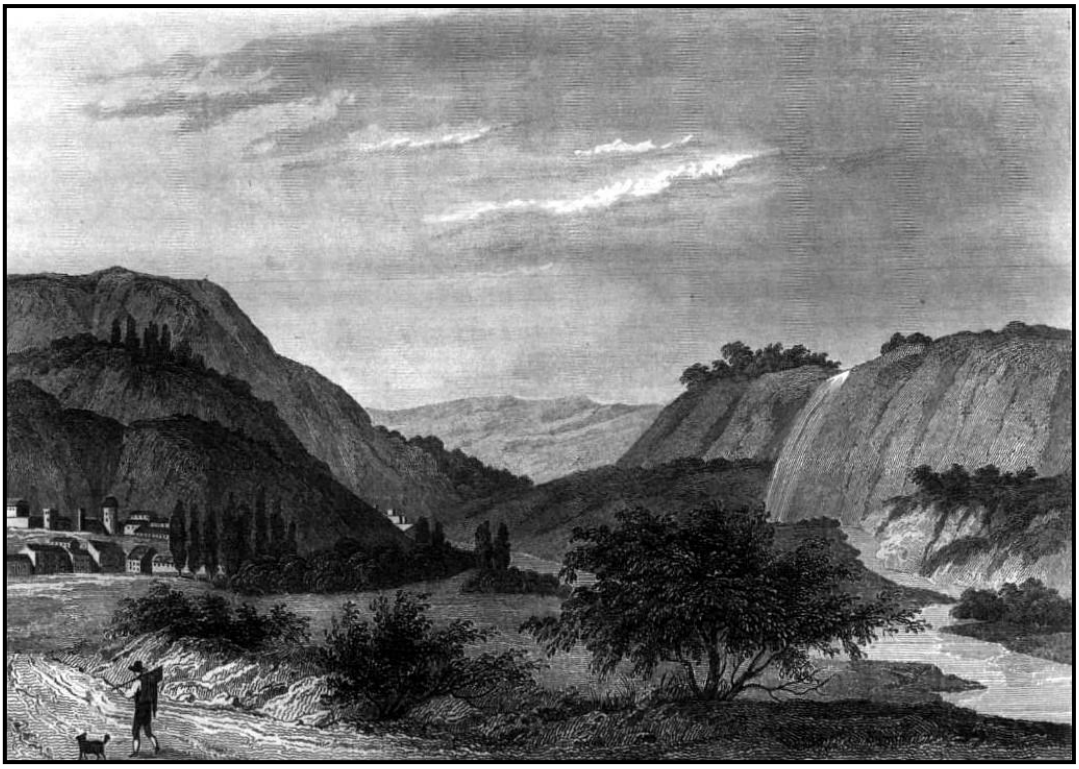
Kaysersberg was at the foot of the Vosges Mountains, and the town supported numerous vineyards. The Vosges Mountains are characterized by steep slopes on the Alsace side, with a gentler slope on the Lorraine side. This created a sunnier and drier climate on the Alsace plain compared to the Lorraine Plateau and favored the development of the Alsatian vineyards. In 1841 Kaysersberg had a population of 3,100 residents.

To cross the High Vosges Mountains into Lorraine, a traveler had to ascend the steep slope on the Alsace side. Today, travelers follow the French National Road designated D415. It is very similar to the route a foot traveler would have used in 1846. The route proceeded through a valley formed by two high peaks. To the south of the valley was Gazon de Faîte (1,303 m; 4,275 ft), to the north was Brézouard (1,229 m; 4,032 ft). The road between these peaks climbed to the Bonhomme Pass, which was 949 meters (3,113 ft) above sea level. By comparison, the Saverne Pass was only 410 meters (1,345 ft) above sea level. Thus, over a distance of 14 kilometers (8.5 miles), a traveler using the Bonhomme Pass needed to climb over 2,500 feet in elevation.

From the Bonhomme Pass the road took the emigrant 30 kilometers (18.5 miles) to the town of Saint Dié (map 143). This was a 6.5 hour walk. The town of Saint Dié was on the Lorraine Plateau in the valley of the Meurthe River. In 1841 it had a population of 8,336 residents.

Image of Saint Dié
https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint-Di%C3%A9-des-Vosges#/media/Fichier:Saint-Di%C3%A9-des-Vosges_depuis_le_centre_hospitalier.jpg

The town had a long history of prestigious Christian monasteries and sanctuaries, welcoming both pilgrims and the sick. It was also a strategic location between Alsace and Lorraine which made it of interest to both military commanders and government administrators. For these reasons the population of this mountain town was relatively large.



Raon-l'Étape in 1838

The road to Lunéville followed the Meurthe River valley downstream in a northerly direction, but the difficult terrain had not passed.

Raon-l'Étape was 16 kilometers (10 miles) down the road, a walk that was about 3.5 hours over mostly flat terrain. In 1841 Raon-l'Étape was a town of 3,500 residents. At Raon-l'Étape the landscape transform into a much more mountainous topography. The town was nested in a narrow valley, surrounded by heavily wooded hillsides, at the convergence of the Plaine and Meurthe Rivers.

Baccarat was the next town on the road. It was about 10 kilometers (a 2 hour walk) from Raon-l'Étape. Baccarat had a population of 3,200 in 1841. Since 1765 the town was the site of a celebrated glassworks and crystal factory

From Baccarat, Lunéville was a 5.5 hour walk, 26 kilometers (16 miles). The road was relatively flat. At Lunéville a traveler to Le Havre joined with travelers following the Strasbourg to Paris route. They all proceeded to Nancy, then Toul and on to Champagne (map 142).

The Northern Route

The Northern Vosges are a low mountain range. They extend in a northeasterly direction from the Saverne Pass at the south into the Palatinate Forest of Germany. The highest point is the Great Wintersberg at 581 meters (1,906 feet) above sea level. This peck is southwest of Wissembourg.

Confusion can arise because sometimes “only the High Vosges … form the ‘Vosges mountains’ strictly speaking, while the Northern Vosges constitute a wooded area of low hills.”

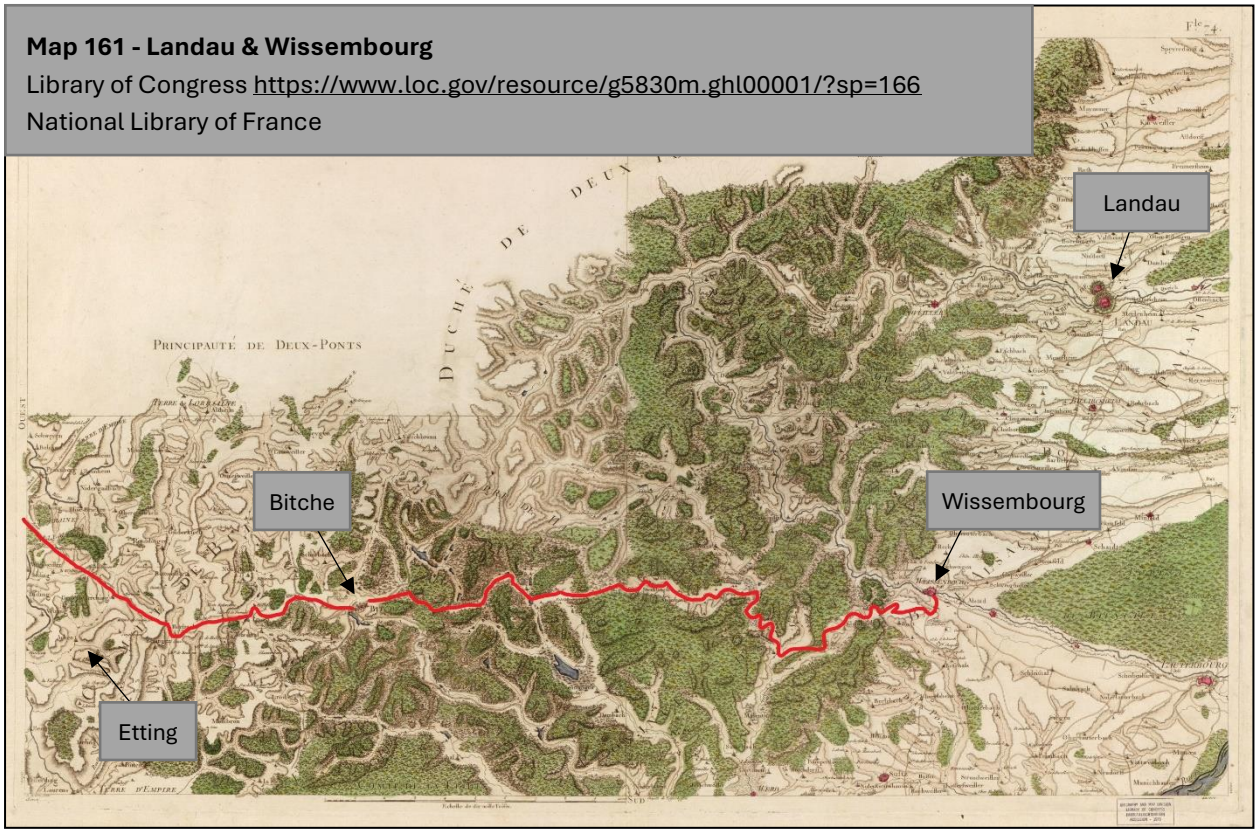
Alsatian emigrants who originated from the districts around Wissembourg and emigrants from the Landau districts of the Bavarian Palatinate could consider two different routes to Le Havre. First, they could travel south to the Saverne Pass and join the emigrants using the Strasbourg to Paris route.

Alternatively, they could pass through the Northern Vosges mountains between Wissembourg and Bitche, then proceed to Paris by way of Metz on roads that would take them through northern Lorraine.

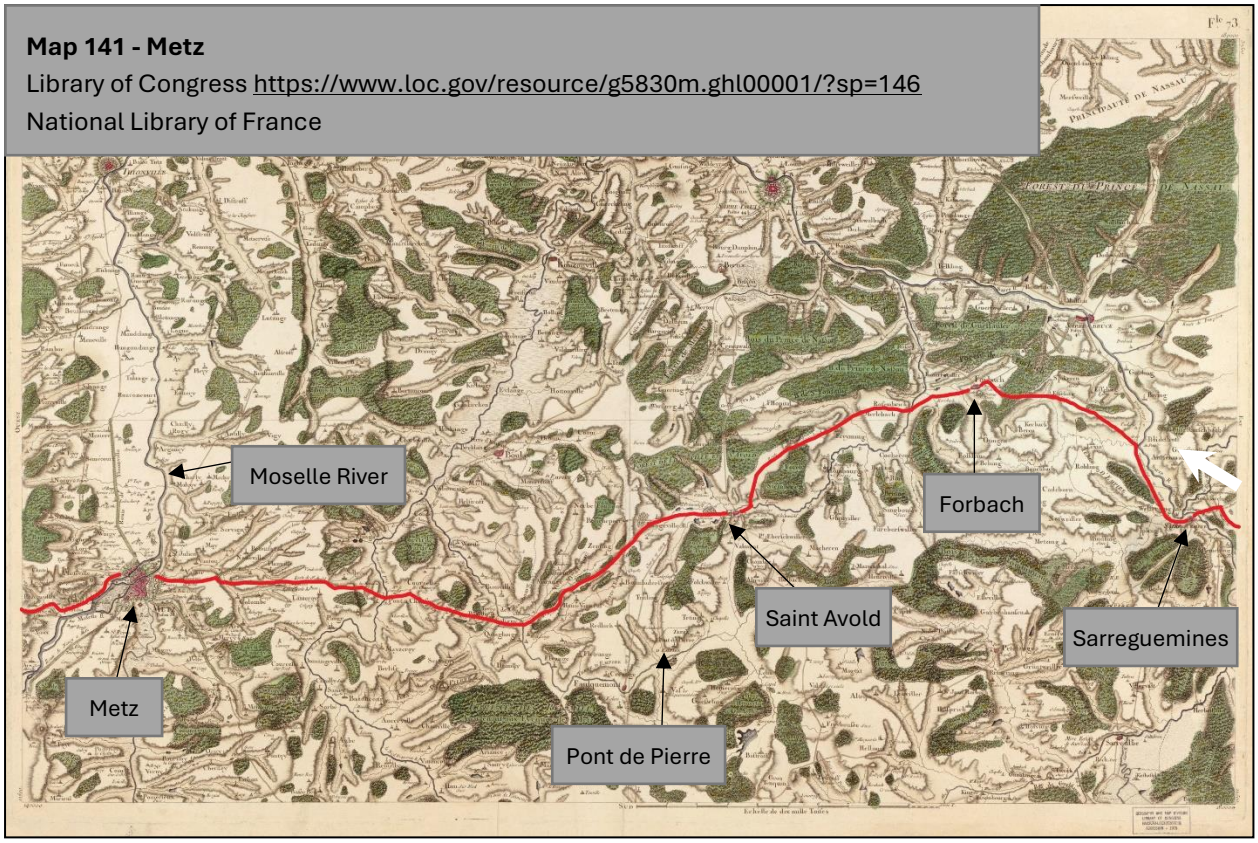
However, the road from Wissembourg to Bitche was a difficult path. It was a distance of 28 miles over which a traveler ascended about 1,200 feet. It would take 9.5 hours to reach Bitche by foot, if a traveler could walk at a pace of 3 miles per hour. But the terrain would have slowed that pace. At 2.5 miles per hour, the trek to Bitche would have taken at least 11.5 hours.

The walk from Wissembourg to Saverne was about 13 hours, but it was relatively flat and straight the entire way. Moreover, by using the Saverne Pass a traveler could join other groups heading to Le Havre and could find freight wagons to carry their belongs. For these reasons it seems more likely than not residents from northern Bas-Rhin used the Saverne Pass. But some, perhaps many, traveled to Bitche instead.

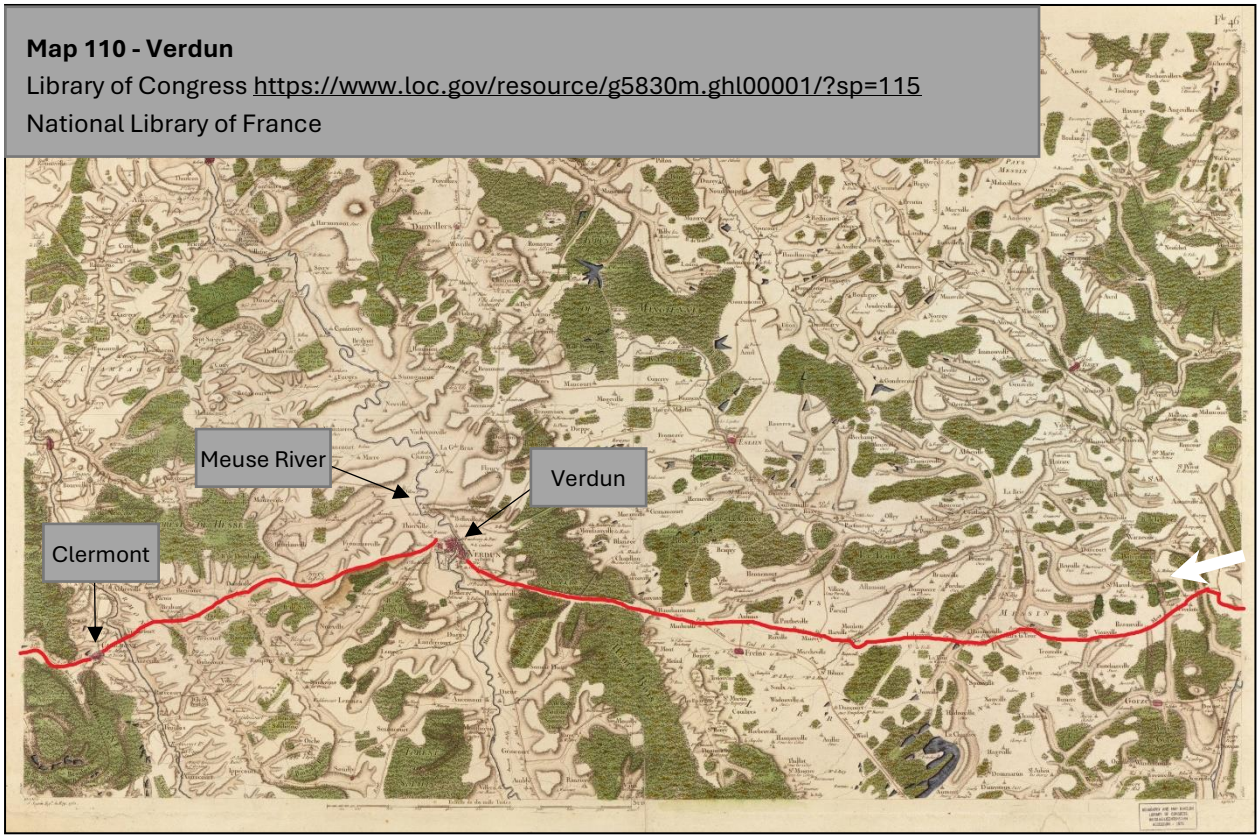
Map 161 - Landau & Wissembourg
Library of Congress https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=166
National Library of France



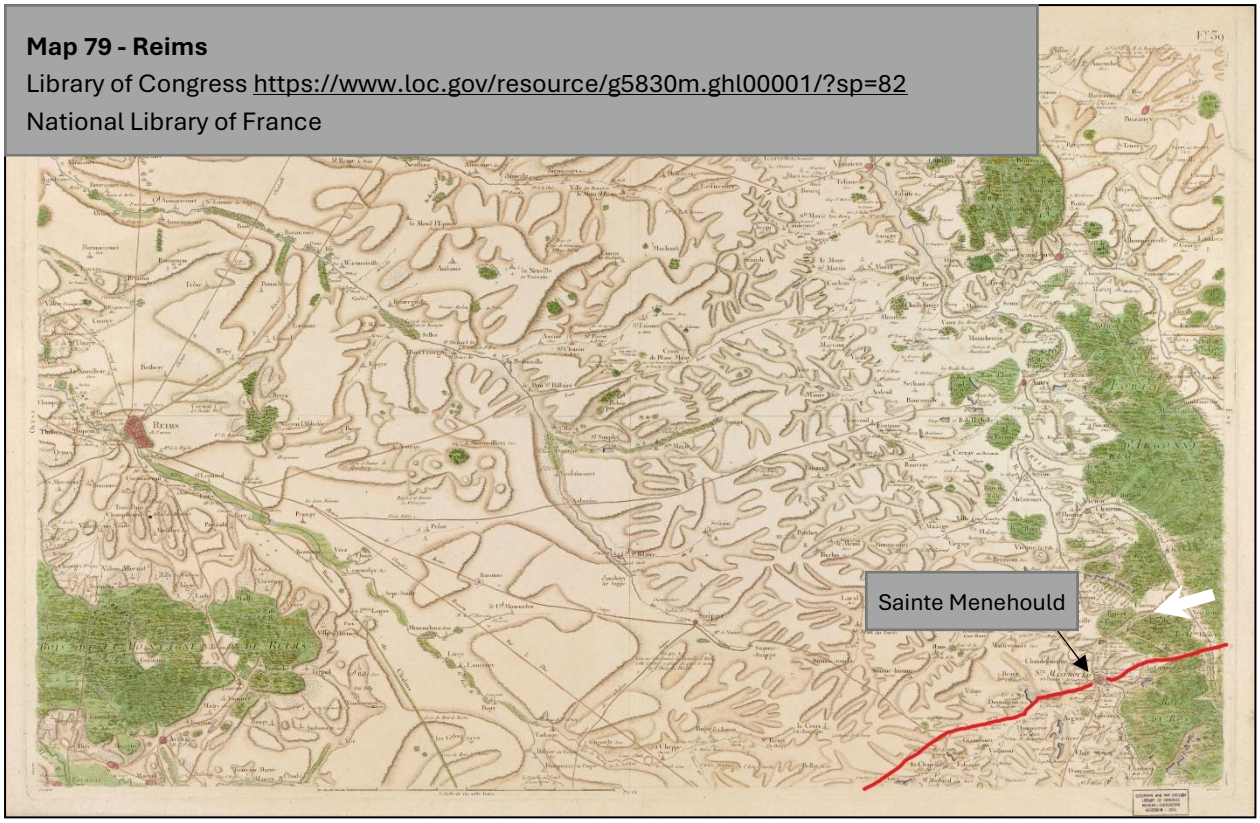
Map 141 - Metz
Library of Congress https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=146
National Library of France

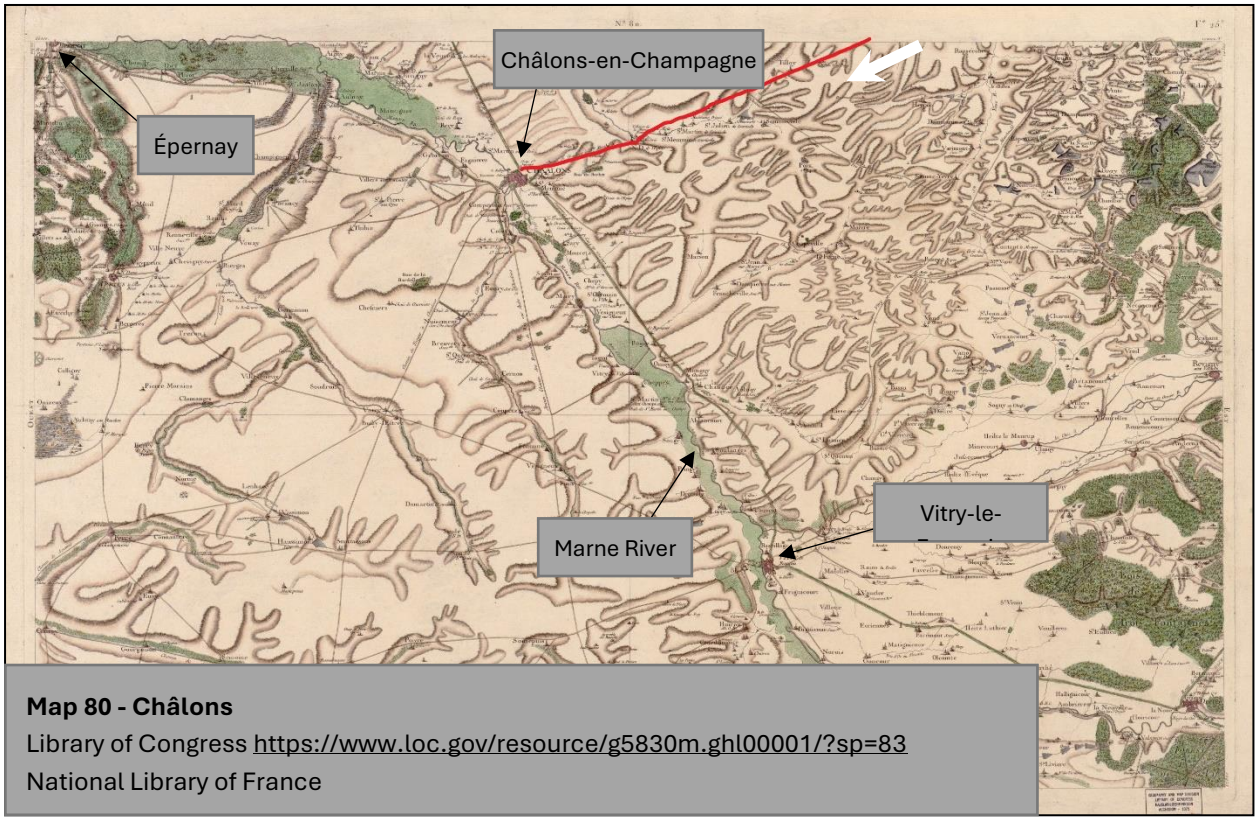


Map 110 - Verdun
Library of Congress https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=115
National Library of France



Map 79 - Reims
Library of Congress https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=82
National Library of France





Map 80 - Châlons
Library of Congress https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=83
National Library of France

One family in my family tree originated from the County of Bitche in Lorraine. The Jacob Demmerle family was from the town of Etting and left Europe from the Port of Le Havre in 1833. The family secured passage on the sailing ship named *James* and arrived in New York Harbor on June 21.

Jacob Demmerle was 54 years old when he arrived in New York. His wife was 44 years. They traveled with seven children, Andrew (age 20), Nicholas (age 17), Otilia (14), Madeline (7), Jean (6), Catharine (5), and Mary (2). The ship's manifest noted that their destination was Buffalo, N.Y. and they were traveling with "four chests and one illegal cast of wine."

The Demmerle family, and all other emigrants from northern Lorraine, would have traveled to Paris by way of Metz. Details of the route are presented in the following table.

From	To	Kilometers	Miles	Walking hours
Bitche	Sarreguemines	31	19	6.5
Sarreguemines	Forbach	19	11.5	4
Forbach	Saint Avold	18	11.5	4
Saint Avold	Metz	42	26	9
Metz	Verdun	65	40	13
Verdun	Sainte Menehould	40	25	8
Sainte Menehould	Châlons-en-Champagne	42	26	8.5

The County of Bitche straddled the Northern Vosges mountains and the Lorraine plateau. Mainly a forested region, it was strategically located between the watersheds of the Rhine and the Moselle Rivers.

A military fortress, the Citadel of Bitche, was erected at this town during the Middle Ages. After the French gained control of Lorraine, the citadel was integrated into the defensive system for the French border. In 1841 the population of Bitche was about 3,000 residents.

Image of Bitche
https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bitche#/media/Fichier:Bitche.jpg

From Bitche the route to Paris went to Sarreguemines which had a population of about 4,200 in 1841. The town was located at the confluence of the Saar and the Blies Rivers. It functioned as a hub connected three roads from the south to the city of Saarbrücken in the north. At the end of eighteenth century, pottery and earthenware manufacturing took hold in Sarreguemines. Napoleon I placed several orders and became one of its best customers.

From Sarreguemines the route to Paris headed north along the Saar River, then turned westerly to the town of Forbach. There were almost 4,300 residents at Forbach in 1841. This town, and the next town on the route, Saint Avold, were located in the Lorraine coal basin. Copper and lead mines had been exploited here since the Middle Ages. Industrialization brought an increasing use for coal, and its extraction in this region began at the start of the nineteenth century.

The road from Forbach to Saint Avold followed the Rosselle River upstream on a gradual uphill grade. In 1841 the population at Saint Avold was just over 3,100 residents.

A second family in my family tree originated from this area of Lorraine. The Peter Bach family was from Pontpierre, which was south of Saint Avold. On the Cassini map (no. 141) the town is identified as Pont de Pierre. This family emigrated in 1846. Peter Bach (age 63), his wife, Anna Schmitt (age

54), and three children George (age 22), Catherine (age 20), and John Peter (age 17) made the voyage to America. A second daughter followed a few years later with her husband and three small children.

From Saint Avold, the city of Metz was 42 kilometers (26 miles) west, a 9 hour walk. Metz was located in the Moselle valley, at the confluence of the Moselle River coming from the south-west and the Seille Lorraine River coming from the south-east. It was a large city with a population over 39,700 in 1841. This was larger than Nancy which was 33 miles directly south.

From the Middle Ages, Metz occupied a unique position at a crossroads for major European traffic. The north-south axis, which ran through Antwerp, Luxembourg City, Metz, Nancy, and Dijon, directly connected the North Sea to the Mediterranean. The east-west axis, running through Paris, Reims, Metz, Saarbrücken, and Frankfurt, connected Paris and some major German cities. Thus, the most important cities surrounding Metz were Luxembourg City to the north, Nancy to the south, and Saarbrücken to the east, with main roads extending to all three places.

Metz became a French protectorate in 1552 and a French military stronghold thereafter. In 1552, the Holy Roman Emperor gave the King of France, Henry II, the right to protect the three free cities of Metz, Toul, and Verdun from the Spanish armies of King Charles V. The cities received a permanent French garrison, but the Holy Roman Emperor retained sovereignty over them. Geographically these cities were within the territory of the Dutchy of Lorraine but, as free cities, they were not the legal domains of the Dukes.

In 1633 the King of France began asserting authority over the three cities. The seal of the city, which identified each as an imperial city, was removed. The French salt tax (the *gabelle*) was introduced. And a royal intendant replaced the city parliament. Then, in the treaties of Westphalia which ended the Thirty Years War (1648), the Empire ceded the cities to France. The three formerly free cities thereby became the province of Trois-Évêchés within the Kingdom of France.

From Metz, the next major place on the journey to Le Havre was Verdun. This city is best known to Americans as the site of a major battle during the First World War. The Battle of Verdun resulted in horrendous casualties. During a nine-month period in 1916 over 162,000 French soldiers and 143,000 German soldiers were killed on the fields north of the city.

Verdun is located on the Meuse River, 40 miles west of Metz. It had become part of the province of Trois-Évêchés in a shared history with Metz. In 1841 Verdun was a large city with a population of 15,500. Yet between Metz and Verdun there were only small villages along the road.

Since the Middle Ages Verdun was known for its sugared almonds (*Dragées*). This confectionary was traditionally included at meals celebrating family events like weddings, christenings, and first communions. At Verdun, the early nineteenth century emigrant was still on the Lorraine Plateau, but they would soon enter Champagne.

Image of Verdun
https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Verdun#/media/Fichier:Verdun_Panorama_R01.jpg

From Verdun, the road to Paris took the emigrant 25 kilometers (15.5 miles) to the small town of Clermont-en-Argonne. Its population in 1841 was 1,400. For a long time before the nineteenth century, the County of Argonne was not an independent domain, but was shared between the two major regions of Champagne and Lorraine.

Sainte Menehould was 15 kilometers (9 miles) further on the same road. The total travel time between Verdun and Sainte Menehould was a bit over 8 hours by foot. Sainte Menehould became the property of the Counts of Champagne at the end of the twelfth century. In 1841 it had a population of 4,100

residents. At Sainte Menehould the emigrant had left the Lorraine Plateau and entered the Champagne plains.

The town of Châlons-en-Champagne was another 8.5 hour walk down the road (42 kilometers, 26 miles). At Châlons, travelers on the northern route to Paris joined with travelers using the Strasbourg to Paris route. From this point forward, the two routes followed the same path to Paris and then onto Le Havre.

Appendix

Appendix 1: Journey to Le Havre

Major Places on the Road from Alsace to Le Havre

Place	Population 1841	Primary Source
Strasbourg	70,298	https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strasbourg
Soufflenheim	2,886	https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soufflenheim
Haguenau	10,349	https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haguenau
Saverne	5,226	https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saverne
Phalsbourg	3,540	https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phalsbourg
Sarrebourg	2,321	https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarrebourg
Lunéville	12,285	https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lun%C3%A9ville
Nancy	35,901	https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nancy
Toul	7,037	https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toul
Ligny-en-Barrois	3,147	https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ligny-en-Barrois
Bar Le Duc	12,526	https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bar-le-Duc
St Dizier	5,705	https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint-Dizier
Vitry-le-François	7,749	https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vitry-le-Fran%C3%A7ois
Châlons-en-Champagne	14,100	https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ch%C3%A2lons-en-Champagne
Épernay	5,978	https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%89pernay
Dormans	2,148	https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dormans
Château-Thierry	4,995	https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ch%C3%A2teau-Thierry
La Ferté-sous-Jouarre	4,105	https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/La_Fert%C3%A9-sous-Jouarre
Meaux	9,000	https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meaux
Paris		
Pontoise	5,419	https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pontoise
Magny-en-Vexin	1,530	https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magny-en-Vexin
Rouen	96,002	https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rouen
Yvetot	9,083	https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yvetot
Lille Bonne	3,671	https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lillebonne
Harfleur	1,611	https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harfleur
Le Hevre	27,154	https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Le_Havre

There is a Wikipedia page for each of the towns and cities in English and in French. I found the French pages to be much more informative and relied mostly on those sources. I do not read French,

so I opened each page using Google Chrome which includes translation functions. I found the translations easily readable in English.

Appendix 2: Cassini Maps

The individual Cassini maps

Sheet Number	Title	Year Surveyed	Year Published
Central Route			
161	Landau - Wissembourg	1755-1762	1763-1766
162	Strasbourg	1760-1767	1768-1770
142	Nancy	1754-1763	1758-1760
111	Toul	1756-1759	1759
80	Châlons	1754-1758	1757
79	Reims	1757-1759	1758-1760
44	Soissons	1750-1752	1757
45	Meaux	1750-1752	1757
1	Paris	1749-1755	1756
2	Beauvais	1751	1756
25	Rouen	1756	1757
24	Yvetot	1757	1759
60	Le Havre	1757	1757
Southern Route			
163	Colmar	1757-1760	1760-1761
143	Mirecourt - Epina	1754-1762	1761-1762
142	Nancy	1754-1763	1758-1760
Northern Route			
161	Landau - Wissembourg	1755-1762	1763-1766
141	Metz	1757-1762	1763-1766
79	Reims	1757-1759	1758-1760
110	Verdun	1754-1759	1760
80	Chalons-sur-Marne	1754-1758	1757
Source: https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carte_de_Cassini			

The Cassini maps hosted at the Library of Congress

Sheet Number	Title	URL (link to image)
Central Route		
161	Landau - Wissembourg	https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=166
162	Strasbourg	https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=167
142	Nancy	https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=148
111	Toul	https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=116
80	Châlons	https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=83
79	Reims	https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=82

44	Soissons	https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=46
45	Meaux	https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=47
1	Paris	https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=1
2	Beauvais	https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=2
25	Rouen	https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=26
24	Yvetot	https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=25
60	Le Havre	https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=63
Southern Route		
163	Colmar	https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=168
143	Mirecourt - Epina	https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=149
142	Nancy	https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=148
Northern Route		
161	Landau - Wissembourg	https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=166
141	Metz	https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=146
110	Verdun	https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=115
79	Reims	https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=82
80	Chalons-sur-Marne	https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=83
Note: The map number and the image number used by the Library of Congress are not generally the same.		

The Cassini maps hosted at the National Library of France

Sheet Number	Title	URL (link to image)
Central Route		
161	Landau - Wissembourg	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53095189f/f1.item.zoom
162	Strasbourg	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b530952082/f1.item.zoom
142	Nancy	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b530952171/f1.item.zoom
111	Toul	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53095241k/f1.item.zoom
80	Châlons	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53095244x/f1.item.zoom
79	Reims	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b530951918/f1.item.zoom
44	Soissons	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b530951505/f1.item.zoom
45	Meaux	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53095173b/f1.item.zoom
1	Paris	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53095162g/f1.item.zoom
2	Beauvais	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53095162g/f1.item.zoom
25	Rouen	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b530951611/f1.item.zoom
24	Yvetot	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53095160k/f1.item.zoom
60	Le Havre	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53095165t/f1.item.zoom
Southern Route		
163	Colmar	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53095271t/f1.item.zoom
143	Mirecourt - Epina	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b530952332/f1.item.zoom
142	Nancy	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b530952171/f1.item.zoom
Northern Route		
161	Landau - Wissembourg	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53095189f/f1.item.zoom

141	Metz	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53095199v/f1.item.zoom
110	Verdun	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b530951238/f1.item.zoom
79	Reims	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b530951918/f1.item.zoom
80	Chalons-sur-Marne	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53095244x/f1.item.zoom
You will find an internet landing page at this link: https://gallica.bnf.fr/html/und/cartes/france-en-cartes/la-carte-de-cassini The page is in French. I used Google Chrome to translate it to English. The page contains a list of all the maps by sheet number and a dynamic map that facilitates quick access to the different sheets.		

The Cassini maps published in 1815, "New Edition"

Sheet Number	Title	URL (link to image)
Central Route		
161	Landau - Wissembourg	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b77118339/f1.item.zoom
162	Strasbourg	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b7711834q/f1.item.zoom
142	Nancy	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b7711815c/f1.item.zoom
111	Toul	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b77117848/f1.item.zoom
80	Châlons	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b77117544/f1.item.zoom
79	Reims	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b7711753q/f1.item.zoom
44	Soissons	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b7711721r/f1.item.zoom
45	Meaux	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b77117225/f1.item.zoom
1	Paris	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b7711505z/f1.item.zoom
2	Beauvais	
25	Rouen	
24	Yvetot	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b77117010/f1.item.zoom
60	Le Havre	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b7711735s/f1.item.zoom
Southern Route		
163	Colmar	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b77118354/f1.item.zoom
143	Mirecourt - Epina	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b7711816s/f1.item.zoom
142	Nancy	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b7711815c/f1.item.zoom
Northern Route		
161	Landau - Wissembourg	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b77118339/f1.item.zoom
141	Metz	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b7711813j/f1.item.zoom
110	Verdun	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b7711783v/f1.item.zoom
79	Reims	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b7711753q/f1.item.zoom
80	Chalons-sur-Marne	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b77117544/f1.item.zoom

Additional References

Physical map of France : https://www.freeworldmaps.net/europe/france/france-physical-map.jpg

Triangular map of all France

- https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53095291n/f1.item.zoom
- https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b55000351b/f1.item.zoom

Index : https://gallica.bnf.fr/html/und/cartes/france-en-cartes/la-carte-de-cassini

History of the Cassini maps

- https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carte_de_Cassini
- https://catnaps.org/cassini/cart.html
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cassini_map
- https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/C%C3%A9sar-Fran%C3%A7ois_Cassini

A Table of Assembly or index for the individual Cassini maps was published in 1797. It provided the plate number (in the upper left corner of the respective rectangle) and the date of publication (in the upper right corner) :

- https://www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/workspace/handleMediaPlayer?qvq=&trs=&mi=&lunaMediaId=RUMSEY~8~1~25806~930092

Wheelwright (*charron*) : https://artflsrv03.uchicago.edu/philologic4/encyclopedie0521/navigate/20/2/

Freight wagons : https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wagon

Wagons : https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Front_axle_assembly

Saddler-coachbuilder's workshop :
https://artflsrv03.uchicago.edu/philologic4/encyclopedie0521/navigate/26/8/

Horse harnesses : https://artflsrv03.uchicago.edu/philologic4/encyclopedie0521/navigate/19/18/

Alternate Routes

https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaysersberg
https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint-Di%C3%A9-des-Vosges
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bitche
https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bitche
https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Citadelle_de_Bitche
https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pays_de_Bitche
https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarreguemines
https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forbach
https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint-Avold
https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metz
https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Verdun
https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clermont-en-Argonne
https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sainte-Menehould
https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trois-%C3%89v%C3%AAch%C3%A9s
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vosges
https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Massif_des_Vosges
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belfort_Gap
https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Col_du_Bonhomme_(massif_des_Vosges)
https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vosges_du_Nord
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palatinate_Forest
https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wasgau

THE 18TH CENTURY SOUFFLENHEIM KITCHEN: 1750-1792

By Michael J. Nuwer, July 2021

Inventories and descriptions of property at the time of death for residences of Soufflenheim contain a colorful mosaic of life in the town. These documents identify a deceased person's real property, personal property, and debts. Listings of personal property include barn-yard tools, farm animals, and feeds; household items like bedding, linens, furniture, and clothing; they also include kitchen tools and stored food products. This essay focuses on these last two items.

Exploring the details of kitchen items found in the estate inventories can give us insights into daily life in the town of Soufflenheim. A kitchen is a room or part of a room used for food preparation and cooking. During the eighteenth century, cooking was done over an open fire and home life centered around the always-lit fireplace.

There are twenty-six inventories for Soufflenheim residents from the years 1750 to 1792 that have been completely translated into English. Fifteen of these documents included items used in a household's kitchen. The following table presents the fifteen kitchens found in the inventories. Each cell contains the deceased person's name, the date the inventory was notarized, and the specific items found in the kitchen.

Joseph Wilhelm (21 April 1758)	**Salome Metzler (19 January 1762)**	**Hans Georg Biff & Anna Maria Witt (6 February 1762)**
1 iron pot 2 iron pans 2 iron soup spoons	one iron pan one smaller one iron pot with cover one skimming spoon, fork, and knife	1 iron pan 1 same cast iron 1 iron pot and cover 1 melting pot
Jacob Mössner (16 June 1762)	**Johannes Beckh (18 June 1762)**	**Frantz Nuber (27 September 1763)**
1 copper van 2 iron pans 1 meat fork and spoon a skimming spoon 1 iron pot and cover	2 oil pans and 1 smaller 1 skimming spoon and one meat fork and 1 knife 2 iron pots with covers 2 stone jugs Half on a copper cauldron	an old iron pan a small tin pan a mold a pair of scissors
Jacob Kieffer & Margaretha Liechteisen (10 January 1765)	**Barbara Stäblerin (6 February 1766)**	**Maria Magdalena Brotschy (9 September 1768)**
1 van 1 other type 1 pot and one larger 1 iron pot 1 iron pan 1 spoon 1 iron cooking spoon 1 brass van 1 iron van 2 small grease pots 7 spoons 1 larger spoon 1 kitchen fork 1 cooking spoon 1 same	Cooking material 1 iron skimming spoon	1 old big iron worked pan 1 smaller one 1 iron large spoon and skimming ladle, plus meat fork

Otillia Metzler (4 March 1774)	**Margaretha Wilhelm (6 February 1778)**	**Anna Pauli (5 February 1781)**
1 old copper cauldron 2 large iron pots 1 iron spoon skimming spoon one meat fork 1 stone oil jug	3 different iron pots 2 iron pans 1 brass cauldron 1 skimming spoon, another kitchen spoon, one meat fork, another one 1 old iron pan several kitchen tools 1 oil jug	one iron pot and its cover one iron pan one iron pan one with a cover one oil pan one bowl one skimming spoon and spoon plus meat fork

		several pots one old copper cauldron
Valentin Eisenkirch **(22 February 1783)** Two iron pots Two material for cattle Two pans One copper van	**Joseph Kieffer** **(18 February 1785)** 5 spoons and one fork 1 iron pan 1 small jug	**Stephan Zettwooch** **(11 January 1786)** 1 old copper cauldron 1 iron pan 1 skimming spoon 4 old spoons 1 cup 2 basins 1 tool to cut 1 knife 1 sack 3 saws in iron

Iron Pots and Pans

The cookware found in Soufflenheim inventories included cast-iron pots and kettles as well as those made from brass and copper. These heavy pots were used for wet-cooked foods such as stews and soups. For dry-cooked food that required high temperatures, cast-iron fry pans (sometimes called spiders) were used, and these too were found in the Soufflenheim inventories. Eighteenth century kitchens also used gridirons for broiling and tin reflecting pans for roasting, but neither of these items were found in the Soufflenheim inventories.

The most common items in these fifteen kitchens were the pots and pans made of iron. Iron cooking pots were valued for their durability and their ability to distribute heat evenly, a characteristic that improved the quality of cooked meals. The alternative to iron cookware was brass or copper. These too maintained an even heat, but the metals were less durable and much more expensive than iron.

Pots and pans made of brass or copper had long been cast by pouring molten metal into a hollow mold made of loam or clay. In the sixteenth century, however, Dutch manufactures began producing brassware using molds made of sand. The use of sand molds enabled the Dutch to lower the cost of high-quality cookware.

At the beginning of the 18th century (1707) a method for sand casting iron pots was developed in England. Sand casting techniques used re-usable patterns and enabled cast iron goods to be made in large quantities. Since iron was a cheaper metal than brass or copper, the combination dramatically lowered the cost of cookware. This made it possible for more households to purchase cookware. The spread of cast-iron pots manufactured by the Dutch casting techniques helped establish them as “Dutch ovens,” a term that has endured for over 300 years.

Before the middle of the nineteenth century, kitchens did not have cook stoves with a range and oven. A household cooked its meals in a hearth. Thus, the pots and pans used for cooking were designed for use in the hearth. Cast-iron pots were made with arc-shaped hanger so they could be suspended over a fire. Many pots were also made with legs so they could stand in the coals. A commonly used cast-iron cooking pan called a spider had a handle and three legs allowing it to stand in the coals of a fireplace. (Flat bottom, legless pots and pans came into use when cooking stoves became popular in the middle of the nineteenth century.)

A few Soufflenheim inventories included a cauldron made from copper or brass. A cauldron was another name for a large pot or kettle with a rounded bottom but no legs. It was intended for cooking or boiling over an open fire.

Food was cooked on a hearth over an open flame

A hearth was a brick or stone-lined fireplace used for heating the house and for cooking food. For centuries, the hearth was an integral part of a home, usually its central and most important feature. Hearth cooking was characterized not so much by recipes as by knowledge of fuels and heat regulation. The key element for cooking in a hearth was the maintenance of steady heat in the face of everchanging temperatures. Fires increase and decrease as fuels ignited, blazed into flames, and then subsided into glowing coals or embers. Good cooks used this varying heat to their advantage, shifting pots according to the state of the fire and the needs of the dish.

In addition to pots and pans, most Soufflenheim kitchens included cooking utensils such as a large spoon, a skimmer, a ladle, a meat fork, and a knife. A single household seldom had all five of these utensils in their inventory. Moreover, whichever utensil they had, the household seldom had more than one of them. Many families owned an ax or hatchet which was typically listed with farm tools but could be used in the kitchen as well.

Economic status was reflected in the range of a household's cookware. Lower class families were limited to perhaps a cooking pot, water kettle, and frying pan, while more privileged families owned larger assortments and varied sizes of the basic items, supplemented with specialized equipment.

Food

Household cookware was, of course, used to prepare the family meals. The Soufflenheim inventories from 1750 to 1792 identified a variety of food items stored by families. In addition to grain (which is discussed below), the agricultural fields of Soufflenheim's ban produced root crops and legumes. Among the twenty-six inventories, we found three with a supply of beans and five with a supply of peas. Legumes were notable for their nitrogen-fixing root nodules. They collect available nitrogen from the atmosphere and store it in these nodules. When the plant was harvested, the uncollected roots break down, making the stored nitrogen available to future crops. For this reason, legumes play a key role in crop rotation.

Other corps found in eighteenth century Soufflenheim included beets in one inventory and potatoes, which were found in eight inventories. The potato was a New World product that was brough to Europe in the sixteenth century. By the end of the sixteenth century it had been introduced into the Franche-Comté, the Vosges of Lorraine and Alsace. A century later, it was widely cultivated across the Low Countries, the Rhineland, Southwestern Germany, and Eastern France.

Potatoes had a significant effect on European demographics. The product yielded about three times the calories of grain from the same amount of land and was more nutritious. Moreover, potatoes grew

in a wider variety of soils and climates. These factors significantly improved agricultural production in the early modern era. For the local populations, potatoes were cheaper than bread, just as nutritious, and did not require a special mill for grinding. On the other hand, grain was much easier to transport and store so the production of both grain and potatoes coexisted.

No garden vegetables were found in the twenty-six Soufflenheim inventories. Perishable vegetables were not expected in an inventory, but items like cabbage and carrots could be stored for some period of time. Three inventories contained sauerkraut which suggests that cabbage was grown. Many vegetables could be stored if they were pickled with a salt brined or an acid. Sauerkraut was one example.

How to Make Sauer-kraut

Taken from the Lancaster Star, January 9, 1879. Lancaster, New York was an agricultural community outside of Buffalo with a large number of Alsatian immigrants in the Antebellum period.

“It may interest some of our readers to know how to make sauer-kraut, a dish that the Germans are very fond of:

“The proper way to make sauer-kraut is as follows: The receipt is for the manufacture of one barrel. Take about thirty or forty heads of cabbage, (the number will depend on the size of the heads,) and first clean them and cut them up fine with a slough cutter or sharp carving-knife. Next mix the cabbage well with salt; for thirty good sized heads two quarts of salt will be sufficient. Pack the cabbage in the barrel, (a wine or liquor barrel, well cleaned and scalded, is perhaps the best,) and after it is packed, put a clean muslin cloth on the top of the cabbage, entirely covering it. Then put a wooden cover on the cloth, and on the cover place a clean stone weight, (an iron weight would rust and flavor the ‘sauer-kraut.’) Put the barrel in a dry place, and every week be careful to wash the cloth, the weight, and the wooden cover. The cabbage will not be transformed into good ‘sauer-kraut’ in less than three weeks; it would be better if it could remain in pickle for two months. When the cloth cover and weight are washed each week the brine on the top of the cabbage should be tasted, and if it is rather fresh, more salt should be sprinkled on; the cabbage must always be covered with brine. If by evaporation or soakage the brine becomes low, it will be necessary to make a brine strong enough to float an egg or potato, and pour enough of it on to cover the cabbage. Before it is ready for use it must be thoroughly washed several times in clear cold water. To be eaten raw it may be mixed with vinegar and spices. To prepare it for cooking, boil it in clear water for ten minutes, then put it into a colander, squeeze the water out of it, and it is then ready to cook and serve with meat.”

Curing or pickling vegetables with a salt brine prevents the growth of certain microorganisms that cause the food to go bad, while encouraging other good microbes to flourish. The vegetables thereby undergo a fermentation process. If the curing process uses an acid, like vinegar, it stops the growth of the spoilage-causing microbes without stimulating the microbe growth that causes food to ferment. The result is unfermented pickles. In some cases, both brine and acid are used.

Seven Soufflenheim inventories contained vinegar which was used for pickling as well as cooking. Vinegar can be produced from any fermentation process. Beer, wine, and apples were all fermented and could have been the base for the vinegar found in Soufflenheim. Three inventories contained malt, which could have been used to make malt vinegar as well as beer. Apples were grown in Soufflenheim. One of the inventories included twelve sacks of apples. The vinegar used for cooking and pickling could have been made from apple cider.

Six of the Soufflenheim inventories contained a store of meat. Two of these were described as “dry meat” and three were “smoked pork.” The dry meat may have been something like dried sausage (salami) or it may have been some kind of cured beef (corned beef), but there were no specifics provided. In addition to the stored meat, nine inventories included at least one living pig.

Before the mass production of pigs in the twentieth century, fresh pork in Europe was traditionally an autumn dish. Pigs were slaughtered in the autumn after growing in the spring and fattening during the summer. Due to the seasonal nature of the meat, apples (also harvested in late summer and autumn) have been a staple pairing to fresh pork.

Salting pork was a remarkably effective technique for its preservation. Europeans had long known the techniques of curing food in salt or salty brine. It was basically a pickling process. Salting pork was used to produce ham, bacon, and sausage. Shoulders and legs were commonly cured to make ham,

whereas sides, belly, and back were cured to make bacon. In continental Europe, bacon was used as a cooking ingredient primarily in cubes (called “lardons”). It was valued as a source of fat and for its flavor.

Before the twentieth century smoking was also used to preserve pork. Ham and bacon were made from fresh pork by curing with salt, then smoking them. Large quantities of salt were added, and smoking times were quite long, sometimes involving days of exposure.

Lard was another important product made from pigs. Lard is a semi-solid fat obtained by rendering the fatty tissue of a pig. It could be made by steaming, boiling, or dry heat. Lard was an important cooking ingredient and was used similarly to butter. Cooks used lard as a cooking fat, a shortening, or as a spread in the same ways as butter. Four inventories contained stores of fat, grease, or lard, which were probably different ways of expressing the same product.

It was notable that the twenty-six inventories contained no dairy products. Liquid milk was of course highly perishable, and we did not expect to find it in household storage. However, butter and cheese could be preserved. Both butter and soft cheese (unfermented cheese) could last through a winter when a cow was dry. And, of course, hard cheese could be stored a year or more. Still, none of these products were found in the investigated inventories.

On the other hand, there was indirect evidence of dairy products in Soufflenheim households. One inventory included a “butter pot” and two included a milk storage container (a “milk barrel” and a “milk tank”). Perhaps more significantly, eighteen of the twenty-six inventories included a cow.

Another perishable food product that we did not expect to find in the inventories was eggs. But ten of the inventories contained hens and six contained geese. The eggs from these birds were surely included in Soufflenheim meals.

Bread

Bread was the staple in everyone’s diet, and it was the main reasons for the grain fields scattered throughout the Soufflenheim ban. We find examples of bread’s central role in the book, *Soufflenheim, A Town in Search of its History*. When the Austrian Army invaded in 1744, the town was “obliged to furnish them with bread and wine.” And in 1766 when the community sent two militiamen to Haguenau, the town paid for their “allotment of bread and wine.”

Making bread required, first, the grain grown in the fields. After the harvest, the kernels had to be separated from the chaff and then ground. The grinding operation was performed at the communal flour mill. Once the gain was ground into flour, it could finally be made into dough and baked. Baking bread often required an oven, and towns had bakers who operated the baking ovens. It was also possible for households to bake bread in the embers of a fireplace.

The bread may have been made from wheat flour or from some combination of wheat, oats and rye. Historians have found that many parts of Northern Europe made bread by combining oats, rye, and barley. The Soufflenheim inventories contain stores of wheat, oats, and rye, but there was no instance of barley. Eleven Soufflenheim inventories had a store of wheat, five had a store of rye, and three had oats.

It would be useful to know whether a leavening agent was used in the eighteenth-century breads baked in Soufflenheim. If yeast was used for creating the bread, it frequently came from beer. In Europe, the use of yeast as a leavening agent became more common in the sixteenth century, however, unleavened bread remained a staple of the diets of rich and poor alike.

Unleavened bread was dense and difficult to digest, so it was made thin. Pieces of unleavened bread were used as plates to hold the rest of a meal. As the meal progressed, the juices soaked into the bread making it more flavorful and easier to eat.

Bread was also used to make biscuits. In their original form, biscuits were simply twice baked bread. This left them crispy, flaky, and easy to preserve. Because biscuits remained edible for much longer periods of time than loaves of bread, they were ideal for long travels, war time, and stored supplies of food for winter months.

The Flour Mill

Before a bread could be baked, a farmer's grain had to be ground into flour. Although this task could be done by hand using a mortar and pestle, the volume of grain needing to be pulverized called for a different solution. During the middle ages every European town and village had a flour mill that could grid grain into flour.

Milling was a mechanical process by which the grain was crushed into a powder called flour. The grinding removed the outer covering (the indigestible bran) and reduced the inner part of the grain kernel. The result was whole grain flour.

The heart of a flour mill was its millstone. The millstone was composed of two pieces, one stone laid on top of the other. The bottom stone was fixed to the floor, while the top stone was mounted on a separate spindle. Grain was put between the two stones through a conical hopper in the center of the millstone while the top stone rotated. The rotary motion, combined with the weight of the stone, ground the grain down to flour.

The millstone was driven by gears connected to a power source. A flour mill could be powered by men, animals, water, or wind. The classic mill design was waterpower. We know the mill in Soufflenheim was powered by water. The town account for 1672 recorded payments to a carpenter for work on the "mill wheel." Another payment for work on the "mill's wheel" was recorded in 1680. These records tell us, first, that Soufflenheim had a flour mill and, second, that it was powered by a water wheel.

The miller who operated the mill possessed a considerable amount of craft knowledge. To grind flour properly, the miller needed to consider the speed of the water going past the wheel, the amount of grain fed into the millstone, and the cut-distance between the top and bottom stone. It was a miller's job to find the balance between these factors and avoid overground or underground flour. The balance, moreover, varied with the type of grain being ground and its moisture content. A master miller had to know his grain.

Flour mills were very large capital investments, and thus, they were almost always built and supported by the local community. We don't know the specific customs followed at the Soufflenheim mill. However, the typical customs

might give us some idea about the local practices. Because the mill belonged to the community, the miller paid a rental fee for its usage. *Soufflenheim, A Town in Search of its History* references a rent paid on the town's mill in the late sixteenth century.

The miller was paid for his service in money and in kind. The 1680 Soufflenheim town account recorded a money payment to "the miller for the common grinding." However, when individual farmers brought their grain to a mill, they received flour minus a percentage which was retained by the miller. The miller received this so-called "miller's toll" as the fee for his service.

The Bakery

After a household had obtained flour from the mill, it needed to mix the flour and bake the dough to create a loaf of bread. Households in Soufflenheim may have baked the bread themselves or they may have relied on the services of a baker. Eighteenth century household kitchens did not have a baking oven. Baking ovens were expensive capital investments and required careful operation. This is why specialized bakeries emerged in villages, towns and cities.

We know from church records of births and marriages that there were bakers in Soufflenheim. In addition, the 1766 town account recorded that, when the new church was consecrated, "the baker cook[ed] bread … for the population and … the inn keeper 'at the oxen' [sold] wine…."

Soufflenheim's population faced three possible arrangements for baking bread.

1) The household baked their bread at home in the embers of their own hearth. Unleavened bread could be cooked directly against a heat source. Thus, it was possible to successfully bake bread in the embers of a fire so long as it was turned frequently. Alternatively, a Dutch oven could be used for baking the bread. Leavened breads, however, required indirect heat, which a baker's oven provided.

2) The baker baked bread for the community. The baking oven or ovens could have been part of a communal bakehouse and structured similarly to the flour mill. The town baker or bakers might have rented the equipment and were responsible for its operation. In this case the population could take their pre-made dough to the communal oven and the baker would bake it for a fee (paid in money or in kind). Some support for this possibility was found in the town account for 1673 which recorded a payment “for the baker’s scale,” suggesting a publicly owned bakehouse.

3) The baker sold their service through an entrepreneurial enterprise. The bread oven could have been owned by the baker (there could have been more than one baker and more than one bakehouse). The population could take their flour to the bakery and the baker would made the dough, bake the loafs, and retained a percentage of the flour as their fee for the service.

No doubt some fraction of the population baked their bread at home while others relied on the bakehouse. However, it is less clear whether the eighteenth-century bakehouse was privately owned or a communal resource. Although commercialization favored the entrepreneurial enterprise by the second half of the nineteenth century, it is not clear when that transition took place in towns like Soufflenheim.

The Dining Table and Tableware

In a somewhat odd result, the Soufflenheim inventories contain many instances of tablecloths but none of the inventories contained a table. Moreover, none of the twenty-six inventories contained tableware, like dinner plates, bowls, or cups. Furthermore, most of the inventories contained no flatware (or “cutlery” for our European reader). In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries tin was the primary material used for tableware. Two of the inventories contained a heading for “Pewter and Kitchen Tools” (Pewter is a type of tinware), but there were no tableware items in the lists.

In addition, although table forks were not common in the eighteenth century, spoons and knives had been used as eating utensils since Paleolithic times. For the fifteen inventories that contained kitchen items, only three reported spoons for use with a meal (as opposed to a “large spoon” for cooking).

Perhaps the population of Soufflenheim used bread as their plate and their hands for eating. Historians tell us that bread was used as a plate to hold the meal. Loaves of bread were usually designed to make one full portion size for an individual with a normal appetite. The potatoes, meat, and gravies would saturate the loaf which might then be eaten with one’s fingers.

Closing Observation

The preparation of a meal was merely the precursor to its consumption. However, we cannot say how many daily meals an eighteenth century Soufflenheim family consumed. Nor do we have a sense of their timing. The three meal regimen so common today did not become a standard until well into the modern era. During the Middle Ages two meals per day were eaten in most parts of Europe. One meal was eaten in the mid-morning and one in the late afternoon, but the exact times varied both by period and region. Breakfast did not become a more substantial meal in most parts of Europe until the nineteenth century. Historians note that farmers ate some sort of morning meal, but it is unclear exactly at what time and what it consisted of. The Soufflenheim inventories do not provide the kind of detail that would inform these questions. There remains much that is unknown about daily life in Soufflenheim. More investigation is needed, for sure.

APPENDIX I
Soufflenheim Inventories: 1700-1749

The information used to discuss the kitchens of Soufflenheim was taken from inventories notarized between 1750 and 1792. We also have evidence from the previous fifty years. Information about kitchens found in inventories notarized between 1700 and 1749 is presented below. There are twenty-nine inventories for Soufflenheim residents that have been completely translated into English from the first half of the eighteenth century. Twenty of these documents included items used in a household’s kitchen. The following table presents the twenty kitchens found in these inventories. Each cell contains the deceased person’s name, the date the inventory was notarized, and the specific items found in the kitchen.

Iron was the most common metal used for the pots and pans in these households. Bass and copper pots, pans, and cauldron were also used. These households provided evidence that tableware was used at least by some families. Tin and pewter plates, dishes, and spoons are present. We also find tin and pewter jugs (perhaps what Americans call “pitchers”).

Also of interest, four households had a cabbage barrel and five had a sauerkraut barrel.

Hans Jacob Kieffer (15 June 1701) 1 copper vat 1 old pan of cast iron 1 iron ladle 1 soup ladle 1 iron grease ladle	**Augustin Underkirch & Barbara Christmann (28 July 1707)** In copper Same in tin Same iron	**Maria Sigler [Sigel] (29 July 1707)** One old copper cauldron One iron pan
Gertrude Kieffer (15 March 1708) 2 old copper pans 1 copper cauldron	**Catherina Siger & Hans Lohr (11 March 1710)** 1 old iron pan 1 iron spoon	**Hans Jacob Becker (3 May 1711)** A smaller cauldron One iron pan
Anna Maria Christmann (4, 5, 6 May 1711) jug of one measure 1 dishes of middle size 2 plates 1 soup spoon 1 bottle of one measure 1 iron pot 1 middle sized dish 1 jug of one measure 1 cauldron of 1 measure 1 old pan 1 copper cauldron 1 old iron pan 3 pewter dishes 4 pewter plate 1 pewter small jug 1 pewter jug of one measure	**Barbara Kieffer & Hans Georg Metteweg (5 April 1724)** 1 old copper pan 1 old copper cauldron and tools 4 old pewter spoons 1 old cooking pot 2 iron pans 1 iron meat fork 1 iron pan	**Niclaus Träher (08 January 1727)** 1 old brass cauldron 1 large tin soup pot 1 tin jug 5 tin spoons 1 iron pan 1 small copper pot 1 old iron skimming spoon 1 iron mold 1 stone jug with tin surrounding 1 large tin dish 1 large old copper pan 1 iron soup spoon 1 new copper pan 1 tin bottle 1 brass candlestick 1 stone jug with tin surrounding 1 tin bottle contains half measure 1 tin jug contains a schoppen 5 tin spoons 1 tin vase 1 iron soup spoon 4 tin spoons 1 pine tree kitchen stand
Thomas Kieffer (16 May 1729) 1 copper barrel 1 pewter jug 1 old iron pan 1 kitchen stand 1 oven stand	**Niclaus Träher (15 April 1734)** 1 copper cauldron of half ohm measure 1 old pewter bottle	**Barbara Leymann (1 March 1736)** 1 new copper cauldron 1 iron pan 1 iron grease pan 1 iron skimming spoon
Maria Irr (08 July 1738) 1 small iron pan 1 foam skimming spoon 1 iron pan	**Margaretha Balbierer (05 April 1740)** One copper basin and one iron pot	**Maria Göltzer (20 July 1740)** One old copper cauldron 1 large iron pan 1 smaller of the same 1 iron pancakes pan One iron skimming spoon One iron soup spoon One iron cooking spoon One iron pot
Philipp Kieffer (13 June 1746) 1 old copper van 1 ironed and deep 1 old tin pan 1 iron smaller pan 1 soup jug with spoon 1 out of pewter 1 pine tree flour bin 1 old kitchen cupboard	**Catharina Wölf (15 June 1746)** One iron pot of middle content 1 other of the same 1 smaller same 1 small vat 1 kitchen chest	**Michael Kieffer (14 November 1747)** 1 good copper cooking pot 1 worn iron pan 1 old iron smaller pan 1 iron large cooking spoon 1 iron meet fork 1 iron soup spoon 4 wooden plates
Maria Träher (15 November 1747)	**Mathis Beckh (27 February 1749)**	

1 good iron cauldron 1 old pot 1 cooking mold	1 copper cauldron 1 iron pot 1 iron pan 1 skimming spoon 1 soup spoon 1 meat fork	

APPENDIX II
Contemporary Images

The following pages contain images that depict activities discussed in the preceding text. The images are taken from *The Encyclopedia of Diderot*. The *Encyclopedia* was published in France under the direction of Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert between 1751 and 1772, the same time period as the twenty-six inventories explored in the text. When completed the work contained 17 volumes of text and 11 volumes of plates. It was one of the great achievements of Enlightenment thought. Every branch of human knowledge was covered, not just the liberal arts. Among other things, the *Encyclopedia* described the mechanical arts. Diderot's presentations adopted the emerging scientific approach for understanding mechanical and production processes so that people could apply useful knowledge to their everyday life. Many of the plates were representations of workshops and tradesmen with detailed descriptions of the processes. Seven of those plates are reproduced below.

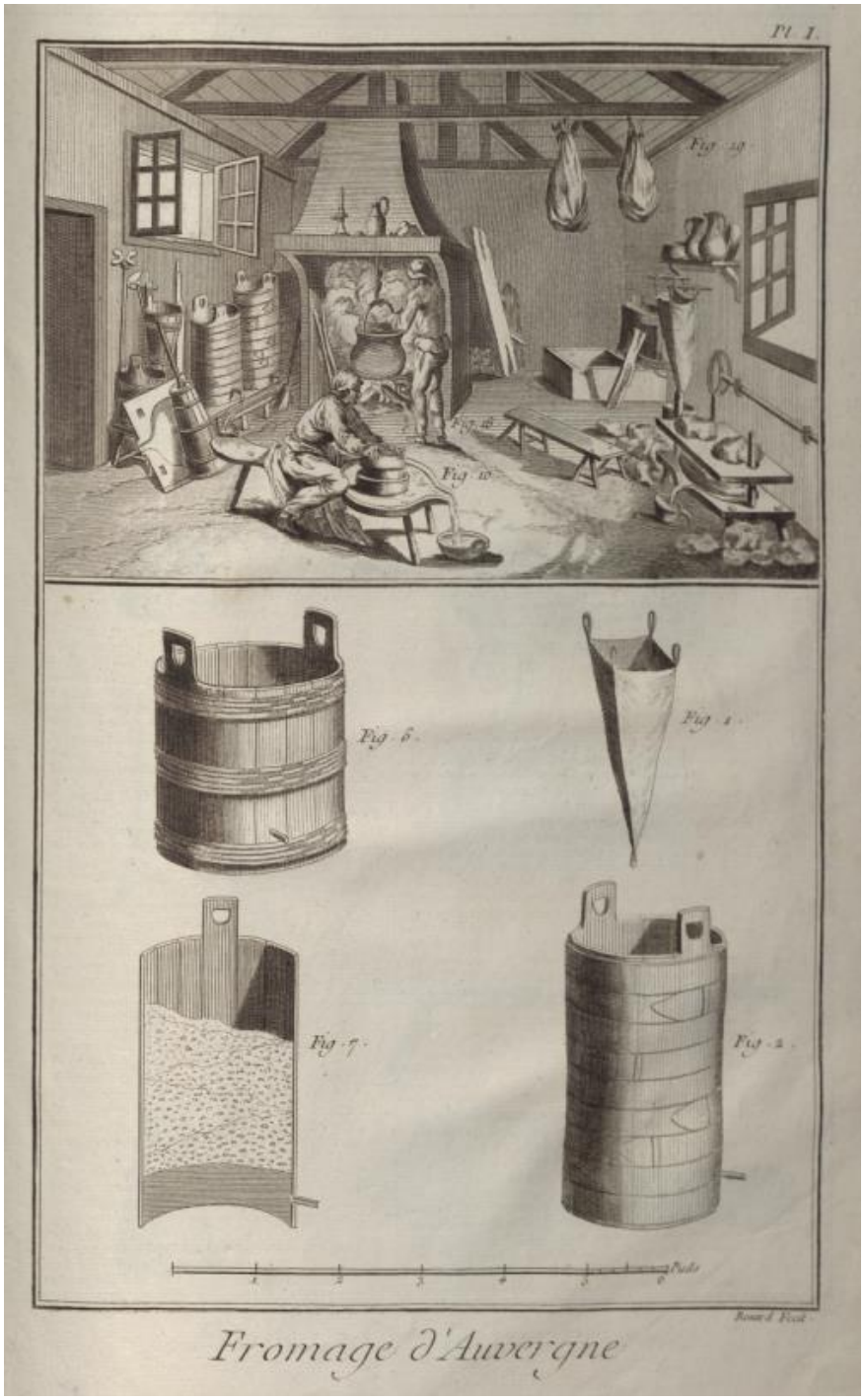
The first image is a household kitchen with a hearth. The household depicted in this kitchen scene was making cheese.

The next three images show the manufacture of cast-iron pots at a forge. The first image contains a vignette of the furnace and molding room with molds in various stages of casting. This image is followed by two images showing the sequence of operations for sand molding a cast iron pot with legs.

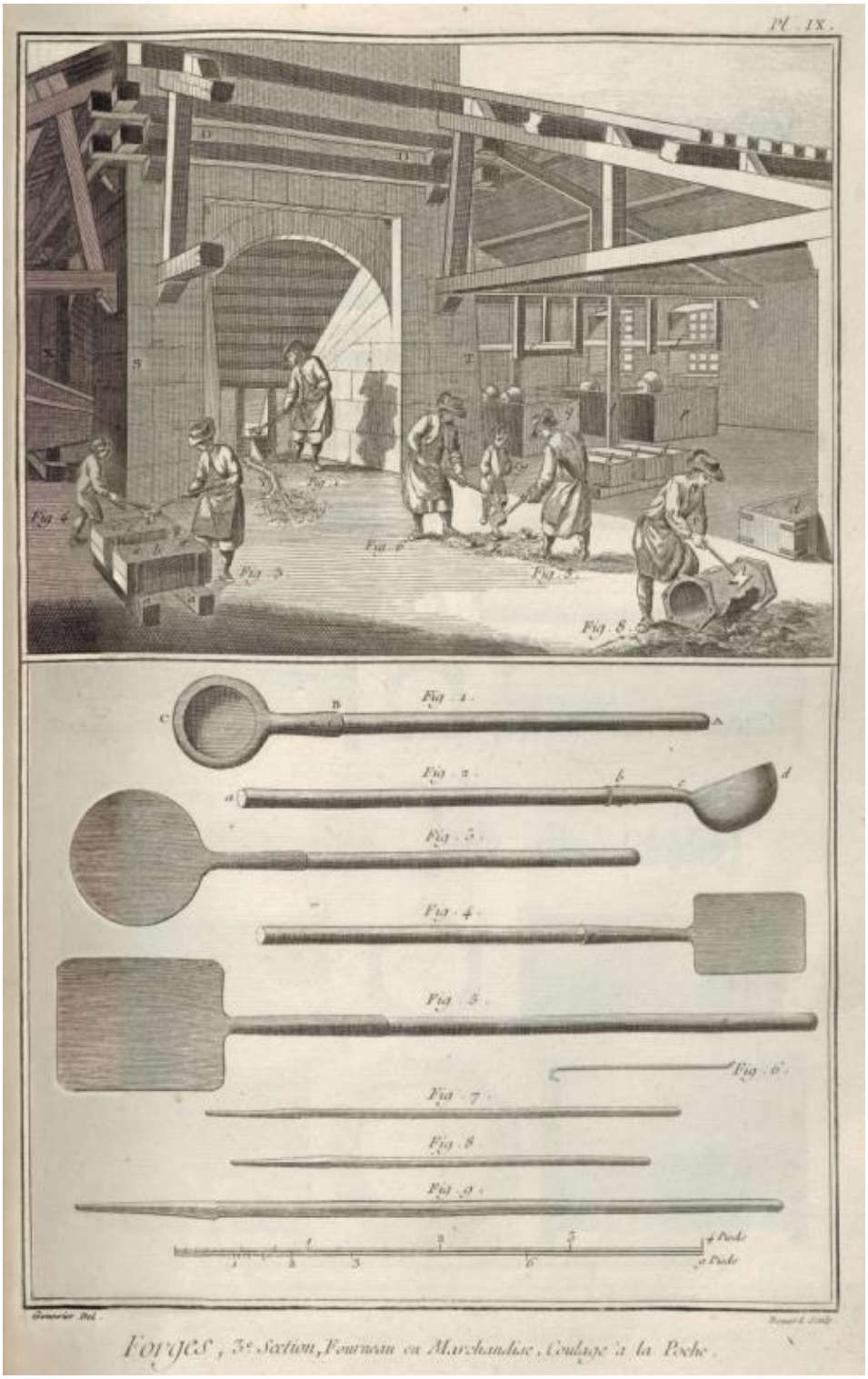
The next two images are from a grouping of wind and water mill plates. The first image shows an interior view of a flour mill powered by a water wheel. The second image shows details of a mill's grindstone.

The last image depicts an eighteenth-century bakehouse. The vignette shows the different operations involved with bread making. Below the vignette are representations of the baker's tools. Fig. 1 shows a front view of a bread oven while fig. 2 shows its profile. Interestingly, Fig. 7 shows a flour bolter used to sift flour. By the nineteenth century bolters would be relocated to flour mills. By sifting flour at the mill, it could be sold by grade.

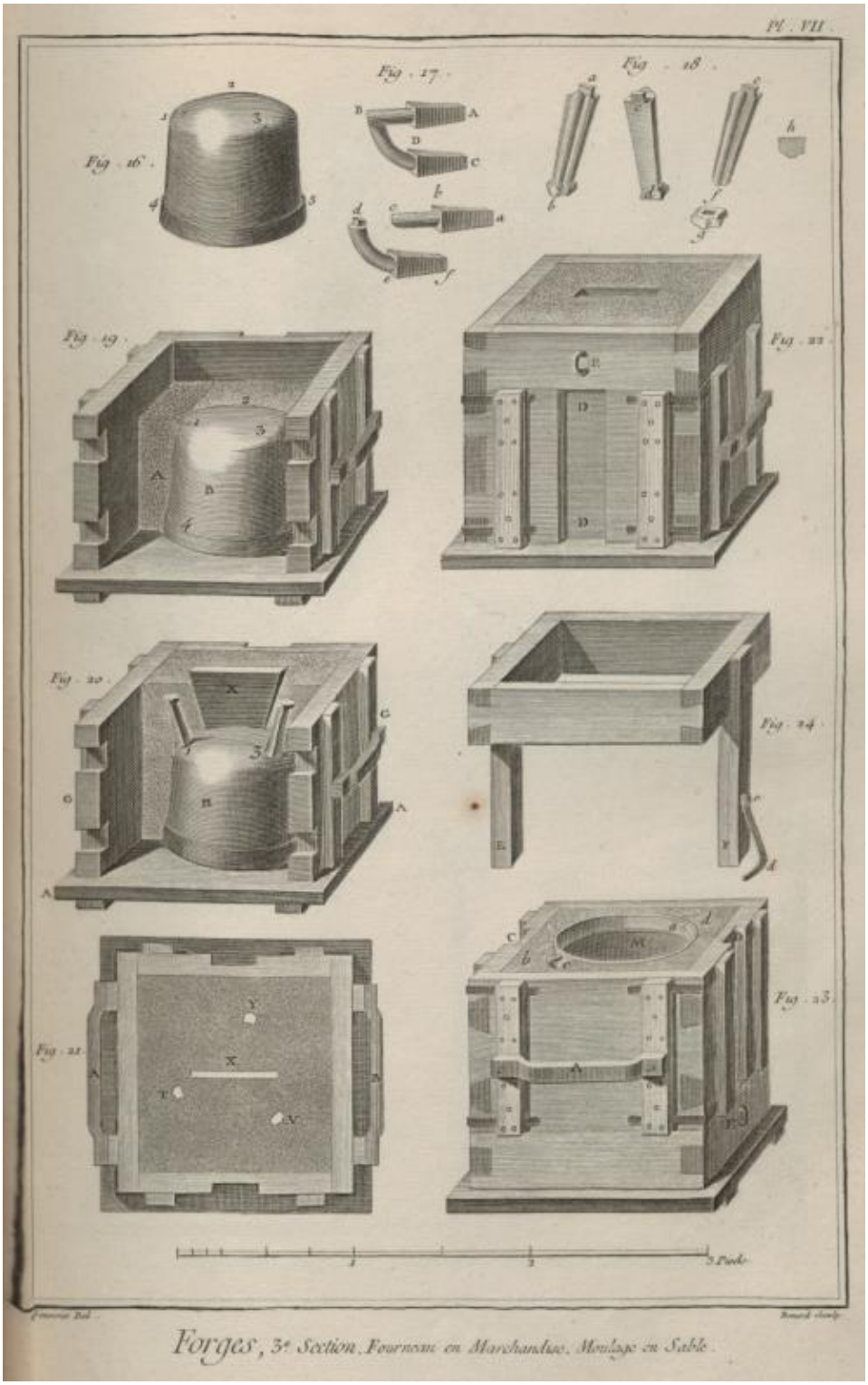
The URLs (i.e., web links) that accompany the images include the original texts which explain the plates in detail. Although written in French, Google Chrome does a reasonably good job of translating them into English.



Encyclopedia of Diderot: https://artflsrv03.uchicago.edu/philologic4/encyclopedie0521/navigate/23/59/



Encyclopedia of Diderot: https://artflsrv03.uchicago.edu/philologic4/encyclopedie0521/navigate/21/19/



Forges, 3e Section. Fourneau en Marchandise. Moulage en Sable.

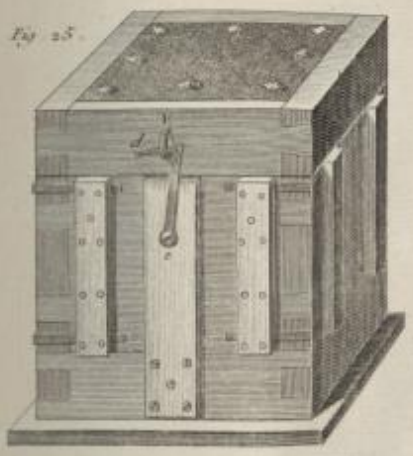


Fig. 25.

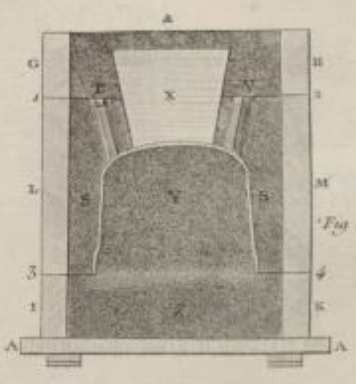


Fig. 29.

Fig. 26.

Fig. 30.

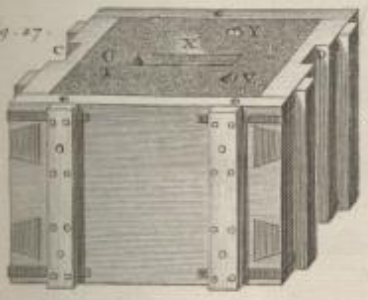


Fig. 27.

Fig. 34.

Fig. 35.

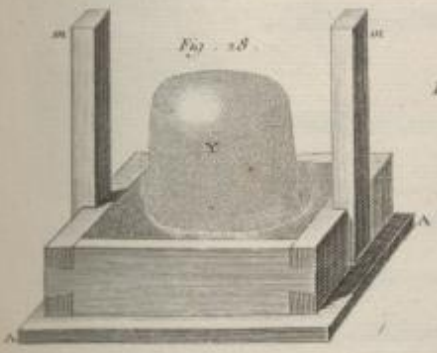


Fig. 28.

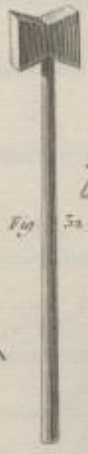
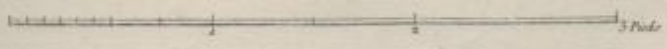


Fig. 32.

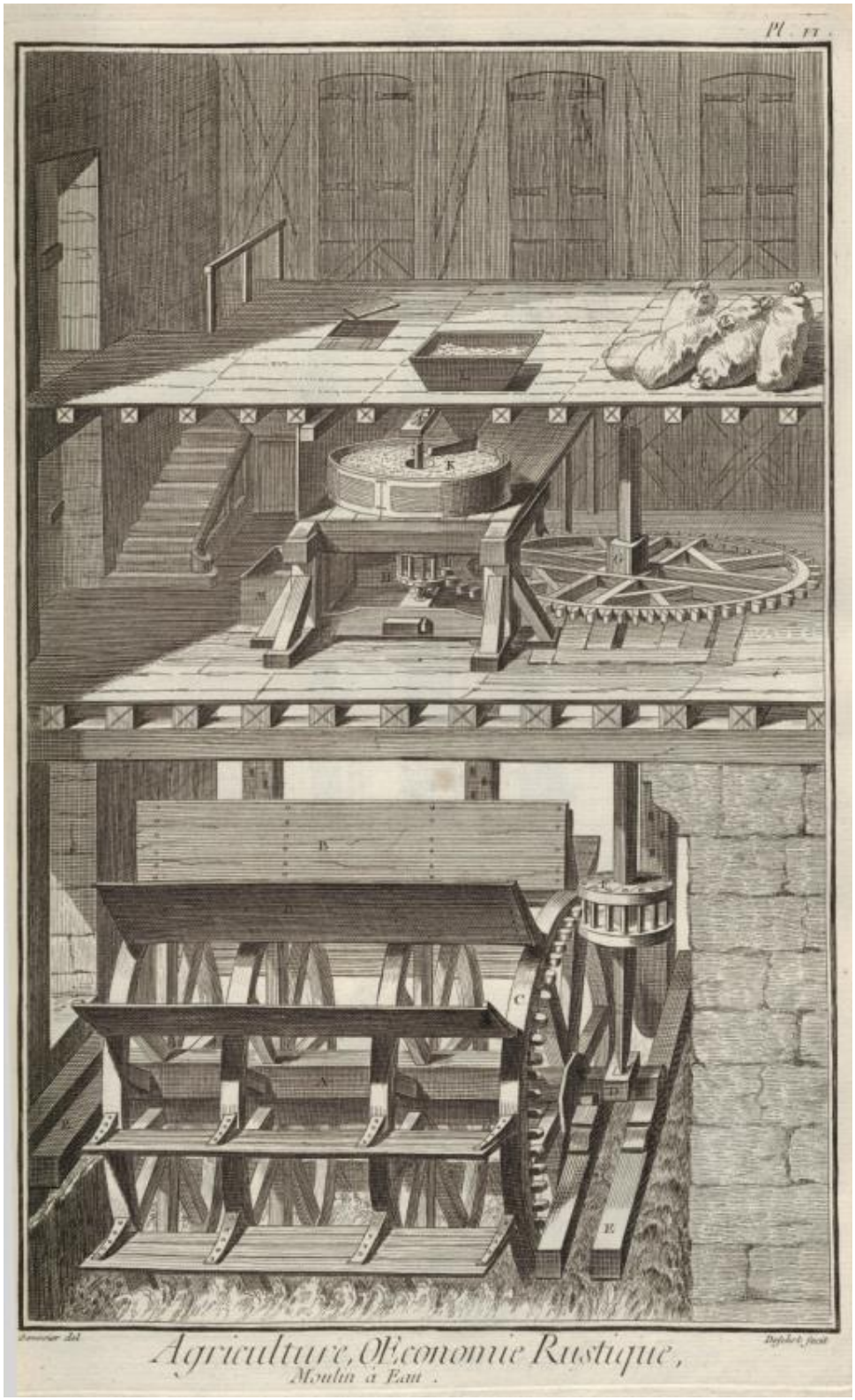
Fig. 31.

Fig. 33.

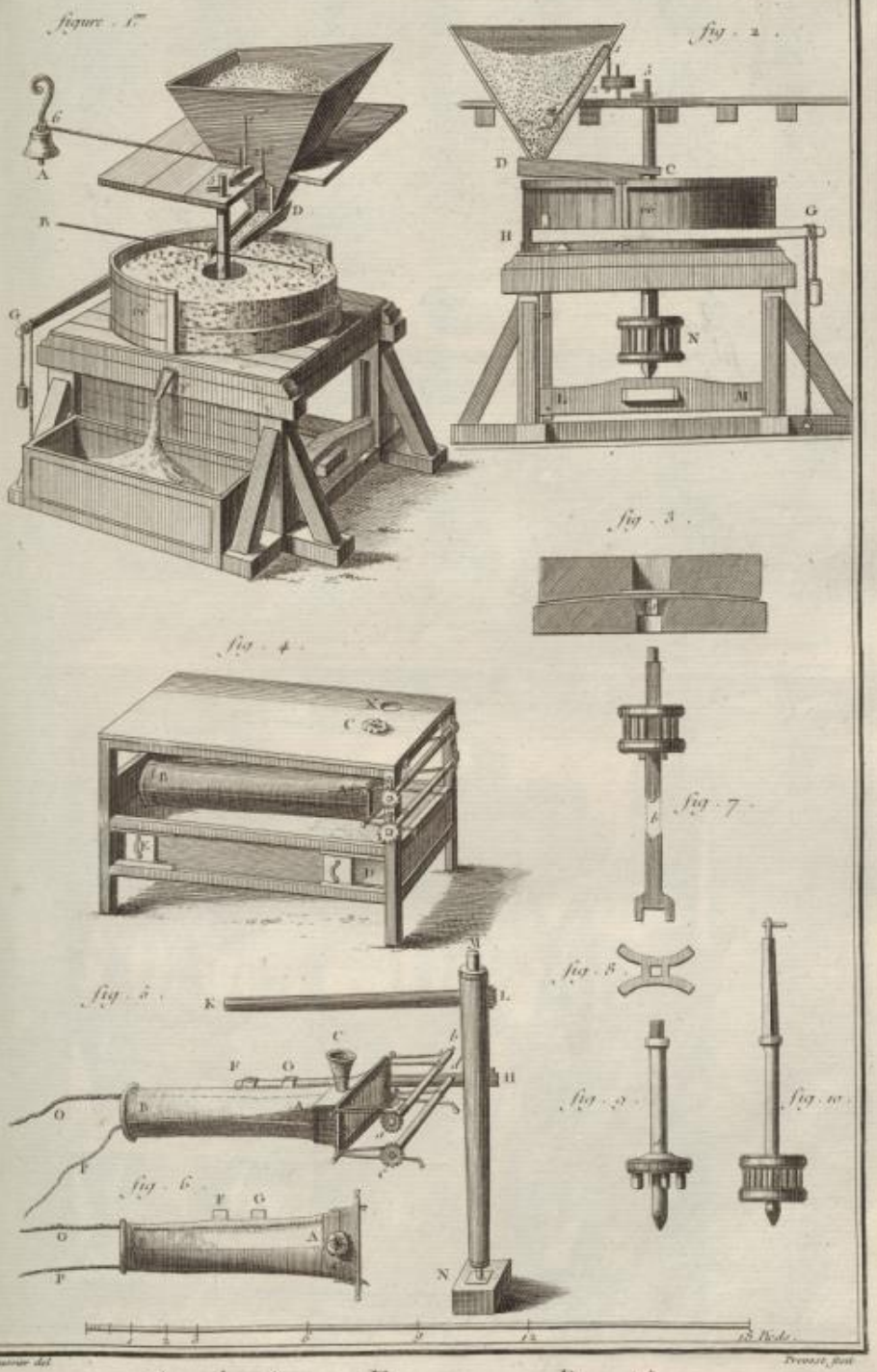


3 Pieds

Forges, 3e Section, Fourneau en Marchandise, Moulage en Sable.



Encyclopedia of Diderot: https://artflsrv03.uchicago.edu/philologic4/encyclopedie0521/navigate/18/13/



Agriculture Economie Rustique.

Detail des Moulins.

Encyclopedia of Diderot: https://artflsrv03.uchicago.edu/philologic4/encyclopedie0521/navigate/19/17/

WEAVERS OF SOUFFLENHEIM

By Michael J. Nuwer, January 2023

The Alsace census of 1836 reported twenty-eight weavers in the town of Soufflenheim. Nineteen of these weavers were heads of a household and nine were single men. The census reported that my ancestor, Anton Nuwer, a 40-year-old father of three, was working as a plowman, but we had learned from other historical documents that, before 1831, he too worked as a weaver. Anton Nuwer's 1818 marriage record identified him as a weaver. In addition, the birth records of his first six children, which had dates between 1819 and 1829, identified Anton Nuwer as being a weaver.

Anton Nuwer was born in 1796, and learned the weaving trade from his father, Antoni Nuwer (1760-1818). Antoni Nuwer learned the weaving trade from his brother-in-law, Jacob Wilhelm. When Antoni Nuwer was two years old his father died. Seven years later his sister (Maria Anna, who was 13 years older) married Jacob Wilhelm, who was a Soufflenheim weaver. Jacob Wilhelm and Maria Anna Nuwer were given ownership of the family house on the condition that Antoni Nuwer had the right to live there as long as he was not married, and that Jacob Wilhelm train Antoni Nuwer in a profession. Antoni Nuwer therefore lived with his sister and brother-in-law for 18 years, and during this time, he was trained as a weaver.

The 1818 marriage record for Anton Nuwer was a civil document written in French. The word *tisserand* was used to identify his occupation, which is weaver in French. Anton's father, Antoni Nuwer, was also identified as a *tisserand* in this marriage record. Additionally, there are Church records that identify Antoni Nuwer as a weaver. The 1789 baptismal record for his first-born child (Francis Joseph) identifies Antoni with the Latin words *lini textor*, which can be translated as "linen weaver."

More Soufflenheim Weavers

Name	Born	Died	Comment
Jacob Meyer	abt 1725	bef 1789	
Michael Doppler	abt 1730	1791	
Jean Mey	1735	aft 1792	
Joseph Vogel	1738	1788	
Adam Elchinger	1740	1779	
Antoni Hummel	1751	1815	
Antoni Schlosser	1754	1791	
Michael Doppler	1766		Son of Michael Doppler
Joseph Adam	1766	1829	also a farmer
Antoni Vogel	1771	1844	Son of Joseph Vogel
George Vogel	1776	1856	Son of Joseph Vogel; also a farmer

Linen was produced from flax, a fiber that grew well in Northern Europe. The predominant fibers used for textiles in Western Europe during the late Middle Ages were wool followed by linen. Nettlecloth and hemp were additional fibers used for making textiles. Flax, hemp, and nettle were important plant-based textile material in Europe because they grew in Northern European climates. Cotton did not

grow well in these climates. Linen cloth made from flax had been manufactured in Europe for many centuries. Across Northern Europe, as well as in Alsace, linen cloth was produced in large quantities during the pre-industrial period.

Soufflenheim estate inventories contain many cloth items made from linen. Fifty-five inventories notarized between 1700 and 1792 have been translated into English. From these documents we found linen items which included tablecloths, hand towels, and curtains; bedroom items like bed cloth, pillowcases, and bed covers; there were also clothing items like men's shirts and women's under dresses. Also, the inventories frequently contain linen "toil." Although the specifics of this item are a bit unclear, a toil may have meant a bolt of fabric.

Hemp was another fiber used to make household items of cloth, although it does not appear to have been as popular as linen. Hemp made tablecloths, bed cloths, pillowcases, hand towels, and clothing items were found in the Soufflenheim inventories. These inventories also contain three clothing items made from cotton (a coat, a shirt, and a pair of stockings) and there were many clothing items made from wool.

Flax and hemp were both grown and processed in Soufflenheim. We found seven inventories that included raw flax in various stages of processing and four inventories that contained some hemp. The present essay focuses on the processing of linen cloth. It traces the production of linen cloth from the harvesting of the flax and extraction of the fibers to the weaving of the cloth.

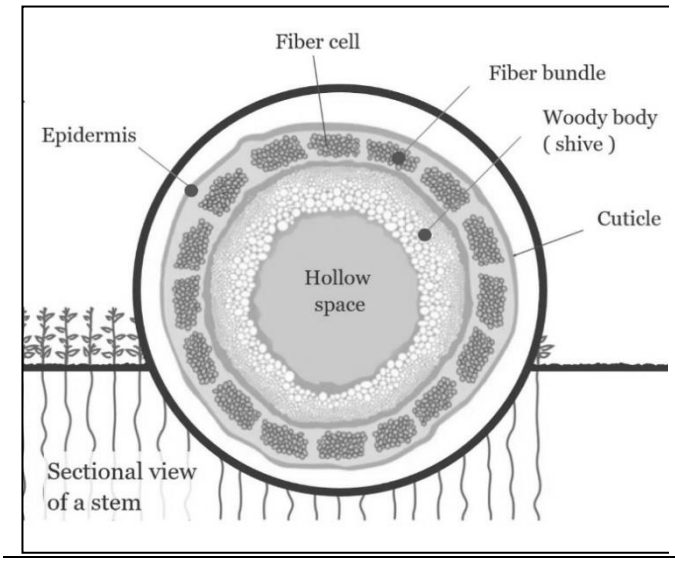
Raw Flax and Hemp in the Soufflenheim Estate Inventories

Name	Items listed
Philipp Kieffer (1746)	38 measures of whitened flax In the barn are stored 4 Viertel unspun flax
Joseph Wilhelm (1758)	14 pounds of hemp ready for use
Salome Metzler (1762)	18 pounds flax Ten pounds worked flax
Hans Georg Biff & Anna Maria Witt (1762)	24 measures of flax half worked 7 measures of hemp toil
Johannes Beckh (1762)	17 measures of hemp and linen each 9 pound 40 same worked at 22 pounds 6 measures more hemp worked
Jacob Mössner (1762)	53 measures of flax
Maria Magdalena Brotschy (1768)	17 measures of raw flax 16 measures of worked flax 5 1/2 measures of other flax (kelsch) Linen seed: 1/2 small piece
Otillia Metzler (1774)	6 pounds hemp 7 pounds linen 10 1/2 pounds worked hemp

Cultivated flax plants have slender stems and grow about four feet tall. The flax fibers used to make linen come in bundles under the bark of the slender stems. These fibers must be extracted from beneath the surface of the stem. The image below illustrated this structure. Flax is stronger than cotton fiber, but less elastic. It is soft, lustrous, and flexible, with the appearance of blonde hair.

When harvested, the flax plant is pulled up with the roots (not cut), so as to increase the fiber length. After this, the flax is allowed to dry, the seeds are removed, and it is then processed. Before the flax fibers can be spun into linen, they must be separated from the rest of the stem. The first step in this process is called retting, which is a technique of rotting away the inner stalk and leaving the outer

parts intact. While retting, the flax lays on the ground in the field between two and four weeks, depending upon the weather and field conditions. As a result of alternating rain and sun, an enzymatic action loosens the fibers bound to the straw. The farmer turned the straw during retting to evenly rett the stalks. When the straw is retted and sufficiently dry, it is rolled up and can be stored before extracting the fibers.



Left: Cross section of Flax Stem

The fiber cells are the strands of flax which were used to make linen. Fiber cells are arranged in fiber bundles. Processing the flax required separating the fiber bundles from the surrounding material. https://worldlinen.com/pages/fine-linens

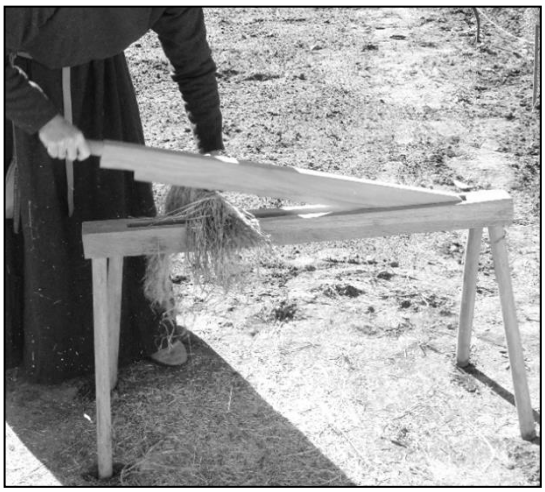
Right: Retted Flax Ready to be Dressed

At this point, the flax fibers are still bound to the coarse outer straw. Removing the straw from the fibers is a process called dressing the flax. There were three steps used to separate the straw from the fiber: breaking, scutching, and hackling. Below are images illustrating each of these steps.

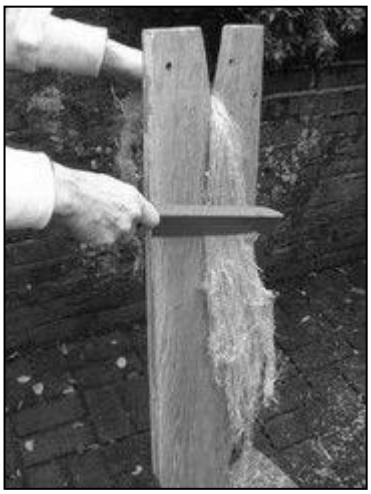
To remove the straw, the flax stems are first broken. This means the straw is cracked and broken-up into small, short bits, while the actual fiber is left unharmed. Second the flax stems are scutched which removes some of the straw from the fiber. This operation scrapes the outer straw from the fibers. Finally, the stems are pulled through hackles, which are a bed of sharp, long, tapered nails driven into wooden blocks at regular spacing. A hackle block acts like a comb which removes the straw and some of the shorter fibers, leaving the long flax fibers.

The raw flax fibers can now be treated like cotton fibers. They are bleached, spun into yarn, woven into cloth, and the cloth can be dyed or printed as desired.

Dressing Flax



Step 1: Breaking



Step 2: Scutching

Step 3: Hackling or combing

Raw flax

Bleaching

Bleaching is a process of decolorizing the raw textile material. It can be carried out at various stages of production. The raw fiber could be bleached, or the spun yarn could be bleached, or the bleaching could be performed on the woven cloth. One Soufflenheim inventory, dated 1727, contained “unbleached hemp toil” while another inventory, dated 1746, contained “measures of whitened flax.” These items suggest that bleach was used in eighteenth century Soufflenheim, but it is less clear at which stage in the production process bleaching occurred.

Sun bleaching was the most common practice in Europe. The fabric was boiled in lye made from ashes. It was then rinsed, spread on grass fields, and exposed to sunlight. Oxygen from the air and from the grass did the bleaching.

Spinning Flax into Yarn

Spinning is an ancient art in which fibers are drawn out and twisted together to form yarn. In the case of flax, the natural fiber is slightly turned counter-clockwise, and so most flax is spun counter-clockwise—opposite the direction of wool or cotton spinning. Spinning could be done by hand with a

drop-spindle or with the use of a spinning wheel. The now iconic spinning wheel was first introduced in the eleventh century. Initially the wheel was turned by hand and later a treadle or foot peddle was added to turn the wheel.

A Spinning Wheel for Spinning Flax

The raw flax was wound on a stick called a distaff. The spinner's right fingers draft the fibers and her left fingers wet the fibers with water. The wheel, powered by a treadle, is used to turn the spindle (located in front of the spinner's right knuckles) which twists the fibers into linen yarn.

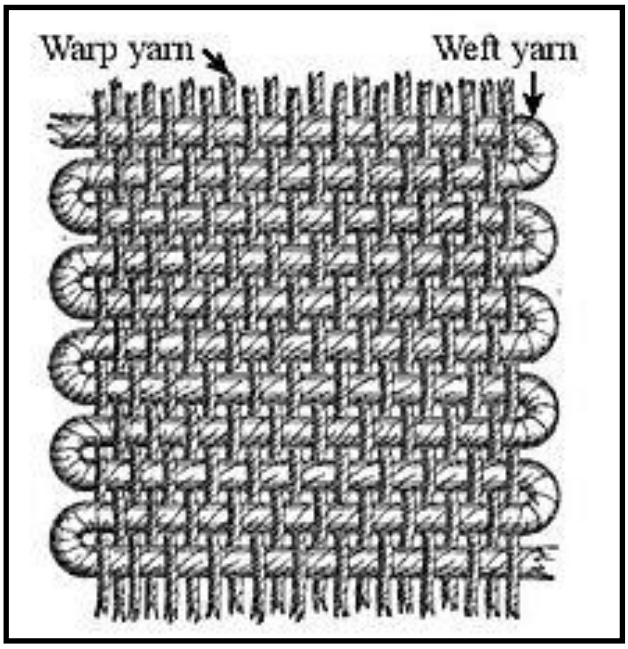
Spinning Wheels in the Soufflenheim Estate Inventories

Name	Items
Anna Maria Christmann (1711)	Two spinning wheels
Michael Kieffer (1747)	1 spinning wheel with its seats, 1 spinning wheel
Maria Träher (1747)	2 spinning wheels
Mathis Beckh (1749)	1 spinning wheel
Hans Georg Biff & Anna Maria Witt (1762)	1 spinning wheel
Johannes Beckh (1762)	1 spinning wheel
Jacob Kieffer & Margaretha Liechteisen (1765)	1 spinning wheel and tools
Barbara Stäblerin (1766)	1 good spinning wheel
Otillia Metzler (1774)	1 spinning wheel, with hemp, winding

Margaretha Wilhelm (1778)	two spinning wheels, and related tools for spinning
Margaretha Geiger (1788)	spinning wheel

Weaving

Weaving is a method of textile production in which two sets of yarn are interlaced at right angles to form a fabric. One set of threads is called the warp and the other set is called the weft. A fabric woven with a weft thread interlaced between warp threads is called cloth. Cloth is woven on a device that holds the warp threads in place while a weft thread is interlaced through them. This device is known as a loom.



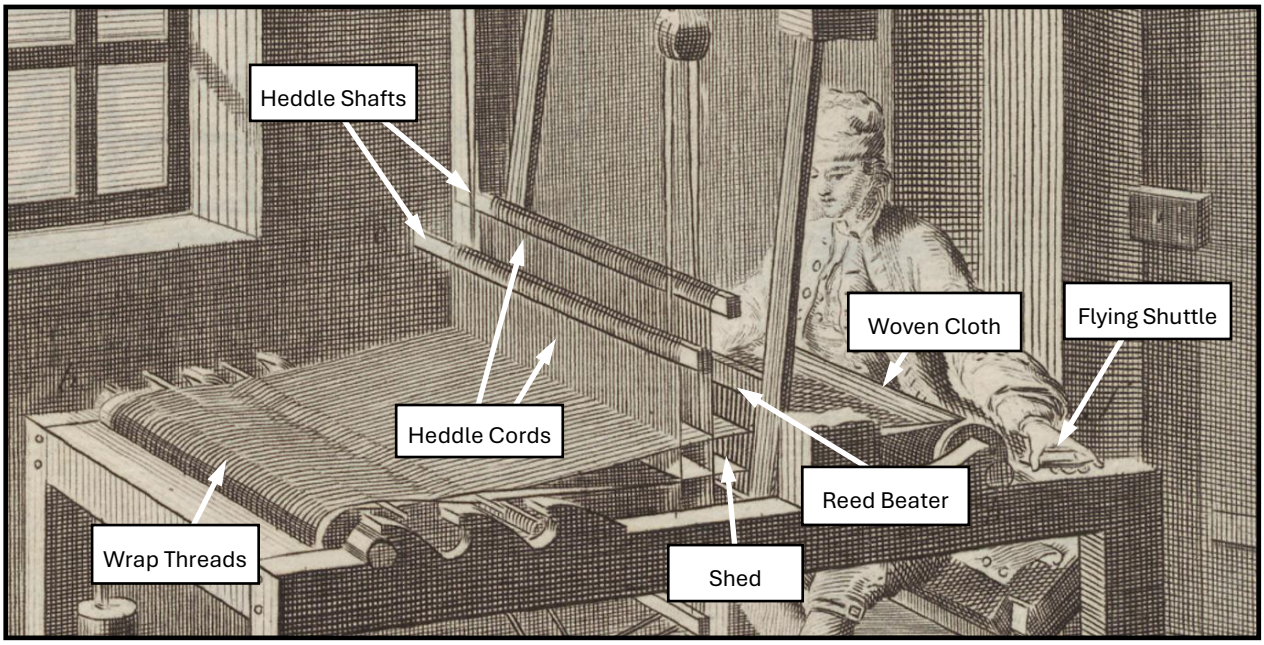
Plain Weave

The warp yarns alternate above and below the weft yarn.

Weaving on a loom involves the repetition of three actions. The first action is shedding. This is where alternating warp threads are separated by raising or lowering “heddles” to form an open space through which the weft thread can pass. The second action is picking. This is where the weft thread is propelled across the loom (side to side) by hand or by a shuttle. The final action is battening. This is where the weft thread is pushed up against the cloth by the reed. These three actions are then repeated.

The heddles are an integral part of a loom. They are used to separate the warp threads, making space for the passage of the weft thread. A handwoven tea-towel, for example, might have between 300 and 400 warp threads and thus use that many heddles. The typical heddle is made of cord, and each one has an eye in the center where the warp is threaded through. Each wrap thread is passes through a separate heddle-eye and each heddle is fastened to one of two (or more) shafts. These shafts are moved up and down using a foot peddle. When the first shaft is raised, so too is every

other heddle, and therefore, every other warp thread. This creates the space (the “shed”) through which the weft thread can pass.

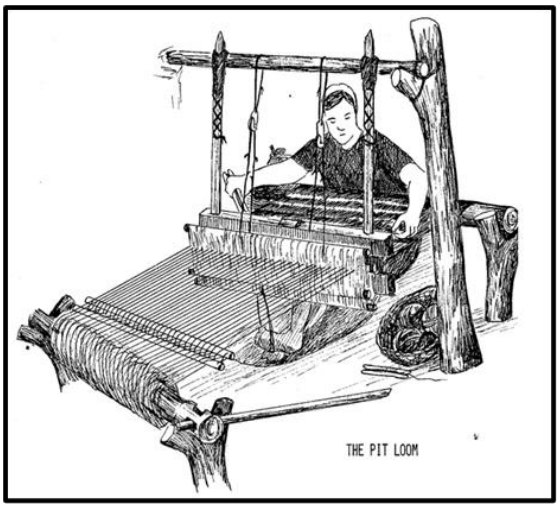


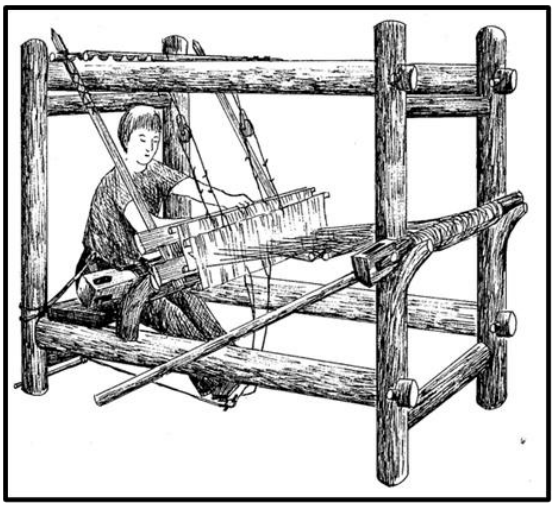
A Simple Handloom

The image is taken from The Encyclopedia of Diderot. The Encyclopedia was published in France under the direction of Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert between 1751 and 1772.
Source: https://artflsrv04.uchicago.edu/philologic4.7/encyclopedie0922/navigate/18/18

A hand loom might be wide or narrow. Hand weavers could only weave a cloth as wide as their arm span. To weave cloth that needed to be wider, two people were required to do the task. This ceased to be necessary after the flying shuttle was invented in 1733. “The weaver held a picking stick that was attached by cords to a device at both ends of the shed. With a flick of the wrist, one cord was pulled, and the shuttle was propelled through the shed to the other end with considerable force, speed, and efficiency. A flick in the opposite direction and the shuttle was propelled back.” A single weaver could control this motion and the flying shuttle could be used to weave much wider fabric than an arm’s length. The shuttle and the picking stick sped up the process of weaving. It is not known when the flying shuttle was introduced at Soufflenheim, but it seems reasonable to suppose that it was used there by 1780.

There are many types of looms. Backstrap looms are among the oldest. Vertical stand looms were common in the Middle Ages until they were replaced by the horizontal hand loom. Horizontal hand looms might be constructed over a pit where the weaver sat or on a wooden frame. All these devices came in many sizes.





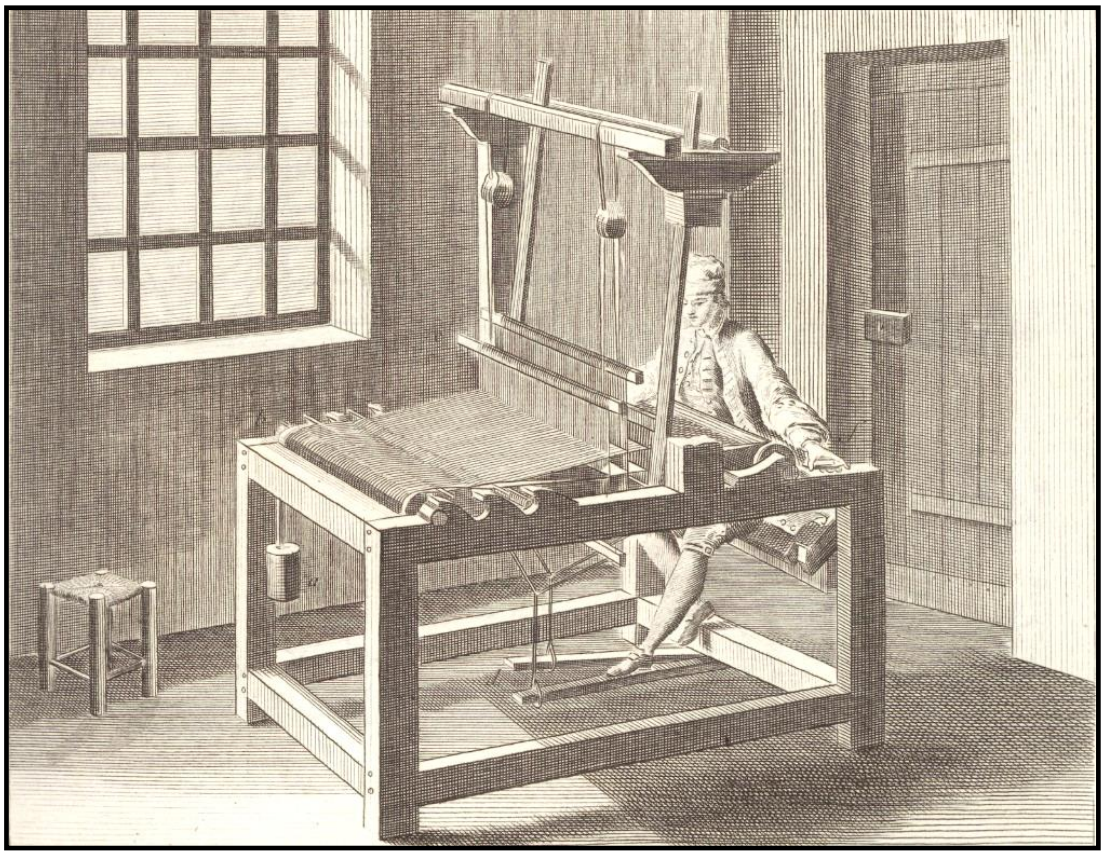
Pit Loom **Frame Loom**

Two Variations of the Horizontal Loom

https://web.archive.org/web/20140302081647/http://www.cd3wd.com/cd3wd_40/vita/handloom/en/handloom.htm

Among the fifty-five translated inventories notarized in the eighteenth century (1700-1792) none contained a loom. This may be because the translated inventories represent only about 5 percent of the notarized inventories from this period and only a few residents worked as weavers in any one generation.

Translated inventories for the earlier period (1674 to 1699) contain two looms. Both instances were from 1684. The inventory for Hans Goetz included “one weaver’s stand” and the inventory for Barbara Götz contained “material for the weaver’s profession.” Both items were valued at 10 gulden, which was a substantial valuation for the time. This information suggests that framed looms with a significant amount of joinery work were probably used in Soufflenheim. But it does not preclude the use of other loom types



Eighteenth Century Horizontal Frame Loom, 1772
https://artflsrv04.uchicago.edu/philologic4.7/encyclopedie0922/navigate/18/18

Organization of the Work

The weavers of seventeenth century Soufflenheim were most likely handicraft workers. Historians use the term handicraft work to refer to making things with one's hands and skill using tools powered by human muscle. The handicrafts produced things to meet the needs of the people in their local community. Handicraft weavers worked at home and provided a service to residents of their town. Their products were made-to-order. Local families might spin their own flax (or hemp) into yarn and then deliver it to a handicraft weaver who would make the cloth.

Rural handicraftsmen spent a great deal of their time occupied by agricultural activities. Almost no one worked year around at their craft. They owned farmland and they used it to produce their own food. As Lucien Sittler and Frédéric Geissert the authors of *Soufflenheim: a town in search of its history* put it, "many craftsmen were also farmers. They were craftsmen-farmers." (p. 83)

Evidence for handicraft organization is found in the Soufflenheim notarized inventories. A 1749 inventory for Mathis Beckh contained a "debt to the weaver for weaver's work." Debts for "weaving work" were also found in inventories notarized in 1778 and in 1788. These debts appear to be for made-to-order cloth. Some residents of Soufflenheim also contracted to have their raw flax (or hemp) spun into yarn. Joseph Lengert's 1788 inventory contained a debt to Antoni Albrecht "for spinning work."

The work of a rural handicraft weaver differed from that of an urban craft weaver. Urban weavers also worked at home, but they marketed their cloth at fairs and sold it to merchants. In other words, the cloth was produced before there was a customer. Craft weavers did not produce cloth for a specific

customer, but rather for a market in the expectation that a customer would be found. Due to the uncertainties of finding these customers, urban weavers in Europe formed guilds to regulate their trade. The craft guilds controlled the quality of the cloth and the training needed for an apprentice. A cloth merchant then acted as a middleman between the craft weavers and the customers.

An organizational change began to take place near the end of the Middle Ages. The “domestic system” (also called the putting-out system) was introduced and became a popular system of cloth production in Europe. Historians have found evidence of the domestic system existing in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but it was most prominent in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

In the domestic system, a cloth merchant purchased yarn and “put-out” this material to a domestic worker (the weaver). The cloth was then prepared by the weaver in their own home and the finished cloth returned to the merchant. The main participants in this system were the urban merchants and the rural handicraftsmen. Travelling merchants from urban centers and their agents would tour the rural villages, supplying the raw materials and collecting the finished goods. This organization served as a way for merchants to bypass the more expensive guild system and to access a rural labor force which was a less expensive source of labor.

It is not clear to what degree, if at all, the weavers of Soufflenheim participated in the domestic system. The 1836 Soufflenheim census reported twenty-eight weavers, five spinners, and four dyers in the town. The larger and disproportionate number of weavers suggests that these weavers were producing more cloth than was needed by the residents of Soufflenheim. As a point of reference, the census reported eighteen tailors, twenty-four bakers and eight butchers. It seems reasonable to suppose that the labor time of the tailors, bakers and butchers was sufficient to service the residents of Soufflenheim. (Remember that bakers produced bread, which was consumed daily. But cloth was not purchased nearly as often.) This might suggest that a significant portion of the labor time from the twenty-eight weavers found in the 1836 census was in surplus to the needs of Soufflenheim residents and that that surplus labor was working in the domestic system.

Urban merchants were the other participants in the domestic system. The cloth merchants who would have put-out yarn to Soufflenheim weavers may have been located in the town of Bischwiller. That town is five miles south of Haguenau, and only seven miles southwest of Soufflenheim. In the seventeenth century, Bischwiller was an emerging textile town. Huguenot refugees had resettled in Bischwiller, and they brought their knowledge of the textile trade to their new home.

In 1818 Bischwiller was the home of thirty-five firms manufacturing textile products. A few of these firms had built textile factories with industrial carding and spinning machines. It is possible that some of the Bischwiller firms were engaged in putting-out activities and that some of the weavers at Soufflenheim were working for these firms. However, this evidence is no more than circumstantial.

Another possible outlet for the surplus labor of Soufflenheim weavers was factory labor. According to Lucien Sittler and Frédéric Geissert, the authors of *Soufflenheim: a town in search of its history*, there may have been a textile factory in Soufflenheim. “In 1828,” they write, “the Prefect [of the district] authorizes M. Titöt and Chastellux … to establish cotton weaving factories in Soufflenheim; these will give employment to poor people in the place” (p. 85). Such a factory could have hired weavers as wage laborers and might explain the disproportionate number of weavers found in the 1836 census. However, Sittler and Geissert, were unable to verify that the weaving factory was actually built.

If there was a weaving factory at Soufflenheim, then it may have been the case that, during the eighteenth century, Soufflenheim’s weavers were handicraftsmen servicing local residents of the town but after 1828 and the opening of the weaving factory, some residents learned the tasks needed to be factory weavers and became wage workers.

Alsace was one of the most industrialized regions of France during the Napoleonic Wars and in the early decades of the nineteenth century. In the first decades of the century, the textile mills at Mulhouse and Colmar began to mechanize the spinning and the calico printing processes. In the 1820s, smaller towns began to produce specialty textiles with cotton and cotton-linen blends for the Parisian market, thereby creating considerable work for handloom weavers in the countryside. As a result, Alsace had a burgeoning class of both urban wage workers and rural domestic workers.

The Soufflenheim census for 1836 does not provided enough information to determine whether the weavers were factory workers or domestic workers. The town residents working as weavers tended to be young. Among the twenty-eight weavers in 1836, only nine were 40 years of age or older, and only two were over the age of 50. Nineteen, that is, two thirds of the twenty-eight weavers were under the age of 39. Nine of these young weavers were single while the remaining ten were married.

There were no father-and-son weavers in the 1836 census. There were, however, seven weavers whose fathers had also worked as a weaver. Three of these second-generation weavers were brothers. They were each single and all were living in the same household. Their ages were 23, 26, and 30, and their widowed mother was listed as the head of the household. Their father was Francis Joseph Wilhelm (1779-1834), who was a weaver in Soufflenheim until his death in 1834 at the age of 55. Four other weavers had had a father who was a weaver and had passed the trade from one generation to the next. Thus, twenty-one of the weavers were first generation workers in the trade.

In additional to the three Wilhelm brothers just mentioned, Jacob and Michel Zinger, ages 44 and 40 respectively, were brothers. Both worked as weavers, but their father (Jacob Zinger) had worked as a plowman and so the brothers learned the trade elsewhere. Antoni and Denis Burger, 36 and 29 years old respectively, were also brothers who worked in the weaving trade. Their father (Joseph Burger) had worked as a plowman. None of the remaining twenty-one weavers appear to have been related.

— § § § —

Antonin Nuwer, who was born in 1760, was working as a linen weaver by 1780. Francis Joseph Wilhelm and his younger brother Antoni Wilhelm (1782-1810) were Antoni Nuwer's nephews (Maria Anna Nuwer's sons) and were both weavers at Soufflenheim. All three weavers learned the trade from Jacob Wilhelm, Antoni Nuwer's brother-in-law. It is possible that Antoni Nuwer and his two nephews worked as domestic weavers for an out-of-town merchant before 1800, but it is more likely they were handicraftsmen, weaving made-to-order cloth for residents of Soufflenheim. They may have continued working as handicraft weavers during the years Napoleon Bonaparte ruled France (1799-1815).

Antoni Nuwer's son, Anton, was born in 1796, and by the age of ten was probably apprenticing the weaving trade with his father. Anton worked as a weaver until 1829 or 1830 when he changed his occupation. By this time, factory produced cloth was displacing handicraft weaving. Weavers were increasingly working for putting-out merchants or for factory owners and town residents were increasingly purchasing cloth made for markets. This transition to industrial production may have contributed to the reason Anton Nuwer changed occupations from a weaver to a plowman.

It may have also influenced his decision to leave Soufflenheim and immigrate to America in 1844. As described by the historian Mack Walker, "The prospect of joining the wage-labor class, the lowest he knew, was abhorrent to the pride, training, and traditions of the independent freeholder or [handicraftsman]. Despite his difficulties and his fears, he was reluctant to move to the city; better to go to America, where his hope for success *in the old ways* was higher." (Emphasis added)

Sources

Primary Data

Robert Wideen, ed., *Soufflenheim Inventories: 1700 -1749* (Soufflenheim Genealogy Research and History) https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/c0db0dfe-27d2-4632-889f-eeb26fbb14e1/downloads/Inventories%201700-1749.pdf

Robert Wideen, ed., *Soufflenheim Inventories: 1750 -1792* (Soufflenheim Genealogy Research and History) https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/c0db0dfe-27d2-4632-889f-eeb26fbb14e1/downloads/Inventories%201750-1792.pdf

Lucien Sittler and Frédéric Geissert, *Soufflenheim: a city in search of its history*, History and Archeology Society of Ried Nord, Drusenheim, 1987. https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/c0db0dfe-27d2-4632-889f-eeb26fbb14e1/downloads/Soufflenheim%20Une%20Cite.pdf

Robert Wideen, ed., *Soufflenheim Inventories: 1674 -1699* (Soufflenheim Genealogy Research and History) https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/c0db0dfe-27d2-4632-889f-eeb26fbb14e1/downloads/Inventories%201674-1699.pdf?ver=1668451813860

Flax and Linen

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Linen

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flax

https://www.fiadnata.org/preparing-flax-for-spinning/

https://www.tailoronten.com/blogs/news/9275507-a-history-of-linen-and-how-it-is-made

Spinning

https://www.fibre2fashion.com/industry-article/7349/bleach-clean-up

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hand_spinning

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Distaff

Looms and Weaving

https://www.fibre2fashion.com/industry-article/3759/facts-about-weaving-loom-types

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Loom

https://artflsrv04.uchicago.edu/philologic4.7/encyclopedie0922/navigate/18/18

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heddle

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Weaving

https://web.archive.org/web/20140302081647/http://www.cd3wd.com/cd3wd_40/vita/handloom/en/handloom.htm

Domestic Industry

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Artisan

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Putting-out_system

https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bischwiller

Other Sources

Robert S DuPlessis, *Transitions to Capitalism in Early Modern Europe* (1997)

Mack Walker, *Germany and the Emigration, 1816-1885* Chapter 2 (1964)

THE SOUFFLENHEIM BARNYARD

By Michael J. Nuwer, January 2023

Lucien Sittler and Frédéric Geissert, the authors of *Soufflenheim: a town in search of its history*, tell us that, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the craft trades were an important activity in Soufflenheim. But “this is not the main aspect of life in the village. Life there was mainly based on agriculture and animal breeding, providing food to the population” (p. 28). This food was not provided through a system of market-based production and exchange. Sittler and Geissert tell us that “all this farming activity was based on consumption of what was produced and not on commercialization” (p. 83).

Agriculture affected all aspects of daily life in the town of Soufflenheim. One example was the religious celebration of Saint Wendelin. This saint is the patron of domestic animals, and the town church contained a side alter dedicated to him. In the late seventeenth century, Soufflenheim residents celebrated the feast of Saint Wendelin with processions to the convent of Koenigsbruck (which was in the Haguenau Forest, near Leutenheim, northeast of Soufflenheim). In 1743 the parish vicar presided over “a high mass with songs on St. Wendelin’s Day” and lead a procession around the outskirts of the town (p. 56). In 1761, prayers were said and “ribbons were fixed on the cattle’s heads to preserve them from the evil” of an epizootic disease. The agricultural way of life was not simply an economic system for providing food. It was fully woven into all aspects of social life.

The division of labor in eighteenth century Soufflenheim was not as specialized as we know it today where jobs are divided and subdivided, and where people are occupied with a single set of tasks typically year around. In eighteenth century Soufflenheim the work of craftsmen was part-time and seasonal. Household heads were always associated with an occupation. The sacramental records of marriages and baptisms identify potters, weavers, shoemakers, carpenters, millers, bakers, butchers, and many more. Many of the trades required a multi-year apprenticeship. However, almost no one worked year around at their craft. These same craftsmen spent a great deal of their time occupied by agricultural activities. They all owned farmland and they all produced their own food. As Lucien Sittler and Frédéric Geissert put it, “many craftsmen were also farmers. They were craftsmen-farmers.” (p. 83)

This essay explores the domestic animals found in Soufflenheim during the eighteenth century (1700-1799). The data set used for this essay contains the inventories and descriptions of the property left at the time of death for fifty-five residents of Soufflenheim.

An estate inventory described the real and personal property left by an individual when they died. These inventories were presented by the heirs of an estate, in the presence of the town mayor, at least one member of the town justice committee, and the regional notary who was a public official similar to a surrogate court judge in the United States. Before the French Revolution and its abolition of sensorial ties, residents of Soufflenheim appeared before the notary of Haguenau. This notary held legal authority and the notarized documents were considered legal documents with enforceable entitlements, obligations, and responsibilities. These estate records still exist in the government archives of Bas-Rhin, France.

Robert Wideen, a Soufflenheim genealogy researcher, has identified 504 individual inventories that were notarized and are currently housed in the Bas-Rhin Archives for the years 1700 to 1791. There are 166 inventories for the period between 1700 and 1749 and 338 for the period between 1750 and 1791. Fifty-five of these notarized documents have been translated into English. These translated

inventories constitute the data set used for the current essay. Thirty-nine of the fifty-five inventories, seventy-one percent, contained barnyard animals. From this data set we hope to gain a glimpse of the eighteenth-century barnyard in the town of Soufflenheim.

Consider, for example, the inventory of Niclaus Träher. According to the translated document he died December 5, 1726. The hearing to settle his estate was requested by his heirs, which included his widow and their six adult children. The notarized document was signed on January 8, 1727 “in presence of Adam Schäfter, provost, Jacob Stückelreisser and Hans Georg Frittmanns, both burghers [and] members of the justice council, and of Johann Paul Wolff, royal notary of Haguenau.”

In addition to the family house and gardens, the estate contained more than thirty parcels of crop land outside the village. Farming implements identified in the inventory included an iron plow, a harrow, a four-wheeled wagon, and a two-wheeled cart. Compared to other Soufflenheim inventories, Niclaus Träher was a farmer with significant means.

The inventory also identified the domestic barnyard animals owned by the estate. These included six horses: a black horse, a grey stallion, three brown horses, and an old horse. There were five cows: a red cow, an old red cow, another old cow, a small grey cow, and a young cow. Nine pigs were found in the estate: four adult pigs, four small pigs and one old female. The estate also contained ten hens and six geese. This information illustrates the array of barnyard animals found in eighteenth century Soufflenheim.

Most of the inventories used for this essay contain a lesser amount of wealth than that of Niclaus Träher. The goal of this essay is not to understand individual farms. The data are not robust enough to achieve such a goal. Rather the essay seeks to understand some characteristics of a generalized barnyard within the town of Soufflenheim. What animals were raised in the town during the eighteenth century? What were the animals used for? And, perhaps as revealing, what animals were absent from the Soufflenheim barnyard?

The following table shows the name of the deceased person and the barnyard animals identified in their inventory. The quantities for the six most common farm animals are reported.

Barnyard Animals : The Animals Found in Soufflenheim Inventories.

	Year	Horses	Oxen	Cows	Pigs	Hens	Geese
Hans Jacob Kieffer	1701	2	2	4	5	6	
Hans Philipps Kieffer	1707			1			
Augustin Underkirch & Barbara Christmann	1707		2	3			
Gertrude Kieffer	1708			2			
Catherina Siger & Hans Lohr	1710			1			
Barbara Kieffer & Hans Georg Metteweg	1724			4	6		
Niclaus Träher	1727	6		5	9	10	6
Thomas Kieffer	1729	5	3	6	8	12	5
Simon Oesterreicher	1734			4	14		
Niclaus Träher	1734	2		1	4		
	Year	**Horses**	**Oxen**	**Cows**	**Pigs**	**Hens**	**Geese**
Barbara Leymann	1736			1			
Maria Irr	1738	3	2	1	4	8	8
Margaretha Balbierer	1740			3	1		
Peter Wilhelm	1740		2	3	3	5	4

Maria Göltzer	1740			3	2		1
Conrad Beck	1740			4			
Philipp Kieffer	1746	2	2	4	11	6	9
Catharina Wölf	1746		2	2	4	18	7
Michael Kieffer	1747			1	2		
Maria Träher	1747	5		1			
	Year	**Horses**	**Oxen**	**Cows**	**Pigs**	**Hens**	**Geese**
Mathis Beckh	1749			3	1	5	
Veronica Messner	1753			2	2	4	3
Peter Strack	1753			2			
Lorentz Estreicher	1758	1				2	
Joseph Wilhelm	1758			1			
Salome Metzler	1762		4			2	
Michel Mössner	1762			1	1		
Hans Georg Biff & Anna Maria Witt	1762			1			
Jacob Mössner	1762		2	3	4	3	4
Johannes Beckh	1762		4	1	3	3	
	Year	**Horses**	**Oxen**	**Cows**	**Pigs**	**Hens**	**Geese**
Franz Nuber	1763	1			2	3	4
Jacob Kieffer & Margaretha Liechteisen	1765			2	2	2	
Barbara Stäblerin	1766	1	2	3			
Maria Magdalena Brotschy	1768			3	3	4	
Otillia Metzler	1774			2	1		
Margaretha Wilhelm	1778			3		2	3
Anna Pauli	1781	1	2	2		4	2
Valentin Eisenkirch	1783			1			
Stephan Zettwooch	1786			1	1		4
	Year	**Horses**	**Oxen**	**Cows**	**Pigs**	**Hens**	**Geese**
		29	**29**	**85**	**93**	**99**	**60**

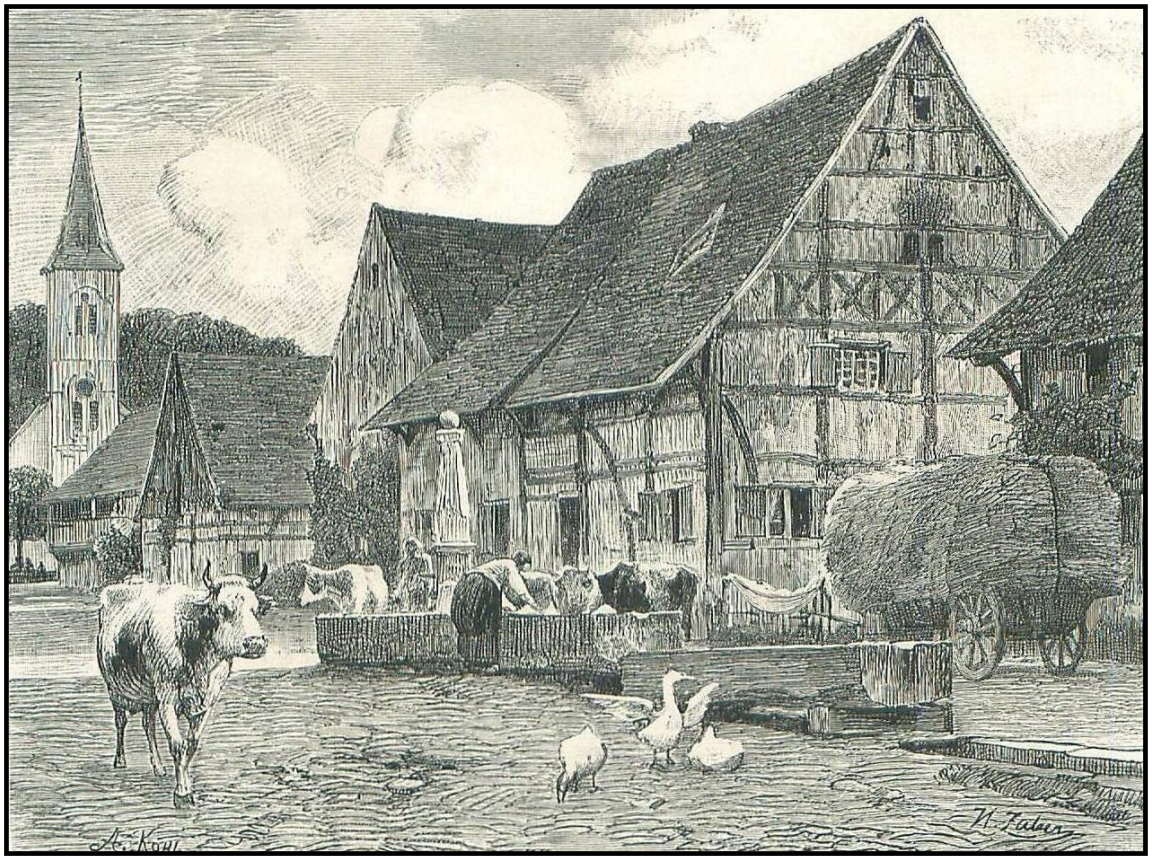
During the Medieval and early modern periods, the rural regions of Alsace were organized into what can be called clustered settlements, which is in contrast with the idea of a dispersed settlement pattern. North Americans are accustomed to the dispersed settlement of rural land. In such a territorial organization, agricultural land is divided into pieces and farmers live on their land separated from one another. In a clustered settlement, people live close to each other in a village and their farmland is outside the residential area.

Throughout the Middle Ages central government across Europe was generally weak and townspeople needed protection from bandits and lawless nobles. Rural populations therefore tended to cluster close together in order to ensure their common security. Due to such social clustering, houses in the open country were very rare. A typical European clustered village consisted of houses on either side of a main street, each with a small garden. The plowed agricultural land was located away from the housing cluster. People did not live on their farmland.

The Soufflenheim inventory of Frantz Nuber, who died in 1763, illustrates this pattern. Frantz Nuber and his wife Anna Müller lived in the village of Soufflenheim. Their home was described as a “house and cow shed … built on a garden inherited by the widow.” In other words, residents owned a small plot of land inside the residential cluster on which they had their barn and vegetable garden, in

addition to their house. Their next-door neighbor would have likely had the same arrangement. Thus, as depicted below in the image of a typical Alsatian town, the animals were living within the residential cluster.

Frantz Nuber and Anna Müller also plowed two plots of farmland. This land was located outside the residential cluster. The land in the outskirts of Soufflenheim was called the “ban.” The authors of *Soufflenheim: a town in search of its history* tell us that the “ban is composed of three parts: the ploughed land, the meadows, and the forest. Each of them has its importance. … The many [ploughed] fields are owned either by farmers or by the commune. … The meadows belong … mainly to the commune. The third part of the … ban includes the communal forest.”



A Typical Alsatian Town

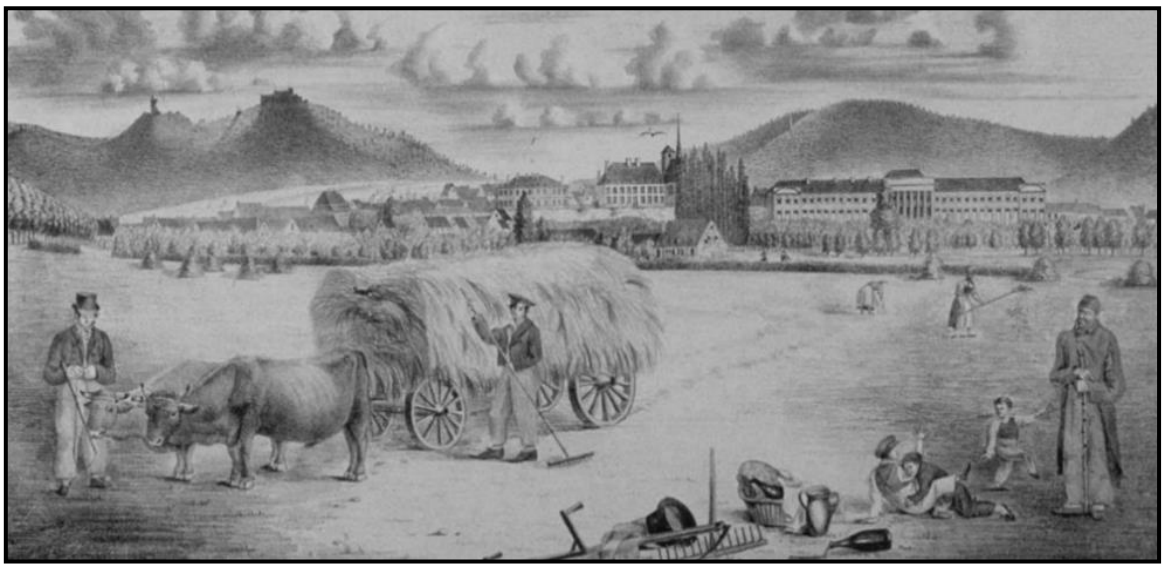
Cows, geese, and a wagon of hay in the center of the town’s residential section was typical during the eighteenth century.
Source: https://picclick.fr/Abreuvoir-vaches-ferme-%C3%A0-Vieux-Ferrette-Pfirt-ch%C3%A2teau-Alsace-325355475596.html

Draft Animals: Oxen and Horses

Due to their sheer physical strength, draft animals aided in the physical labor of a farm. Oxen and draft horses were used for tasks like plowing land and hauling cargo. In addition to plowing and hauling, oxen were used for drawing wagons in the fields and grain-grinding by trampling. They were also used to skid logs in the forest. Oxen were most often used in teams of two, paired with a single yoke.

Oxen are cattle trained as draft animals. They were often adult, castrated males. An ox was usually over three years old due to the need for training and to allow it to grow to full size. Working oxen

needed to be trained to respond to signals from the ox-driver. Signals to stop, go, back up, turn to the right, etc. were given by verbal command and reinforced by a goad or whip.



Vue de la ville de Saverne, 1800
Harvesting hay from the fields. The hay wagon is drawn by two oxen
Source: Bibliothèque nationale de France (BNF), https://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb41926467d

Bischwiller, 1826
A two-wheel cart and a four-wheel wagon, both drawn by horses. The wagon is loaded with hay.
Source: Bibliothèque nationale de France (BNF, https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10215177n/f1.item.zoom

Image 1: Plowman opening a furrow with an ordinary plow (fig 1); seed drill (fig 4); hand seeder (fig 5); carter driving the harrow to cover the seed (fig 6); carter and clod breaker used to level the ground (fig 7).

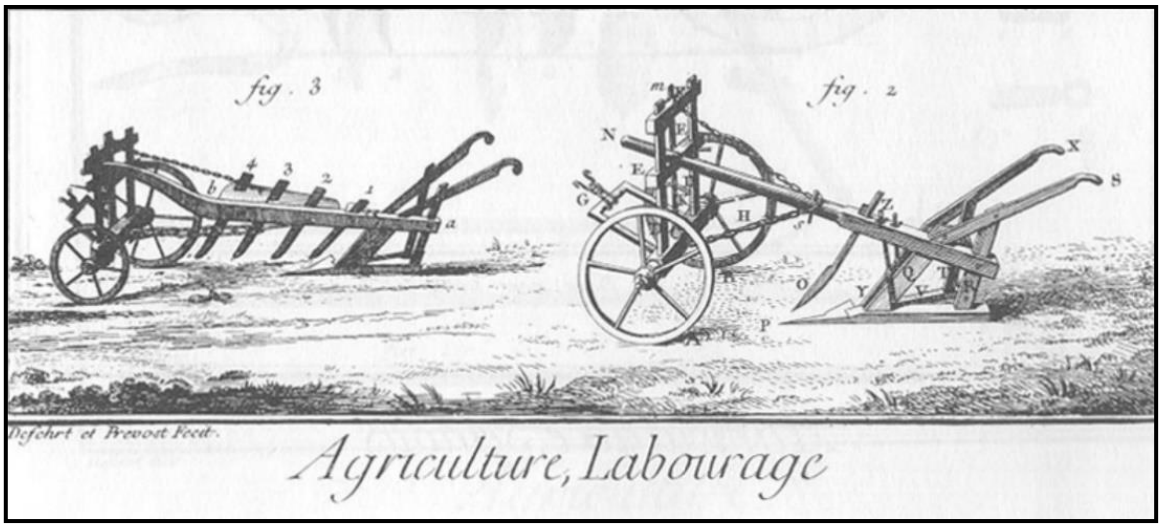


Image 2: left, Jethro Tull plow; right, Ordinary plow

Agriculture et économie rustique - Labourage **("Agriculture and rural economy - Plowing")**
Images 1 and 2 from *The Encyclopedia of Diderot & d'Alembert*, 1762. The Encyclopedia was the first general encyclopedia to describe the mechanical arts and was one of the greatest achievements of Enlightenment thought. It included seventeen folio volumes accompanied by detailed engravings. The image above reproduces an agricultural field being plowed and seeded in northern France. Source: https://artflsrv03.uchicago.edu/philologic4/encyclopedie1117/navigate/18/8/

A draft horse was larger than a riding horse. The primary characteristics of a draft horse were strength, patience, and a docile temperament which made them useful to pre-industrial farmers. Although oxen could pull heavier loads and could pull for a longer period of time than horses, they were not as fast. Two men, one to drive a pair of oxen, and one to hold the plow, could turn about half an acre in a day, but one man with a pair of horses could plow two acres a day.

Twelve of the inventories in our data set contained oxen while eleven inventories contained horses. Six of these inventories contained both oxen and at least one horse. Of the thirty-nine inventories that contained barnyard animals, seventeen or forty-three percent had at least one draft animal.

In the cases where oxen were found in the inventories, the farm employed at least two animals. Two inventories contained four oxen and only one of the twelve inventories with oxen contained an odd number of animals. This highlights the fact that oxen were used in teams. A similar pattern is not seen for the farms with horses.

The inventory data also contains evidence of the equipment pulled by the oxen and horses. From the fifty-five translated inventories, fourteen of them contained a plow while sixteen contained a four-wheeled wagon and five contained a two-wheeled cart.

In the eighteenth century, a common occupation in Soufflenheim was the plowman (*laboureur*). The term meant one who owned a plow and a team of oxen or horses. This enabled him to plow the fields he owned and to rent his services to others in town. Most of the town's artisans and craftsmen also had fields that needed to be plowed but they did not typically own the needed animals. These artisans and craftsmen would hire the services of a plowman. The ownership of draft animals was a sign of status and a source of cash income in this time and place. Although Soufflenheim is famous as a town of potters, there were many plowmen in the town.

Fowl: Chicken and Geese

Domestic chickens had been raised in Europe since at least the times of Antiquity. In the eighteenth-century chickens were valued primarily for their eggs and fertilizer. As a source of meat, chickens were of only secondary importance. Compared to cattle and hogs, chickens were easy to raise and had a low cost.

Typically, a hen lays its eggs in the early or mid-morning, usually within six hours of sunrise. Collecting eggs from the hen house was a daily chore along with everything else. Usually, eggs would be collected two or three times a day.

Those of us who are from the United States, are accustomed to refrigerating their eggs and may think of eggs as a highly perishable food. However, an egg that is unwashed and unbroken may be left unrefrigerated for several months without spoiling. An unwashed egg has a cuticle which protects the egg from bacteria and therefore they do not require refrigeration.

Eggs were a seasonal crop just like garden vegetables and field crops. Chickens naturally slow down or stop laying eggs as the days get shorter. The shorter days and cooler temperatures signal to hens to take a break and give their bodies a rest. Come spring, they are rested and ready to start laying again. Usually by March the hens will resume egg production.

The preindustrial hen had large thighs and small breasts and they would be slaughtered when they were no longer laying well. Until the industrial production of chickens, small flocks were expected to forage for much of their food. Chickens will eat grass, weeds, bugs, and dandelion greens as well as grain spilled by the cattle and horses. They also eat garden trimmings and kitchen scraps.

Periodically a farmer will need to let some eggs hatch so that older hens can be replaced. This process required a rooster to fertilize the eggs and a "brooding" hen to sit on the eggs for three weeks before they hatch. When the eggs hatch, about half of the chicks will be the females desired for laying eggs, the others will be unwanted males. Within eight to twelve weeks, the males could be butchered.

In addition to chickens, eighteenth century farms at Soufflenheim commonly keep geese. Domestic geese have been selectively bred and were known in Antiquity. Like chickens they provided both eggs and meat for a family. Due to their large size and upright posture, domestic geese cannot fly long distances. With the help of a strong tail wind, they may get several feet off the ground and remain in the air for no more than a quarter of a mile.

Geese could provide meat and eggs from natural grazing and seem to have been more resistant to diseases than other avian species. In the warm months, geese feed almost entirely on grass and weeds. In the winter they needed food from the store of animal feed. Typically, they could feed on a diet of hay, grain, and a few kitchen scraps like cabbage.

Domestic geese lay more eggs than wild geese, up to 50 eggs per year, compared to 12 eggs for a wild goose. But chickens lay at least three times this number of eggs. A goose egg was typically larger than a chicken egg and they had proportionally more yolk, otherwise they could be used in cooking just like chicken eggs. The main reason geese were kept in the barnyard was because their meat was preferred over chicken meat.

In Alsace, cooked goose was a popular tradition for the Saint Martin's Day feast (Martinmas) held every November 11th. Goose meat was also a tradition at the Christmas meal. One popular recipe called for stuffing the goose with apples and chestnuts.

Eighteenth century homes did not have ovens. The bird might have been cooked in a hearth using a cast iron Dutch oven, it might have been cooked with a rotisserie spit over a wood fire, or it might have been prepared at home and cooked in the baker's oven. Hiring the services of the baker's oven was known to occur in Alsace into the twentieth century. In the mid and late nineteenth century, women would prepare a Baeckeoffe casserole on Sunday or on laundry day and leave it with the baker to cook. The women might arrange to pick up the dish on their way home from church or after completing the wash on laundry day. The baker's oven also may have been used in the eighteenth century to roast a goose for Martinmas or Christmas.

Pigs

Pigs were mostly raised for their meat, which we call pork. Pigs were probably the most important source of meat in eighteenth century Soufflenheim.

Pigs are omnivorous and are highly versatile in their feeding behavior. Like chickens and geese, pigs are a foraging animal, they will eat leaves, stems, roots, fruits, and flowers. The advantage of this behavior was that farmers did not need to raise feed for these animals. As we will see below, the pigs of Soufflenheim foraged in the communal forest.

Female pigs reach sexual maturity at three to twelve months of age and come into estrus every eighteen to twenty-four days if they are not successfully bred. The gestation period averages 116 days. By contrast, cattle first give birth at two or three years, and have a gestation period of about 283 days, which made them much more costly than pigs.

Fresh pork was seldom eaten in the summer because the heat made it virtually impossible to prevent spoiling. Before the twentieth century, fresh pork in Europe was traditionally an autumn dish. Pigs were slaughtered in the autumn after growing in the spring and fattening during the summer. This is one reason why apples, also harvested in late summer and autumn, have been a staple pairing to fresh pork.

Old World techniques of food preservation were salting, smoking, curing, or pickling. Cabbage was cured in a salt brine to make sauerkraut while hard-boiled eggs were pickled in vinegar or cured in brine. And, of course, ham and bacon were cured in salt.

From a pig, the shoulder, the belly (or “middling”), and the leg (or ham), were the parts most frequently salt-cured and smoked. There were two methods of salting pork for preservation. One was dry salt curing, the other, more popular, was to use a brine. Curing pork in a brine was the same method used to make sauerkraut.

Instructions include letting the hams sit in the brine for three weeks to a month, depending on their size. They were then hung to dry and smoked. It is not uncommon to see old images of homes with a ham hanging from a door frame. One Soufflenheim inventory from 1778 included “meat in the chimney” and this was a high value item at ten guldens.

An eighteenth-century recipe from the American colonies illustrates the process of curing pork. To secure the meat “against the possibility of spoiling, salt them before they get cold.” Then, cut the hams, shoulders and middlings, rub a large table-spoonful of salt petre on the inside of each ham, for some minutes, then rub both sides well with salt, sprinkle the bottom of a large tub with salt, lay the hams with the skin downward, and put a good deal of salt between each layer, salt the shoulders and middlings in the same manner, but less salt-petre is necessary, cover with cold water.”

When the shoulders and middlings have been in salt three weeks, hang them up to smoke, do so with the hams at the end of four weeks. “If they remain longer in salt they will be hard. Remember to hang the hams and shoulders with the hocks down to preserve the juices.”

After curing in salt, some receipts suggest hanging the meat “in a chimney of a moderate heat,” or to “dry them where wood is burnt.” Smoking gave the hams a desirable flavor. Six Soufflenheim inventories specifically listed “smoked pork” while another one listed “meat in the chimney.”

Sausage was another method used to preserve pork. The recipe was straight forward. “Take the tender pieces of fresh pork, chop them exceedingly fine.” Chop in some fat and add the seasoning. Variations in seasoning was the source of great differences among geographic regions. Different regions had access to different kinds of seasonings. After the seasoning was added to the pork, the mixture was filled into “chitterlings,” that is, the skins of the sausage. These were the small intestines of the animal. “After the skins are filled, they should be hung in a dry place.” One recipe noted that “sausages are excellent made into cakes and fried but will not keep so well as in skins.”

The inventories included in our data set did not contain sausage, nevertheless, it would be strange if the Soufflenheim households had not made sausage. It seems likely that sausage was made and consumed in eighteenth century Soufflenheim. Salt, too, was not found in the Soufflenheim data set although one inventory contained a debt to “the salt maker in Rountzenheim.” We know salt was available because of its use in the curing and pickling processes. Estate inventories are a valuable source of information, but it remains true that they provide a limited picture of daily live in the village.

Salt: A Side Note

In the fourteenth century, the King of France began taxing salt and the revenue become the Kingdom’s primary source of income. By the mid-sixteenth century, in an effort to better collect the taxes, the sale of salt became a monopoly of the state. At that time the Kingdom made salt from sea water and evaporation ponds. The north and west of the Kingdom were supplied from facilities near La Rochelle while the south and Rhone valley were supplied from facilities along the Mediterranean coast.

Territories in today's eastern part of France were annexed after the sixteenth century and were grafted onto the existing salt monopoly. Franche-Comte, Alsace, and Lorraine got their salt from wells where brine was pumped out of the ground and boiled. There were major state-owned wells in both Franche-Comte and Lorraine. The Lorraine wells were near the city of Metz. These supplied Lorraine as well as Switzerland, the Palatinate, the Rhineland, and Alsace. The salt was taxed at the point of production and sold to merchants in Strasbourg, Basle, Trier and elsewhere. The merchants then redistributed the salt to local towns and villages, like Soufflenheim.

Dairy Cows

Cattle are a highly versatile barnyard animal. They have been a source of power for work, a source of meat, and a source of milk, although the same animal cannot perform all three of these functions. A cow trained as an ox was not a useful milk producer. The harder a cow worked in the fields, the less milk it gave, and conversely, milk production drained the animal's energy for work in the fields.

The Soufflenheim inventories clearly distinguish oxen, cows, and bulls. There were twenty-nine oxen, eighty-five cows, and three bulls identified in the fifty-five translated inventories. In this section we focus on the cows. Cows were used for milk, from which a household could make butter and cheese. When the cow was old and no longer a milk producer it could be used for meat and their hides could be used to make leather. Cows also produced calves which could be used for meat (veal was often mixed with pork to make sausage). And finally, cows were a source of fertilizer.

Before a cow would give milk, it must give birth to a calf. A cow typically had her first calf at the age of three years. If the cow gave birth to one calf per year, she could produce milk until she passed her prime at the age of eight or nine years depending on the care she received. Calves would arrive between early February and the middle of April, and the cow would produce milk for three to nine months.

This made a cow expensive. It had to be fed during the periods that no milk was given, that is, during the first few years of life and during the months when it was dry. In addition, calves had to be fed. To avoid the cost of feeding calves, most were hurried off to butchers at no more than a week of age. Their meat could be used for making sausage and it could be cured in a salt brine. Beef that is cured or pickled is called corned beef in the United States. The Soufflenheim data set contains three instances of "dry meat" which might have been some kind of cured beef.

The critical feeding problem for cattle came in the winter. A cow ate about forty pounds of hay a day, with a supplement of oats, buckwheat, potatoes, turnips, peas, or carrots. Hay was the staple food for any animal keep through the winter and the Soufflenheim data set contain seventeen inventories that had stores of hay.

According to Hans Jürgen Teuteberg, prior to the Thirty Year's War, liquid milk was of little interest in the German states. Because liquid milk was extremely perishable, it had to be consumed immediately. When a cow was wet, liquid milk might be used to make something like semolina pudding. This pudding was made with milk and wheat plus raisins or fruit, and it had been eaten in Europe since Roman times. The perishability of liquid milk could be overcome if it was processed into butter or cheese.

The first step in farm-made butter was creaming the milk. Fresh milk was poured into shallow pans where it stood for several hours while droplets of butterfat rose to the surface. This is where the cream separated from the milk. The skimmed cream would be stored until enough was collected to make butter. The next step was the iconic butter churning. Churning cream was a process that shook the cream until the small fat globules stuck together. It ordinarily took about thirty minutes for butter to form in the churn. At that point the cream had separated into butter and buttermilk.

Finally, the butter was removed from the churn and placed on a board where it was salted and kneaded. The salt acted as a preservative and aided in the expulsion of surplus water. The kneading worked the butter to create its familiar smoothness.

It is not clear how much butter was used in eighteenth century Soufflenheim. Stocks of stored butter were not found in any of the translated inventories, nevertheless there was some evidence that butter was made in eighteenth century Soufflenheim. One inventory contained a “butter pot” while another contained a “butter churn.”

The skim-milk leftover from creaming may have been used to feed barnyard animals or it may have been used for making cheese. There are two broad categories of cheese. Ripened cheeses were made by coagulating milk with a rennet enzyme and a culture acid. These cheeses were then ripened (aged) by bacteria or mold. The second category was unripened cheeses. These cheeses were made by coagulating milk with acid. No rennet was used, and these cheeses were not aged. Examples include soft cheeses like cream cheese, cottage cheese, and fresh cheese curds. Quark (or quarg) was an unripened cheese made in many German cultures.

Whereas butter-making was simply a mechanical process of churning gravity-separated cream, ripening cheese was a complex chemical process involving precise coagulation and curing of curd into digestible cheese. Most farmers never mastered the art, and the quality of farm made cheese was always unreliable. Unripened cheese was easier to make and was a favorite way of preserving milk for the winter when a cow went dry.

Stores of cheese were not found in the Soufflenheim inventories. This was a bit surprising because repined cheeses could be stored for a year of more, and we expected to find at least a few households with a block of cheese. Nevertheless, the fact that many inventories included a cow suggests that butter, cheese, and liquid milk in season, were all consumed in Soufflenheim.

The Communal Herds

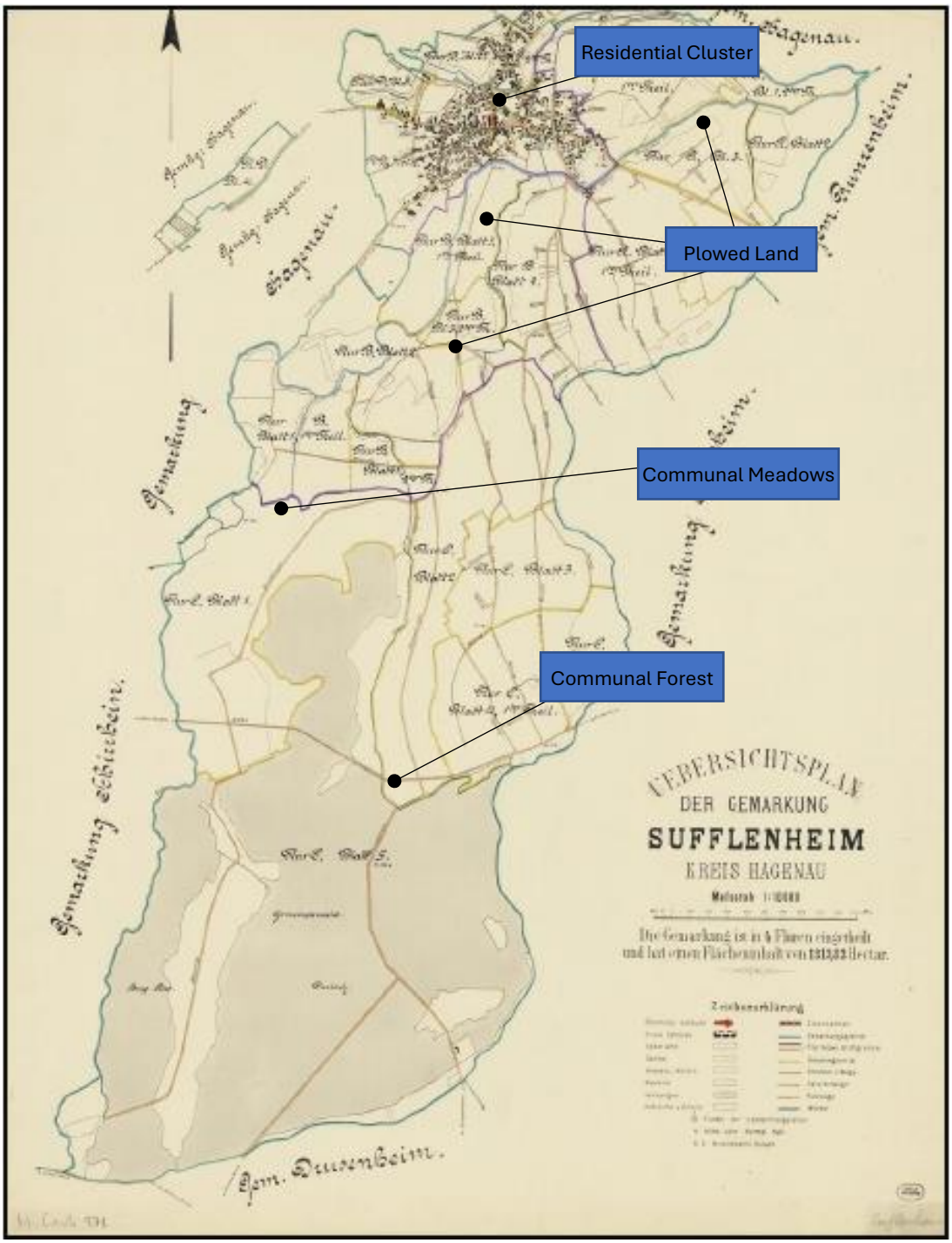
Farm animals must be fed, which constituted their primary cost. A plowman who owned a team of oxen, needed to feed his animals. A farmer who owned a dairy cow and some pigs needed food for these animals. To produce the animal food, farmer needed land, even if the animal was a forager. The organization of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century farming in towns like Soufflenheim relied on communal land to help feed the animals.

As we noted above, the land that made up the Soufflenheim ban (or the outskirts) was composed of the plowed land, the meadows, and the forest. The burghers of Soufflenheim jointly owned the communal forest and the communal meadows. Soufflenheim’s forest was located in the southern part of the town. It was over two miles away for the residential cluster. Families of the town’s burghers had the right to collect from the communal forest firewood that fueled their hearths as well as oak and beech for building purposes (p. 29). The forest was also used for grazing their pigs (p. 9).

Farmers owned their pigs individually but combined them into a herd (a “communal herd”) that foraged in the forest. The village payment and revenue accounts show payments to village employees which included “three foresters who look after the communal forest” and “shepherds of the swine-herd.” The forest clerks “looked over the forest applying the forest regulations, watched over cuttings of trees, punished violations of forest rules, and took care of the game” (p. 10). The “pig shepherds are hired each year” (p. 45), and fines were given to farmers “for grazing pigs in forbidden districts inside the forest.”

Historical documents also make reference to grazing the pig herd in forests that neighbored Soufflenheim. The Haguenau forest was both the largest forest in Alsace and a royal forest owned by

the King of France. In the 1750s and 1760s the town of Soufflenheim paid the royal authorities for access to graze the Soufflenheim pig herd in the royal forest. Similarly, in the 1730s the burghers of Soufflenheim leased forest land from the neighboring town of Drusenheim. Leasing forest land to graze pigs was known as pannage, suggesting it was a common practice.



Soufflenheim Land Use

The residential cluster is in the north of the town. The plowed land is directly south and east of the residential village. The communal forest takes up the southern part of the town - the shaded area on this map. The communal meadows are north of the forest.

Thus, each owner of a pig did not need to maintain separate pieces of land for their animal to forage upon. The pigs foraged for their food in the communal forest and the town paid for grazing privileges in neighboring forests.

Although pigs were individually owned, they were cared for within a cooperative system. Each resident did not keep their own animal at their home. Instead, the animals were kept in a single herd and the pig herder managed the combined pig herd. Pig breeding was an important matter for the town burghers and thereby for the pig herder as well. The herder was part of the town's staff and was paid out of the town accounts.

Communal organization was also used for the cattle herd. In 1662 the Soufflenheim ban contained 291.5 "Acker of meadows," of which 169 were communal meadows. That is, 58 percent of the land devoted to meadows was owned in common by the town's burghers and they used these communal meadows to graze their cattle (p. 28). We are told by the authors of *Soufflenheim: a city in search of its history*, that "[cattle] did not stay in stables but were driven in a herd into the ban to graze, in winter too." And that "shepherds must mark their cattle so that they can recognize each piece and find again more easily if lost, same for pigs, also marked two times in the year. Cowboys also shorten the horns of herd to avoid accidents" (p. 49).

The same source summarized the communal characteristics of livestock husbandry: "Stock rearing is important. The communal herd is composed of cattle and pigs, shepherds care for them. … The herd is driven into the communal grazing place, but also to the communal forest and royal forest (forest of Haguenau) to feed the pigs and pasture of cattle, in summertime and in winter." (p. 48)

It was the joint responsibility of the town's burghers, as a corporate body, to maintain the communal forest and the communal meadows. As for the latter, we are told in *Soufflenheim: a city in search of its history*, "the meadows must be well kept, and the ditches cleaned out because of flooding. A specific employee, named the Friese was appointed to the draining. He was in charge of the main ditch, named the Landgraben that needs periodic dredging. In 1683 and 1684 he receives a salary to measure it, to dig it, and to improve it. He does the same for the Stockmattengraben ditch and receives payment to create a new ditch" (p. 28).

We also read in *Soufflenheim: a city in search of its history* about a communal bull. It "is often mentioned [in the town accounts]; when he needs to be cared for or when it is time to acquire another one." Dairy cattle needed to give birth to one calf per year to continue producing milk. Thus, a bull was a necessary part of a farm's dairy function. However, for farmers with only one or two cows, it would have been far too costly to keep their own bull. A communal bull who could be shared by many farmers solved this problem. The town, as a body, also cared for the bull. In 1743 and 1744, for example, the town bought medicine for the bull. And, in 1748, 12 gulden was "paid to Joseph Mary, physician here, for medicine dispensed to the local bull."

Goats and Sheep

In his Pulitzer Prize winning work, *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, Jared Diamond investigated the development of Eurasian civilization and emphasized the importance of large, domesticated animals (over 100 pounds or 45 kg). Historically five large domestic animals become ubiquitous in farmyards across Eurasia. Those five were the goat, the sheep, the pig, the horse, and the cow. Three of these five animals were common in eighteenth century Soufflenheim. Although the data set includes instances of all five animals.

In addition to cattle, horses, and pigs, one inventory contained a goat and two contained sheep. In the latter case, both inventories contained two sheep. Goats have been used for milk, meat, fur, and skins across much of the world. Milk from goats was often turned into goat cheese. But it is not clear what

function was served by the goat at Soufflenheim. It was found in a 1707 inventory along with three cows and two oxen.

Sheep were raised for fleece, meat (lamb, mutton) and milk. A sheep's wool was the most widely used animal fiber and may have been the primary purpose of the sheep at Soufflenheim. The first Soufflenheim inventory with sheep was dated 1734 and the second was 1762. Wool clothing was a common item in the data set. The woolen items included stockings, dresses, scarfs, trousers, camisoles, and a few coats. It is very possible that some families spun and wove their own woolen goods from the wool of their own sheep. But this does not seem to have been common.

Conclusion

Estate inventories from the town of Soufflenheim revealed characteristics of domestic barnyard animals during the eighteenth-century. Historically five large domestic animals become ubiquitous in European farmyards—cattle, pigs, horses, goats, and sheep. Three of these five animals were common in eighteenth century Soufflenheim. Chickens and geese were also common at Soufflenheim.

The cattle identified in the fifty-five inventories used for this study were either ox or cow, that is, a work animal or a dairy animal. These cattle may have produced beef when they could no longer draft or milk. Calves were a necessary by-product of dairy cows and may have been another source of meat. In addition to the ox, work horses were common in Soufflenheim barnyards. Eighteenth-century farms used both oxen and horses as draft animals. They pulled plows and harrows in the grain fields as well as wagons and carts on the roads.

Pigs may have been the most important source of meat in eighteenth century Soufflenheim. Many of the inventories contained pigs while salted pork was the most common meat item found in the inventories. In addition to the large, domesticated animals, the barnyards of Soufflenheim keep chickens and geese. Both produced eggs for the household kitchen and geese produced meat for important feast days.

The data set for this study included inventories from each decade between 1700 and 1790. In this data set, only one inventory contained a goat and only two contained sheep. It appears the goats and sheep were not common in Soufflenheim barnyards. Although eighteenth century Soufflenheim was a self-sufficient community, there were some goods that were purchased from the outside. These included cast iron cookware (as noted in "The Soufflenheim Kitchen"), salt for curing meat and vegetables, and wool for woolen cloth.

This investigation of the Soufflenheim barnyard also supports the view that the agricultural system in the upper Rhine valley was significantly different than the agricultural system familiar to those of us living in the United States. Contemporary western agriculture depends on intensive farming practices, eighteenth century Soufflenheim was different.

With intensive farming practices used in most Western parts of today's world, dairy cows tend to be kept in zero-grazing conditions with all their fodder brought to them; pigs are housed in climate-controlled buildings and never go outdoors; poultry are reared in barns and kept in cages as laying birds under lighting-controlled conditions.

Eighteenth century Soufflenheim employed an extensive system of animal husbandry. That system involved animals roaming under the supervision of a herdsman. The pigs and poultry obtained much of their nutrition from foraging in the forest or around the village. The cattle herd and the horses grazed over communal lands.

Historians tell us that this system of agriculture was not quick to change. The French Revolution and the reign of Napoleon Boneparte, which brought so much change to the realms of cities and politics, had only slight impact on the agricultural system. The extensive system of animal husbandry survived until the end of the nineteenth century.

Sources

Comments on an early draft of this essay by Robert Wideen and Mary Nuwer greatly improved the final version.

Primary data
Robert Wideen, ed., *Soufflenheim Inventories: 1700 -1749* (Soufflenheim Genealogy Research and History) https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/c0db0dfe-27d2-4632-889f-eeb26fbb14e1/downloads/Inventories%201700-1749.pdf

Robert Wideen, ed., *Soufflenheim Inventories: 1750 -1792* (Soufflenheim Genealogy Research and History) https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/c0db0dfe-27d2-4632-889f-eeb26fbb14e1/downloads/Inventories%201750-1792.pdf

Lucien Sittler and Frédéric Geissert, *Soufflenheim: a city in search of its history*, History and Archeology Society of Ried Nord, Drusenheim, 1987. https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/c0db0dfe-27d2-4632-889f-eeb26fbb14e1/downloads/Soufflenheim%20Une%20Cite.pdf

Draft Animals

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cattle#Oxen

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Draft_horse

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ox

Chickens and Geese

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chicken

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Domestic_goose

https://www.breedslist.com/alsatian-goose.htm

https://www.fresheggsdaily.blog/2020/10/what-do-backyard-geese-eat.html

https://poultrykeeper.com/keeping-geese/feeding-geese/

Pigs

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pig#History

The Butchering and Processing of Pork in Eighteenth Century Williamsburg https://research.colonialwilliamsburg.org/DigitalLibrary/view/index.cfm?doc=ResearchReports%5CRR0031.xml

Dairy Cows

Oakes, Elinor F. “A Ticklish Business: Dairying in New England and Pennsylvania, 1750-1812.” *Pennsylvania History* Vol 47, No. 3 (1980): 195-212.

Hans Jürgen Teuteberg, “The Beginnings of Modern Milk Age in Germany”
https://d-nb.info/1140118900/34

Michael Nuwer, “A Lancaster Dairy Farm: The Nineteenth Century,”
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1bi_9dxzGeL86YqkNu8nNhtg-ux-0hwFK

Michael Nuwer, “Making a Living in Western New York, 1845-1880”
Making a Living in Western New York, 1845 - 1880

Other

Michael Nuwer, “The 18th Century Soufflenheim Kitchen”
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cgIIcUErD5gKNgI1IY2gQa2kpa094wrR/

OCCUPATIONS IN THE 1836 SOUFFLENHEIM CENSUS

By Michael J. Nuwer, July 2021

Apprentices are listed with their trade. Soldiers and students have been excluded, as is one person who was identified as a boarder.

There are 11 individuals marked as apprentices. Ten of them live in the same household as the master craftsman. This is the traditional master/apprentice relationship found in the guild system. However, when a father and son were living in the same house and working the same occupation, the son was not labeled an apprentice in the census. In many of the cases, the son was likely in apprenticeship training under his father.

A useful source for occupations and workplaces is *The Encyclopedia of Diderot*. It was the first encyclopedia to describe the mechanical arts. The volumes have hundreds of plate-images from 1751 to 1772 which show workplaces and tools. There are a few different places on the internet with online versions of the Encyclopedia. Here is the link to pottery making hosted at the University of Chicago: https://artflsrv03.uchicago.edu/philologic4/encyclopedie0521/navigate/25/23/

Distribution of Occupations

Tables

- Distribution of male occupations 1836 Census
- Age distribution of males with an occupation
- Distribution of female occupations 1836 Census
- Age distribution of females with an occupation

Distribution of Male Occupations 1836 Census

		All Occupations	Household Heads	Dependents
Agriculture and kindred activities		**15.5%**	**17.2%**	**11.7%**
	Plowman	100	75	25
	Shepherd	2	2	0
	Castrator	1	1	0
Forests and lumber		**3.8%**	**4.6%**	**1.9%**
	Forester	4	3	1
	Charcoal Maker	3	3	0
	Pit Sawyer	3	3	0
	Wood Sawyer	5	5	0
	Woodcutter	9	6	3
	Tinder Maker	1	1	0
Food and kindred products		**5.7%**	**5.7%**	**5.6%**
	Baker	24	16	8
	Butcher	8	6	2
	Miller	3	2	1
	Brewer	3	2	1

Leather and its products		**2.0%**	**1.8%**	**2.3%**
	Saddler	2	2	0
	Shoemaker	10	5	5
	Tanner	1	1	0
Building trades		**6.8%**	**7.1%**	**6.1%**
	Carpenter	24	20	4
	Mason	21	12	9
Metal products		**1.5%**	**1.5%**	**1.4%**
	Blacksmith	8	5	3
	Nail Maker	1	1	0
	Molder	1	1	0
Lumber and its manufacture		**5.4%**	**6.0%**	**4.2%**
	Joiner	7	5	2
	Clog Maker	9	9	0
	Cooper	1	1	0
	Wheelwright	14	8	6
	Bucket Maker	2	2	0
	Turner	3	2	1
Clay, stone, and glass products		**19.5%**	**17.0%**	**24.9%**
	Potter	100	53	47
	Tile Maker	16	13	3
	Tile Worker	13	10	3
	Glazier	1	1	0
Textiles and its products		**8.7%**	**8.8%**	**8.5%**
	Spinner	2	2	0
	Wool Spinner	3	3	0
	Weaver	28	19	9
	Dyer	4	3	1
	Tailor	18	11	7
	Hosier	1	1	0
	Hatmaker	2	1	1
Misc. manufacturing		**1.5%**	**1.3%**	**1.9%**
	Rope Maker	1	1	0
	Basket Maker	2	2	0
	Boneblack Maker	2	2	0
	Ironer	1	0	1
	Locksmith	3	1	2
	Journeyman	1	0	1
Manual labor		**17.6%**	**17.2%**	**18.3%**
	Day Laborer	104	68	36
	Carter	6	4	2
	Well Digger	7	6	1
Personal services		**3.5%**	**1.3%**	**8.0%**
	Barber	1	0	1
	Domestic	16	0	16
	Innkeeper	4	4	0

	Tavern Keeper	2	2	0
Guard services		**2.1%**	**2.6%**	**0.9%**
	Rural Policeman	3	3	0
	Footpath Guard	1	1	0
	Horse Guard	1	0	1
	Cut Wood Guard	1	1	0
	Night Guard	1	1	0
	Path Guard	1	1	0
	Wood Guard	2	2	0
	Road Guard	4	3	1
Town services		**2.1%**	**2.4%**	**1.4%**
	Mayor	1	1	0
	Deputy Mayor	1	1	0
	Doctor	3	3	0
	Priest	1	1	0
	Vicar	2	0	2
	School Master	1	1	0
	School Teacher	1	1	0
	Teacher Helper	1	0	1
	Roadmender	3	3	
Merchants		**2.9%**	**3.8%**	**0.9%**
	Grease Merchant	2	2	0
	Haberdasher	3	3	0
	Landlord	5	4	1
	Merchant	4	4	0
	Peddler	3	2	1
	Wood Merchant	1	1	0
	Trader	1	1	0
Misc. not otherwise specified		**1.7%**	**1.5%**	**1.9%**
	Musician	1	0	1
	Pauper	6	6	0
	Gardiner	1	1	0
	Hunter	1	0	1
	Valet	1	0	1
	Waiter	1	0	1
Total		**666**	**453**	**213**

Age distribution of males with an occupation

	All occupations		**Household heads**		**Dependents**	
Age	count	percent	count	percent	count	percent
less than 20	36	5.4	0	0.0	36	16.9
20-29	183	27.5	46	10.2	137	64.3
30-39	149	22.4	121	26.7	28	13.1
40-49	118	17.7	112	24.7	6	2.8
50-59	95	14.3	94	20.8	1	0.5

60-69	60	9.0	57	12.6	3	1.4
70 and over	25	3.8	23	5.1	2	0.9
Total	666	100.0	453	100.0	213	100.0

Distribution of Female Occupations : 1836 Census

The two midwives were married women, one day laborer was a widow, the remainder of the women were single.

Occupation	count
Servant	35
Seamstress	10
Midwife	2
Day Laborer	2
Nun	1
School Teacher	1
Miller	1
Retailer	1
Total	53

Age distribution of females with an occupation

Age	count	percent
less than 20	13	24.5
20-29	26	49.1
30-39	9	17.0
40-49	1	1.9
50-59	2	3.8
60-69	1	1.9
70 and over	1	1.9
Total	53	100.0

Mendicants

Six heads of household in the Soufflenheim 1836 census are described as mendicants (paupers), perhaps receiving assistance from the town and church.

“Soufflenheim, A Town in Search of its History” has references about the town using public money to help the poor, a bit like a town social welfare system. It sounds like the first part of the 19th century was characterized by some serious economic distress.

We read that “due to the lack of employment, many persons are threatened with hunger. The municipality is obliged to make efforts to alleviate misery.” Efforts made by the commune were cited for 1823, 1827, and 1828. At one point in the late 1820s we are told that “the [town] council accounts for high costs of life, misery and lack of work, it votes a credit of 5,000 francs to the workshop charity. The commune has to suspend a project of having a new organ installed, which would have cost 9,000 francs…. The workshop charity must operate as swiftly as possible.” It appears this economic distress continued well into the next decade. Soufflenheim records from the 1830s state that “a fifth of the population is poor,” and in 1838 “the municipality of Soufflenheim is searching for methods to improve the economic situation.

Historians have noted that during the 1820s and 1830s many regions in central Europe witnessed the growth of large numbers of people largely unnecessary to the new, emerging economic patterns. This was due partly because the population was growing faster than society could incorporate the growth, which meant unemployment, and partly because new technology was destroying the old ways, which also meant unemployment. The unemployment, however, was not a permanent state. People on the margin between the old ways and the new found themselves moving into and out of the ranks of the unemployed.

Joseph Messner was 57 years old in 1836 when the census listed him as a pauper. However, he worked as a day laborer in 1821, a wood sawyer in 1824, and a plowman in 1829.

George Eberhard was 54 years old in 1836. Birth records indicate that he had worked as a day laborer in 1825, 1830, and 1833. He was listed as a pauper in 1836, but in 1839 he was again working as a day laborer.

Joseph Braun was 43 years old when the census was taken in 1836. He had been a tailor in 1824, and then worked as a day laborer in 1827, 1830, and 1834. When the 1836 census was taken he was listed as a pauper. In 1841, however , he was again working as a day laborer."

Mendicants (Paupers) in the 1836 Census

Street	House	Entry	Family	Surname	Name	Profession	Age	State	Sex	Remarks
Rue Dite im Gübel	68	387	69	**DOPPLER**	**Michel**	Pauper	72	W	M	
Rue Dite im Gübel	68	388	69	**DOPPLER**	**Modeste**	Soldier	24	S	M	
Rue Dite im Gübel	68	389	69	**LENGERT**	**Bibiane**		33	W	F	Widow of Doppler; daughter-in-law of Michel
Rue Dite im Gübel	68	390	69	**DOPPLER**	**Joseph**		8	S	M	
Rue Dite im Gübel	68	391	69	**DOPPLER**	**Madeleine**		9	S	F	
Rue Dite im Gübel	68	392	69	**DOPPLER**	**Antoine**		6	S	M	
Rue Dite im Gübel	99	573	103	**BRAUN**	**Joseph**	Pauper	43	M	M	
Rue Dite im Gübel	99	574	103	**THOMEN**	**Marguerite**		44	M	F	
Rue Dite im Gübel	99	575	103	**BRAUN**	**Clotilde**		14	S	F	
Rue Dite im Gübel	99	576	103	**BRAUN**	**Catherine**		11	S	F	
Rue Dite im Gübel	99	577	103	**BRAUN**	**Louise**		9	S	F	
Brunnenberg	240	1348	247	**MESSNER**	**Joseph**	Pauper	57	W	M	
Brunnenberg	240	1349	247	**MESSNER**	**Gilles**	Day Laborer	21	S	M	
Brunnenberg	240	1350	247	**MESSNER**	**Marguerite**		15	S	F	
Brunnenberg	240	1351	247	**MESSNER**	**Veronique**		12	S	F	
Brunnenberg	240	1352	247	**MESSNER**	**Madeleine**		7	S	F	
Brunnenberg	255	1430	263	**GRAN**	**Louis**	Pauper	66	M	M	
Brunnenberg	255	1431	263	**MEY**	**Marguerite**		52	M	F	
Brunnenberg	257	1432	264	**EBERHARD**	**Georges**	Pauper	54	M	M	
Brunnenberg	257	1433	264	**SEILER**	**Odile**		46	M	F	
Brunnenberg	257	1434	264	**EBERHARD**	**Marie Anne**		22	S	F	

Brunnenberg	257	1435	264	**EBERHARD**	**Madeleine**		15	S	F	
Brunnenberg	257	1436	264	**EBERHARD**	**Georges**		12	S	M	
Brunnenberg	257	1437	264	**EBERHARD**	**Odile**		5	S	F	
Brunnenberg	279	1540	287	**MARTIN**	**Antoine**	Pauper	55	M	M	
Brunnenberg	279	1541	287	**WOHLIUNG**	**Catherine**		47	M	F	
Brunnenberg	279	1542	287	**MARTIN**	**Suzanne**		23	S	F	
Brunnenberg	279	1543	287	**MARTIN**	**Michel**		14	S	M	

MAGDALENA NUBER AND JOHANNES MOCKERS

By Michael Nuwer, November 2024

Magdalena Nuber was born in Soufflenheim on September 15, 1754. She was baptized at the Medieval Church on the same day of her birth. Her father was Niclaus Nuber (1726-1761; a farmer and tailor) and her mother was Marianne Hasser (1728-1800). Magdalena was seven years old when her father died in 1761, and she was ten years old when her mother remarried. On June 12, 1764, Joseph Adam became Magdalena's stepfather. [1]

Magdalena was married in 1778. Although her marriage certificate has been lost, we have her marriage contract which was signed on February 8, 1778. The wedding ceremony would have occurred one or two weeks later. Magdalena was 23 years old on her wedding day. Her new husband was Joseph Schoeffter and the couple's first child was born about nine or ten months after the wedding ceremony. Magdalena and her husband had four children. In the fall of 1786, her husband died leaving her a widow with three young children. Magdalena was 32 years old and had been married only eight years. [2]

Within a year's time, Magdalena Nuber remarried. Her second husband was a widower named Johannes Mockers.

Johannes Mockers had been born in Bühl in 1742*. He came to Soufflenheim at the age of 22. Mockers was appointed the new schoolteacher and director of the church school in 1764. At that time, the people of Soufflenheim made no distinction between church school and public school. The primary purpose of education was religious training, and schooling was important in so far as it contributed to the salvation of the soul.

Within a few years of his arrival at Soufflenheim, Mockers became involved in a "big project," the acquisition of an organ for the new church. The town had decided to replace their Medieval church in 1761, and the new structure was consecrated in 1766. By 1769 the town was ready to install a new organ. Mockers had "a good knowledge of the matter." Records indicate that he made trips to Haguenau, Woerth, and Nehwiller, "to examine several organs." The town historians Sittler, Elchinger, and Geissert tell us that Mockers decided on a model "fabricated in Rastatt and in 1770 the organ was delivered for 1200 gulden." It was "sent on five carriages from Rastatt." [3]

My ancestor Antoni Nuwer was born in 1760. We know that, as an adult, he wrote his own signature implying he was literate. Mockers would have been his teacher. If Antoni attended school from the age of five until the age of twelve, then he attended school between the years 1765-1772.

Johannes Mockers married three times and had many children. His first wife, Maria Eva Schaub, was from Bühl where they were married in 1765. Their first child was born the next year in Soufflenheim. Schaub died in 1785. We do not have a record of Mockers' second wedding with Magdalena Nuber, but their first child was born in September 1788. Johannes Mockers, a widower, and Magdalena Nuber, a widow, were probably wed in 1787.

The French Revolution erupted in 1789 and on July 12, 1790 the new government enacted the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. This law had great significance in towns like Soufflenheim. It sought to put the Franch Catholic Church under the control of French society. Key provisions included the local election of bishops and priests, the payment of their salaries by the state, and the requirement that electors sign an oath of loyalty to the constitution. The effect of this law was to eliminate the authority of the Pope over the appointment of clergy. As a result, a schism was created, resulting in a

“constitutional church” that was subservient to the state and an illegal and underground Church loyal to the Papacy.

Johannes Mockers was an outspoken opponent of this law, as were Soufflenheim’s parish priest, pastor Ignace Lemfried, and its assistant priest, pastor Félix Rumpler. Both clerics were forced to leave France in September 1792. The Revolutionary government also closed Saint Michael’s church at the end of 1792 and church property was sold at an auction.

Because he expressed his opinions openly, Johannes Mockers was removed from his teaching responsibilities and imprisoned. The town historians Sittler, Elchinger, and Geissert wrote:

> He has expressed too openly his opinions and has been imprisoned. His wife [Magdalena Nuber] asks that he be able to return to his family. The Director of the District of Haguenau deliberated on this petition, estimating that he made some incautious speeches, but has been sufficiently punished, therefore he grants [Mockers] authorization to return [to Soufflenheim] with an injunction to be more circumspect in his words and respectful of laws.

The political and religious tension did not subside in 1793. By the end of the year about 90 residents of Soufflenheim fled the town (as part of the Great Flight) and took refuge in the Palatinate or Baden. Johannes Mockers’ name appeared on a list of Soufflenheim residents who left in December 1793. Magdalena Nuber did not leave with her husband. She remained at the family residence where she died on February 15, 1794 (27 Pluviôse year II of the French Republic). Her death was recorded at the Soufflenheim town hall.

> Today on the twenty-seventh day of the month of Pluviôse in the second year of the French Republic appeared before me—Antoni Messner the municipality clerk, of the local council in Sufflenheim in the Department of the Lower-Rhine, who on the twenty-fifth of March seventeen hundred and ninety-three, old style, was elected for receiving the acts whereby the births, marriages and deaths of the citizens should be registered in the town hall—Joseph Adam the elder, a farmer, fifty years old, and Antoni Nuber, a day-laborer, thirty-four years old, both … living in Sufflenheim, the former the stepfather and the latter a close acquaintance of the deceased Magdalena Nuber; those same persons declared to me, Antoni Messner, that the reported Magdalena Nuber, forty-three years old, wife of Johannes Mocker, died this morning at three o’clock in her residence located in the municipality reported to us. In response to this declaration here, I went immediately to this place and assured myself of the death of the late … Magdalena Nuber and drew up the present act which Joseph Adam and Antoni Nuber have signed with me in the town hall in Sufflenheim on the day, month, and year said above. [4]

Johannes Mocker did not make the declaration of his wife’s death, because he had fled Soufflenheim a few months earlier. The declaration was made by Joseph Adam, Magdalena’s stepfather and Antoni Nuwer, her close acquaintance and her first cousin.

A law passed on January 11, 1795 permitted the 1793 refugees to return to Alsace, although the procedures made it difficult to actually accomplish the return. We know Mockers returned to Soufflenheim, but there is no specific date that confirms his arrival. Town documents state his name in October 1798 and “In 1799 he gets payment to rewind the clock and ring the bells.” The “next year he is again the schoolteacher, organist, and bedel.”

My ancestor Anton Nuwer was born in 1796. Like his father, Antoni (Sr), Anton (Jr) is presumed to have been literate because he wrote his own signature. His schooling may have started in 1801 at the age of five and proceeded until about 1808 when he was twelve years old. Johannes Mockers was, therefore, Anton’s school teacher. According to town historians Sittler, Elchinger, and Geissert, after his return from Baden, Mockers was the director of the school from 1800 until he died in 1814.

*The location of Mocker's birth is from Lucien Sittler, Marc Elchinger, and Fritz Geissert: "He was born in Bühl in 1742 and came to Soufflenheim aged 22 years". But, I think they are mistaken. My understanding is that he was born in Stundwiller, which is next door to Bühl (Bas-Rhin). The parish church was in Stundwiller, but it serviced multiple towns, including Bühl. So, the physical location for the sacrament was always Stundwiller, but the individuals were residents of other places. The marriage certificate says that Mocker's father was a resident of Stundwiller. The same authors givee his occupation as "schoolteacher, organist, and bedel" or at least that is how it was translated. A bedel is not an administrator. The French word was "sacristain." Maybe a better translation would have been "sexton" (bedel is a British word). The sexton is "a person who looks after a church and churchyard, sometimes acting as bell-ringer and formerly as a gravedigger." We know that Mocker signed many of the burial records at St. Michael's.

Mockers' marriage and baptism records are found at the Archives of Alsace in Strasbourg:

- Marriage (left side, 1st full entry)
- Baptism (right side, 6th entry)

"Joannes, filius legitimus Joannis Moquers" … Geneanet says his father was from Belgium, hence the French spelling.

Sources

[1] Record of Baptism, https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSRB-CQLL-4

[2] Marriage Contract, page 69
https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/c0db0dfe-27d2-4632-889f-eeb26fbb14e1/downloads/5de9c5ef-90e1-44c5-ae33-b987029281c3/Marriage%20Contracts.pdf?ver=1731374196653

After-death inventory, page 161
https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/c0db0dfe-27d2-4632-889f-eeb26fbb14e1/downloads/36a266d3-b7ca-49c8-a8a3-639d009d2208/Inventory%20Records.pdf?ver=1731374196653

Magdalena's dowry is discussed on pp. 11-14 in "The Estate of Niclaus Nuwer (1726-1761)"
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1--HqPzdVc2x4vByEDHeHLirr8SdBhyR3

[3] Lucien Sittler, Marc Elchinger and Fritz Geissert, *Soufflenheim Une cite à la recherche de son histoire*, Societe D'Histoire Et D'Archeologie Du Reid Nord, 1987
https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/c0db0dfe-27d2-4632-889f-eeb26fbb14e1/downloads/Part%201%20Good%20reduced%2011-10-21.pdf

[4] Death record, Bas-Rhin Archive. Top, left of image: https://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/ETAT-CIVIL-C468-P1-R284503#visio/page:ETAT-CIVIL-C468-P1-R284503-1408759

Translated from German to English by Mona Logarbo, "German Genealogy Translations" on Facebook.

THE SOUFFLENHEIM FARM OF JOHANNES KIEFFER

By Michael J. Nuwer, August 2025

Johannes Kieffer (1784–1852) of Soufflenheim was married on 21 February 1811. He was 26 years old. His new wife was Catherine Messner (1781–1828). The father of the groom was Laurent Kieffer, a 64-year-old plowman. The father of the bride was Joseph Messner, a 52-year-old plowman.

Johannes' wife, Catherine Messner, gave birth to six children. Those children are listed in Table 1. All but one of the children grew up to adulthood.

Table 1
The Children of Johannes Kieffer and Catherine Messner

Name	Born	Wedding date (age)	Spouse	Died (age)
Laurent Kieffer	2 Jun 1812	20 Jan 1843 (30)	Catherine Schmuck	30 Jul 1885 (73)
Louis Kieffer	12 Aug 1813	22 May 1843 (29)	A.M. Antoinette Aubriet	2 Aug 1849 (35)
Alexander Kieffer	27 Apr 1815	Never married		20 Nov 1871 (56)
Joseph Kieffer	20 Feb 1817			9 Mar 1819 (2)
Catherine Kieffer	10 Oct 1819	9 May 1843 (23)	Johannes Nuwer	11 Nov 1882 (63)
Johannes Kieffer	8 Aug 1822	9 Oct 1849 (27)	Celestine Nuwer	5 Apr 1905 (82)

Source:
Birth record, Laurent Kieffer, 2 June 1812 (https://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/ETAT-CIVIL-C468-P1-R284291#visio/page:ETAT-CIVIL-C468-P1-R284291-1409843)
Birth record, Louis Kieffer, 12 August 1813 (https://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/ETAT-CIVIL-C468-P1-R284292#visio/page:ETAT-CIVIL-C468-P1-R284292-1409908)
Birth record, Alexander Kieffer, 27 April 1815 (https://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/ETAT-CIVIL-C468-P1-R284294#visio/page:ETAT-CIVIL-C468-P1-R284294-1410055)
Birth record, Joseph Kieffer, 20 February 1817 (https://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/ETAT-CIVIL-C468-P1-R284296#visio/page:ETAT-CIVIL-C468-P1-R284296-1410179)
Birth record, Catherine Kieffer, 10 October 1819 (https://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/ETAT-CIVIL-C468-P1-R284298#visio/page:ETAT-CIVIL-C468-P1-R284298-1410320)
Birth record, Johannes Kieffer, 8 August 1822 (https://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/ETAT-CIVIL-C468-P1-R284301#visio/page:ETAT-CIVIL-C468-P1-R284301-1410502)

Throughout the Early Modern period (about 1500–1800) much of the land in Alsace was farmed by smallholders. Many of the peasant proprietors of these small holdings supplemented their farming by working as artisans in trades like weaving, shoemaking, or tailoring. A few peasant proprietors, however, could live from their patrimony. They often worked as plowmen and tended to be among the better off members of the rural population.[1]

Johannes Kieffer was one of those better off peasant proprietors. Vital records identified him as a farmer (*cultivator*) in February 1811, June 1812, August 1813, and April 1815. He was then identified as a plowman (*laboureur*) in February 1817, October 1819, August 1822. He was also identified as a plowman in the 1836 census and again in the 1841 census.[2] In short, he worked as a plowman for about 25 years.

Cadastre records provide additional support for the view that Johannes Kieffer was one of Soufflenheim's better-off farmers. Soufflenheim's Cadastre was completed in 1836 and provides detailed information about the property an individual owned. The Cadastre information for Johannes Kieffer was entered on folio 358, and it is presented in Table 2.

The folio shows that Johannes Kieffer owned 21 pieces of property in 1836. He owned a house, yard, and orchard in the village cluster and farmland in the agricultural fringe. The farmland was scattered in all four sections of Soufflenheim's Cadastre plan.

Table 2A
Cadastre Folio, Soufflenheim
Jean Kieffer, son of Laurent, folio number 358

Section	Parcel	Type	Meters^2	Class	Tax	Yr Added	Yr Removed	Owner/seller
A	226	plowed	1240	3	2.73		1844	Deed not found
A	245	plowed	980	3	2.16		1844	Deed not found
A	322	plowed	1970	2	5.91		1844	Johannes Kieffer
A	550	plowed	2160	2	6.48		1844	Deed not found
A	962	plowed	1480	2	4.44		1844	Children
A	1085	plowed	2330	1	8.15		1844	Johannes Kieffer
B	235	plowed	1720	5	1.38		1844	Children
B	236	meadow	220	2	0.66		1844	Children
B	395	meadow	870	2	2.61		1844	Deed not found
B	519	meadow	670	1	2.35		1844	Children
B	690	plowed	830	4	1.25		1844	Children
B	710	plowed	680	4	1.02		1844	Children
C	57	plowed	1970	4	2.96		1844	Johannes Kieffer
C	283	plowed	1485	5	1.19		1844	Johannes Kieffer
C	369	plowed	1570	4	2.35		1844	Johannes Kieffer
C	609	meadow	2285	3	5.26		1844	Deed not found
D	267	Orchard	400	1	1.40		1844	Johannes Kieffer
D	268	House		4	20.00		1844	Johannes Kieffer
D	268	Yard	480	1	1.68		1844	Johannes Kieffer
D	1202	plowed	875	5	0.70		1842	Sold in 1841
D	1358	plowed	1565	5	1.25		1844	Deed not found
A	776 half	plowed	1530	4	2.30	1839	1844	Children
B	693	plowed	1160	4	1.74	1839	1844	Children
C	494	plowed	1900	4	2.85	1839	1844	Deed not found
A	240	plowed	965	3	1.12	1842	1844	Deed not found

Table 2B
Cadastre Folio, Sessenheim

Section	Parcel	Type	Meters^2	Class	Tax	Yr Added	Yr Removed	Owner/seller
C	597	plowed	2680	3	6.70		1847	Johannes Kieffer
C	747	plowed	1720	3	4.30		1845	Johannes Kieffer
C	748	plowed	1690	3	4.23		1845	Johannes Kieffer

Table 2C
Cadastre Folio, Schirrhein

Section	Parcel	Type	Meters^2	Class	Tax	Yr Added	Yr Removed	Owner/seller

C	638	meadow	950	2	5.32		1849	Deed not found
C	641	meadow	1400	2	7.84		1849	Deed not found
D	415	meadow	8790	1	65.92		1845	Joh. Kieffer & children

The Village House

Johannes Kieffer's Cadastre folio provides definitive information about the location of his house in the village of Soufflenheim. That yard and dwelling was situated at parcel number 268 of the 1836 Cadastre plan. The property was on the corner of what is today Rue des Pierres and Rue du Marché. Johannes Kieffer also owned an attached orchard, located at parcel number 267. The house, yard, and orchard are marked in Figure 1.

Figure 1
Cadastre Plan, 1836
https://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/LIGEO-1513780#visio/page:LIGEO-1513780-14310

Johannes Kieffer may have lived in this house for more than thirty years. Indeed, it was probably his boyhood home. Before Johannes Kieffer married in 1811, the families of the bride and groom—the Kieffer family and the Messner family—entered into a marriage contract. Among other things, the contract conveyed to Johannes Kieffer "a single-story house with a barn, stables, pigsty, shed, garden, rights, and dependencies located in Soufflenheim, identified as number 89." The contract expressly stated that this acquisition was not "included in the marital community." In other words, Johannes Kieffer was the sole owner, and Catherine Messner had no ownership rights in the house.

This was the same house that was recorded in the 1836 Cadastre. Figure 1 shows the location of Johannes Kieffer's house at parcel number 268. The Cadastre also recorded the house number of that dwelling, which was 132. That house number was used in the 1836 census, and it provides a way

to determine Johannas Kieffer's neighbors. From the census we know that house number 133 was occupied by the family of Joseph Messner and house number 134 by the family of Antoni Nuwer. The precise locations of those two houses are also shown in Figure 1.

What can we say about the occupants of these houses before 1836? Evidence from historical documents tells us that the houses numbered 132, 133, and 134 in 1836 were the same houses that were numbered 115, 116, and 117 in 1819. When the 1819 census was taken, that document recorded Johannes Kieffer living at house number 115. Although not the same number as reported in the 1836 census, it was probably the same house. We can infer this because, in the 1819 census, Johannes Kieffer had the same neighbors as he had in 1836—Joseph Messner was living at house number 116 and Antoni Nuwer was living at house number 117.

Birth records for the families of these three neighbors confirm the house numbers found in the 1819 census. Table 3 presents the house numbers used in the birth records for the Kieffer, Messner, and Nuwer families. Before the 1819 census (specifically between 1815 and early 1819), the house numbers for the three neighbors were sequential: 109, 110, and 111. The entry for February 1817 ("98" was entered) was probably an error. The village clerk entered the old, pre-1815, number instead of the new number that should have been entered in the birth record.

Soufflenheim house numbers were then modified before the end of 1819, perhaps to accommodate the census which was certified by the mayor in December 1819. Table 3 shows that the numbering sequence from the vital records corresponds to the numbers used in the 1819 census, that is, 115, 116, 117. These numbers were used until at least 1829. Beginning in 1830, house numbers were no longer recorded on Soufflenheim birth certificates. Table 3 thus shows that the house Johannes Kieffer sold in 1843 was the same house that he received from his father in 1811.

In 1836, the Cadastre characterized the Kieffer house as a class 4 dwelling. For purposes of the Cadastre, dwellings were assigned a classification number and a corresponding tax rate. The classification number was based on the rental value of the property and reflected the quality of the house. Table 4 shows the classes and tax rates for Soufflenheim's housing in 1836. The Cadastre contained seven dwelling classes. Class 1 was the highest quality house, and it carried a tax rate of 40 francs per dwelling. Class 7 was the lowest quality house with a tax rate of 4 francs per dwelling.

The quality of Johannas Kieffer's class 4 house was above average; 72 percent of the houses in Soufflenheim were classified as lower quality dwellings. Table 4 also presents an estimated social status scale. Houses in class 1, 2, or 3 are defined as upper class houses (10.5 percent). Houses in class 4 are upper-middle class (17.4 percent). Houses in class 5 are lower-middle class (32.7 percent). And houses in class 6 or 7 are lower class (39.3 percent). Johannas Kieffer's house was thereby an upper-middle class dwelling.[3]

Based on the quality of his house, Johannas Kieffer can be described as a member of Soufflenheim's upper middle class.

Table 3
House Numbers from Vital Records

Record Date	Kieffer	Messner *	Nuwer
8 May 1812		77	
2 June 1812	98		
12 August 1813	98		
27 April 1815	109		
20 June 1815		110	
20 February 1817	98		

18 September 1817		110	
12 February 1819			111
1819 Census	115	116	117
10 October 1819	115		
28 December 1819			117
27 November 1820		116	
2 November 1821			117
8 August 1822	115		
22 September 1823		116	
8 December 1823			117
5 October 1825		116	
27 December 1825			117
13 October 1827		150	
15 December 1827			117
28 March 1829			117
29 July 1830		—	
16 December 1831			—
10 September 1834			—
1836 census	132	133	134
Cadastre Folio	132	133	134
30 August 1837			—

* There were two different people named Joseph Messner living at house number 110/116/133. In 1836 the resident at that location was Joseph Messner, son of Pierre Messner & Marie Anne Meyer. He married Marie Anne Friedmann on 15 November 1821. The 1836 census house number was 133, his folio was 500, and the Cadastre parcels were 233 and 234. He was living in house number 116 when his daughter Catherine was born in 1823.

The previous resident of that property was also named Joseph Messner. He was the son of Fredrick Messner and Marie Anne Messner. He married Marie Anne Ludwig on 8 August 1802. This Joseph Messner was reported at house number 116 in the 1819 census and his daughter Marie Anne was born there in November 1820. The younger Joseph Messner moved into this house between 1820 and 1823.

Table 4
Soufflenheim Houses

Class of House	Tax rate per dwelling	Number of houses	Percent of houses	Status Class
1	40	10	1.8	Upper
2	32	14	2.5	
3	25	34	6.2	
4	20	96	17.4	Upper-middle
5	15	180	32.7	Lower-middle
6	8	208	37.7	Lower
7	4	9	1.6	

The Attached Orchard

When Laurent Kieffer gave his son the family house in 1811, the property included the house and yard, but not the orchard that was identified in the 1836 Cadastre at parcel number 267. Laurent Kieffer acquired that orchard after his son's wedding. On 14 November 1831, Laurent Kieffer made

his Last Will and Testament. That document states that he had acquired the “orchard and garden adjoining my house… about four years ago,” that is, about 1827.

The Will bequeathed the orchard to Johannes Kieffer “by préciput and apart from his hereditary share in my estate.” In other words, the orchard was excluded from the estate that was to be divided equally among Laurent Kieffer’s heirs.

Similarly, Laurent Kieffer was the owner of two debts from his son Johannes. The aggregate amount of the debt was 1,089 francs. In his Will, Laurent Kieffer released “him from having to account for it in my estate, fully forgiving the debt ... also by préciput and apart from his hereditary share in my estate.”

Laurent Kieffer stated that these bequests were made “in recognition of the special care that my said son, Jean Kieffer, has provided me.”

Laurent Kieffer died on 20 May 1832, the death certificates said he was 85 years old.[4] At the time of his death, Laurent Kieffer’s estate would have been divided into four shares. In addition to his son, Johannes, he had two surviving daughters (both were married) and the children of a third daughter who predeceased her father. The heirs were:

- Maria Anna Kieffer (1769-1853)
- Margaretha Kieffer (1772-1838)
- The children of Marie Catherine Kieffer (1776-1814)
- Johannes Kieffer (1784-1852)

Although the evidence is not conclusive, it appears that at the time of his death Laurent Kieffer’s estate was the orchard and the debt. There was no notarized after-death inventory of his estate, suggesting that the estate was too small for such a legal document. Laurent Kieffer probably transferred his land to his children long before he died, and at the time of his death, there was little left in his estate. He therefore used his Last Will and Testament to give the orchard and the debt to his son Johannes rather than letting the law divide those assets equally among the four heirs.

Farmland

The Cadastre registers for Soufflenheim show that Johannes Kieffer owned 2.5 hectares (6.2 acres) of farmland. These documents designated farmland as plowed land or meadow land. Johannes Kieffer owned four parcels that were meadows, totaling 0.4 hectares (about one acre), and 14 parcels that were plowed, totaling 2.1 hectares (5.2 acres).

The Cadastre recorded both meadows and pastures as distinct types of land, so meadows were not the areas used for grazing livestock. Instead, meadows were grasslands intended for producing hay. Farmers did not plow their hay field. Instead, they cultivated a grass turf to build up a matted layer of grass. Plowing the sod would destroy that mat.

Johannes Kieffer owned a very large farm for that time and place. Ninety-five percent of the land holdings in Soufflenheim were smaller than 2.5 hectares (6.2 acres).

At the start of 1839, Johannes Kieffer’s Cadastre folio recorded the addition of three parcels of plowed land. That land came from the estate of Joseph Messner, Johannes’s former father-in-law. Johannes Kieffer’s wife, Catherine Messner, died on 26 August 1828. She had five surviving children. Her father, Joseph Messner, died at the age of 77 on 12 June 1836. At the time of his death, he owned 1.35 hectares (3.34 acres) of farmland, and he had three heirs. His son, Jean Messner (folio 492, husband of Catherine Adam), the children of his late son, Joseph Messner (folio 499, husband of

Catherine Messner), and the children of his late daughter, Catherine Messner (wife of Johannes Kieffer). The Kieffer children inherited three parcels of land totaling 0.46 hectares (1.1 acres) from their maternal grandfather. Johannes Kieffer was the administrator of that land, but he was not the exclusive owner.

In addition to the farmland in Soufflenheim, Johannes Kieffer owned land in neighboring towns. In Sessenheim, which is east of Soufflenheim, Johannes Kieffer had three parcels of plowed land. Together they totaled 0.6 hectares (1.5 acres). In Schirrhein, to the south of Soufflenheim, Johannes Kieffer owned three more parcels of land. These were meadows and together totaled 1.1 hectares (2.75 acres). Thus, Johannes Kieffer's farm contained 4.2 hectares (10.4 acres) of land spread across three towns.

When Johannes Kieffer and Catherine Messner were married in 1811, their families entered into a marriage contract. Section one of the contract states that the married couple would adopt "the system of community property as regulated by the Napoleonic Code."

Under French law, community property belonged to both spouses, and the community of property remained undivided during the duration of the marriage. In the case of Johannes Kieffer and Catherine Messner's marriage, the community of property applied to land acquired during their marriage. However, land owned before the marriage or acquired through inheritance remained separate property.

Ownership of property did not permit Catherine Messner to hold administrative control of her property. French law specified that community property was under the control of the husband whose powers were almost as extensive as if he was the sole owner. The separate property of the wife was also under the control of her husband, but with a few restrictions. The husband could not alienate (i.e., sell), pledge, or exchange his wife's separate property without her consent. Moreover, under the law, the husband was treated as if he was an agent of his wife's property, and therefore, was required to account for the financial and physical status of the property. For example, a husband had to report to his wife the rental income generated by her property.

These legal strictures were fundamentally connected with the patrimony of a family.[5] When Catherine Messner died in 1828, her after-death inventory identified specific parcels of land that she owned separately from her husband and specific parcels that were community owned. The land that Catherine Messner owned separately from her husband had been inherited from her father and mother. If her husband, Johannes Kieffer, had full ownership of that land (either as community property when they were married or as inheritance when Catherine died) and if Johannes Kieffer fathered additional children with another wife (before or after his marriage to Catherine), then those children, having rights to the property owned by their father, would inherit part of the Messner family's patrimony, even though those children had no genetic link to Catherine Messner and her father. The law's structure prevented this. Any land that came to the Johannes Kieffer family through his wife was reserved for her children.

The order of precedence for inheritance was as follows:

- children (or, if they are deceased, their children)
- parents and privileged collateral heirs (siblings or, if deceased, nephews and nieces)
- grandparents
- surviving spouse
- other collateral heirs (uncles, aunts, cousins, etc.).

In the specific case of Johannes Kieffer, he did not father any children outside his marriage to Catherine Messner. Therefore, Catherine's children would have inherited her land regardless of the

order of precedence for inheritance. But no one was assured of that outcome when Johannes and Catherine were married in 1811.

The structure of the law illustrates the fundamental connection between the family and patrimony. For our ancestors, a family was more than a network of individuals. It was also a collection of properties. Today we think of farmland as a factor of production, that is, an economic asset that generates income. Our ancestors had a different view of their property. “To conceive of property without the family—the family without property—is impossible” was a dominate view.[6] The Catholics Church supported and advocated for this view. Family life was built around bonds between parent and child in which spiritual and moral values were transferred from the parents to the children. Property ownership and patrimony were thought to strengthen those bonds and were thus fundamental to maintaining the spiritual and moral values of the family, while the loosening of parental-child bonds was viewed as the primary cause of spiritual and moral decline. And those parent-child bonds were loosened by the loss of property and patrimony.

Bonds of family affection and bonds of property were in principle thought to be the complementary foundations of family solidarity and its cohesiveness.

In this view of family life, the family functioned harmoniously when each of its members performed its designated function, in the same way as the organs of a human body contribute individually to its general health and functionality. The success of this family life depended on the willingness of both parents and their children to subordinate their individual interests to those of the family. In this way of thinking, individual liberty was a fundamental threat to family life.

Heritable property was the glue that bound this family structure together. “[Without heritable property] there is no family, and the poor man is proof.... His children disperse, succeeding generations soon forget their names. … The family is nothing, or nearly nonexistent for the poor.”[7] Johannes Kieffer and his family acted in ways that illustrate their acceptance of this link between property and family bonds. Sensing the threat to these bonds in Soufflenheim they sought to transplant them in North America.

Emigration

Johannes Kieffer and his family emigrated from Soufflenheim in August 1843. The year before he left, he controlled 27 parcels of land in three towns.

Parcels	Type	Meters^2	Acres	Town	Deeds of sale found	
					Parcels	Meters^2
17	plowed	25,535	6.3	Soufflenheim	11	16,725
4	meadow	4,045	1.0	Soufflenheim	2	890
3	plowed	6,090	1.5	Sessenheim	3	6,090
3	meadow	11,140	2.8	Schirrhein	1	8,790

At the beginning of 1843, Johannes paid taxes on this land. In Soufflenheim, his village house, yard, and orchard were assessed for 23.08 francs. The 21 parcels of farmland that he controlled in Soufflenheim were assessed for 60.16 francs. In addition, Johannes Kieffer paid 15.23 francs for three parcels of land that he controlled in Sessenheim and 79.08 francs for three parcels of land that he controlled in Schirrhein—one of those parcels was a very large meadow.

Most of that land was sold in 1843 before Johannes Kieffer left Soufflenheim. A deed-of-sale was found in the Alsace Archive for his house and for 17 of the 27 parcels of farmland. In two instances, two parcels of land were sold on the same deed, thus, 15 deeds of sale were used to transfer 17

parcels of farmland. Together these deeds account for approximately two-thirds of the farmland that Johannes Kieffer controlled.

The house, yard, and orchard were sold to Mathieu Kieffer, a Soufflenheim farmer, and his wife, Régine Haaser, on 5 May 1843 (deed number 516). The property was described as: “A single-story dwelling on the ground floor, barn, stable, stall, pigsty, well, garden, courtyard, rights, appurtenances, and dependencies, all located in Soufflenheim.” Mathieu Kieffer and his wife lived in that house until 1862.

The selling price was 1,500 francs. Interestingly, the value of the house in 1843 was the same amount as it was in 1811 when Laurent Kieffer gave the property to his son. In a sense, the value of the house declined because in 1811 the property did not include the attached orchard while in 1843 the sale included the extra land containing that orchard. One way to look at it is that the orchard added no value to the property. Alternatively, the value of the house and yard declined over the 30-year period.

The buyers of the house, yard, and orchard did not pay the full purchase price in 1843. According to the sales agreement, the buyer would pay “in three equal annual installments, the first installment shall be due on 1 May [1844], and the next two on the same date in the two following years, each with five per cent annual interest from this day forward.”

It is also interesting to note that the sellers of the house were identified as “Jean Kiefer, farmer, and Barbe Voegélé, spouses, residing and domiciled in Soufflenheim.” This means that Johannes Kieffer’s children did not inherit any portion of the house from their mother when she died in 1828. This fact confirms that the 1811 marriage contract gave the house and yard to Johannes as a wedding gift, but the house was not part of the community property of the marriage.

One final observation is that this deed-of-sale, which was signed on 5 May 1843, said “the buyers may from this day forward take ownership of and dispose of the property as their own as of, today and begin enjoyment of the same as of the upcoming June twenty-five….” The fifth of May was a Friday, and the Kieffer family was permitted to continue living in the house for another seven weeks, until Sunday, 25 June.

As emigrants, the Kieffer family embarked from Le Havre on 16 August. Thus, there were seven weeks and three days between the time the family left their house in Soufflenheim, and they embarked on a sailing ship to North America. The family remained in Soufflenheim for some of this time. Deeds for the sale of farmland were signed after 25 June. One deed was signed on 27 June and another on 5 July, placing Johannes Kieffer in Soufflenheim on those dates. This leaves six weeks between the embarkation date and the last known date he was in Soufflenheim. The journey from Soufflenheim to Le Havre took about three weeks. The travels passed through Châlons-sur-Marne where Louis Kieffer and his new wife were living.[8] Johannes Kieffer and the other travelers may have stopped for a visit. It is also possible that the Kieffer family arrived in Le Havre well ahead of their actual departure date. In the 1840s, it was not uncommon for travelers to wait several weeks before available space on a vessel could be purchased.

In addition to the family house, Johannes Kieffer sold his farmland before leaving Soufflenheim. The first known sale took place in late April 1843. Seven of the 15 deeds found at the Archives were dated April 29. Seven more sales were made in May and June. Although deeds were not found for ten parcels of farmland, the Soufflenheim Cadastre clearly indicates that the land was sold in 1843.

There were three forms of owners among the 15 deeds found in the Archive. Seven of the documents sold land that was owned by Johannes Kieffer and his second wife Barbara Voegelé. Another seven deeds sold land “on behalf of” Johannes Kieffer’s children. Johannes was not himself the primary owner of that land. Finally, one of the deeds, the one for the very large meadow in Schirrhein, was

sold by Johannas Kieffer, his wife Barabra, and all five of his children. These seven individuals owned an undivided interest (although not an equal interest) in that meadow land.

In 1843 when the Kieffer family was preparing to emigrate, Johannes Kieffer sold these parcels of land. The very large meadow in Schirrhein was identified in Catherine Messner's estate inventory as community property from her marriage with Johannes. When she died, one-third of that property was inherited by her children. Thus, when the meadow was sold in 1843, the sellers were identified as "Jean Kieffer and Barbe Voegelé, his wife, Laurent Kieffer, a clog maker for himself and on behalf of Louis Kieffer, a soldier stationed in Châlons; Alexandre Kieffer living in Soufflenheim, Catherine Kieffer, spouse of Jean Nuwer, residing in Soufflenheim, and Jean Kieffer" (Deed number 608). In other words, both Johannes Kieffer and his children were owners of that parcel of land. That meadow sold for 1,800 francs!

There were seven other deeds in which Johannes Kieffer had no direct ownership interest. These properties were owned exclusively by his five children. The land was inherited by the children from their mother in 1829 or from their grandfather in 1838. The deeds-of-sale identify the seller as: "Jean Kieffer and Barbe Voegelé, his wife, *on behalf of their children*, namely: Laurent Kieffer, a clog maker; Louis Kieffer, a soldier stationed in Châlons; Alexandre Kieffer and Catherine Kieffer, residing in Soufflenheim; and Jean Kieffer, the latter still a minor" (emphasis added).

The children/owners were not signatories to the sales contracts and thus separate legal documents were needed so that the children could ratify these sales. On 28 June 1843, Laurent Kieffer, Alexandre Kieffer, and Catherine Kieffer declaring before a notary "that they ratify and approve the said contracts in all their parts."

Louis Kieffer and his younger brother Johannes Kieffer were not parties to this document because they were not living in Soufflenheim when it was signed. Louis was a soldier living elsewhere. He gave his brother Laurent private power of attorney to ratify the contracts. Thus, Laurent Kieffer signed "acting both in his own name and in the name and as the general and special agent of Louis Kieffer, soldier in the 12th Regiment of Light Infantry at Châlons-sur-Marne, under private power of attorney."

Ratification by Johannes Kieffer, Jr. was more complicated. He was living in New York, USA. The younger Johannes left Soufflenheim with a large group of emigrants in early April 1843. The group embarked from Le Havre on 24 April, which was before any of the properties were sold. In other words, Johannes was not in France when the properties deeds in which he had an ownership interest were signed. Thus, he had to send his power of attorney from North America.

That document, signed in Buffalo, New York, was dated 13 December 1843, which was after his father and sibling had arrived in Western New York. The document was then sent to his brother, Louis Kieffer, who was a resident of Châlons-sur-Marne. Louis traveled to Soufflenheim and ratified the sales contracts for his brother on 16 August 1844.

> Mr, Louis Kiefer, former soldier, residing in Châlons-sur-Marne, now in Soufflenheim, his native town …. Acting as agent for Jean Kieffer, his brother, a settler in the United States of America, residing in Buffalo, State of New York, pursuant to a power of attorney written in German, dated Buffalo 13 December 1843, executed before James Rochester, Public Notary of the said State. … Declares that he ratifies and approves in all their parts the said contracts signed by Jean Kieffer and Barbe Voegelé, his wife.

Louis Kieffer's Share

It is likely that Louis Kieffer received his share of his father's inheritance in 1843, that is, at the same time Johannes Kieffer, Sr. and his other four children immigrated to North America. Johannes liquidated his property in Soufflenheim and based on his future actions, will use the money to help his children get started as farms in Western New York. Each of his four immigrant children will inherit a part of the liquidated Soufflenheim wealth. It seems reasonable to think that Louis, who did not emigrate, received his inheritance before the rest of the family left France.

There is a document in the Alsace Archive that supports this view. As we noted above, some of the farmland recorded on Johannes Kieffer's Cadastre folio was owned by his children via inheritance from their mother and maternal grandfather. The ratification documents mentioned above identify seven parcels of land that Johannes Kieffer sold on behalf of his children.

Each of the children held rights to one-fifth of the proceeds from the sale of that land. On 5 July 1843, Laurent Kieffer, Alexander Kieffer, and Catherine Kieffer transferred one-fifth of the proceeds to their brother Louis. The document states that Laurent, Alexander, and Catherine were acting "on behalf of, and providing guarantee for," their brother, Johannes Kieffer, "who is currently absent."

The amount of the transfer was "four hundred twenty-eight francs, ninety-three centimes, and one third." The proceeds from the seven deeds sold by Johannes Kieffer on behalf of his children were 2,120 francs, one-fifth of which is 424 francs. The transfer to Louis Kieffer was within five francs of this amount.

It is presumed that Johannes Kieffer made a transfer to his son Louis representing about one-fifth of the proceeds from the other liquidated Soufflenheim properties.

Financing the Move to North America

Among the 15 deeds-of-sale for farmland plus the deed-of-sale for the family house, only four buyers paid cash for the property. The remaining buyers arranged some kind of payment plan. In all cases, the payments were scheduled for once a year. The due dates used in the different deeds included Saint John's Day, Saint Michel Day, Christmas Day, four were scheduled for Saint Martin Day, and a few other dates. One deed arranged for a single installment, three deeds arranged for two installments, the remainder of the deeds arranged for three or four installments.

In effect, Johannes Kieffer became a creditor, converting his real property into financial assets. The problem, however, was that Johannes needed cash for his journey to North America. Today, in the 21st century, turning real property into cash (i.e., liquidating property) is straight forward. When someone sells real property, if the new buyer is unable to pay cash, they can easily obtain a bank loan (usually in the form of a mortgage) and use the money from the loan to pay for the property. Whether paid in cash or with the proceeds of a loan, the seller receives cash which is then available for use in purchasing a different piece of real estate or for any other purpose.

In 1843, Johannes Kieffer needed cash to emigrate, but liquidating property in the early nineteenth century was not so straight forward as today. The banking system at that time was much less developed compared to the services provided by today's banks. This was especially true for the kind of banking we call commercial banking—that is, banks which accept deposits from the public and issue loans for the purpose of personal consumption or business investment.

Because installment payments were used to finance most of the land sales, Johannes Kieffer could not take his wealth to North America. To address this problem of illiquid assets (assets that have value but cannot be readily turned into cash), the notary added a third party to the sale contracts. This additional party was Jacques Schick, a "tobacconist and owner, resident of Bischwiller."

From a legal perspective, Johannes “assigned” (a legal procedure) to Jacques Schick his and his wife’s rights to receive and manage the installment payments from the buyers. The legal assignment was made in exchange for cash, “which the assignors [Johannes Kieffer and his wife] acknowledge having received from the assignee [Jacques Schick], minus a small agreed discount, all of which has been paid in the presence of the notary and witnesses.” In other words, Jacques Schick paid Johannes Kieffer a cash amount and in return he received the right to collect the buyer’s debt plus interest. Through this mechanism, Johannes Kieffer was able to receive cash that he could carry to North America.

That cash would be used to finance the family’s journey to North America and to buy farmland in Western New York.

Guardianship

Johannes Kieffer had one more matter that needed to be addressed before he could emigrate from Soufflenheim. Johannes was the guardian of his late brother-in-law’s children. Johannes’s first wife, Catherine Messner, had a younger brother, Joseph Messner, who died in 1828. Joseph’s surviving children are listed in the following table:

Name	Born	Age in 1834	Age in 1843
Ignace Messner	8 August 1817	17	26
Joseph Messner	15 September 1819	15	24
Laurent Messner	9 August 1821	13	22
Catherine Messner	29 October 1824	10	19
Thérèse Messner	31 December 1826	8	17

Joseph Messner’s widow, the children’s mother, died 4 December 1934. At that time all five children were minors, and Johannes Kieffer was named their guardian on 15 December 1834. Nine years later, in 1843 when Johannes Kieffer was preparing to leave Soufflenheim, the three oldest boys were no longer minors, but the two youngest girls were still under 22 years of age.

In 1836, a Cadastre folio for Joseph Messner’s children (folio no. 499), contained six parcels of farmland and a village house totaling three-quarters of a hectare. Three more parcels of farmland were added in 1838 when the children inherited land from their grandfather. The total was then almost 1.2 hectares.

Johannes Kieffer managed that land. The family house, which was number 154 in 1836, was rented to Marie Anne Burger, a widow with seven children. The farmland also was rented. These assets generated an income of 77 francs in both 1835 and 1836, the income increased to 94 francs after the grandfather’s land was added.

The notarized document “declared that, wishing to settle to the United States of America, [Johannes Kieffer] had convened a family council to appoint a new guardian, and that by its resolution dated 29 May, that Council, chaired by the Justice of the Peace of the Canton of Bischwiller appointed the eldest of the aforementioned children, Mr. Ignace Messner, a plowman residing in Soufflenheim, as guardian.”

When Johannes Kieffer left for North America in 1843, Thérèse Messner was one of the travelers. She was 17 years old. Thérèse remained in Western New York after immigration. She was married in Tonawanda on 11 August 1857 and died in Dunkirk on 22 February 1861. Childbirth appears to have been the cause of death.

An interesting piece of information found in this guardianship document noted that Johannes Kieffer loaned 250 francs to Laurent Messner in June 1840 “when the latter departed for North America.” Laurent Messner, who was 19 years old at the time, probably traveled with his cousin Leon Messner. Leon, his wife and 2-year-old daughter, traveling on the Ship *Ilzaide*, arrived in New York City on 13 June 1840 and settled in New Germany, Waterloo County, Canada.[9] There can be no doubt Johannes Kieffer was aware that many emigrants from Soufflenheim settled in New Germany, Canada. Yet Johannes Kieffer chose to settle his family in the hinterlands of Buffalo, New York.

The guardianship document notes that the loan Johannes Kieffer made to Laurent Messner generated interest. For the period “from July 1, 1840 to next July 1” the interest on the 250 francs loan was 37.50 francs. Johannes Kieffer withdrew 287.50 from the guardianship account and debited it from Laurent Messner’s share of the assets.

The interest paid on this loan, which was essentially a personal loan, was set at an annual rate of 15 percent. That rate of interest can be compared to the rate of interest that was charged for the real estate Johannes Kieffer financed with installment payments. The sale of his house, for example, was financed at an annual interest rate of five percent.

Immigration

Johannes Kieffer and his family arrived in New York City on 20 September 1843 and on 21 October 1843 he purchased a bit more than 51 hectares (127 acres) of farmland in the town of Lancaster, in Western New York. He paid $2,646 for the property (about 14,341 francs[10]) and there was no mortgage on the land. Clearly, Johannes Kieffer was able to liquidate his Soufflenheim property and to use the money to buy a much larger farm in Western New York.

Johannes Kieffer was 59 years old when he purchased the New York land. Two years later he transferred parts of that land to his heirs. On 24 June 1845, three land deeds were recorded by the Erie County Clerk in which Johannes Kieffer conveyed parts of his land to his sons and son-in-law. The first deed was between Johannes Kieffer and Laurent Kieffer (“son the John Kieffer”). The second was between Johannes Kieffer and Johannes Nuwer (“son in law to the said John Kieffer”). The third deed was between Johannes Kieffer and Johannes Kieffer, Jr. (“son the said John Kieffer party of the first part”). Each deed conveyed 31.5 acres of land (12.75 hectares).

Laurent Kieffer, Johannes Nuwer (Catherine Kieffer’s husband), and Johannes Kieffer, Jr each became owners of one-quarter of the Lancaster, New York farm. Johannes Kieffer, Sr. retained the remainder of the land, comprising 31.5 acres. Each of the four subdivided parcels had road frontage. A railroad ran through the land and owned a one-acre right-of-way.

Alexander Kieffer did not receive an ownership share of the real estate. Although a reason has not been discovered, Alexander Kieffer may have been—in today’s language—a person with special needs. He was born in 1815 and was seven years older than his younger brother Johannes. In 1845 Alexander was 30 years old. He never married. He was found in the 1850 and 1860 U.S. Federal Censuses living with his sister, Catherine Kieffer, and he was listed as a laborer on Johannes Nuwer’s farm. Records from the local Catholic Church (Saint Mary’s in Lancaster, New York) registered his death on 20 November 1871. He was 56 years old. There is no evidence that he lived independently from other family members. These demographic characteristics, in combination with the fact that he did not receive a share of his father’s real estate, are consistent with the possibility that Alexander had a physical or mental disability.

Johannes Kieffer, Sr died on 24 March 1852 at his home in Lancaster, New York. His Last Will and Testament dated 19 February 1852, bequeathed his real estate in the Town of Lancaster (31.5 acres) to his second wife and his son Alexander during the lifetime of his wife. Upon her death, the property

was to go to his son-in-law, Johannes Nuwer, with a provision that Johannes Nuwer financially compensated his sons, Johannes Kieffer, Alexander Kieffer, and Laurent Kieffer.[11]

Barbara Voegele died fifteen months after her husband, on 11 June 1853. As specified in Johannes Kieffer's Will, Johannes Nuwer inherited a legal interest in his father-in-law's land. Laurent Kieffer left New York and moved to Michigan in 1856. In 1859 he transferred his 31.5 acres as well as his interest in his father's 31.5 acres of land to Johannes Nuwer.

Johannes Kieffer, Jr.'s did the same, but not until 1873. The long period between Johannes Kieffer, Sr.'s death in 1852 and Johannes Kieffer, Jr.'s surrender of his interests in the farm in 1873 was probably related to his brother Alexander Kieffer. Johannes Kieffer, Jr. may have retained his interest in the land for twenty years in order to ensure Alexander was cared for. After Alexander died in 1871, that insurance was no longer needed.

We conclude this article with the observation by the historian Mack Walker. He showed that the bulk of the emigrants from Central Europe who went to North America in the 1830s, 1840s, and 1850s did so not to build something new but rather to regain and conserve something old. Those emigrants made the long journey "ultimately to keep the ways of life they were used to, which the new Europe seemed determined to destroy." In Walker's view, emigration was not so much an act of radical affirmation as an act of conservative rejection.

> They wanted to escape rootlessness (or mobility, if you prefer); or rather, they felt their roots being torn up, and sought a place to sink them again, for they could not contemplate living in another way. They were not characterized by "the willingness to break with old traditions ... to gamble the peace of their families and the security of their heirs on an uncertain future," to quote a typical description. … They were rather, I think, people who traveled thousands of grim miles in order to keep their roots, their habits, their united families and the kind of future they wanted for their families. They did not wait passively for their roots to be broken, to be sure; yet they were conservatives, who acted radically in order to preserve, and who journeyed to another world to keep their homes.[12]

The descendants of Johannes Kieffer took part in the creation of such a conservative community in Western New York, centered around a Catholic parish and a rural economy insulated from financial fluctuations.[13] This community was sought to perpetuate the intertwined family unit, its farm, and the salvation of the souls of its members.

The immigrant farms in Western New York were family farms in the fullest sense of the term. They were owned by the farmer, worked by family labor, and used to provide an equal start in life for each child. This was a social structure transplanted from the old country. The farm insured the dedication of time and resources that religious practice required, while religion provided the farm and its family with protection from God's seasonal wrath. Nowhere is this family focus more evident than in the norms governing the transmission of the farm from one generation to the next.

This community was not an adaptation of American practices by immigrants seeking a new way of life. The dominant practice among Yankee farmers dictated that their farms were sold outright when the farmer retired or were retained and rented until the farmer's death and then sold at auction. Then the proceeds were divided among the heirs according to the provisions of the will or intestacy law.[14]

A different pattern prevailed among the German-speaking, immigrant farmers in Western New York. Exemplified by the actions of Johannes Kieffer, the usual practice in New York, as in Central Europe, was for the farmers to turn the ownership of the land over to their children.

APPENDIX 1

Louis Kieffer, Some New Discoveries

Louis Kieffer did not immigrate to North America, but until recently there was no known record of him after 1836. We have a Soufflenheim birth record for Louis, he was also included in the 1819 census, and he was named in 1829 as an heir to his mother's estate. Louis was then listed as a member of Johannes Kieffer's household in the 1836 census. But there are no further records of Louis Kieffer in Soufflenheim after that census: no marriage record, no birth certificates on which he was a father, and no death record.

An 1844 power-of-attorney document found at the Alsace Archive identified Louis Kieffer as a resident of Châlons-sur-Marne, France, which is information that turned out to be a major clue for a family history researcher. Châlons-sur-Marne was a town in the Champagne province of Northern France. Today it has the name Châlons-en-Champagne. The province of Champagne is west of Lorraine and, as it turns out, Châlons-sur-Marne was on the main road between Strasbourg and Paris. Every Alsatian immigrant who embarked from Le Havre would have passed through Châlons-sur-Marne on their journey from Alsace to Normandy.

In the 1840s, Châlons-sur-Marne was one of France's large urban towns. Its population was more than four times the population of Soufflenheim (14,000 vs. 3,000). It was even larger than Haguenau—29 percent larger.

The Department of Marne Archive has a marriage record and a death record for Louis Kieffer. Both documents are unambiguous. They name his father and his mother, and they note that Louis was born in Soufflenheim. Louis Kieffer married Anne Marie Antoinette Aubriet on 22 May 1843.[15])The bride was born on 6 September 1815 in the city of Reims. She was 27 years old while Louis was 29 on the wedding day.

The marriage certificate provides the following information about the groom:

> Mr. Louis Kieffer, *chasseur* in the twelfth light infantry regiment on unlimited leave, residing in this city, duly authorized to contract marriage by permission of the field marshal commanding the department of the Meuse on April 20th last. Born in Soufflenheim (Bas-Rhin) on 11 August 1813, over 25 years old, legitimate son of Mr. Jean Kieffer, a farmer residing in Soufflenheim, who gave his consent to his son's marriage by an act executed with Me Kausseison, notary in Bischwiller (Bas-Rhin), in the presence of witnesses on 10 May of this year, and of the late Catherine Messner.[16]

Another document found in the Bas-Rhin Archive was a consent to marriage signed by Johannes Kieffer. That document was dated 11 February 1843 and states that Johannes Kieffer consented to the marriage of his son Louis Kieffer. It identifies Louis Kieffer as a soldier in the 12th light regiment; it states that the regiment was garrisoned in Lyon; and that Louis Kieffer was "currently on indefinite leave in Soufflenheim."

Interestingly, the bride-to-be was named Mademoiselle Adélaïde Obry, of Châlons-sur-Marne. This is not the same person Louis Kieffer married on May 22nd. Moreover, the marriage record quoted above gives 10 May 1843 as the date Johannes Kieffer consented to his son's marriage. Clearly, for some yet unknown reason, Louis' first attempt at marriage did not come to pass.

The May 22nd marriage document identified Louis Kieffer as a *chasseur* in the twelfth light infantry regiment. The French word *chasseur* translates into English as "hunter." In the French Army,

chasseur was used to designate military units that were specially trained for rapid action. According to one description, “the *chasseurs à pied* were the light infantrymen of the French Imperial army.” They were “independent units or companies within existing regiments.” *Chasseur* units were “armed the same as their counterparts in the regular line infantry (*fusilier*) battalions but were trained to excel in marksmanship and in executing maneuvers at high speed.”[17] The “hunters” were considered elite troops.

In 1832, French law established that every male citizen owed military service to the State. All male citizens who were 20 years of age were eligible for service. Louis Kieffer was born in August 1813 and turned 20 years of age in 1833. It is likely that he entered the French Army on 1 January 1834. He may have been conscripted into the army, but it is more likely that he voluntarily enlisted. Members of the elite units were typically volunteers.

The 1836 Census identified Louis as a solder but did not give his regiment. His service obligation would have been for seven years, and he would have been discharged on 31 December 1840. It appears that Louis extended his military service through at least 1843. This extension would explain why he was not reported in Soufflenheim’s 1841 Census.[18] It was common for soldiers to be sent home in anticipation of their discharge, which could explain the unlimited leave he was awarded in 1843.

In the 1830s and early 1840s, the 12th light infantry regiment had been assigned to various locations across France. In 1838 the regiment was in northern France in the department of Pas-de-Calais, while the following year it was garrisoned at Verdun, in the province of Lorraine. In the summer of 1841, the unit was camped at Châlons-sur-Marne, but then the regiment left for Lyon in September and October.[19]

Another piece of information from Louis Kieffer’s marriage certificate is that one of the witnesses was a man named Laurent Schmuck. Laurent was also from Soufflenheim. He was born there on 9 August 1815. His father was Gabriel Schmuck; his mother was Catherine Eck.

The 1836 Census found Laurent Schmuck living in Soufflenheim with his widowed mother and four siblings. He was 20 years old and had learned the trade of a tailor. When the 1841 Census was recorded, Laurent was no longer living with his mother and family.[20]

The Marne Archive has a marriage record for Laurent Schmuck. He had been married in Châlons-sur-Marne a few months before Louis Kieffer. His marriage certificate was dated 25 February 1843. But Laurent had been living in Châlons-sur-Marne since at least 1841. The marriage certificate said that Laurent’s mother had given her notarized consent for the marriage on 11 November 1841.[21]

Thus, by the end of 1841, both Louis Kieffer and Laurent Schmuck were living away from Soufflenheim. Louis Kieffer’s military unit was camped at Châlons-sur-Marne in the summer of 1841, while Laurent Schmuck’s marriage certificate placed him there in November 1841. Both Laurent Schmuck and Louis Kieffer were married in Châlons-sur-Marne a few years later.

It is possible that when Louis’ regiment was camped at Châlons-sur-Marne in the summer of 1841, he connected with his hometown friend, Laurent Schmuck. Louis then returned to the town with “unlimited leave” when his military term of service was near completion.

After he was discharged from the army, Louis Kieffer became a woodworker. In 1849, he was identified as a *menuisier*, which was a person who made and repaired wooden objects. Louis and his wife had no children; or at least none were found in the records at Châlons-sur-Marne. In 1844 Louis was given power of attorney by his younger brother, Johannes. Louis Kieffer died in Châlons-sur-Marne on 2 August 1849. He had been married for six years and was only a few days shy of his 36th birthday.[22]

APPENDIX 2

The 1819 Census

The 1819 Census identified the name of the household head, but no other household member was identified by name. Johannes Kieffer was listed in the census as the head of the household for family number 115. The household members were identified as follows:

Number of Male Children	3
Number of Female Children	1
Number of Male Servants	1
Number of Female Servants	-
Total Number of Persons in the House	7

Source: https://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/REC-POP-C468-R7276#visio/page:REC-POP-C468-R7276-57490

There were seven members of the household, four of whom were children. The three male children were Laurent (7 years old), Louis (6 years old), and Alexander (4 years old). The Soufflenheim mayor dated the 1819 Census as 1 December 1819. Johannes Kieffer's son Joseph died in March 1819 and so was not counted in the census. Catherine, who was born in the second week of October 1819, was the one female child.

The three remaining household members were Johannes Kieffer, his wife Catherine Messner, and his father, Laurent Kieffer. Johannes Kieffer's marriage contract and Laurent Kieffer's will both indicate that Laurent lived with his son after 1811. Laurent lived in the house with Johannes' family until his death in 1832. Thus, the male servant was probably Laurent Kieffer.

APPENDIX 3

Marriage contract of Jean Kieffer & Catherine Messner

Archives d'Alsace, site de Strasbourg, cote 7 E 44/41.
Office of Me Marie Joseph Alexandre Pareth, notary in Roppenheim, Bas-Rhin. Deed 33.
English translation by Claude Geyer

9 February 1811
No. 33
Kiefer and Messner of Soufflenheim

Contract of Marriage

Before Joseph Pareth, Imperial Notary for the jurisdiction of the justice of the peace of the canton of Bischwiller, arrondissement of Strasbourg, department of Bas-Rhin, residing in Roppenheim, undersigned,

Appeared Jean Kiefer, 26 years old, adult and legitimate son of Laurent Kiefer, farmer residing in Soufflenheim, and the late Catherine Lehmann, his wife, with his said father also present, duly authorized and assisting for the purposes hereof, future husband on the one hand; And

Catherine Messner, 28 years old, adult and legitimate daughter of Joseph Messner, farmer residing in Soufflenheim, and Marguerite Eck, his wife, with her said father also present, duly authorized and assisting for the purposes hereof, future wife on the other hand.

The parties, in view of the marriage which will shortly be celebrated between the said Jean Kiefer and Catherine Messner, have drawn up, concluded, and agreed upon the following civil conditions and conventions of the said marriage.

Namely

1. They adopt the system of community property as regulated by the Napoleonic Code. As a result, they establish a community of movable property and immovable acquisitions, which will be governed, managed, and divided according to the provisions of said Code.

2. The real estate contributions of the future husband are documented in the maternal inventory concerning immovables. Additionally, he brings to the marriage a sum of eight hundred francs in cash, partly from said inheritance and partly from his earnings and savings, of which the future wife acknowledges awareness. This amount will be immobilized and subject to recovery if necessary.

3. The said Joseph Messner and Marguerite Eck, his wife, whom he authorizes, hereby establish a dowry for the future wife and their daughter, who accepts, as an advance inheritance from their estate, a sum of seven hundred francs in cash, at the legal value of the franc, on the wedding day, without interest. The future husband assumes responsibility for this amount, guaranteeing it to the future wife and her heirs. This sum is hereby immobilized and will be subject to recovery if necessary.

4. In consideration of this marriage, the said Laurent Kieffer, the father of the future husband, hereby renounces, cedes, abandons, and transfers from now on and forever, guaranteeing it against any encumbrance or hindrance, to the future husband, his son, who accepts for himself and his heirs, without this acquisition being included in the marital community. He conveys a single-story house with a barn, stables, pigsty, shed, garden, rights, and dependencies located in Soufflenheim, identified as number 89. It is bordered on one side by the heirs of Jean Moser, on another by the communal street, with in front an another communal street, and behind by the said Moser heirs. The property is conveyed in its current state, as known and accepted by the future husband, who takes ownership as of this day but will not take possession or enjoy [the property] until after the father’s death. The father reserves absolute control and enjoyment until then, free from charges, servitudes, debts, and mortgages, except under the condition that the future spouses may share the ground-floor stove room with the father, set up their bed, cook and bake in the kitchen, do laundry, place their kitchenware, and thresh their grain in the barn’s threshing area. Plus one-fourth of the barn space, half of the last stable, one-third of the attic; and, in case of disagreement, they may at their expense convert the shed into living quarters. If the father relinquishes control earlier, the future spouses will take possession parts of the house he assigns to them. This reserved portion is valued at an annual income of ten francs or a capital of two hundred francs. The father specifies that movable objects affixed with nails, stones, or cement will remain with the future husband as part of this transfer, at an annual income of ten francs or a capital of two hundred francs.

The father specifies that movable objects affixed with nails, stones, or cement will remain with the future husband as part of this transfer. This transfer is made for the price of fifteen hundred francs, of which the future husband commits to paying his father on the wedding day, °+ without interest. The eight hundred francs remaining will be paid in eight equal installments of one hundred francs each, the first due on Saint Martin’s Day, one thousand eight hundred and twelve, and the following seven installments on the same day of each seven subsequent year, also without interest, under the specific obligation of the transferred property. °+ that of seven hundred francs

[Note in margin] Cross-reference of five words approved Containing the words, that of seven hundred francs

5. The future spouses agree, as an express condition of their union, that if the future wife only in the event that she outlives the future husband, with or without children, she will have the right to become

the unchallenged owner of the entirety of the said house and its dependencies for the sum of fourteen hundred fifty francs from which she may deduct the seven hundred francs she brings to the present marriage under Article Three. As for the remaining seven hundred and fifty francs, she shall pay them into the estate of the future husband in four installments, the first of which shall be due one year after his passing, and the following three on the same date in each of the three subsequent years, without interest. Each of the first three installments shall be for two hundred francs, and the final one for one hundred and fifty francs. Similar installments of two hundred francs each shall be granted to the future husband for the reimbursement of what he will owe to the heirs of the future wife, should he outlive her, also without interest.

6. The marital bed will remain the free property of the surviving spouse. Thus, all the above has been irrevocably agreed upon between the parties. Done, read, executed, and interpreted in German in Soufflenheim, at the transferred property, on February nine, one thousand eight hundred and eleven, in the presence of Pierre Mezler, joiner, and Sébastien Simon, carpenter, both residing in Soufflenheim, required witnesses, who signed with the parties and the notary. The future wife declared that she is unable to write or sign in any manner and made her usual mark with a cross.

Signatures

APPENDIX 4

Will of Laurent Kieffer

Archives d'Alsace, site de Strasbourg, cote 7 E 15 /56.

Office of Me Edmond Baltazar Aloyse Beunat, notary in Bischwiller, Bas-Rhin. Deed 3252.

English translation by Claude Geyer

N° 3252 Will

Sufflenheim 14 November 1831

Master Edmond Baltazar Aloyse Beunat, Royal Notary, practicing for the jurisdiction of the Justice of the Peace of the Canton of Bischwiller, in the Communal District of Strasbourg, Bas-Rhin Department, at the residence in Drusenheim, assisted by the witnesses named at the end,

Was present Mr. Laurent Kieffer, a plowman residing in Soufflenheim, who appeared in person in sound mind and body, with clear memory and judgment, as evidenced by his statements and conversation both with us, the notary, and with the said witnesses, all of whom expressly rendered the following in person at the office of the said notary.

The said Mr. Laurent Kieffer, appearing in the face of death and having commended his soul to God, requested that we receive his will as dictated by him, as follows:

I hereby revoke the public will I made at my domicile in Sufflenheim on February sixteen, one thousand eight hundred thirty, which shall be deemed null and void.

I give and bequeath to my son, Jean Kieffer, a plowman who resides with me in Soufflenheim, by préciput and apart from his hereditary share in my estate, the property of the orchard and garden adjoining my house, as I acquired it from Joseph Mosser, a turner of this place, about four years ago, so that from the day of my death he may use and dispose of it as he sees fit.

I declare, among other things, that my said son, Jean Kieffer, owes me one hundred eighty pieces of five francs and eighty centimes, amounting to one thousand forty-four francs, and nine pieces of five francs each, amounting to forty- five francs, which together total one thousand eighty-nine francs; of

this sum, I hereby release him from having to account for it in my estate, fully forgiving the debt and making any necessary donation, also by préciput and apart from his hereditary share in my estate.

I make the above bequests in recognition of the special care that my said son, Jean Kieffer, has provided me.

This was thus executed and dictated by the testator in the German language, in the presence of the witnesses, to us, the Notary, who successively translated it into French and wrote it by hand as it was pronounced by the testator; and thereafter, by us, the notary, always in the presence of the said witnesses, read aloud and interpreted in a clear and intelligible voice to the testator, and re-read and re-interpreted due to the testator's deafness, who declared that he fully understood everything and expressly wished for it to be recorded as the faithful expression of his will.

Thereof record is made.

Done and executed at Drusenheim, in the notary's office, in the presence of André Klein, Jean Huck, known as "the young one," Jacques Ostertag – the three plowmen – and Étienne Eichler, a carpenter, all four residing in Drusenheim, on one thousand eight hundred thirty-one the fourteenth day of November, between five and six o'clock in the evening. The testator, together with the said four witnesses and us, the notary, then signed these presents after a reading and interpretation in German, spoken aloud in a clear and very intelligible voice, all of which was perfectly understood by the testator as he declared.

Signatures

APPENDIX 5

Jean Kiefer's deed of sale for his Soufflenheim house
Archives d'Alsace, site of Strasbourg, cote 7 E 5.1/126.
Office of Me Eugène Kauffeisen, notary in Bischwiller, Bas-Rhin. Deed 516.
English translation by Claude Geyer

---

5 May 1843
No. 516

Sale and transfer of 1,500 Frs

Before Me, Eugène Kauffeisen, Notary residing in Bischwiller, undersigned, and in the presence of the witnesses named below,

Appeared

Jean Kiefer, farmer, and Barbe Voegélé, spouses, residing and domiciled in Soufflenheim, the wife duly authorized by her husband. Who, by these present, declare that they have sold, transferred, and conveyed, with joint and several warranty against any disturbance, debt, mortgage, or other encumbrance whatsoever

To Mr. Mathieu Kiffer, farmer, and Ms Régine Haaser, spouses, residing in said Soufflenheim, the wife duly authorized by her husband, both of whom are present and accept

A single-story dwelling on the ground floor, barn, stable, stall, pigsty, well, garden, courtyard, rights, appurtenances, and dependencies, all located in Soufflenheim, street known as "vers le Gaentzeck," bordered on one side by a street, on the other by the widow Georger, in front by the street, and in the rear partly by a path and partly by Ignace Moser.

As this building stands, continues and behaves without reservation or exception, but without any guarantee as to the condition of the buildings, and with everything wall, nails, dowels and other parts of the real estate or by destination real estate nature.

> It belonged to the seller Kieffer, having been transferred to him by his father, Mr. Laurent Kieffer, son of Pierre, a farmer in Soufflenheim where he deceased, as part of his marriage contract with Catherine Messner, his first wife, executed before Me Pareth, then notary in Roppenheim, canton of Bischwiller, on 9 February, eighteen hundred eleven, duly recorded, and furthermore, subject to various conditions which have since expired due to the father's death and fulfillment of payment terms, for which he must provide proof.

The buyers may from this day forward take ownership of and dispose of the property as their own as of, today and begin enjoyment of the same as of the upcoming June twenty-five, including all rights, active and passive servitudes and attachments, as previously held or claimed by the sellers or their predecessors, and shall be responsible for the payment of all taxes beginning from the date they take enjoyment.

This sale has been made for the price of fifteen hundred francs, which the buyers jointly and severally promise and commit to pay to the seller's order in three equal annual installments, the first installment shall be due on 1 May, one thousand eight hundred and forty-four, and the next two on the same date in the two following years, each with five per cent annual interest from this day forward.

As a guarantee for said payments, the inheritance sold shall remain subject to lien and mortgage as security.

At this time, and by these same present, the sellers assign and transfer with joint and several warranty as to the legitimacy of the debt and the present and future solvency of the debtors,

To Mr. Jacques Schick, tobacconist and annuitant, residing in Bischwiller, who is present and accepts,

The sum of fifteen hundred francs, representing the full price of the sale as of this day,

For the assignee to collect and receive said sum and its accessories upon simple receipts, according to the above-mentioned due dates.

This assignment has been made in consideration of a matching amount of fifteen hundred francs, which the assignors acknowledge having received from the assignee, minus a small agreed discount, all of which has been paid in the presence of the notary and witnesses, with full discharge and without reservation. To this end, the assignors fully subrogate the assignee in all their rights, titles, claims, privileges, and mortgages resulting from this deed, including the full effect of the resolutory clause.

All payments shall be made in current gold or silver coins legally circulating in francs, and not otherwise, either at the office of the undersigned notary or at the domicile of the assignee, at the assignee's discretion.

For the execution of this deed, all parties elect domicile at our notarial office

> Thus executed

Done and passed in Soufflenheim, at the residence of Mr. André Hellmer, innkeeper, on one thousand eight hundred and forty-three, 5 May, in the presence of the said Helmer and Pierre Schmuck, clog maker, both residing in Soufflenheim, upon request.

After reading and interpretation, the parties, witnesses, and notary signed the document.

Signatures

APPENDIX 6

Summaries of deeds of sale
English translation by Claude Geyer

Sale to Joseph Bastian	Deed No. 497
Date of deed:	29 April 1843
Seller(s):	Jean Kieffer and Barbe Voegelé, his wife.
Buyer:	Joseph Bastian living in Soufflenheim
Nature and origin of the property:	23.30 ares of land in Soufflenheim, canton Werb, cadastral reference section A number 1085
Operation:	sale of 800 francs and transfer of 600 francs
Payment terms:	200 francs cash and 3 equal terms, the first in one year from today and the other two on the same day of the following two years, with interest as prescribed by law starting from this day
Third-party assignment:	Jacques Schick, tobacconist and owner, resident of Bischwiller

Sale to Michel Mary	Deed No. 498
Date of deed:	29 April 1843
Seller(s):	Jean Kieffer and Barbe Voegelé, his wife.
Buyer:	Michel Mary living in Soufflenheim
Nature and origin of the property:	34.10 ares of land in Sessenheim, on one side Joseph Rieff, on the other side Michel Dobler
Operation:	sale and transfer of 800 francs
Payment terms:	800 francs in 4 equal terms, the first on next Saint Martin's Day and the other three on the same day of the following three years, with interest as prescribed by law starting from this day
Third-party assignment:	Jacques Schick, tobacconist and owner, resident of Bischwiller

Sale to André Issele	Deed No. 499
Date of deed:	29 April 1843
Seller(s):	Jean Kieffer and Barbe Voegelé, his wife.
Buyer:	André Issele and Françoise Obermeyer, spouses living in Soufflenheim
Nature and origin of the property:	20 ares of land in Soufflenheim, canton Haeglum, on one side Jean Messner, on the other side Jean Haberkorn, up and down a path
Operation:	sale and transfer of 400 francs
Payment terms:	400 francs in 2 equal terms, the first on 1 April 1845, and the other on the same day of the following year, with 5% interest
Third-party assignment:	Jacques Schick, tobacconist and owner, resident of Bischwiller

Sale to Germain Wilderotter	Deed No. 500
Date of deed:	29 April 1843
Seller(s):	Jean Kieffer and Barbe Voegelé, his wife.
Buyer:	Germain Wilderotter and Elisabeth Roth, spouses living in Soufflenheim
Nature and origin of the property:	20 ares of land in Soufflenheim, canton Gottesheusel, on one side Joseph Schlosser, on the other widow Messner, up and down a path
Operation:	sale and transfer of 580 francs
Payment terms:	580 francs in 3 equal terms, the first on 11 November 1844, and the two others on the same day of the following years, with interest as prescribed by law starting from this day
Third-party assignment:	Jacques Schick, tobacconist and owner, resident of Bischwiller

Sale to Michel Müller	Deed No. 501
Date of deed:	29 April 1843
Seller(s):	Jean Kieffer and Barbe Voegelé, his wife.
Buyer:	Michel Müller and Elisabeth Schutz, spouses living in Soufflenheim
Nature and origin of the property:	26 ares of land in Sessenheim, canton Hoertermattstross, on one side Valentin Müller, on the other a path, up and down a path
Operation:	sale and transfer of 300 francs
Payment terms:	300 francs in 2 equal terms, the first on St. John's Day, 25 June 1846, and the other on the same day of the following year, with interest of 5% starting from this day
Third-party assignment:	Jacques Schick, tobacconist and owner, resident of Bischwiller

Sale to Louis Jaeck	Deed No. 502
Date of deed:	29 April 1843
Seller(s):	Jean Kieffer and Barbe Voegelé, his wife, on behalf of their children, namely: Laurent Kieffer, a clog maker; Louis Kieffer, a soldier stationed in Châlons; Alexandre Kieffer and Catherine Kieffer, residing in Soufflenheim; and Jean Kieffer, the latter still a minor.
Buyer:	Louis Jaeck, living in Soufflenheim
Nature and origin of the property:	18 ares mainly arable land with a small part of adjoining meadow, in Soufflenheim, canton Oberädel, on one side Antoine Georg, on the other side Alexandre Kieffer, on one end the departmental road, on the other the buyer himself
Operation:	sale and transfer of 400 francs
Payment terms:	400 francs in 4 equal terms, the first on next Christmas, and the other on the same day of the following years, with 5% interest per year starting from this day
Third-party assignment:	Jacques Schick, tobacconist and owner, resident of Bischwiller

Sale to Madeleine Wilhelm	Deed No. 503
Date of deed:	29 April 1843

Seller(s):	Jean Kieffer and Barbe Voegelé, his wife
Buyer:	Madeleine Wilhelm, widow of Joseph Messner, living in Soufflenheim
Nature and origin of the property:	15.70 ares of land in Soufflenheim, cadastral reference section C number 369, canton Brannengewand, on one side the Kirchdoerfer heirs, on the other side the widow of Joseph Müller
Operation:	sale and transfer of 200 francs
Payment terms:	200 francs at next Saint-Michel Day, 29 September with 5% interest per year starting from this day
Third-party assignment:	Jacques Schick, tobacconist and owner, resident of Bischwiller

Sale to Jean Müller	Deed No. 504
Date of deed:	1 May 1843
Seller(s):	Jean Kieffer and Barbe Voegelé, his wife
Buyer:	Jean Müller and Marguerite Daul, spouses living in Soufflenheim
Nature and origin of the property:	15.30 ares of land in Soufflenheim, canton Kirlenfeld bey den Hartzöpfen, on one side Joseph Messner, up and down a path
Operation:	sale and transfer of 460 francs
Payment terms:	460 francs in 4 equal terms, the first today's day a year from now, and the others on the same day of the following years, with interest as prescribed by law starting from this day
Third-party assignment:	Jacques Schick, tobacconist and owner, resident of Bischwiller

Sale to André Helmer	Deed No.515
Date of deed:	5 May 1843
Seller(s):	Jean Kieffer and Barbe Voegelé, his wife.
Buyer:	André Helmer, living in Soufflenheim
Nature and origin of the property:	18 ares of land in Soufflenheim, canton Oberkohlgrub, on one side Félix Goetz, on the other side Michel Elchinger the old, up and down a path
Operation:	sale and transfer of 300 francs
Payment terms:	300 francs in 3 equal terms, the first on 11 November 1843, and the two others on the same day of the following years, with interest as prescribed by law starting from this day
Third-party assignment:	Jacques Schick, tobacconist and owner, resident of Bischwiller

Sale to Laurent Haberkorn	Deed No. 539
Date of deed:	19 May 1843
Seller(s):	Jean Kieffer and Barbe Voegelé, his wife, on behalf of their children, namely: Laurent Kieffer, a clog maker; Louis Kieffer, a soldier stationed in Châlons; Alexandre Kieffer and Catherine Kieffer, residing in Soufflenheim; and Jean Kieffer, the latter still a minor.
Buyer:	Laurent Haberkorn and Sophie Schitt, spouses living in Soufflenheim

Nature and origin of the property:	11.60 ares mainly arable land, in Soufflenheim, canton Hungerfeld, on one side Antoine Beck, on the other side the Bitsché heirs, on one end a path, on the other end through
Operation:	sale and transfer of 300 francs
Payment terms:	300 francs in 3 equal terms, the first on 11 November 1844, and the two others on the same period of the following years, with interest as prescribed by law starting from 11 November 1844
Third-party assignment:	Jacques Schick, tobacconist and owner, resident of Bischwiller

Sale to Valentin Müller	Deed No. 567
Date of deed:	9 June 1843
Seller(s):	Jean Kieffer and Barbe Voegelé, his wife, on behalf of their children, namely: Laurent Kieffer, a clog maker; Louis Kieffer, a soldier stationed in Châlons; Alexandre Kieffer and Catherine Kieffer, residing in Soufflenheim; and Jean Kieffer, the latter still a minor.
Buyer:	Valentin Müller, living in Soufflenheim
Nature and origin of the property:	8 ares of meadow, in Soufflenheim, canton Ritterberg, on one side Michel Kieffer, on the other side Ignace Messner, a ditch at one end, a field at the other.
Operation:	sale and transfer of 200 francs
Payment terms:	200 francs paid in this way: 50 francs on 1 April 1844, and 150 francs on the same day of the following year, with interest as prescribed by law starting 6 May 1843
Third-party assignment:	Jacques Schick, tobacconist and owner, resident of Bischwiller

Sale to Pie Ernewein	Deed No. 568
Date of deed:	9 June 1843
Seller(s):	Jean Kieffer and Barbe Voegelé, his wife, on behalf of their children, namely: Laurent Kieffer, a clog maker; Louis Kieffer, a soldier stationed in Châlons; Alexandre Kieffer and Catherine Kieffer, residing in Soufflenheim; and Jean Kieffer, the latter still a minor.
Buyer:	Pie Ernewein, living in Soufflenheim
Nature and origin of the property:	14 ares of arable land, in Soufflenheim, canton Langenthal, on one side Michel Messner, on the other side Georges Vogel, a path at one end, communal land at the other.
Operation:	sale of 400 francs
Payment terms:	400 francs paid cash
Third-party assignment:	none

Sale to François Haertel	Deed No. 569
Date of deed:	9 June 1843
Seller(s):	Jean Kieffer and Barbe Voegelé, his wife, on behalf of their children, namely: Laurent Kieffer, a clog maker; Louis Kieffer, a soldier stationed in Châlons; Alexandre Kieffer and Catherine Kieffer, residing in Soufflenheim; and Jean Kieffer, the latter still a minor.

Buyer:	François Adam Haertel, living in Soufflenheim
Nature and origin of the property:	11 ares of arable land, in Soufflenheim, canton Hungerfeld, on one side the Rauchel heirs, on the other side Jean Messner, on one end through, on the other end the road to Sessenheim.
Operation:	sale and transfer of 240 francs
Payment terms:	240 francs paid cash
Third-party assignment:	Jacques Schick, tobacconist and owner, resident of Bischwiller

Sale to Michel Dobler	Deed No. 599
Date of deed:	27 June 1843
Seller(s):	Jean Kieffer and Barbe Voegelé, his wife, on behalf of their children, namely: Laurent Kieffer, a clog maker; Louis Kieffer, a soldier stationed in Châlons; Alexandre Kieffer and Catherine Kieffer, residing in Soufflenheim; and Jean Kieffer, the latter still a minor.
Buyer:	Michel Dobler, living in Soufflenheim
Nature and origin of the property:	7 ares of arable land, in Soufflenheim, canton Haarentochel, on one side the Jacques Messner, on the other side Ignace Obermeyer, on bottom end through, on up a path.
Operation:	sale and transfer of 120 francs
Payment terms:	120 francs paid cash
Third-party assignment:	Jacques Schick, tobacconist and owner, resident of Bischwiller

Sale to Jean Wenger & others	Deed No. 608
Date of deed:	5 July 1843
Seller(s):	Jean Kieffer and Barbe Voegelé, his wife, Laurent Kieffer, a clog maker for himself and on behalf of Louis Kieffer, a soldier stationed in Châlons; Alexandre Kieffer living in Soufflenheim, Catherine Kieffer, spouse of Jean Nuwer, residing in Soufflenheim, and Jean Kieffer
Buyer:	Jean Wenger, Georges Wenger and Théodore Wenger, living in Drusenheim
Nature and origin of the property:	87.90 ares of meadow in Schirrhein, canton Bildery, cadastral reference section D number 415, on one side the path to Drusenheim, on the other side abutments, on one end a path, on the other end a Binder from Sessenheim
Operation:	sale of 1,800 francs
Payment terms:	1,800 francs paid cash
Third-party assignment:	none

Sources

1. Frederic O. Sargent, “Feudalism to Family Farms in France,” Agricultural History, vol. 35, no. 4 (Oct. 1961), pp. 193-201.

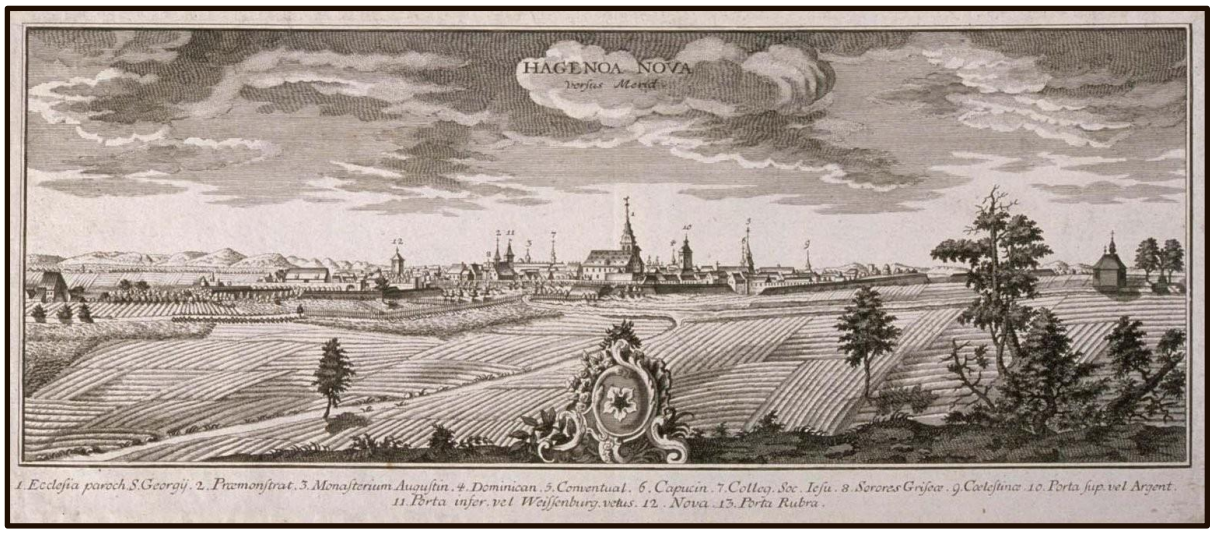
2. 1836 Census, (https://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/REC-POP-C468-R7464#visio/page:REC-POP-C468-R7464-78749). 1841 Census, (https://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/REC-POP-C468-R7465#visio/page:REC-POP-C468-R7465-78812)
3. Michael Nuwer, “Occupational Status in Soufflenheim, 1836” (https://drive.google.com/file/d/1hSuxSoG5nBNMvoqklc4td5PUkXoSUrgq/view)
4. Death record, Laurent Kieffer, 20 May 1832 (https://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/ETAT-CIVIL-C468-P1-R284542#visio/page:ETAT-CIVIL-C468-P1-R284542-1411260)
5. Katherine A Lynch, Family, Class, and Ideology in Early Industrial France: Social Policy and the Working-Class Family, 1825-1848. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988. https://archive.org/details/familyclassideol0000lync/page/n5/mode/2up. Michelle Perrot and Anne Martin-Fugier, “The Actors,” A History of Private Life: From the Fires of Revolution to the Great War, eds. Philippe Ariès, Georges Duby, and Michelle Perrot, trans. Arthur Goldhammer. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1990. https://archive.org/details/historyofprivate0000unse_s1j6/page/98/mode/2up
6. Katherine A. Lynch, Family, Class, and Ideology in Early Industrial France: Social Policy and the Working-Class Family, 1825-1848. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988, p. 36.
7. Roger Gougenot des Mousseaux, quoted in ibid., pp 36-37.
8. See Appendix 1 for more details about Louis Kieffer.
9. The ship’s manifest identified “Jacob Messner” a 19-year-old traveling with Leon Messner and his family. The current author thinks this individual was probably Laurent Messner. Leon was Laurent Messner’s first cousin, the son of Jean Messner.
10. One US dollar was worth 5.42 French francs.
11. Lynda Goldman (https://www.genealogy.com/forum/surnames/topics/kieffer/241/).
12. Mack Walker, Germany and the Emigration, 1816-1885, (Harvard University Press, 1964)
13. See Michael Nuwer, “Immigrant adaptation to a new home: patterns from the first generation” (https://drive.google.com/file/d/17ImHRXQKj2F0AggqbHAn861sSFPzcXFV/); Michael Nuwer, “The Independent Cultivator” (https://drive.google.com/file/d/1y7qe7id78lGg9cotjdYAcbeYOpxPWGzt/); Michael Nuwer, “A History of St. Mary of the Assumption, Lancaster” (https://drive.google.com/file/d/12wWAZVk-96_El-p93O13EOG3L18Tbj1O/); Michael Nuwer, “The Failed Assimilation of German Immigrants in Lancaster” (https://drive.google.com/file/d/1E1wRQ9tXd9GEJ1qZmAVZo1qVvhdELNXx/).
14. Kathleen Neils Conzen, “Making Their Own America: Assimilation Theory and the German Peasant Pioneer,” German Historical Institute Washington, D.C., Annual Lecture Series No. 3; Kathleen Neils Conzen, “Peasant Pioneers: Generational Succession among German Farmers in Frontier Minnesota,” in Hahn and Prude, eds., Countryside in the Age of Capitalist Transformation, 259–92; David A. Gerber, The Making of an American Pluralism: Buffalo, New York, 1825-60, (University of Illinois Press, 1989).
15. Record of marriage: https://archives.marne.fr/ark:/86869/ht6jx13cm2dz/cc5cedfa-4c83-416d-99f5-8d65d226b177
16. The wording in French was: “Le sieur Louis Kieffer, chasseur au douzième régiment d'infanterie légère en congé illimité domicilié en cette ville dûment autorisé à contracter mariage par permission de M. le maréchal de camp commandant le département de la Meuse du 20 avril dernier né à Soufflenheim (Bas-Rhin) le onze août mil huit cent treize, fils majeur et légitime du sieur Jean Kieffer cultivateur domicilié à Soufflenheim lequel a donné son consentement au mariage de son fils par acte passé devant Me Kausseison, notaire à Bischwiller (Bas-Rhin) en présence de témoins le dix mai dernier et de feu Catherine Messner.”
17. Wikipedia, “Chasseur,” https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chasseur
18. The 1836 census identified family members who were solders. The 1841 census did not identify solders.

19. Charles-Joachim-Edgard Malaguti, Historique du 87e régiment d'infanterie de ligne: ex-12e Léger, 1892, pp. 536-537.
20. Census of Soufflenheim, 1841, family #480.
21. Record of marriage: https://archives.marne.fr/ark:/86869/ht6jx13cm2dz/67b671fe-a4bb-4541-8323-06d967ac5b4f
22. Record of death: https://archives.marne.fr/ark:/86869/q47dp1v6zs90/1b439634-c3de-4fa5-ab49-5eaa95c3f152

AGRICULTURE IN ALSACE

By Michael J. Nuwer, February 2023

Below is an image of the city of Haguenau, France from 1751. In the early modern era (1492-1789), Haguenau was an important commercial center for northern Alsace and the administrative capital for the Prefecture of Haguenau. One of Alsace's ten free cities, Haguenau was governed by a council elected from families of merchants and nobles. The jurisdiction of the Prefecture extended to 45 villages, including Soufflenheim. The city is nine miles west of Soufflenheim, and a direct road through the Haguenau Forest connected the two places. Before the French Revolution, Soufflenheim was ruled by the Prefecture, to whom it paid seignorial taxes.



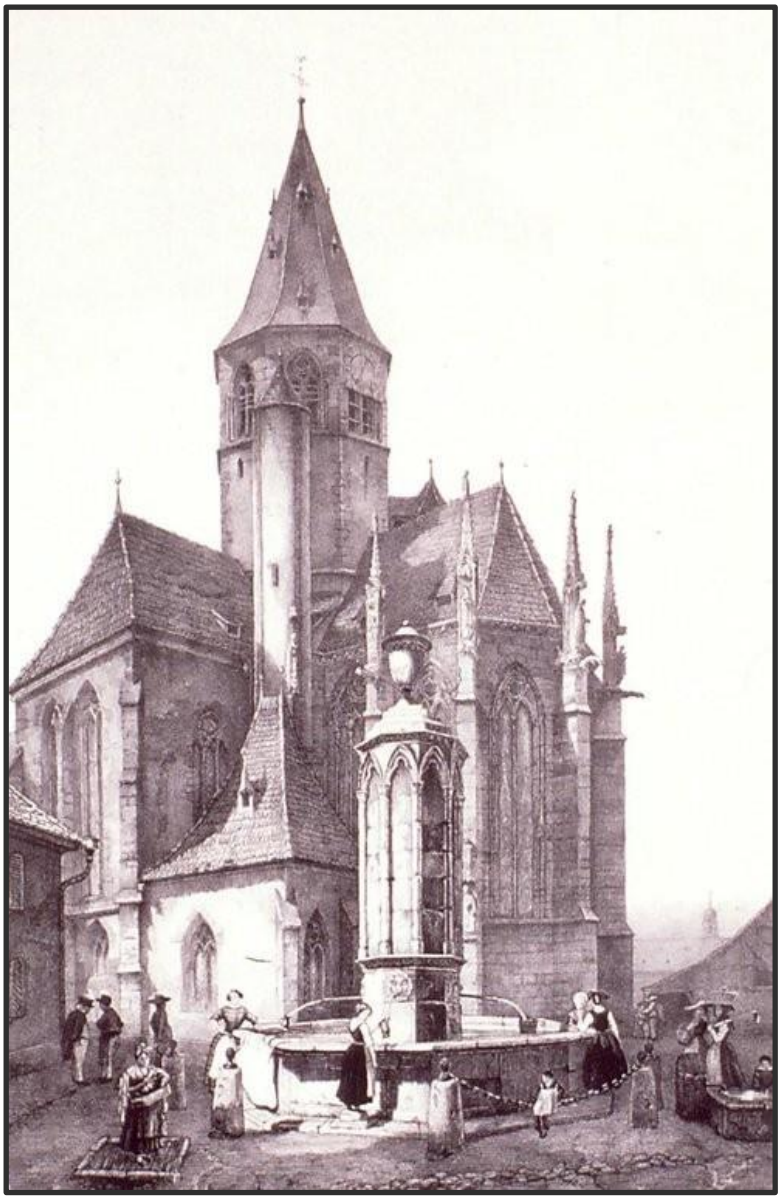
Haguenau, 1751. Source: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b102011807.r=Haguenau?rk=5064402;4

Haguenau was also the home of St. George church, the main Catholic church of the region. Although the Protestant Reformation (1517-1555) gained importance in Haguenau, the Jesuits took charge of St. George church and stopped the Protestant progression in the city. The Church of St. Michael in Soufflenheim was a dependency of St. George church. In the above image, St. George is in the center – the tallest building in the city.

This image of Haguenau illustrates the organization of Alsatian cities, towns, and villages during Mediaeval and early modern times. Throughout the Middle Ages central government was generally weak and townspeople needed protection from bandits and lawless nobles. Rural populations therefore tended to cluster close together in order to ensure their common security.

Due to such social clustering, houses in the open country were very rare. A typical European clustered village consisted of houses on either side of a main street, each with a small garden. The plowed agricultural land was located away from the housing cluster. People did not live on their farmland.

A striking aspect of the agricultural system was the division of the plowed land into narrow strips. The above image highlights that agricultural organization. In the foreground, the horizontal and vertical rows are ridges of dirt which divide the fields into long narrow strips. Hence the term “strip farming” is sometimes used to describe the system.



St. Georges Catholic Church at Haguenau
Source: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10227411m.r=Haguenau?rk=2854091;2

The strips were long and narrow because farmers needed to minimize the number of times their plow-team had to turn around. As a rule, the longer dimension of a strip (its length) was determined by the distance a plow could conveniently be dragged by a team of oxen and the shorter dimension (its width) by the number of furrows the oxen could comfortably work in one day. The traditional size of a strip in English history was a furlong (220 yards) by a chain (22 yards), the area of which forms one acre. This is the historical origin of the acre in Great Britain, and the United States inherited that unit of measurement.

On the European Continent, the morgen was the traditional measurement of area. Like an acre, a morgen represented the amount of land that could be plowed in a unit of time—a “day’s work.” Of course, many barriers like rivers, streams, rocks, roads, and soil conditions modified the standard dimension of how much land could be plowed in a day. Thus, the size of a morgen varies from half to over two acres (2,000 to 10,000 m^2) of land.

A single family would have use-rights (ownership or otherwise) to multiple strips of farmland, but the strips did not typically lie side by side. Instead, they were scattered among the open fields.

Like Haguenau, Soufflenheim’s agricultural land was located outside the clustered village and divided into long narrow strips. Survey maps from 1836 document almost 3,000 strips, which were owned by a population of about 560 families. This organization of land persisted well into the nineteenth century.

The *Cadastre*

During the rule of Napoleon Bonaparte (1799–1814), the French government put forth a plan to create a registry of property for the purpose of determining ownership and for assessing property taxes. This land registry is called the *Cadastre*. Beginning in 1807, a systematic land survey of France was undertaken. In each village, town, or city, plots of land were measured, classified according to usage, and detailed maps were drawn. The scattered plots of land were then combined into a registry for each owner. This determined the owner’s income, and that income was made the tax base.

Surveys in Lower Alsace (Bas-Rhin) began in 1808 and continued through 1844. Soufflenheim’s survey was conducted in 1836. For purposes of the *Cadastre*, the Commune of Soufflenheim was divided into four sections, each labeled with a letter A through D. The residential village was found in Section D. The other three sections contain agricultural land.

The following image shows the northern part of the Soufflenheim Commune as depicted in the *Cadastre* maps. The residential district is in the upper left of the image. The small dark squares represent houses. To the right in the image is plowed farmland, identified as Section A. Below the residential district is Section B of the maps. It too is farmland.

Image 1

The next image shows almost the whole of the Soufflenheim Commune. At the top is the residential district, designated Section D for the *Cadastre* maps. To the right of the residential district is the farmland of Section A. Below is the farmland in Section B and below Section B is more farmland designated as Section C. The area below Section C is lightly shaded and the shading protrudes into Section C; this is Soufflenheim's communal forest, where the inhabitants collected firewood and building materials.

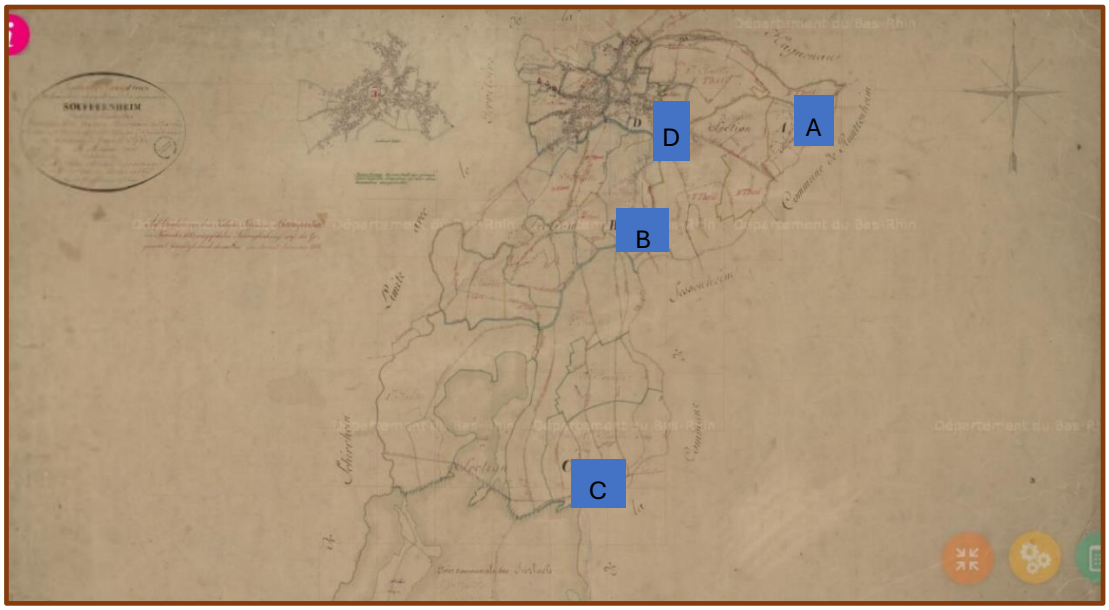


Image 2

The next two images, three and four, show closeups of the residential district. Detailed representations of streets, houses, outbuilding, and gardens can be seen. In image three, St. Michael's church is in the lower right; in image four the Oelberg cemetery is at the left.

Image 3

Image 4

The last two images, five and six, show closeups of the plowed agricultural land. We see clearly the fields divide into long, narrow strips. Image five is from Section A of the maps and image six is from Section B.

Image 5

Image 6

The 1836 population census for the Commune of Soufflenheim found 2,942 inhabitants living in 562 households. The *Cadastre* survey identified and numbered each strip of land in the agricultural fields. There were about 3,000 strips, which is an average of about 5 strips per family. The *Cadastre* registry maintained an index of these strips of land along with their owner. Information kept in the registry included the year a plot was purchased, the year it was sold, its location on the survey maps, its use, and the net income it generated.

The *Cadastre* data set makes it possible to identify the house and farmland owned by Soufflenheim families beginning about 1836. Digital copies of the survey maps are available online (hyperlinks are listed below); however, the registries of owners are available only at the Bas-Rhin Archive in Strasbourg. As of February 2024, the Soufflenheim Genealogy, Research, and History network has high quality images of the registry index for the Napoleonic *Cadastre* which covers the period 1836-1888. From this index, the registry (or folio) page for a landowner can be identified.

Soufflenheim's *Cadastre* Maps at the Archives of Alsace in Strasbourg:

Index of maps:

Section A, sheet 1

Section A, sheet 2

Section A, sheet 3

Section A, sheet 4

Section B, sheet 1

Section B, sheet 2

Section B, sheet 3

Section B, sheet 4

Section C, sheet 1

Section C, sheet 2

Section C, sheet 3

Section C, sheet 4

Section C, sheet 5

Section C, sheet 5, part development A and B

Section D, sheet 1

Section D, sheet 2

Section D, sheet 3

Section D, sheet 4

SAINT MARTIN'S DAY

By Michael J. Nuwer, November 2022

An early November start to the Christmas season would not have been unusual for our Alsatian ancestors. For them the Christmas season began November 11. This date on the liturgical calendar is the Feast of Saint Martin. Today, we know that day as Veterans Day (in the US); Remembrance Day (in the British Commonwealth); or Armistice Day (in France). Our ancestors knew it as Saint Martin's Day or Martinmas. This day celebrated the life and charity of Saint Martin of Tours (336 – 397), who was the third bishop of Tours.

During the Middle Ages, Advent was six weeks. It began on November 11 (Saint Martin's Day) and lasted until Christmas Day. Advent was then, as it still is now, a period of preparation for the Feast of Christmas. Unlike now, however, Advent in the Middle Ages was a season of abstinence during which Christians devoted themselves to prayer and fasting, which was required on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

The Feast of Saint Martin was the Thanksgiving Day of the Middle Ages. Particularly in the German-speaking regions of Europe, it was an important feast day marking the end of the harvest season and the beginning of winter. The Feast of Saint Martin, thus, united the rhythm of the liturgical calendar on the one hand and the agricultural cycle on the other. It marked the end of an agrarian year and the beginning of a new liturgical year.

By early November the last fields would have been harvested and the winter wheat would have been sown. To avoid the cost of feeding animals through the winter, all but the best farm animals were butchered, and their meat was salted to provide food later in the winter. A feast made good sense at this time. There was an abundance of food and perishable items that wouldn't survive the winter months needed to be consumed. Traditions celebrating the day included feasting on Martinmas goose, drinking the first wine of the season, and folk plays performed by troupes of amateur actors.

In Alsace, as well as other German-speaking regions, goose was traditionally eaten on Saint Martin's Day. Goose has a distinct flavor which made it a favorite Martinmas dish. Fr. Francis X. Weiser, S.J. described the Saint Martin Day's feast:

"People first went to Mass and observed the rest of the day with games, dances, parades, and a festive dinner, the main feature of the meal being the traditional roast goose (Martin's goose). With the goose dinner they drank "Saint Martin's wine," which was the first lot of wine made from the grapes of the recent harvest. Martinmas was the festival commemorating filled barns and stocked larders, the actual Thanksgiving Day of the Middle Ages. Even today it is still kept in rural sections of Europe, and dinner on Martin's Day would be unthinkable without the golden brown, luscious Martin's goose." (Fr. Francis X. Weiser, S.J. *Handbook of Christian Feasts and Customs*, 1958)

Saint Martin's Day was also an accounting date. Notarized documents often used Saint Martin's Day as a date of payment. When, for example, my 6th great grandfather died in Soufflenheim in 1787, he had four heirs. The legal document determining the distribution of his assets stated that "each heir receives his share: Maria Eva on St. Martin's Day of year 1791, Marianna on St. Martin's Day 1788 and 1792, Antoni on St. Martin's Day 1789 and 1793, Margaretha on St. Martin's Day 1790 and 1794." Many other estate inventories from Soufflenheim set this day for making payments. It made good sense. Since the barns were full and there was an abundance of food at this time of the year, resources were available that could be used to settle debts and other financial obligations.

The Feast of Saint Martin was a day to give thanks for the harvest and marked the beginning of preparations for Christmas. Martinmas coincided with the last harvests. On the 12th of November a time of spiritual preparations for Christmas began. So, people wanted to ensure they had a good feast and made merry before this period of devotion and self-denial leading to the Feast of Christmas.

SOUFFLENHEIM EMIGRATION 1839: OBERMEYER, MESSMER, AND SCHALL

By Michael J. Nuwer, August 2024

View of South Street, from Maiden Lane, New York City, circa 1827, William James Bennett
Metropolitan Museum, Edward W. C. Arnold Collection of New York Prints, Maps, and Pictures
https://www.americanyawp.com/text/08-the-market-revolution/

United States immigration data show that the years between 1827 and 1845 were marked by a sustained rise in the volume of immigrants to U.S. ports. “Immigrant volume underwent a substantial increase during a fairly short period of years, and … the increase occurred well in advance of the potato famine.”[1]

Although many of these immigrants originated from Ireland and Great Britain, large numbers also came from states in southwest Germany[2] (Baden, Wurttemberg, the Rhenish Palatinate, Rhenish Prussia, and Hessia), from Switzerland, and from Alsace, France.

Reviewing immigration volume during the period between 1820 and 1870, Nicole Fouché found that Alsatian emigration before 1845 was an important element of the mass immigration. She showed that Swiss and German emigration had “a very slow start” while Alsatian emigration “started very high and very strong.” Therefore, “the influence of foreign emigration on Alsatian emigration is not as obvious as is generally believed.”[3]

The French government expressed concern about Alsatian emigration well before 1845. “The Kingdom risks becoming impoverished” by the departure of “craftsmen or farmers who possess an establishment commensurate with their status and sufficient resources for their needs.” The flight of cash was part of this concern. “Rich and poor alike took cash with them, which could pose a local problem at a time when cash was in short supply.”[4]

Evidence of that concern came in 1838, when the mayors of Alsatian towns were required to provide a list of all emigrants to North America for the years between 1828 and 1837. In particular, they were asked to provide the amount of cash taken from their commune.

Soufflenheim's report contained 70 names. There were 42 solo travelers who left town with a median average amount of cash of 330 francs. There were also 28 families with a total of 159 individuals departing Soufflenheim. The families left with a mean average of 4.3 children and a median average of 1,600 francs.[5]

The following article discusses a group of 23 Soufflenheim emigrants who left their homes during the first phase of mass immigration (1827-1845), specifically in the year 1839. The article relies on information from Cadastre folios to show important characteristics about these emigrants.

The Emigrants

On September 6, 1839 the sailing ship *Lausanne* arrived in New York Harbor with merchandise for A.G. & A.W. Benson and 159 steerage passengers. Genealogists Brian J. Smith and Mark Drexler have identified 23 of those passengers as residents of Soufflenheim.[6] The immigrants left Le Havre, France on July 12, 1839 and spent a long 56 days crossing the North Atlantic Ocean.[7] The following table shows the names of the Soufflenheim immigrants onboard the *Lausanne*.

1839 Emigrants	Children
Ignace Obermeyer, age 54, and Richarde Buchmüller, age 49	Martin Obermeyer, age 11
Phillip Obermeyer, age 21	
Joseph Schall, age 38, and Marie Anne Messmer, age 40	Adrienne Messmer, age 24 Joseph Schall, age 14
Vincent Messmer, age 35, and Marie Anne Rund, age 37	Marie Messmer, age 3 Josephine Messmer, age 1
Marguerite Messmer, age 48, widow of Joseph Lengert	Joseph Lengert, age 23 Xavier Lengert, age 20 Vincent Lengert, age 18 Marie Anne Lengert, age 16 Ophilia Lengert, age 14 Josephine Lengert, age 13 Marguerite Lengert, age 10
Emmanuel Schmitter, age 31, and Madelaine Lengert, age 26	Michel Schmitter, age 2

Kinship ties connected 19 of the 23 emigrates who sailed on the *Lausanne*. Marguerite Messmer and Marie Anne Messmer were sisters. Vincent Messmer was their brother. The twelve children of these three families were cousins. One of those cousins was Madelaine Lengert (Marguerite Messmer's daughter), who was herself married with a child.

The Data

Soufflenheim's Napoléonic Cadastre was created in 1836. The project produced records for each of the town's landowners. Cadastre registers (the folios) enumerated information about an individual's house, yard, garden, plowed land, meadows, and more. A numbering system was used to identify

each parcel of land. Soufflenheim's Cadastre plan divided the town into four sections, each designated by a letter A through D. The residential village was found in section D. The other three sections contained agricultural land. These documents provide useful information about the emigrants on the *Lausanne*.

For purposes of the Cadastre, dwellings were assigned a classification number and a corresponding tax rate. The housing class is useful because it implies the quality of the dwellings. The table below shows the housing classes and tax rates for Soufflenheim in 1836. There were seven dwelling classes. Class 1 was the highest quality house, and it carried a tax rate of 40 francs per dwelling. Class 7 was the lowest quality house with a tax rate of 4 francs per dwelling.

A social status scale can be constructed from this classification system. Houses in class 1, 2, or 3 are defined as upper class houses, which comprise 10.5 percent of Soufflenheim's housing stock. Houses in class 4 are defined as upper-middle class dwellings (17.4 percent of the housing stock). Houses in class 5 are defined as lower-middle class dwellings (32.7 percent of the housing stock). And houses in class 6 or 7 are defined as lower class dwellings (39.3 percent of the housing stock).

Soufflenheim Houses, 1836

Class of House	Tax rate per dwelling	Number of houses	Percent	Status Class
1	40	10	1.8	Upper
2	32	14	2.5	
3	25	34	6.2	
4	20	96	17.4	Upper-middle
5	15	180	32.7	Lower-middle
6	8	208	37.7	Lower
7	4	9	1.6	

At the age of 54, Ignace Obermeyer was the oldest of the 1839 emigrants. His wife was 49 and they had an adopted son named Martin. The 1836 census reported that Ignace worked as a baker and lived in the village at house number 190.

Ignace Obermeyer's Cadastre registry provides information that supplements the census. His records were found in folio 580. That document identifies his house and yard. The dwelling number was 190, which matches the number found in the census. In the Cadastre plan, that house was located at parcel number D 311. The house was a class 4 dwelling which was an upper middle-class quality. There was also a garden (parcel D 312) and an orchard (parcel D 310) at the same address. Finally, Ignace Obermeyer owned one small parcel of farmland. It was one-tenth of an acre and located in Section A.

In 1836 Vincent Messmer was 32 years old, married to Marie Anne Rund, and the father of one daughter, also named Marie Anne. He earned a cash income as a well digger. The census counted Vincent as family number 363. They were living in house number 355. Vincent and his wife had a second daughter born after the census was recorded, and they emigrated in 1839 with two young girls.

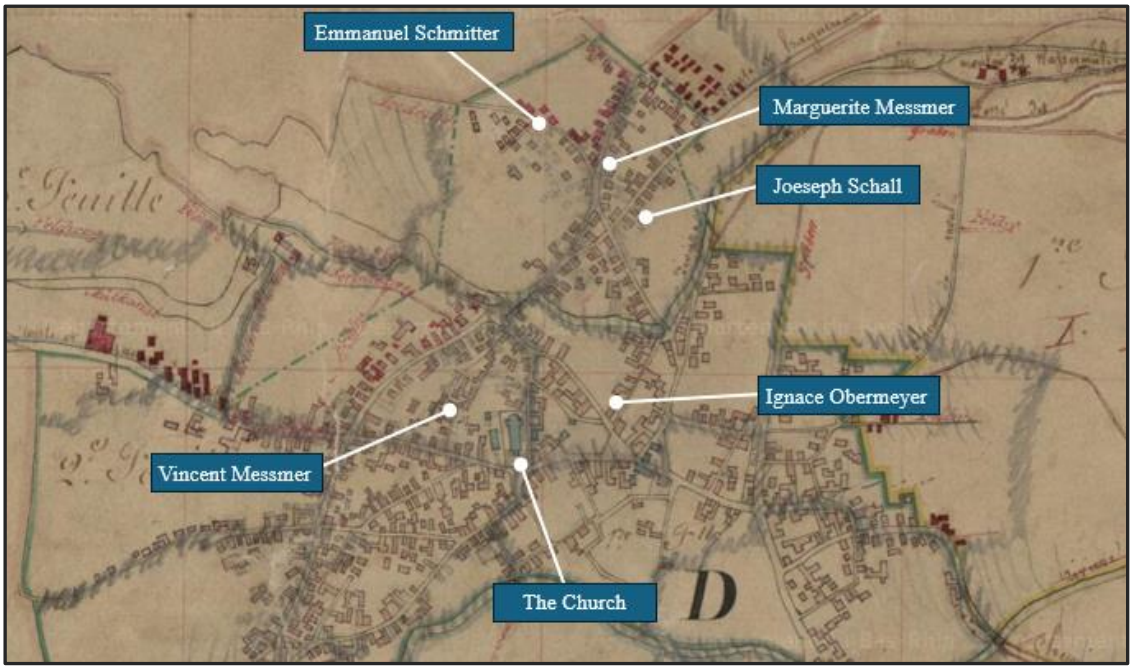
Vincent Messmer's Cadastre folio was number 523. He owned a house and yard in the village and three parcels of farmland. The house was at parcel number D 735 and the yard was 0.08 (2/25th) of

an acre. The house was assessed to be a class 6 dwelling. The three parcels of plowed farmland totaled 0.92 acres.

The 1836 census counted Joseph Schall, his wife, Marie Anne Messmer, and his son, Joseph, Jr. as family number 231. They were living in house number 224. Joseph, Sr. was identified as a tailor. When he emigrated in 1839, Joseph Schall was 38 years old; his wife was 40 and they traveled with two children, Joseph, Jr., who was 14 years old and Adrianne who was 24 years old. Adrianne was born before her mother married Joseph Schall.

Joseph Schall's Cadastre folio was number 618. It identified his village house at number 224, which was located on parcel number D 831 of the Cadastre plan. The house was in the Brunnenberg neighborhood of the village. The yard was very small, only 150 sq meters—that is, 0.04 (1/25th) of an acre. There was no attached garden nor was there an orchard. The house was rated as a class 6 dwelling. Joseph Schall owned no farmland.

The 1836 census identified Marguerite Messmer as the household head of family number 252. They were living at house number 244. Marguerite Messmer was a widow with 9 children. (The tenth child listed in the census, Ferdinand Lengert, was a stepson.)



The Soufflenheim Village Cluster, 1836

Marguerite Messmer's husband, Francis Joseph Lengert, had died in January 1830. When the Cadastre was created six years later, Joseph Lengert's property was recorded in his widow's folio (number 425). The house number was 224, which matched the number found in the census. The house and yard were at parcel D 883 and an attached orchard was at parcel D 884. The Cadastre rated the family house as a class 6 dwelling. Marguerite Messmer owned no farmland.

Marguerite Messmer's oldest daughter, Madelaine, was a member of her household in the 1836 census and married Emmanuel Schmitter later that year. Emmanuel Schmitter did not own property, and it appears that his parents had very little property to pass down. His father, Roman Schmitter,

died in 1809 and his mother was the owner of a class 6 house in the village. She owned no farmland. Emmanuel Schmitter grew up in a lower-class house and in 1836 he was working as a day laborer.

The following table summarizes key characteristics of the emigrants discussed in this article.

Characteristics of Emigrants

	Emigration Age	Class of House	Farmland (acres)	Garden Orchard	Profession
Ignace Obermeyer	54	4	0.11	Y / Y	Baker
Joseph Schall	38	6	0.00	N / N	Tailor
Vincent Messmer	35	6	0.92	N / N	Well digger
Marguerite Messmer	48	6	0.00	N / Y	
Emmanuel Schmitter	31	6	0.00	N / N	Day laborer

"[Alsatian] emigrants," writes Nicole Fouché, "did not systematically come from the poorest classes." The above pages have shown that the Soufflenheim emigrants discussed in this article were lower-middle class residents of a rural community. They were owners of property and they possessed craft skills. Nevertheless, they were not well off. If they owned farmland, it was not much land—even by Alsatian standards.

Fouché also writes that the Alsatian emigrants "came from the countryside, [not the city]. They were rural people who, even if they didn't all work the land, were at least familiar with field work." The Soufflenheim emigrants had craft skills: a baker, a tailor, and a well digger, and they were very likely familiar with field work.

Finally, Fouché writes that the Alsatian emigrants traveled in family groups. "Emigrants were fathers. There is every reason to believe that those who left alone, often young men, were single." Again, the characteristics of the Soufflenheim emigrants are consistent with this conclusion.

Nicole Fouché concludes that "Alsatian emigrants to the USA in the nineteenth century did not belong to an unstable or marginal population. They were, it seems, highly representative of the Alsatian population of the nineteenth century."[8]

Settling in North America

Following their arrival in North America, Marguerite Messmer and her seven children settled in New York City. Genealogist Kelly Cooper has identified marriage documents for each of the children. All the documents are from Manhattan. Six of them were dated in 1844, 1845, or 1846. The seventh child, Joseph Lengert, was married in 1849 and another document indicates that he worked in New York City as a laborer. Cooper also reports New York City death records for six of these children.

Madelaine Lengert and her husband Emmanuel Schmitter also settled in New York City. Kelly Cooper has birth records for four children born in Manhattan between 1840 and 1847.

The other three immigrant families settled in Western New York—in the City of Buffalo. Ignace Obermeyer was found in the 1840 census living in Buffalo's 4th Ward, which was the heart of the city's "German Village." The Obermeyer household included Ignace, Richarde, and their son, Martin. Ignace was employed in manufacturing.[9]

On April 27, 1842 Ignace Obermeyer became a property owner. This purchase was made roughly two and one-half years after he arrived in North America. The house was located at 12 Walnut Street and the purchase price was $500.[10] No mortgage was found.

The 1850 census found Ignace (age 65) and Richarde (age 60) living in a two-family dwelling. Many houses in Buffalo were two-family wood-frame structures. The typical layout was one flat on the first floor and a second flat upstairs. This style of home made it possible for a working-class family to afford home ownership by residing in one of the flats and renting the other flat to another family. The census indicates that Ignace was the owner of the two-family dwelling; the second family was a young immigrant couple (ages 30 and 24). The household head worked as a joiner.[11] Ignace Obermeyer owned this property until April 25, 1859.[12]

Vincent Messmer and his family were found in the 1840 census living in Cheektowaga, a town immediately east of Buffalo. He was employed in commerce.[13] Early the next year, on January 7, 1841, he purchased a parcel of land in the City of Buffalo. The land was located on the south side of Kane Street and was 100ft by 50ft, that is, 0.11 of an acre.[14] Vincent Messmer paid $200 for the land and he financed the purchase with a mortgage.[15] Vincent purchased a second residential lot in 1848. The deed was dated October 12, the purchase price was $200, and the lot was located on Genesee Street near Spring Street.[16]

Vincent Messmer's entry in the 1850 census is similar to Ignace Obermeyer entry. It shows a two-family structure. Vincent Messmer was the owner and his family of six was living in one of the flats. An immigrant family of eight was living in the second flat. Unfortunately, the census does not offer a way to determine whether the Messmer family was residing at the Genesee Street property or at the Kane Street property.

Vincent's wife, Marie Anne Rund, died on August 20, 1850 (age 48). One year later he sold the Kane Street property. The original lot was 100ft by 50ft and he sold it in two pieces of 100ft by 25ft each. The first piece was sold on August 13, 1851 for $125 and the second sold on September 6, 1851 for $325.

In 1855 the New York State census found Vincent (a widower) and his 9 years old son living in Buffalo's 7th Ward. Vicent was 52 years old and working as a pump maker. He was probably living at the Genesee Street house, as it was within the 7th Ward.[17] The building was at that time a three-family structure.[18]

On August 23, 1855 Vincent Messmer sold his Genesee Street house and about that time he and his son moved to New Germany, Canada.

Joseph Schall's history in Buffalo has been a bit more difficult to assess. He was found as the head of a household in the 1840 census. The family of three was living in Buffalo's 4th Ward.[19] A year later, Joseph Schall became a Buffalo property owner. On November 29, 1841 he purchased a residential lot near the intersection of Jefferson and Sycamore Streets. The price was $58, and the purchase occurred a full two years after Joseph arrived in North America.[20]

The 1850 Census found Joseph Schall living in Cincinnati, Ohio; he was working as a tailor in Cincinnati's first ward. His wife, Marie Anne Messmer, and his son, Joseph, Jr., had contracted cholera and died there in June 1849. Joseph Schall, Sr. remarried in 1850. At that time, he was still the owner of a house in Buffalo. The Buffalo house was sold July 19, 1853. Joseph Schall received $90 for the property.[21] Joseph Schall then disappears from history.

Summary

The Soufflenheim immigrants discussed in this article can be described as middle-class members of a rural community. They were property owners with craft skills, but their resources were meager even by Alsatian standards.

Nicole Fouché identified the economic status of two groups of emigrants: those who left Alsace with enough money to settle in North America under good conditions and those who left with just enough to pay for their travel.

> It would be a mistake to think it was always the poorest Alsatians who emigrated. To take the example of the Bas Rhin from 1828 to 1837, it was found that 35 percent of the families took with them large sums of money which probably enabled them to settle in the United States under good conditions. 7 percent of people asking for passports took even larger sums with them and this brings the number of families able to settle in America without any problem up to 42 percent from the financial point of view. The remaining 58 percent had just enough to pay their passage and the overland journey.[22]

Vincent Messmer, Ignace Obermeyer, Joseph Schall, Marguerite Messmer, and Emmanuel Schmitter were not poor nor were they from the unstable and undesirable elements of society.

They “sold their little house with its patch of land” to raise the money for their journey to North America. They traveled in family units, indeed four of the families formed a kinship network. These emigrants may not have been among the 42 percent who settled in America under good conditions, but they were among the group who had enough to pay for their passage and the overland journey.

Ignace Obermeyer, Vincent Messmer, and Joseph Schall sold land in Soufflenheim and became landowners in Buffalo. However, neither of the three immigrants purchased Buffalo land within a year of their arrival. Ignace Obermeyer purchased his property 31 months after arriving; Joseph Schall purchased his property 26 months after arriving; and Vincent Messmer purchased his property 16 months after arriving in North America and that purchase was made with a mortgage. The evidence does not suggest that these immigrants liquidated their Soufflenheim holding at a price enabling them to cross the sea to America *and* buy property immediately upon their arrival.

The emigrants discussed above were lower-middle class members of Soufflenheim’s community. They were neither large landowners nor unskilled laborers. They did not travel under indentured contracts nor on behalf of a colonization company; they were not funded by a labor recruiter; they were not transported at government expense attempting to be rid of undesirables. This article has shown that these emigrants were people “who traveled on their own resources;” who “had property that could be turned to cash;” and who “relied upon their own skills and wished to do so in the future.”[23]

Sources

1. Raymond L. Cohn, *Mass Migration Under Sail: European Immigration to the Antebellum United States*, Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp. 17-22.
2. See Mack Walker, *Germany and the Emigration, 1816-1885*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (1964), Chapter 2: “The Auswanderer, 1830-1845.”
3. Nicole Fouché, *Émigration alsacienne aux États-Unis 1815-1870*, Paris: Éditions de la Sorbonne, 2020 [1992], Chapter 3, (https://books.openedition.org/psorbonne/49333).
4. *Ibid*., Chapter 5.

5. Bas-Rhin Archive, “Emigration pour d'Amerique et les autres pays,” (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSNT-7CZY?i=99).
6. Brian J. Smith, “Matches for Ship: Lausanne 1839,” (http://www.smithancestry.com/sources/ships/ships18201850notes.htm#lausanne1839sepmatch)
7. The *New York Evening Post*, the *New York Morning Courier*, and the *New York American*, each reported a 56-day westward passage. The *New York Morning Herald* reported a 66-day westward passage. The *Morning Herald’s* reporting is assumed to be an error. All four newspaper reports were made in their respective September 6, 1839 editions.
8. Nicole Fouché, *Émigration alsacienne aux États-Unis 1815-1870*, Chapter. 2.
9. 1840 Census of the United States (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33S7-9YYV-3JVG).
10. Erie County New York Deeds, (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-89W6-VRYS?i=454). The deed of purchase states that the property was at 250 Pine Street, but the street name was changed after 1842.
11. 1850 Census of the United States, (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-D1CQ-V25).
12. Erie County New York Deeds, (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-L9WX-SG87?i=218).
13. 1840 Census of the United States, (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33S7-9YYV-3NJF?i=2).
14. Erie County, New York Deeds, (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QSQ-G9W6-JDXV?i=157).
15. Erie County, New York Deed Index, (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-L9WF-SFMW?i=459). Volume 44 of Erie County mortgages is missing.
16. Erie County, New York Deeds, (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-L9WX-3HL7?i=764).
17. The house was at 304 Genesee Street and can be seen on this map, (https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e3-1b5a-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99).
18. 1855 New York State Census, (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33S7-9B5S-S4K).
19. 1840 Census of the United States, (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33S7-9YYV-3JVG?i=8).
20. Erie County, New York Deeds, (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-89W6-VL4Q).
21. Erie County, New York Deeds, (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-89WX-97D6).
22. Nicole Fouché, “Alsatian Emigration to The United States, 1815-1870,” *Bulletin de la Société Industrielle de Mulhouse* (July 1985).
23. Mack Walker, *Germany and the Emigration, 1816-1885*, Cambridge, Chapter 2.

SOUFFLENHEIM EMIGRATION 1847: HALTER, VOEGELE, AND ZINGER

By Michael J. Nuwer, August 2024

Soufflenheim Emigration in the Agrarian Crisis of 1845-1848

On July 9, 1847 a sailing ship named *Exchange* arrived at New York Harbor. Three families from Soufflenheim were among the arriving passengers. The Halter family of seven, the Voegele family of nine, and the Zinger family of eleven disembarked on North American soil. The names of these passengers are presented in Table 1. The sailing ship had departed from Le Havre, France on June 7th, in ballast, with 170 passengers—a 32-day transatlantic voyage.

Historians generally agree that the main reason Europeans immigrated to new places in the first half of the nineteenth century was because of a shortage of land to support their family. Inheritance law in Alsace and southwest Germany passed property equally among a family's sons and daughters, and thus farms were divided and subdivided among all the heirs. This left each heir with smaller parcels of land than their father had. These laws became especially problematic in the early nineteenth century when falling mortality in Europe caused faster population growth. In other words, fixed amounts of land were being divided among a growing number of surviving children. The parcels of land became smaller and smaller for each generation and by the nineteenth century the size of many parcels was not viable to sustain a family. This phenomenon produced an incentive to emigrate, as people sought farmland in North America, a place that was seen to have an abundance of land. In the words of historian Mack Walker:

> The principal means of production was agriculture; its main capital resource was land, which permitted of little expansion. In southwestern Germany, an area of divisible inheritances, agricultural lands had been divided and subdivided to match increased intensification. The family plot decreased in size and remained marginal or submarginal in terms of its capacity to support those who depended upon it, so that in Baden, Wurttemberg, the Rhenish Palatinate, Rhenish Prussia, and the Hesse a large part of the landowning population stood perpetually on the verge of hunger.[1]

United States immigration data shows that the years between 1827 and 1845 were marked by a sustained rise in the volume of immigrants to U.S. ports. This period marked the beginning of mass immigration and was characterized by travelers with the intension of permanent settlement in North America. Beginning in 1846, immigrant volume again rose sharply, finally peaking in 1854. It is common to explain this second jump in the volume of immigration to the 1846 spread of the potato blight across Europe.[2]

The potato blight in Europe was first noticed in June 1845 in Belgium and quickly spread across Northern Europe. The failure of the 1845 potato harvest caused hardship, but it did not cause a crisis. The failure of the 1846 harvest was more severe. To make matters worse, in 1846 the continent lost almost half of its rye harvest and had a below normal wheat harvest, thereby exacerbating the failure of the potato crop. As a consequence of these crop failures, the prices of grains rose substantially throughout Europe and remained high into 1847.[3]

Table 1 : Immigrants on the Ship *Exchange*, June 7 to July 9, 1847

Family of Joseph Voegele

Name	Born	Age at immigration
Joseph Voegele	14 Jul 1790	56
Catherine Muller	11 Apr 1799	48
Joseph Voegele	23 Feb 1823	24
Henry Voegele	14 Jul 1827	19
Francois Xavier Voegele	06 Aug 1830	16
Jean Baptiste Voegele	06 Jun 1834	13
Madelaine Voegele	15 Jul 1836	10
Marie Anne Voegele	24 Apr 1838	9
Margueritha Voegele	01 Jul 1841	6

Family of Martin Halter

Name	Born	Age at immigration
Martin Halter	28 Nov 1796	50
Richarde Schmuck	10 Feb 1799	48
Antoine Halter	06 Jul 1825	22
Marie Eve Halter	25 Dec 1827	19
Martin Halter	11 May 1830	17
Auguste Halter	18 Sep 1835	11
Louis Halter	08 Aug 1839	7

Family of Joseph Zinger

Name	Born	Age at immigration
Joseph Zinger	10 Jun 1784	63
Catherine Schoeffter	02 Apr 1786	61
Jean Zinger	27 Dec 1826	20
Euphenie Zinger	14 Apr 1812	35
Mathieu Schlosser	20 Sep 1810	36
Caroline Schlosser	14 Jan 1835	12
Therese Schlosser	13 Feb 1837	10
Michel Schlosser	28 Sep 1840	6
Jean Schlosser	27 Jan 1843	4
Louis Schlosser	24 Nov 1844	2
Julius Schlosser		

Archival research has identified genealogical information about each of the three Soufflenheim families who arrived in New York on July 9, 1847. Marriages dates, birth dates, and death dates are transcribed and available.[4] That information is not reproduced here. Instead, this article uses the following pages to introduce new information taken from the Cadastre land registry.

Soufflenheim's Napoléonic Cadastre was assembled in 1836. The project contained two parts. First the Cadastral plan created a set of maps showing the boundaries of every parcel of residential and

agricultural land within the commune of Soufflenheim. A numbering system was used to identify each house and parcel of land. The detailed maps divided the town into four sections, each labeled with a letter A through D. The residential village was found in Section D. The other three sections contained agricultural land.

The second part of the Cadastre land registry contained records for each landowner. Cadastre registers (the folios) recorded information about the land owned by an individual. On one page, information about an individual's house, yard, garden, plowed land, meadows, and more was enumerated. Cadastre folios were found for Martin Halter (folio 263), Joseph Voegele (folio 749), and Joseph Zinger (folio 832). Each of these folios was included in the original plan from 1836 when Soufflenheim's Cadastre was assembled.

The folios described the parcels of land owned by the three future immigrants. The information included the section letter and parcel number which locate each parcel on the maps. Also included was a description of the parcel. Farmland was described as either plowed land or meadows. Land in the village cluster included the yards on which dwellings were constructed, gardens, and small orchards. The dwellings were identified separately from their yard. The folio also contains the size, expressed in hectares, and the tax assessment, expressed in francs, of the respective land parcel. Finally, the folios contain the year each parcel of land was added to the folio and the year it was removed from the folio.

For purposes of the Cadastre, dwellings were assigned a classification number and a corresponding tax rate, which indicates the quality of the house. Table 4 shows the housing classes and tax rates for Soufflenheim in 1836. Soufflenheim's Cadastre contained seven dwelling classes. Class 1 was the highest quality house, and it carried a tax rate of 40 francs per dwelling. Class 7 was the lowest quality house with a tax rate of 4 francs per dwelling.

From Table 2 we can estimate a social status scale. Houses in class 1, 2, or 3 are defined as upper class houses (10.5 percent). Those in class 4 are upper-middle class (17.4 percent). Houses in class 5 are lower-middle class (32.7 percent). And houses in class 6 or 7 are lower class (39.3 percent).

It appears that the year in which a parcel was added or removed from a folio was not the year the property was bought or sold. A review made of folios for individuals whose date of immigration is known showed that in almost all cases their folio recorded the year a parcel was removed as the year *after* the property owner emigrated. Jean Kieffer, for example, emigrated from Soufflenheim in the second half of 1843. Before he left, he was the owner of 24 parcels of property. However, the year these parcels were removed from his folio (number 358) was given as 1844. The same issue appears on the folios of many others whose date of immigration is known. It seems doubtful that such a pattern would occur in so many cases. In this article, therefore, it is assumed the property was sold the year before it was removed from the folio.

Table 2 : Soufflenheim Houses

Class of House	Tax rate per dwelling	Number of houses	Percent	Status Class
1	40	10	1.8	
2	32	14	2.5	Upper
3	25	34	6.2	

4	20	96	17.4	Upper-middle
5	15	180	32.7	Lower-middle
6	8	208	37.7	
7	4	9	1.6	Lower

The 1836 Census

The year 1836 was a census year and the census information can be combined with the Cadastre information.[5] The census identified Martin Halter as the head of household number 368. The family was living at house number 361 Oberdorff. The census identifies Oberdorff as a street, but in fact it was a neighborhood which translates as “upper village.” Martin Halter was 40 years old. His wife Richarde Schmuck was 38 years old and they had four children: Antoine (age 11), Eve (age 8), Martin (age 6), and Auguste (age 9 months).

Joseph Voegele was found in the census as the head of household number 290. He was 44 years old and his wife Catherine Muller was 36. They had five children: Joseph (age 13), Marguerite (age 11), Henry (age 9), Xavier (age 5), and Jean (age 2). The Voegele family was living at house number 282. The street was given as Brunnenberg, but again this name was a neighborhood, not a physical street. Brunnenberg, which translates as “mountain spring,” was a region of the village north of the Eberbach River.

Joseph Zinger was identified in the census as the head of household number 110. He was 54 years old and his wife, Catherine Schoeffter was 51. They had four sons living in their household: Barnabe (age 22), Jacques (age 17), Joseph (age 12), and Jean (age 9). The family was living at house number 101 and the street was given as Rue Dite im Gübel, a street name that is not found on any known map of Soufflenheim.

The Cadastre folios that were created in 1836 used the same house number system as the census. This means that the house number from the census can be matched to the house number on a Cadastre folio, and, thereby, the specific location on the Cadastre maps can be identified. Table 3 presents that information and Figure 1 identifies the houses.

Table 3

Item	Halter	Voegele	Zinger
Census house number	361	281	101
Census street name	Oberdorff	Brunnenberg	Rue Dite im Gübel
Cadastre house number	361	281	101
Cadastre district	Village	Brunnenberg	Village
Cadastre parcel number	Sec D #729	Sec D #997	Sec D #170

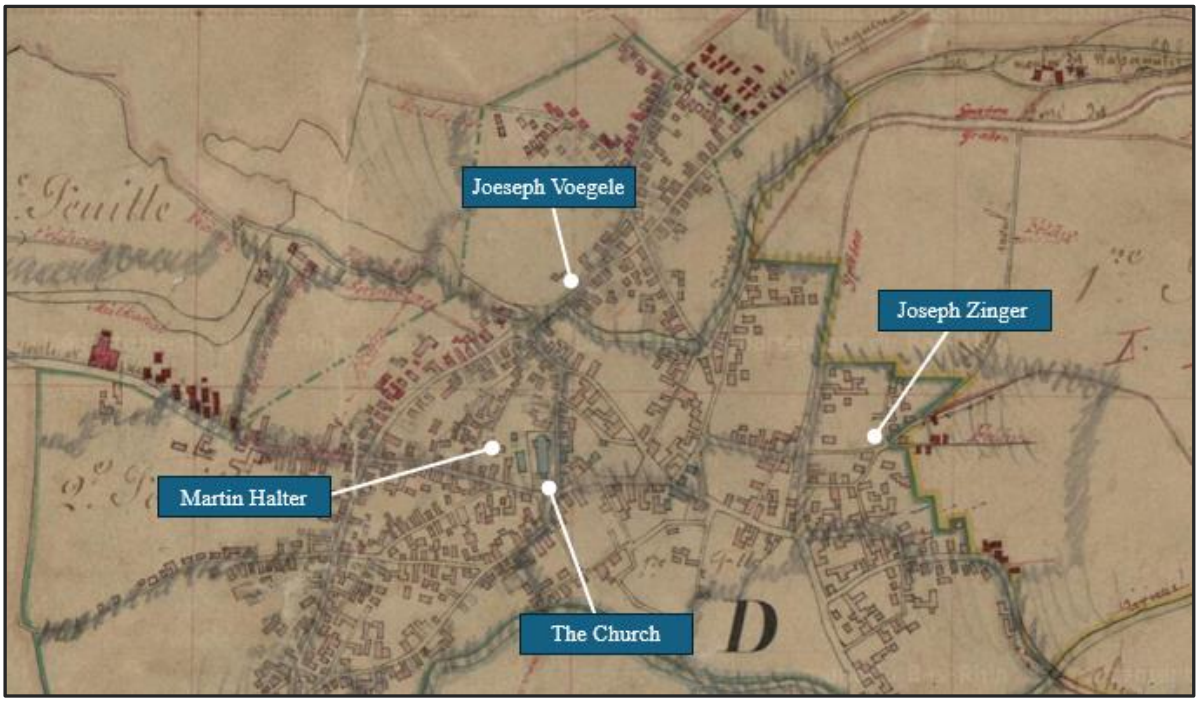


Figure 1 : The Soufflenheim Village Cluster, 1836

The Cadastre plan and the Census were both completed in 1836. The Halter, Voegele, and Zinger families lived in Soufflenheim another ten years before they emigrated. Yet many Soufflenheim residents had already immigrated to North America. In March 1838 the town Mayor submitted a report of all residents who had emigrated between the years 1828 and 1837. The list contained 70 names: 28 families and 42 solo travels. Martin Halter, Joseph Voegele, and Joseph Zinger would have known about these emigrants and probably had known some of them as friends. Be that as it may, it would be another 10 years before the Halter, Voegele, and Zinger families would leave their hometown.

Cadastre Property

Transcriptions of the Cadastre folios for Martin Halter (folio 263), Joseph Voegele (folio 749), and Joseph Zinger (folio 832) are presented in the Appendix of this article.

In 1836, the year that Soufflenheim's Cadastre plan was completed, Martin Halter was the owner of one-half acre of land (0.557 acre). The land included two houses and yards in the village and the yards were next door to each other. The parcel numbers were 728 and 729, the house numbers were 362 and 361 respectively. The Halter family was living at house number 361 and Marie Anne Lehmann, a 70-year-old widow, was living at house number 362. Both houses were rated as class 5 dwellings. Martin Halter also owned one parcel of plowed land in 1836, which was 0.4 acres in size.

In 1841, Martin Halter sold the house at number 361. He probably moved into the house next door. In the same year he acquired additional farmland. He purchased two parcels of plowed land and two parcels of meadow land. At the beginning of 1842 when taxes were due, Martin Halter was the owner of a house and yard in the village and 1.65 acres of farmland. The farmland included three parcels of plowed land totaling 0.98 acres and two parcels of meadow land totaling 0.66 acres.

Table 4 presents the occupations reported in the 1836, 1841, and 1846 censuses. Martin Halter worked as a woodcutter in 1836 and 1841, and he worked as a plowman in 1846. As a woodcutter, he

may have been involved with the harvesting and transport of trees from Soufflenheim's communal forest and from the Haguenau Forest.

In 1846, on the eve of his journey to North America, Martin Halter was 49 years old, he had four sons and a daughter (the youngest, Louis, was seven years old), he owned a class 5 house, and he owned 1.6 acres of farmland.

Table 4 : Census Occupations[6]

	1836	1841	1846
Martin Halter	Woodcutter	Woodcutter	Plowman
Joseph Voegele	Charcoal Maker	Charcoal Maker	Charcoal Maker
Joseph Zinger	Plowman	Plowman	Plowman

Joseph Zinger was also a landowner. In 1836 he owned two houses and two yards in the village. Like Martin Halter, these houses were next door to each other. The parcel numbers were 170 and 171, the house numbers were 101 and 100 respectively. Joseph Zinger also owned an attached orchard. His folio suggests that the house at number 100 was demolished in 1836. Although it was recorded on the folio, it was never taxed. The demolition of this house did not change the quantity of land Joseph Zinger owned. Taken together the land in the village totaled one-quarter of an acre (0.245). The house at number 101 was a class 5 dwelling.

Joseph Zinger also owned farmland in the Soufflenheim fringe (the bann). In 1836 he had six parcels of plowed land. There were no meadows recorded in his folio. The farmland totaled almost two acres (1.96 acres). Between 1836 when the Cadastre was created and 1847 when he left Soufflenheim, Joseph Zinger purchased no additional land, nor did sell any of his land.

Each of the three census years presented in Table 4 report that Joseph Zinger worked as a plowman. In 1846, he was 62 years old, he had four sons and a daughter, he owned a class 5 house, and he owned 1.96 acres of farmland.

In 1836 Joseph Voegele owned a bit more than six and one-half acres of land (6.69 acres). He was also the owner of two houses. In 1836, the Voegele family was living in the house at parcel 997, house number 281. That house number matches the house number in the 1836 census. The second house was at parcel 1217, house number 321. According to the census, Joachim Strack was living at house number 321. This suggests that Joseph Voegele was a landlord. The house at number 321 was a class 4 dwelling.

Joseph Voegele's Cadastre folio tells us that his house at number 281 was demolished in 1836 (presumably after the census recorded him as a resident there). Evidence from the 1841 census tells us that the Voegele family moved into their house at number 321. We know Joachim Strack was living at house number 321 in 1836. His neighbors (at house number 322) were Joseph Schlosser and Appoline Besson. The 1841 census does not include house numbers, but it identifies Joseph Voegele as family number 360 and Joseph Schlosser and Appoline Besson as family number 361, suggesting that they were next door neighbors.

When the Cadastre was initially constructed in 1836, Joseph Voegele owned 5.58 acres of plowed land and 0.74 acres of meadows. His folio shows that seven parcels of farmland were added and three were removed in the years between 1836 and 1846. In 1847 he owned 19 parcels of farmland, and all but one was plowed land. Aggregated together, the farmland totaled 6.14 acres.

Table 4 shows that Joseph Voegele worked as a charcoal maker in 1836, 1841, and 1846. In 1846, Joseph Voegele was 56 years old, he had four sons and three daughters, he owned a class 4 house, and he owned 6.14 acres of farmland.

Leaving Home

We know that the Halter, Voegele, and Zinger families were in Le Havre, France on June 7, 1847, the day the sailing ship, *Exchange*, departed for North America. The journey from Soufflenheim to Le Havre would have taken about three weeks and the travelers would have waited in the port city before their ship departed, perhaps a week or so. Thus, the three families left Soufflenheim no later than the beginning of May.

In January 1847, the emigrants would have paid their property taxes. To obtain a passport needed to leave France, an emigrant had to certify with the town mayor that their taxes and debts were paid. Then between January and May most of the property owned by Martin Halter, Joseph Voegele, and Joseph Zinger was sold or otherwise transferred.

Martin Halter liquidated his house, yard, and five parcels of farmland, which was everything he owned. Joseph Voegele liquidated his house, yard, and garden in the village. He also sold 16 parcels of farmland. There were three parcels that remained unsold when Joseph left Soufflenheim. One was sold in 1848 and the other two in 1849.

The emigration story for the Joseph Zinger family was a bit different. Joseph and his wife Catherine Schoeffter left Soufflenheim with one son (Jean) and one married daughter (Euphenie). They had two other sons (Barnabé and Jacob) who did not emigrate. In 1847, Joseph Zinger transferred his property in the village, a house, yard, garden, and orchard to his son Jacob (0.25 acres of land). Jacob also received a parcel of plowed land which was 0.51 acre. Joseph Zinger then liquidated the other five parcels of farmland (1.45 acres).

In addition, Joseph Zinger's daughter, Euphenie, was married to Mathias Schlosser. They had six children who emigrated in 1847. Mathias Schlosser was the owner of a house and yard in Soufflenheim, but he had no farmland. When he left Soufflenheim with his family and in-laws, his brother Antoni became the owner of Mathias' village property.

In summary, Joseph Zinger sold 1.45 acres of farmland; Martin Halter sold 1.65 acres of farmland plus a house and yard in the village; Joseph Voegele sold 5.24 acres of farmland plus a house, yard, and garden in the village.

We don't know the money prices for this property, and so we don't know how much money each family carried with them when they left Soufflenheim. One estimate might be that a house and yard were worth about as much as 1.25 acres of farmland. In 1841, Martin Halter sold a class 5 house and yard in the village and purchased 1.25 acres of farmland. This may have been a zero-sum transaction. If that was the case, then Martin Halter would have left Soufflenheim with twice as much money as Joseph Zinger. Joseph Voegele would have left with considerably more than both Joseph Zinger and Martin Halter.

A common estimate for the cost of travel from Alsace to New York City in the era before the railroads is about 200 francs per adult. The Halter family traveled with seven people and the Voegele family traveled with nine. Martin Halter needed about 1,400 francs and Joseph Voegele needed about 1,800 francs. The Zinger family traveled with five adults and six children. The travel cost would have been about 2,200 francs. Prices for the Atlantic crossing may have been half for children aged seven and under. In that case, the travel cost would be closer to 1,800 francs (seven adults at 200 francs each and four children at 100 francs each).

After disembarking in New York City, the three Soufflenheim families traveled up the Hudson River to Albany, New York and then west along the Erie Canal to western New York. The families of Martin Halter and Joseph Voegele settled in the town of Lancaster, New York, about fifteen miles east of the City of Buffalo. The family of Joseph Zinger continued from western New York, north into Canada, and settled in the town of New Germany, in Waterloo County.

We know that the Halter and Voegele families proceeded directly from New York City to western New York. Their ship arrived on July 9 and on September 3, 1847 Joseph Voegele and Martin Halter purchased land in Lancaster, New York.[7] The purchase was an undivided interest in a 50-acre parcel of land located in the southeast part of town. Less than two months after arriving in North America, they paid Hiram Clark $600 for the northern part of lot 57. No record of a mortgage was found, and it is inferred that Joseph Voegele and Martin Halter purchased the land with money they brought from Alsace. Since one US dollar was worth 5.42 French francs, $600 was equivalent to 3,252 francs.

Summary

Martin Halter, Joseph Voegele, and Joseph Zinger emigrated from Soufflenheim during the second phase of mass immigration from central Europe. Phase one is recognized by historians to include the years between 1827 and 1845. Phase two began in 1846 and continued through 1854. The jump in the volume of emigration from central Europe was composed of two elements: an extension of the social sources of emigration to include a larger number of poorer people (propertyless day laborers) and a geographic extension to include new areas in central Europe (northern and eastern Germany).[8]

This change in the social composition of emigration from central Europe was “a response to the economic insecurity, the anxiety, the frustration, and the sense of impending crisis that characterized” the years after 1845. An economic crisis in central Europe began in 1845 and hit the rural lower classes especially hard. “The lower classes, who relied particularly on home-grown potatoes, now had to resort to more expensive grains. ... The increased prices left many families in dire need.”[9]

In lower Alsace “the potato was hit by a terrible disease in 1845, which lasted for several years.” The general economic crisis, reflected in rising prices for grain, made “it extremely difficult to make a living. The phenomenon was amplified by a succession of agricultural crises linked to climatic conditions: 1837-1840, 1845-1846 and potato disease, which exacerbated food shortages.”[10]

At Soufflenheim “many people were threatened with hunger.”

> In 1846, according to the [Town] Council’s deliberations, Mayor [Joseph] Messner drew attention to the misery “currently weighing on a large number of families without work.” … He proposed the creation of a charity workshop. A number of people were also hired to build two dikes to protect the Obermattwald and Niederfeld fields from flooding. In November of the same year, the Council became aware of the high cost of living and the misery caused by the lack of work and granted a credit of 5,000 francs to the charity workshop. The commune had to abandon plans to install new organs, for which a credit of 9,000 francs had been earmarked. The charity workshop should be up and running as soon as possible.[11]

In 1845 the potato blight struck hard. Its effect was most severe where the population was dense and there was little industry. These areas depended most upon the potato. More harm was done by the disease in 1846. A very large proportion of central Europe’s potatoes were destroyed. The rye crop, too, was seriously damaged by frosts and food prices rose sharply under the pressure of consumer demand and speculation. “As the economic situation worsened and the tense atmosphere of foreboding grew more oppressive, the spring of 1847 brought unprecedented swarms of [emigrants] by road, river, and rail to the seaports of northwestern Europe.”[12]

The three Soufflenheim families discussed in this article joined that “swarm.” Yet, the three families did not exhibit the characteristics that defined the second phase of mass immigration. They did not originate from a new geographic area. Soufflenheim, and lower Alsace in general, had been a major source of immigration throughout phase one of the process. Moreover, the three families were not poor, propertyless day laborers.

Martin Halter, Joseph Voegele, and Joseph Zinger were people who had skills they could rely upon and who had property that could be turned into cash. They were from Soufflenheim’s middle class. Their choice to emigrate appears to have been rooted in characteristics that gave shape to the earlier phase of mass immigration, although their timing overlapped with the second phase. Thus, the jump in the volume of emigration that defined the second phase of mass immigration was not the result of a shift in the nature and character of emigration, but rather a transcendence which incorporated elements of the first phase while growing and spreading with new elements in the second phase.

Appendix

Voegele, Joseph, Charcoal maker of Soufflenheim : Folio number 749

Year Added	Section	Parcel Number	Parcel Type	Size (hectares)	Size (Acres)	Class	Year Removed
	A	218	Plowed land	0.0895	0.22		1848
	A	240	Plowed land	0.0965	0.24		1842
	A	304	Meadow	0.1540	0.38		1849
	A	699	Plowed land	0.0825	0.20		1848
	A	1033	Plowed land	0.1180	0.29		1850
	B	420	Meadow	0.0740	0.18		1847
	B	422	Meadow	0.0720	0.18		1847
	B	455	Plowed land	0.0920	0.23		1850
	C	297	Plowed land	0.1480	0.37		1848
	C	395	Plowed land	0.2710	0.67		1848
	C	397	Plowed land	0.1370	0.34		1848
	C	433	Plowed land	0.1440	0.36		1848
	C	527	Plowed land	0.0940	0.23		1848
	C	603	Plowed land	0.1830	0.45		1848
	D	977	Plowed land	0.0870	0.21		1842
	D	997	House				1842
	D	997	Yard	0.0705	0.17		1842
	D	998	Plowed land	0.4020	0.99		1842
	D	1217	House				1848
	D	1217	Yard	0.0570	0.14		1848
	D	1218	Garden	0.0230	0.06		1848
	D	1219	Plowed land	0.0770	0.19		1848
	D	1303	Plowed land	0.1075	0.27		1848
	D	1406	Plowed land	0.1300	0.32		1848
1839	D	776	House				1841
1839	D	776	Plowed land	0.0460	0.11		1841
1839	D	1201	Plowed land	0.1940	0.48		1848
1842	D	1202	Plowed land	0.0875	0.22		1848

1842	B	423	Meadow	0.0700	0.17		1847
1843	B	536	Meadow	0.0730	0.18		1846
1846	C	396	Plowed land	0.1510	0.37		1848
1847	C	586	Plowed land	0.1155	0.29		1848
1847	C	587	Plowed land	0.1050	0.26		1848

Martin Halter of Soufflenheim : Folio number 263

Year Added	Section	Parcel Number	Parcel Type	Size (Hectares)	Size (Acres)	Class	Year Removed
	D	728	House			5	1848
	D	728	Yard	0.0425	0.105	1	1848
	D	729	House			5	1842
	D	729	Yard	0.0210	0.052	1	1842
	D	1260	Plowed land	0.1620	0.400	5	1848
1842	A	866	Plowed land	0.0810	0.200	1	1848
1842	B	67	Meadow	0.1470	0.363	1	1848
1842	D	939	Plowed land	0.1550	0.383	5	1848
1842	B	314	Meadow	0.1210	0.299	1	1848

Joseph Zinger, son of Jacob, of Soufflenheim : Folio number 832

Year Added	Section	Parcel Number	Parcel Type	Size (Hectares)	Size (Acres)	Class	Year Removed
	A	51	Plowed land	0.0780	0.193	2	1848
	B	172	Plowed land	0.2060	0.509	5	1848
	B	768	Plowed land	0.0670	0.166	5	1848
	C	259	Plowed land	0.1570	0.388	4	1848
	C	559	Plowed land	0.1230	0.304	4	1848
	D	170	House			5	1848
	D	170	Yard	0.0065	0.016	1	1848
	D	171	House				démolie
	D	171	Yard	0.0645	0.159	1	1848
	D	172	Orchard	0.0280	0.069	2	1848
	D	1427	Plowed land	0.1620	0.400	4	1848

Sources

1. Mack Walker, *Germany and the Emigration, 1816-1885*, (1964), Chapter 2.
2. Raymond L. Cohn, *Mass Migration Under Sail: European Immigration to the Antebellum United States*, Cambridge University Press, 2009.
3. Cormac Ó Gráda, Richard Paping, and Eric Vanhaute, eds., *When the Potato Failed: Causes and Effects of the "Last" European Subsistence Crisis, 1845-1950*, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2007. See Chapters 1 and 10.

4. Indexes for vital statistics are at http://www.smithancestry.com/alsace/); data about the Joseph Voegele family (http://www.smithancestry.com/places/souff/fams.htm#VoegeleMuller); data about the Martin Halter family (http://www.smithancestry.com/places/souff/fams.htm#HalterSchmuck); data about the Joseph Zinger family (http://www.smithancestry.com/places/souff/fams.htm#ZingerSchoeffter).
5. "Soufflenheim - Recensement de 1836." Martin Halter, image 42, entry 1953; Joseph Voegele, image 34, entry 1489; Joseph Zinger, image 15, entry 600 (https://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/REC-POP-C468-R7464#visio/page:REC-POP-C468-R7464-78732).
6. "Soufflenheim - Recensement de 1841." Martin Halter, image 43, entry 1992; Joseph Voegele, image 39, entry 1758; Joseph Zinger, image 14, entry 533 (https://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/REC-POP-C468-R7465#visio/page:REC-POP-C468-R7465-78795). "Soufflenheim - Recensement de 1846." Martin Halter, image 39, entry 2181; Joseph Voegele, image 35, entry 1943; Joseph Zinger, image 13, entry 605 (https://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/REC-POP-C468-R7466#visio/page:REC-POP-C468-R7466-78857)
7. Erie County New York Deeds, September 1847: Hiram Clark to Martin Halter and Joseph Voegele, (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-89W6-N9FM-H?i=285).
8. Walker, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-75.
9. Gunter Mahlerwein, "The consequences of the potato blight in South Germany," in Cormac Ó Gráda, Richard Paping, and Eric Vanhaute, eds., *When the Potato Failed: Causes and Effects of the "Last" European Subsistence Crisis, 1845-1950*, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2007. pp. 213-221.
10. René Clauss, Raymond Schwengler, and Joseph Walter, *Oberrœdern Stundwiller: Deux Villages, Une Paroisse*, Strasbourg: Editions Coprur, 1993. pp. 174, 182.
11. Lucien Sittler, Marc Elchinger and Fritz Geissert, *Soufflenheim Une Cite à la Recherche de son Histoire*, (Societe D'Histoire Et D'Archeologie Du Reid Nord, 1987), p.173.
12. Walker, *op. cit.*, pp. 71-72, 100.