

FRANTZ JOSEPH ADAM AND HIS SOUFFLENHEIM FARM

Historical settlement patterns for towns and villages in Bas-Rhin, Alsace took the form of nucleated communities. A typical settlement consisted of houses clustered together on 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. Throughout the Middle Ages central government was generally weak and people needed protection from bandits and lawless nobles. Rural populations therefore tended to cluster close together in an effort to enhance their common security. Due to such social clustering, houses in the open country were very rare.

The town of Soufflenheim is a typical nucleated settlement. The residential buildings are clustered around a central point and agricultural land is found in the town's outskirts (also known as the "bann"). In Soufflenheim the central point is St. Micheal's Church and the Oelberg Cemetery. Residential houses and small gardens are located in a ring surrounding the Church and Cemetery. Beyond the residential cluster is another ring where we find cultivated land, meadows, and woodlands.

A striking aspect of this social organization was the division of plowed fields into long narrow strips. 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 be conveniently 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.

In the German speaking parts of Continental Europe, the "morgen" was the traditional unit of measurement for agricultural area. Like an imperial acre in England, a morgen represented the amount of land that could be plowed in a unit of time—a "day's work." Of course, soil conditions and other factors influenced the amount of land that could be plowed in a day and so the unit of measurement varied from place to place. The size of a morgen ranged from around 2,000 square meters in some places to over 4,000 square meters in other places (i.e., from half an acre to over one acre).

Yet another aspect of the agricultural system was that a single family possessed multiple strips of farmland, but the strips did not typically lie side by side. Instead, they were scattered among the open fields of the town. The scattered nature of family holdings helped minimize risk from variations in the weather. If conditions in a particular year caused one parcel of land to be unproductive, another parcel might produce better results.

Soufflenheim's agricultural land was located outside the village cluster and divided into long narrow strips. The 1836 Cadastre cartographic survey of Soufflenheim documents almost 3,000 strips of farmland in the town's open fields. This organization of land persisted well into the nineteenth century. The Cadastre measured the surface area of farmland using the metric system—the hectare and its subdivisions. The metric system was developed during the European Enlightenment, and it created measures of length, weight, and area that were derived from natural phenomena. The metric system was formally defined in French law in 1795 and was adopted for use in the Cadastre land registers.

The Cadastre register for Frantz Joseph Adam of Soufflenheim offers a detailed example of the town's agricultural organization. Frantz Joseph Adam was born in Soufflenheim on 7 August 1766. His father was also named Joseph Adam (1742–1814), and his mother was Marianne Hasser (1728–1800). At the age of 22, Frantz Joseph married Marie Anne Burger. Their life as a married couple began at the same time that revolutionary forces were rumbling in Paris. The Estates-General convened at Versailles on 5

May 1789; Frantz Joseph Adam and Marie Anne Burger were married in St. Michael's church at Soufflenheim on 8 June 1789; and the Bastille was stormed in Paris on 14 July 1789.

**Table 1: The Children of Frantz Joseph Adam and Marie Anne Burger
(Adult children highlighted in grey)**

Name	Born	Died	Spouse	Marriage
Philip		12 Apr 1792		
Catherine	10 Jul 1791	24 Apr 1871	Jean Messner	4 Apr 1811 Soufflenheim
Maria Anna	18 Oct 1792	20 Aug 1793		
Marie Anna	20 Dec 1793	8 Apr 1858	Martin Wittemeyer	23 May 1832 Soufflenheim
Frantz Joseph	25 Apr 1795	26 Jul 1796		
Marie Eve	01 Jul 1796		Joseph Daul	9 Feb 1833 Soufflenheim
Frantz Joseph	16 Sep 1798		Marie Kaemmerlin	20 Aug 1828 Saint-Amarin
Joseph	7 Feb 1800	7 Feb 1800		
Ignace	20 Jun 1801	28 Apr 1873	Madeleine Büchel Marie Eve Schappe	20 Jun 1834 Roeschwoog 16 Feb 1838 Soufflenheim
Laurenz	13 May 1803	5 Jun 1803		
Thérèse	13 May 1803	12 Mar 1862	Michel Babinger Marc Messner	4 Feb 1828 Soufflenheim 31 Dec 1840 Soufflenheim
Benedict / George Gabriel	15 Mar 1805	28 Jul 1807		
Rosa	30 Aug 1806	13 Jul 1807		
Marguerite	4 Feb 1808	4 Jan 1809		

Marie Anne Burger was born on 24 October 1767, making her 21 years old on her wedding day. She and Frantz Joseph Adam had 14 children in the years between 1790 and 1808, but only six of those children grew to adulthood. Details about the children are presented in Table 1. Archived records documenting the history of the Adam family indicate that Frantz Joseph worked as a stocking-maker and weaver in the 1790s and then as a forester at the beginning of the nineteenth century. In addition to working in a profession that generated money income, Frantz Joseph was also a farmer who owned land and produced food and other materials for his family.

When Napoleon Bonaparte abdicated as Emperor of France in April 1814, Frantz Joseph Adam was 48 years old. He had six living children, two boys and four girls. Catherine, his oldest daughter, had been married in 1811, while the other five children were still single. The Soufflenheim census of 1819 described Frantz Joseph's household as a family of six which included his wife, three daughters, and one son. It appears that his daughter Catherine and his son Joseph III were living elsewhere when the Census was taken. Frantz Joseph Adam lived another ten years. Archived documents from Soufflenheim recorded his death on 28 December 1829. He was 63 years old and had been married 40 years.

The year 1836 was advantageous for the historian of Soufflenheim. In that year both a census of population was taken and a land registry (the Cadastre) was assembled. These two documents provide valuable information about the residents of Soufflenheim and, for purposes of the current article, about the family of Frantz Joseph Adam.

Frantz Joseph was not recorded in the pages of the 1836 census because he had died before it was taken. Nevertheless, the census recorded his widowed wife as well as the families of his six adult children. Each of the children was married and living in Soufflenheim at the time of the census. These members of the Adam family were also found in the Soufflenheim Cadastre. There are Cadastre land registries for both surviving sons, Joseph Adam III and Ignace Adam, as well as for the husbands of Frantz Joseph's four daughters.

Joseph Adam III was living away from his family when the 1819 census was taken. In 1828 he was married in the town of Saint-Amarin, Haut-Rhin and his marriage document identified him as a wheelwright. The newly married couple moved back to Soufflenheim before 1836. They were found in the 1836 Soufflenheim census as family number 156. Joseph III was 38 years old when the census was taken, and he had no children. The Cadastre land register shows that Joseph III owned a house and yard in the village cluster, but he did not own farmland. Table 2 presents details of his land register for 1836.

Joseph III's younger brother, Ignace Adam, had married in 1834. Ignace and his wife were found in the 1836 Soufflenheim census as family number 205. He was 36 years old and like his brother, he had no children. The Cadastre land register shows that Ignace Adam owned a house, with a yard and a garden in the village, he also owned one parcel of plowed land in the bann. Table 3 presents details about Ignace Adam's land register for 1836.

The house and yard that Ignace owned may have been the residence where he and his siblings grew up. The 1836 census records his mother, Marie Anne Burger, living in Ignace's household. A reasonable interpretation of this arrangement is that Ignace had inherited the family house after his father died. His brother Joseph III was living away from Soufflenheim at that time, and Ignace was caring for his widowed mother at the family residence.

The 1836 census also records the four daughters of Frantz Joseph Adam:

- Catherine Adam and her husband Jean Messner were family number 87. She was 46 years old and had eight children.
- Marie Anne Adam and her husband Martin Wittemeyer were family number 426. She was 44 years old. Marie Anne had one child and two stepchildren.
- Eve Adam and her husband Joseph Daul were family number 13. She was 40 years old and had five children.
- Thérèse Adam was a widow in 1836 and was living with her widowed sister-in-law in family number 462.

Table 2: Cadastre Land Register, Joseph Adam III, wheelwright

Line	Plan Section	Parcel Number	Type of Parcel	Hectares	Class	Tax Rate	Tax
1	D	270	house	—	5	15	15.00
2	D	270	yard / grounds	0.0190	1	35	0.67

Table 3: Cadastre Land Register, Ignace Adam

Line	Plan Section	Parcel Number	Type of Parcel	Hectares	Class	Tax Rate	Tax
1	A	314	plowed land	0.1460	1	35	5.11
2	D	322	house	—	4	20	20.00
3	D	322	yard / grounds	0.0370	1	35	1.30
4	D	323	garden	0.0280	2	35	0.98

Figure 1

Location of Ignace Adam's house and Joseph Adam III's house in the village of Soufflenheim

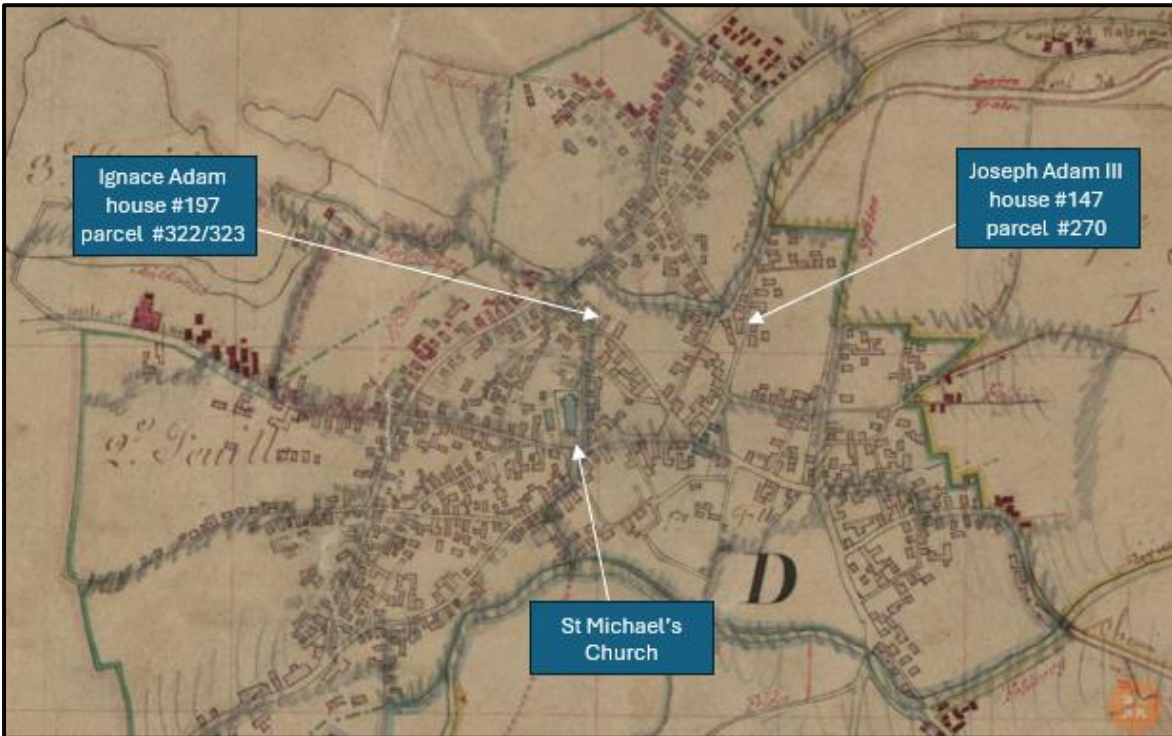


Figure 2

House, yard, and garden, owned by Ignace Adam



The Soufflenheim Cadastre contains a registry for Frantz Joseph Adam, even though he died in 1829. It appears that his wife retained rights in the land. The register title was written in French as: “*Adam Joseph, forestier, veuve, á Sufflenheim.*” The title is a bit confusing. The term *forestier* (forester in English) describes Frantz Joseph Adam, but the term *veuve* (widow in English) describes his wife. Marie Anne Burger was alive at the time this document was written, and so the term “widow” cannot apply to Frantz Joseph. Therefore, the English wording of the land register says: “Widow of Joseph Adam, forester, from Soufflenheim.”

Thus, Marie Anne Burger owned the land in 1836. Be that as it may, she was not farming the land by herself. She was 69 years old in 1836. It is very likely that her son Ignace was farming the land or at least some of it, but we don’t know the details. We must keep in mind that the owner of land was not necessarily the tenant who farmed the land. Ignace Adam may have been farming all the land; or he may have been sharing it with his brother, Joseph III; or some combination of all six Adam children may have been sharing their mother’s land. Nothing in the Cadastre tells us how the land was used. The only information we get is that Marie Anne Burger held the legal rights and the tax obligations.

The Cadastre account identifies 12 parcels of land owned by the widow of Frantz Joseph Adam. Details about each parcel are presented in Table 4. Eleven of the parcels were found in folio number 6 with one additional parcel recorded in folio number 2, although it is not clear why this one parcel was listed

Table 4: Cadastre Land Register, Widow of Frantz Joseph Adam, forester

Line	Section	Parcel Number	Type of Parcel	Hectares	Class	Tax Rate	Tax
1	A	102	plowed land	0.0905	4	15	1.36
2	A	313	plowed land	0.2560	1	35	8.96
3	A	349	meadow	0.1920	2	30	5.76
4	A	958	plowed land	0.1220	2	30	3.66
5	A	1092	plowed land	0.0735	1	35	2.57
6	B	47	meadow	0.1230	2	30	3.69
7	B	416	meadow	0.1080	2	30	3.24
8	B	757	plowed land	0.0810	4	15	1.21
9	C	344	plowed land	0.0330	4	15	0.50
10	D	982	plowed land	0.0600	5	8	0.48
11	D	1077	plowed land	0.0950	4	15	1.42
Folio 2	D	447	meadow	0.0850	3	23	1.96

- The items in lines 1-11 are from folio #6 “widow of Joseph Adam, forester.” Line 12 is from folio #2 “widow of Joseph Adam.”

separately. Together the 12 parcels totaled 1.319 hectares of farmland (the equivalent of 3.26 acres). Eight of the parcels (0.811 hectare; 2.0 acres) were described as plowed land and four parcels (0.508 hectare; 1.26 acres) were described as meadows, which would have produced hay for animals.

The Appendix at the end of this article contains eight maps from Soufflenheim’s Cadastre plan which identify the specific location of each parcel of land in Frantz Joseph’s register. Readers can use the hyperlinks to access each map and to zoom in for greater detail. In addition to the eight section maps,

closeup views are shown for the parcels in lines 1, 2, and 3 of Table 4. Together these images highlight the way in which long narrow strips of land comprised the open fields of Soufflenheim's bann.

Figure 3 (on the next page) shows an 1836 map of Soufflenheim with the relative locations of the land parcels owned by Frantz Joseph Adam. The Figure highlights the scattered nature of farmland across the town's agricultural fields. The distance from the family house in the village to the three northern parcels in Section A is between one-third to two-thirds of a mile (0.54 km to 1.07 km). Five other parcels, two in the southern part of Section A and three in Section B, are about one mile (1.61 km) from the family home. The parcel in Section C is close to two miles (3.22 km) from the house.

The primary purpose of the Cadastre was fiscal, that is, it was created as the French taxation system. In the *Ancien Régime* (that is, before the French Revolution) the royal tax was levied against the income (money or in-kind) of an entire town and the town leadership was responsible for distributing the tax among its inhabitants. In the spirit of the Revolution (the emancipation of the individual and a greater division of landed property), the Cadastre introduced individual taxation based on property ownership.

The Cadastre tax was levied on the value of land and buildings owned by individuals. Today, in the United States, property tax is assessed against the market value of property, that is, against the selling value of the real estate. For the Cadastre, taxes were assessed against the rental revenue that one might receive from the property if it was rented.

Figure 3

Approximate locations of Frantz Joseph Adam's parcels of farmland



Rental value was determined when the land was originally surveyed (1836 for Soufflenheim). The rental value was recorded in the land registers, and it was fixed. French law had no provisions for updating rental values. An assessment made on a parcel of land in, say, 1840 would be exactly the same in, say, 1871. (See for example, folio number 8, Joseph Albrecht of Soufflenheim). If land parcels were divided or joined together, the rental values (and hence the tax obligations) were also divided or joined together.

The tax rates and tax assessments placed on each of Frantz Joseph's parcels of land are shown in Table 4. Parcels on lines 2 and 5 were assessed to have the highest value. They were class 1, plowed land which was valued at 35 francs per hectare. The parcel on line 4 was class 2 plowed land which was valued at 30 francs per hectare. Once the value of the land was determined, the tax assessment was computed by multiplying the tax rate and the size of the parcel. Taken together, the total tax assessment for the 12 parcels of land was 34.81 francs. For reference, Nicole Fouché claimed that 500 to 800 francs corresponded to roughly one year's income for a family of five, implying a tax rate out of income in the range between four and seven percent. (Fouché, *Alsatian Emigration to the United States, 1815-1870*, Chapter 2.)

Marie Anne Burger died on 10 May 1839, at the age of 72. The next year, her children became the owners of her farmland. The Cadastre account provides information about these land transfers. The registers tell us the year a parcel was transferred, and it gives us the account number (that is, the folio number) of the new owner. In the case of Frantz Joseph Adam's land, all the parcels were transferred in 1840 and his six children along with two other individuals became the new owners.

Among the 12 parcels of land owned by Frantz Joseph Adam, five were divided in half while two were divided in thirds. The remaining five parcels were transferred to a single person. Table 5 shows the recipients of Frantz Joseph's farmland. In most cases a single parcel was divided among two or three children. For example, the first parcel (Section A, number 102), which was 0.0905 hectare of plowed land, was given to Eve and Marie Anne. Half the parcel was transferred to Eve and half to Marie Anne. Because both Eve and Marie Anne were married, the transfer was recorded in the registers of their respective husbands.

Table 5: Recipients of Land Parcels, 1840

Section & Parcel Number	Type of Parcel	Ignace folio 3	Joseph folio 4	Thérèse folio 25	Eve folio 129	Catherine folio 492	Marie Anne folio 797	Other
A 102	plowed				1/2		1/2	
A 313	plowed	1/3			1/3			1/3
A 349	meadow	1/3	1/3				1/3	
A 958	plowed		1					
A 1092	plowed					1/2	1/2	
B 47	meadow					1		
B 416	meadow			1/2	1/2			
B 757	plowed			1/2		1/2		
C 344	plowed			1				
D 982	plowed							1
D 1077	plowed	1						
D 447	meadow		1/2	1/2				

- The items in lines 1-11 are from folio #6 “the widow of Joseph Adam, forester.” Line 12 is from folio #2 “the widow of Joseph Adam.”
- Folio 3 was Ignace Adam; folio 4 was Joseph Adam, wheelwright (*charron*); folio 25 was Michel Babinger (1799–1832) husband of Thérèse Adam; folio 129 was Joseph Daul (1779–1850) husband of Marie Eve Adam; folio 492 was Jean Baptiste Messner (1784–1857) husband of Catherine Adam; and folio 797 was Martin Wittemeyer husband of Marie Anne Adam
- Regarding A 313, Other was Ignace Messner, a wood merchant (*marchand de bois*), folio 495.
- Regarding D 982, Other was Jonas Weil from Haguenau, a horse dealer, folio 826.

Two pieces of the farmland were transferred to individuals who were not family members. One-third of parcel 313 in Section A was transferred to Ignace Messner of Soufflenheim (folio 495). Ignace Messner was identified as a wood merchant (*marchand de bois*), and this piece of land might have been payment of a debt, perhaps for firewood.

Similarly, parcel 982 in Section D was transferred to Jonas Weil of Haguenau (folio 826). Note that this parcel of land had the lowest value among the 12 parcels. It was class 5 plowed land worth only 8 francs per hectare. The registry account for Jonas Weil tells us that he was not a Soufflenheim resident. Records from Haguenau identify Jonas Weil as a horse dealer. Here again the land transfer may have been payment of a debt.

Historically, Soufflenheim was a typical nucleated community. Residential housing was clustered around a central point and farmland was scattered in a ring away for the residential cluster. The farmland owned by Franz Joseph Adam was not contiguous to the family house and yard nor was it a single enclosed field in the agricultural bann. Franz Joseph had 12 distinct parcels of land scattered in all four geographic sections of the town. These parcels were strips of land, in open fields, where all the neighboring parcels of land were similarly long narrow strips. Frantz Joseph Adam and his family did not live on their farmland.

By North American standards, Frantz Joseph owned a small farm—he had only 1.319 hectare of farmland, about 3.25 acres. He owned only 0.811 hectare (two acres) of plowed land and 0.508 hectare (1.25 acres) of meadows. Frantz Joseph was not, however, a small farmer by the standards of his day. In 1836, only 8 percent of Soufflenheim’s farms were larger than 2 hectares (5 acres) and only 19 percent of the farms contained one or more hectares of land. Frantz Joseph’s farm was among these 19 percent of the largest farms in Soufflenheim.

Appendix
Mapping Frantz Joseph Adam's Farm

Soufflenheim, Section A, Sheet 1
Completed in the field on 15 April 1836

Parcel 102	0.0905 ha	class 4 plowed land
Parcel 313	0.2560 ha	class 1 plowed land
Parcel 349	0.1920 ha	class 2 meadow

This image shows all of Section A, Sheet 1 and identifies three parcels of land owned by Frantz Joseph Adam.

Source:

<http://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/LIGEO-1513766#visio/page:LIGEO-1513766-14306>



Soufflenheim, Section A, Sheet 1 (partial; closeup)

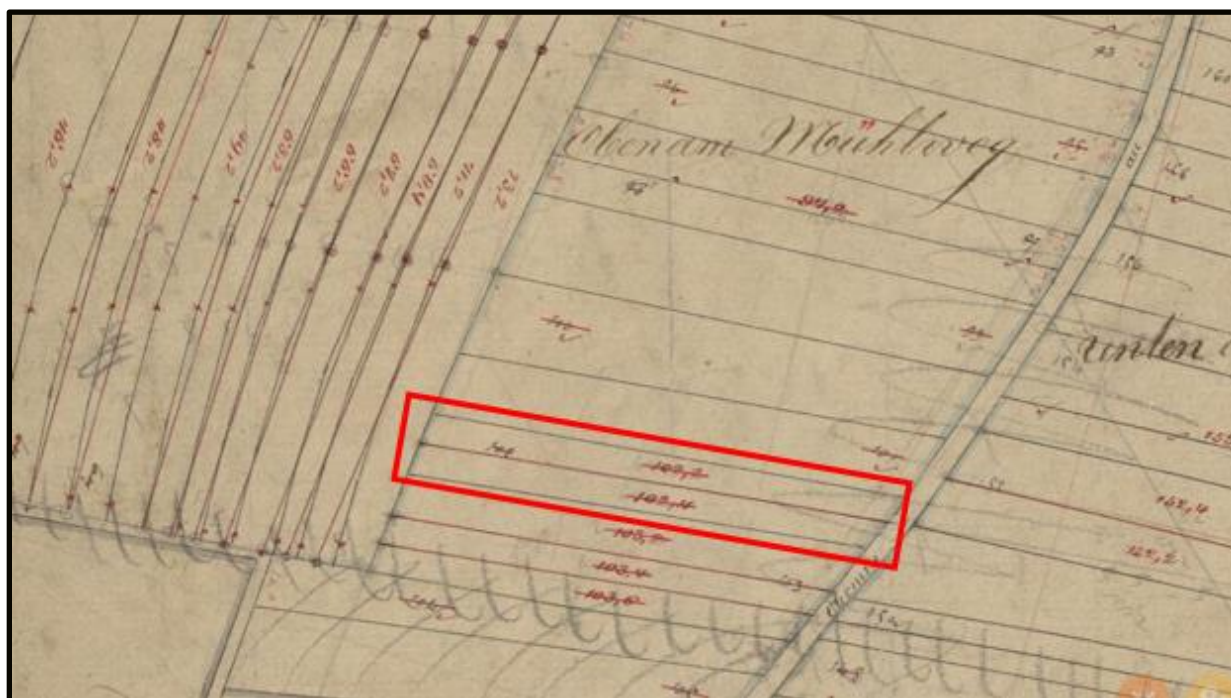
Parcel 102 0.0905 ha class 4 plowed land

Field name: Oben am Muhlveg

In 1840 this parcel was divided between Eve and Marie Anne. The half and half division is visible on the map. The parcel boundary and the number 102 were written in black ink, indicating they were written in 1836. A red line divides the parcel in half. Another red line is drawn through the number 102 and the numbers 102.2 and 102.4 are written in red ink. Red ink was used when the map was updated in 1883.

Source:

<https://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/LIGEO-1513766#visio/page:LIGEO-1513766-14306>



Soufflenheim, Section A, Sheet 1 (partial; closeup)

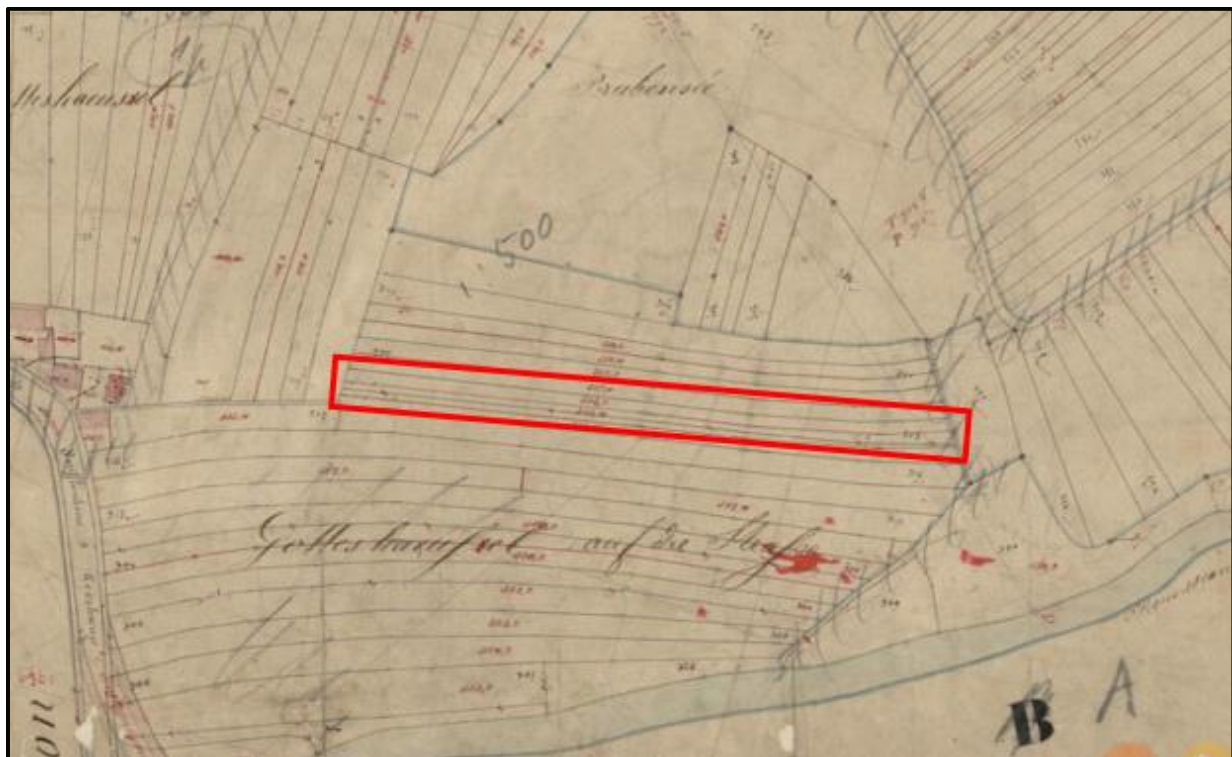
Parcel 313 0.2560 ha class 1 plowed land

Field name: Gotteshaeussel auf die Strass

In 1840 this parcel was divided in thirds. The division is visible on the map. The parcel boundary and the number 313 were written in black ink, indicating they were written in 1836. Two red lines divide the parcel into thirds. A red mark was used to cross out the number 313 and the numbers 313.2, 313.4, and 313.6 are written in red ink. Red ink was used when the map was updated in 1883.

Source:

<https://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/LIGEO-1513766#visio/page:LIGEO-1513766-14306>



Soufflenheim, Section A, Sheet 1 (partial; closeup)

Parcel 349 0.1920 ha class 2 meadow

In 1840 this parcel was divided in thirds. One part each was transferred to Joseph, Marie Anne, and Ignace. In 1843 Joseph transferred his part to Marie Anne and her husband. The map shows parcel 349 divided into a two-thirds parcel (349.2 in red) and a one-third parcel (349.4 in red).

Source:

<https://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/LIGEO-1513766#visio/page:LIGEO-1513766-14306>

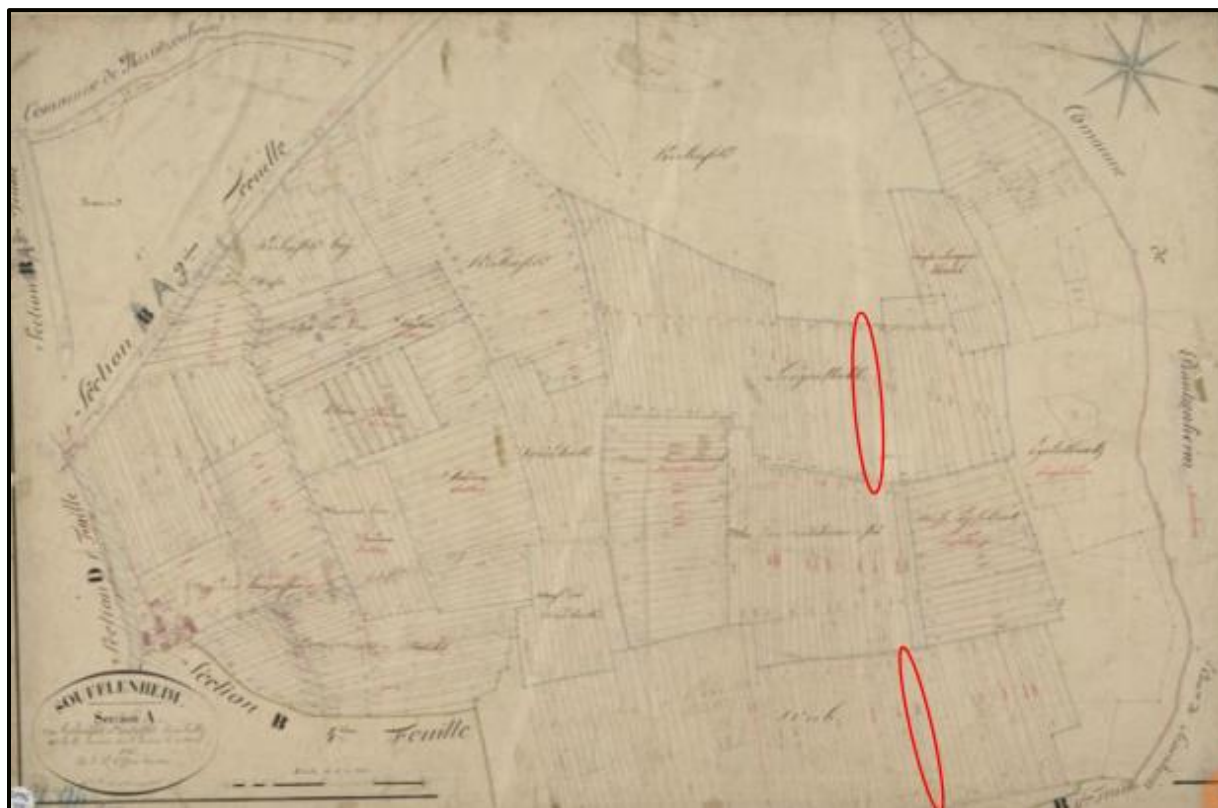


Soufflenheim, Section A, Sheet 4
Completed in the field on 20 April 1836

Parcel 958	0.1220 ha	class 2 plowed land
Parcel 1092	0.0735 ha	class 1 plowed land

Source:

<http://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/LIGEO-1513769#visio/page:LIGEO-1513769-14313>



Soufflenheim, Section B, Sheet 2
Completed in the field on 5 May 1836

Parcel 47 0.1230 ha class 2 meadow

Source:

<http://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/LIGEO-1513771#visio/page:LIGEO-1513771-14318>



Soufflenheim, Section B, Sheet 3
Completed in the field on 15 May 1836

Parcel 416 0.1080 ha class 2 meadow

Source:
<http://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/LIGEO-1513772#visio/page:LIGEO-1513772-14309>



Soufflenheim, Section B, Sheet 4
Completed in the field on 25 April 1836

- Parcel 757 0.0810 ha class 4 plowed land

Source:

<http://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/LIGEO-1513773#visio/page:LIGEO-1513773-14308>



Soufflenheim, Section C, Sheet 4
Completed in the field on 20 April 1836

Parcel 344 0.0330 ha class 4 plowed land

Source:

<http://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/LIGEO-1513777#visio/page:LIGEO-1513777-14319>

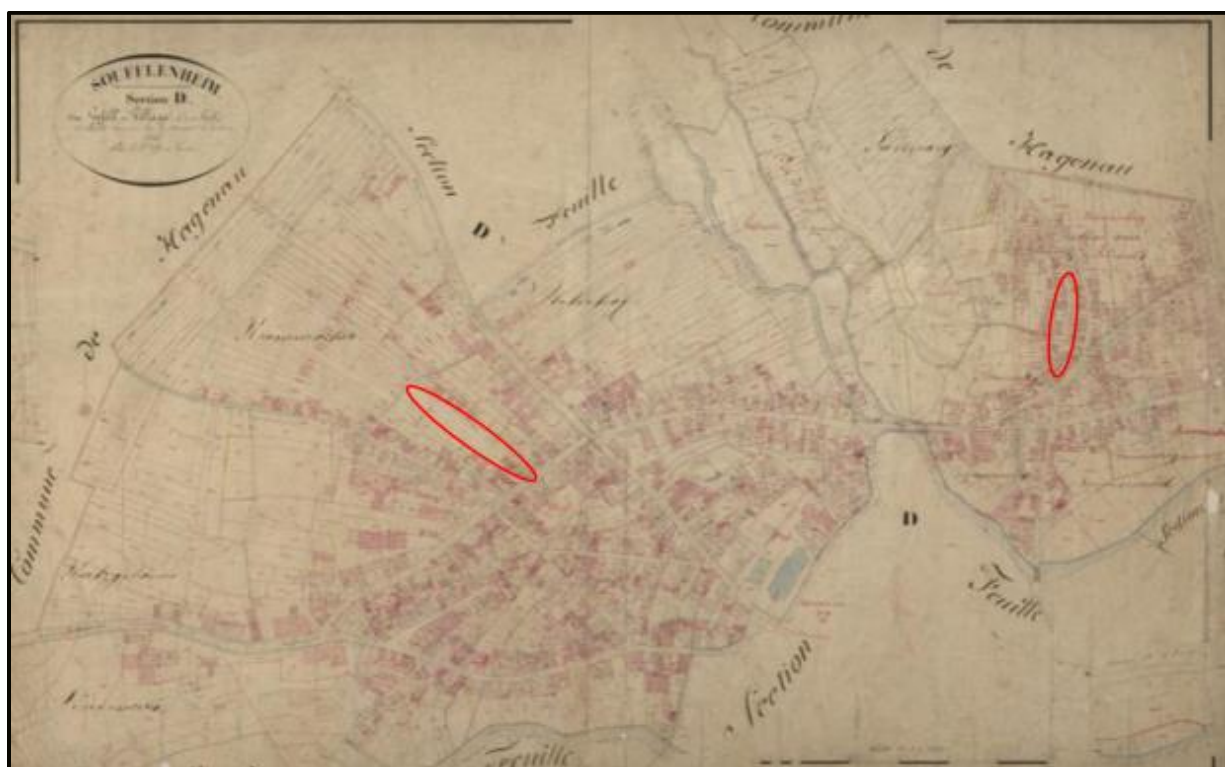


Soufflenheim, Section D, Sheet 2
Completed in the field on 25 June 1836

Parcel 982	0.0600 ha	class 5 plowed land
Parcel 1077	0.0950 ha	class 4 plowed land

In 1836 both parcels were unbuilt land. With population growth during the 19th century, the parcels of farmland became residential plots with houses. When the map was modified in 1883, buildings were added to represent the new houses. Houses which existed in 1836 are drawn in black ink. The new building after 1836 is drawn in red ink and was added to the map in 1883.

Source:
<http://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/LIGEO-1513781#visio/page:LIGEO-1513781-14317>



Soufflenheim, Section D, Sheet 1
Completed in the field on 1 July 1836

Parcel 447 0.0850 ha class 3 meadow

Source:

<http://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/LIGEO-1513780#visio/page:LIGEO-1513780-14310>

