

SOUFFLENHEIM AND ALSACE

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Essays by Michael J. Nuwer of Soufflenheim and Alsace in the 18th and 19th centuries. More writings by Michael Nuwer can be found at: <https://sites.google.com/view/nuwerfamilyhistory/home>



Pottery Merchant in Soufflenheim, Henri Loux

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SOUFFLENHEIM

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) 1 iron pot 2 iron pans 2 iron soup spoons	Salome Metzler (19 January 1762) one iron pan one smaller one iron pot with cover one skimming spoon, fork, and knife	Hans Georg Biff & Anna Maria Witt (6 February 1762) 1 iron pan 1 same cast iron 1 iron pot and cover 1 melting pot
Jacob Mössner (16 June 1762) 1 copper van 2 iron pans 1 meat fork and spoon	Johannes Beckh (18 June 1762) 2 oil pans and 1 smaller 1 skimming spoon and one meat fork and 1 knife	Frantz Nuber (27 September 1763) an old iron pan a small tin pan a mold

a skimming spoon 1 iron pot and cover	2 iron pots with covers 2 stone jugs Half on a copper cauldron	a pair of scissors
Jacob Kieffer & Margaretha Liechteisen (10 January 1765) 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	Barbara Stäblerin (6 February 1766) Cooking material 1 iron skimming spoon	Maria Magdalena Brotschy (9 September 1768) 1 old big iron worked pan 1 smaller one 1 iron large spoon and skimming ladle, plus meat fork

Otillia Metzler (4 March 1774) 1 old copper cauldron 2 large iron pots 1 iron spoon skimming spoon one meat fork 1 stone oil jug	Margaretha Wilhelm (6 February 1778) 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	Anna Pauli (5 February 1781) 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 crops 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 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 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 brine 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 'sauerkraut' 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 grain 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.

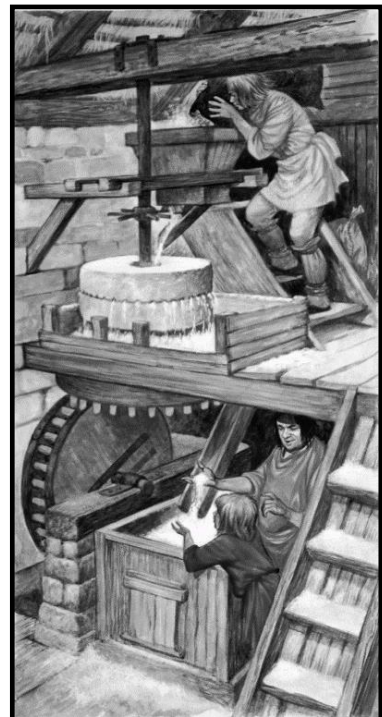
Bread was also used to make biscuits. In their original form, biscuits were simply twice baked bread. This left them crispy, flaky, and easy to preserve. Because biscuits remained edible for much longer periods of time than loaves of bread, they were ideal for long travels, war time, and stored supplies 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 grind 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 make 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)	Augustin Underkirch & Barbara Christmann (28 July 1707)	Maria Sigler [Sigel] (29 July 1707)
1 copper vat 1 old pan of cast iron 1 iron ladle	In copper Same in tin Same iron	One old copper cauldron One iron pan

1 soup ladle 1 iron grease ladle		
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 meat fork 1 iron soup spoon 4 wooden plates
Maria Träher (15 November 1747) 1 good iron cauldron 1 old pot 1 cooking mold	Mathis Beckh (27 February 1749) 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.

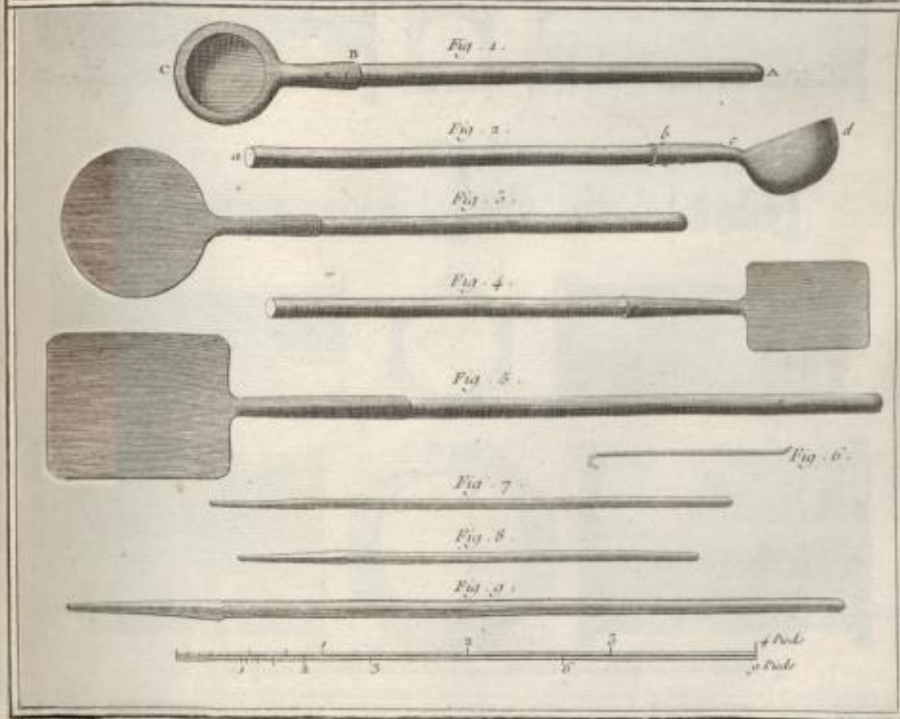
The next three images show the manufacture of cast-iron pots at a forge. The first image contains a vignette of the furnace and molding room with molds in various stages of casting. This image is followed by two images showing the sequence of operations for sand molding a cast iron pot with legs.

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.





Forges, 3^e section, Fournais en Marchandise, Coulage à la Poche.



Fig. 16.



Fig. 17.

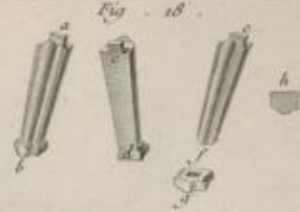


Fig. 18.



Fig. 19.

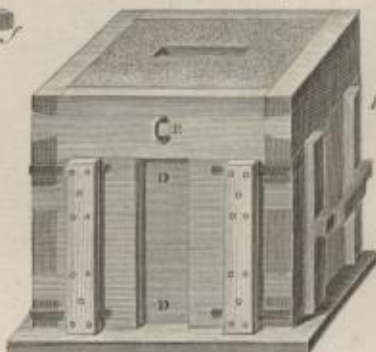


Fig. 22.

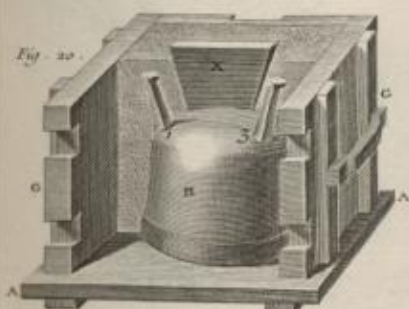


Fig. 20.



Fig. 24.

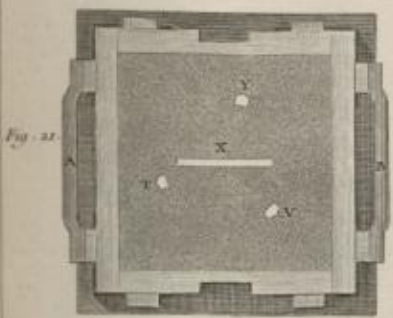


Fig. 21.

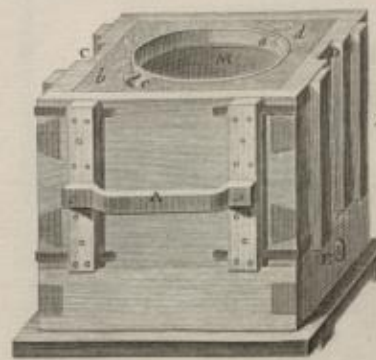
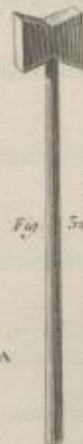
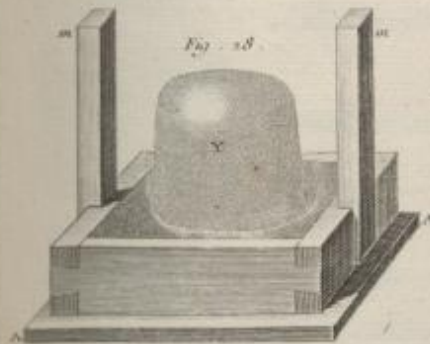
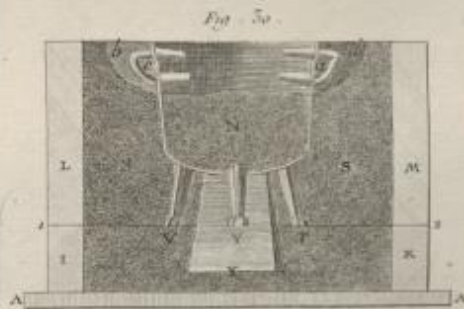
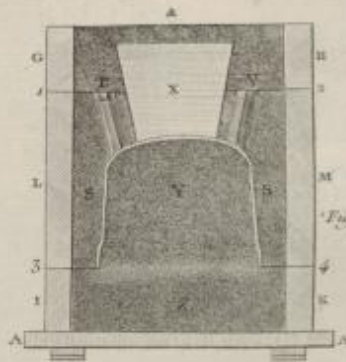
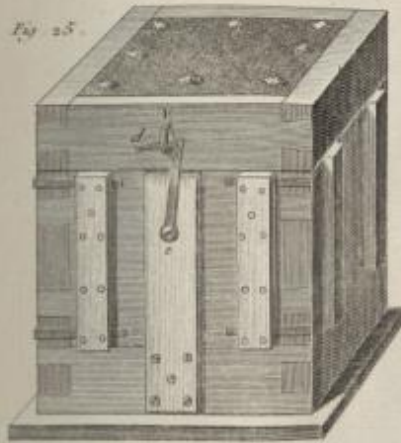


Fig. 23.

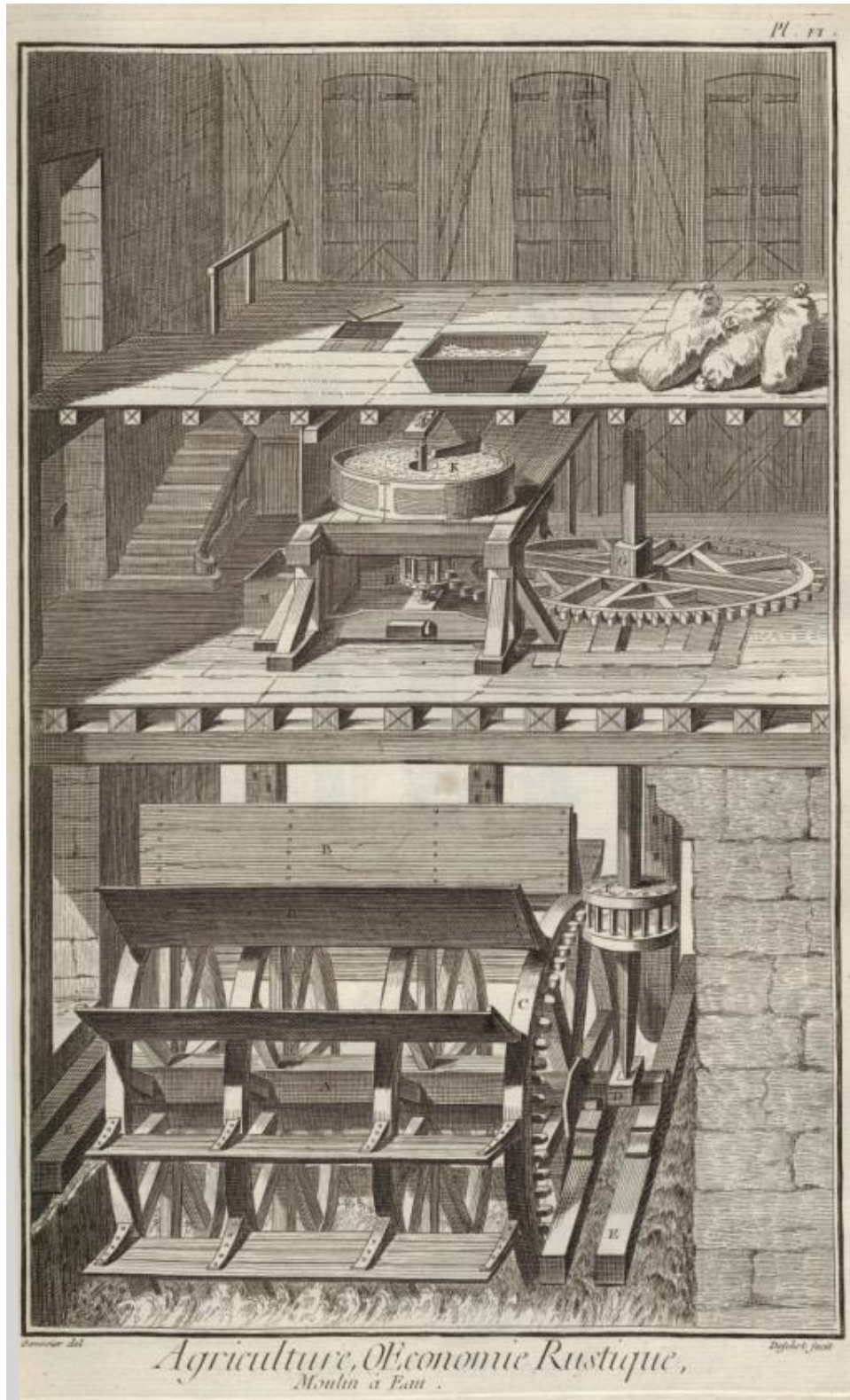


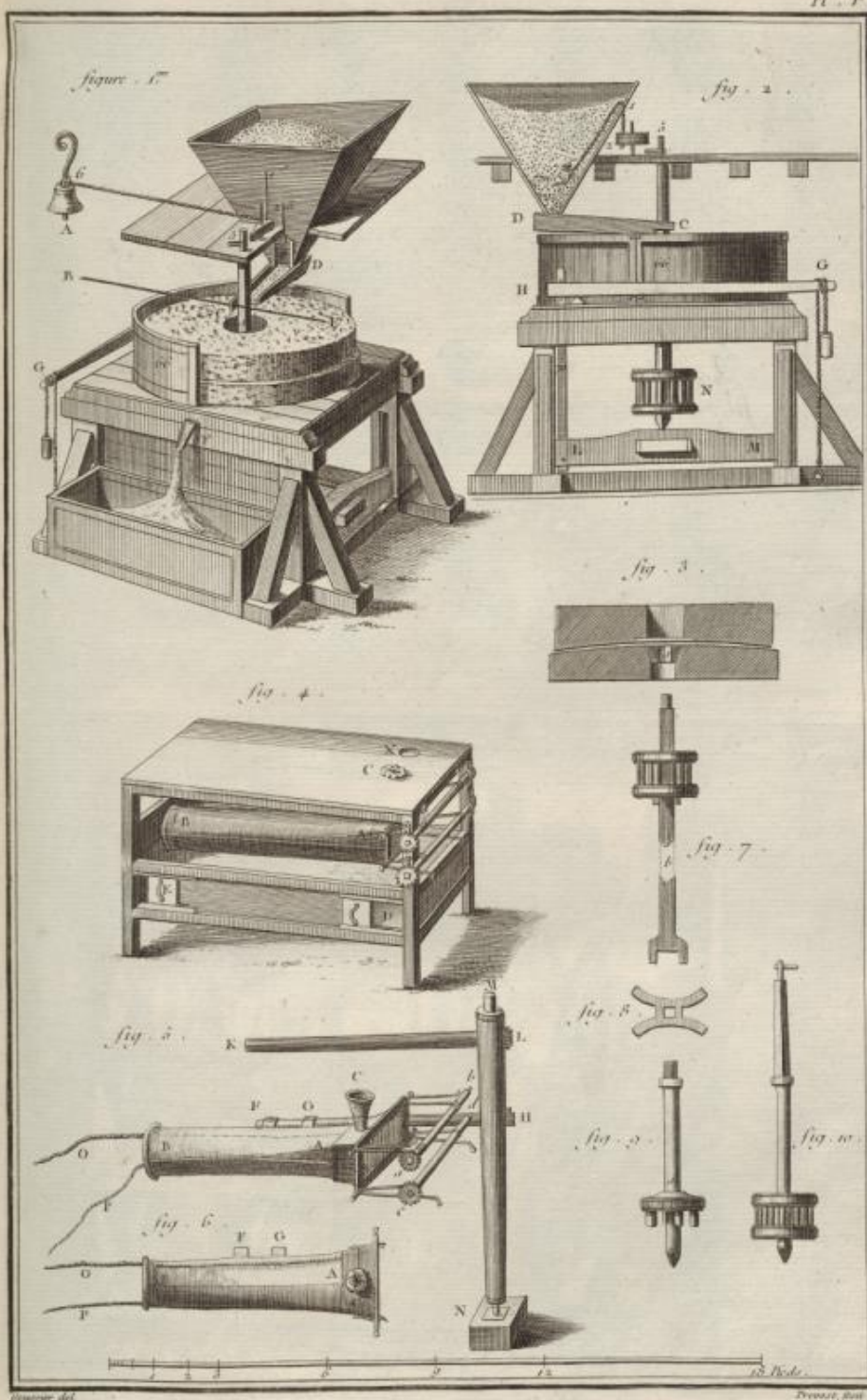
Forges, 3^e Section, Fourneau en Marchandise, Moulage en Sable.



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





Agriculture Economique Rustique.
Départ des Moulins.



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.

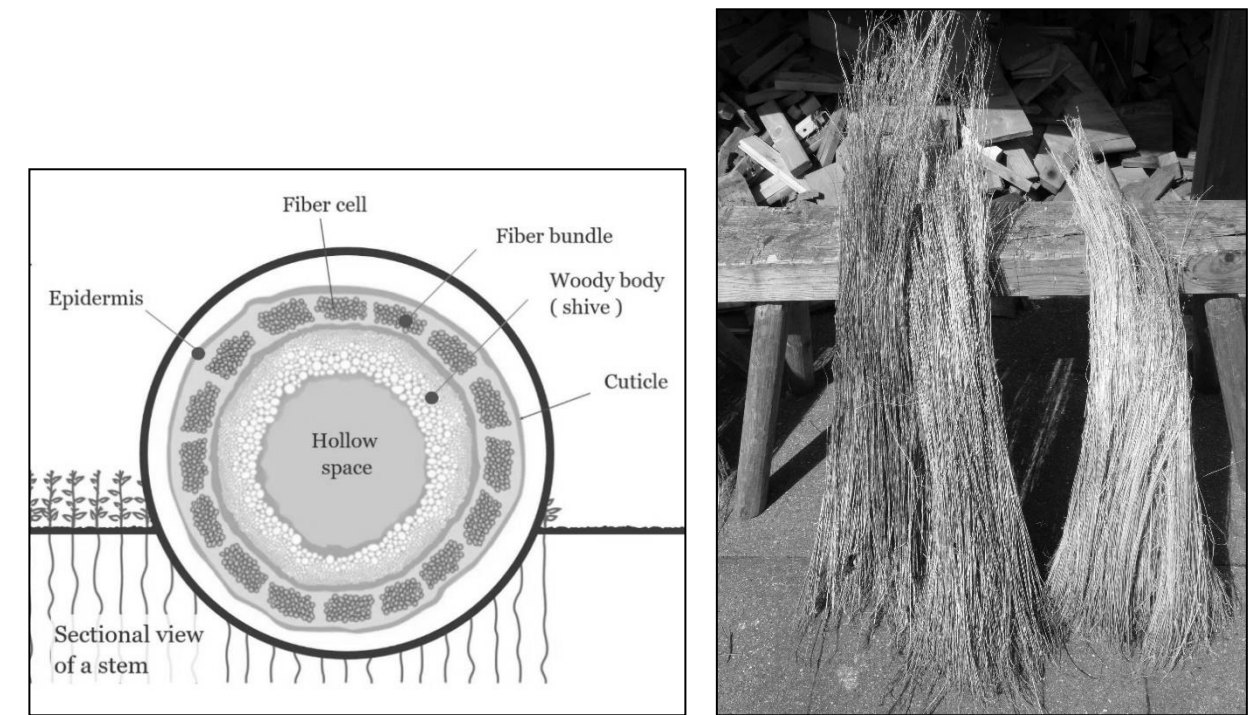
Raw Flax and Hemp in the Soufflenheim Estate Inventories

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
Otilia 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

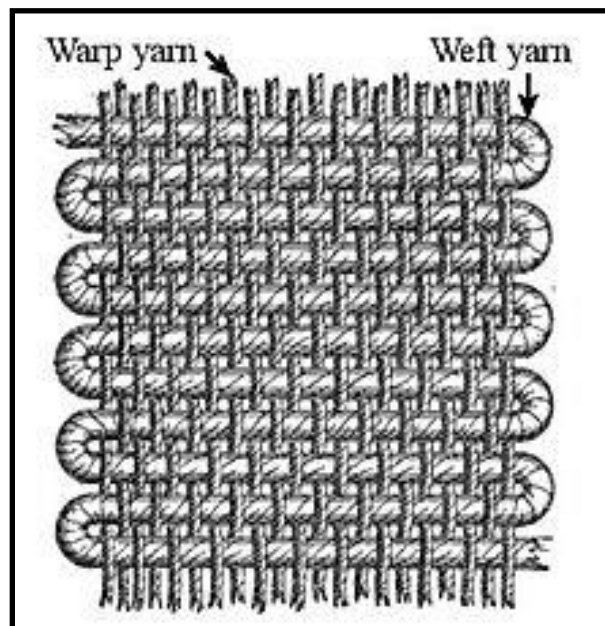
The raw flax was wound on a stick called a distaff. The spinner's right fingers draft the fibers and her left fingers wet the fibers with water. The wheel, powered by a treadle, is used to turn the spindle (located in front of the spinner's right knuckles) which twists the fibers into linen yarn.

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.

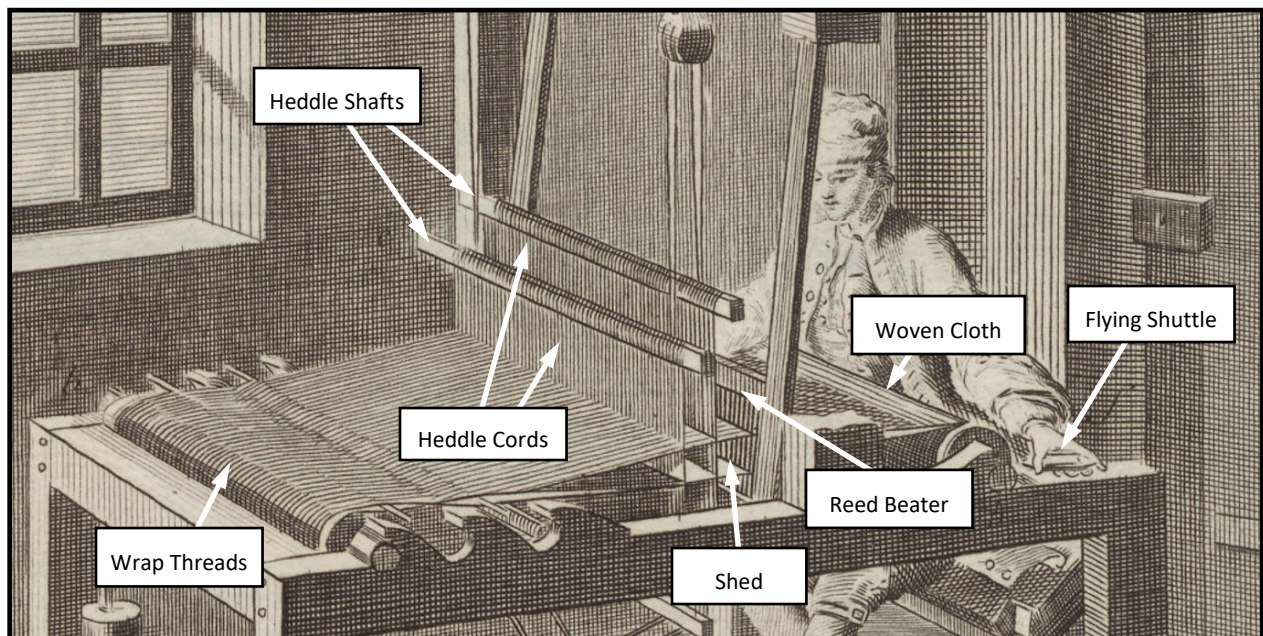


Plain Weave

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 warp thread 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

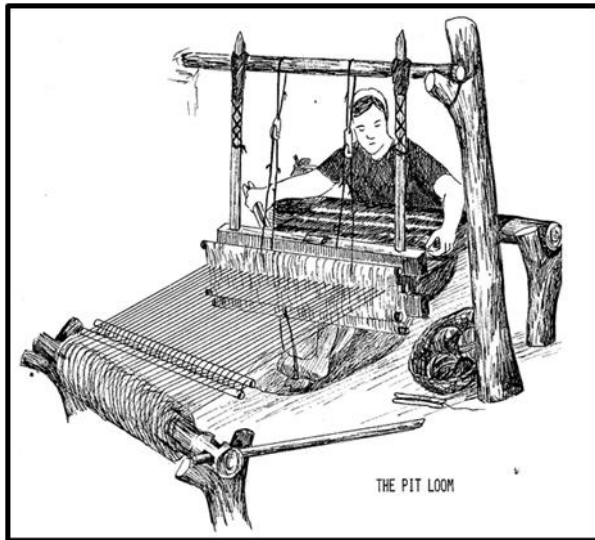
The image is taken from The Encyclopedia of Diderot. The Encyclopedia was published in France under the direction of Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert between 1751 and 1772.

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

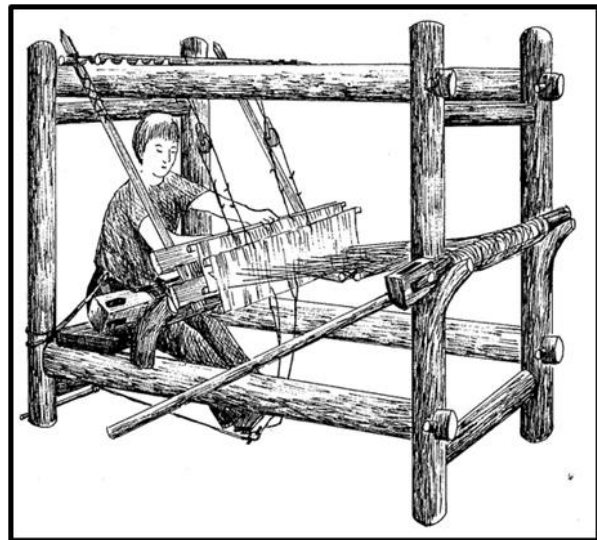
A hand loom might be wide or narrow. Hand weavers could only weave a cloth as wide as their arm span. To weave cloth that needed to be wider, two people were required to do the task. This ceased to be necessary after the flying shuttle was invented in 1733. “The weaver held a picking stick that was attached 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



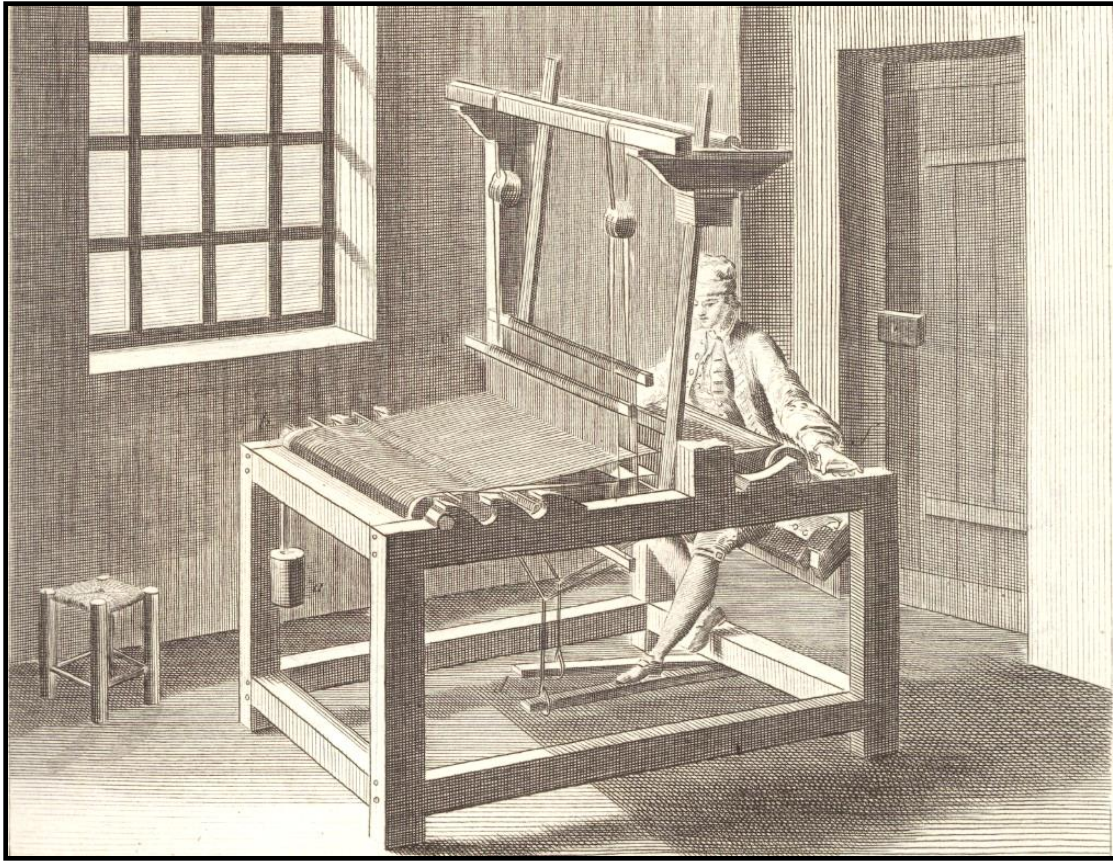
Frame Loom

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. Titôt 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 addition 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.

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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)

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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 altar 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 Schäfer, 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	
Otilia 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

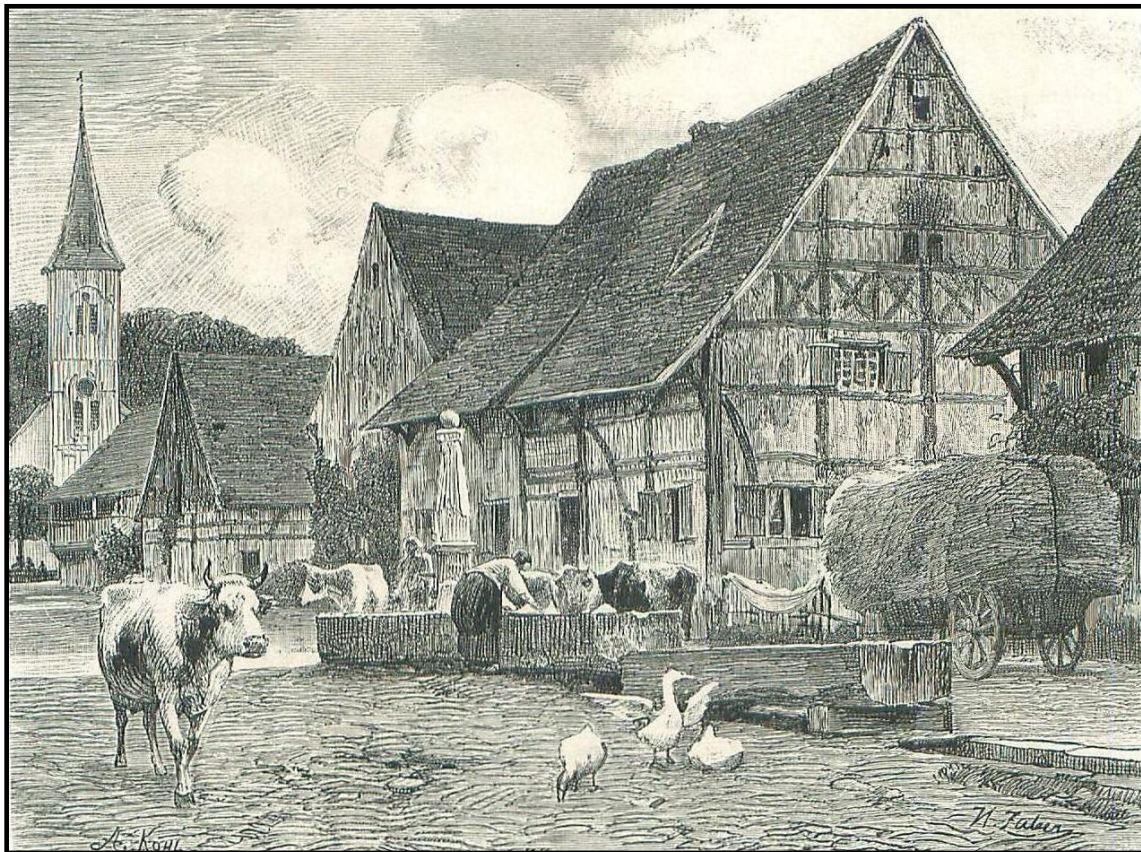
During the Medieval and early modern periods, the rural regions of Alsace were organized into what can be called clustered settlements, which is in contrast with the idea of a dispersed settlement pattern. North Americans are accustomed to the dispersed settlement of rural land. In such a territorial 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: <http://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: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10215177n/f1.item.zoom>

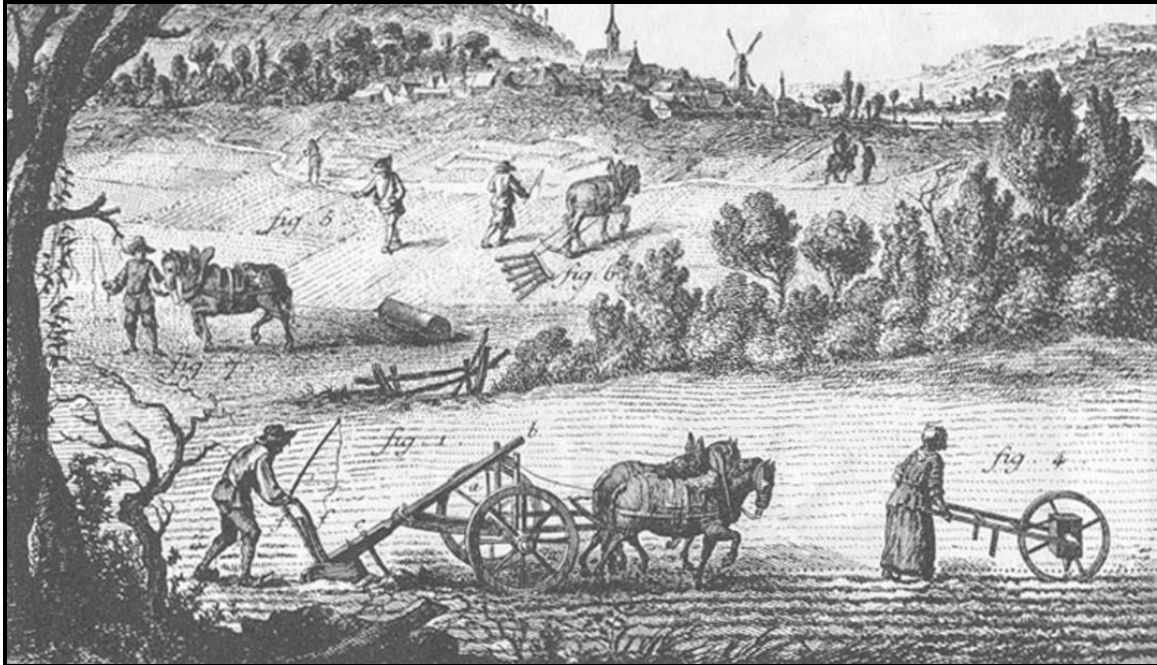


Image 1: Plowman opening a furrow with an ordinary plow (fig 1); seed drill (fig 4); hand seeder (fig 5); carter driving the harrow to cover the seed (fig 6); carter and clod breaker used to level the ground (fig 7).

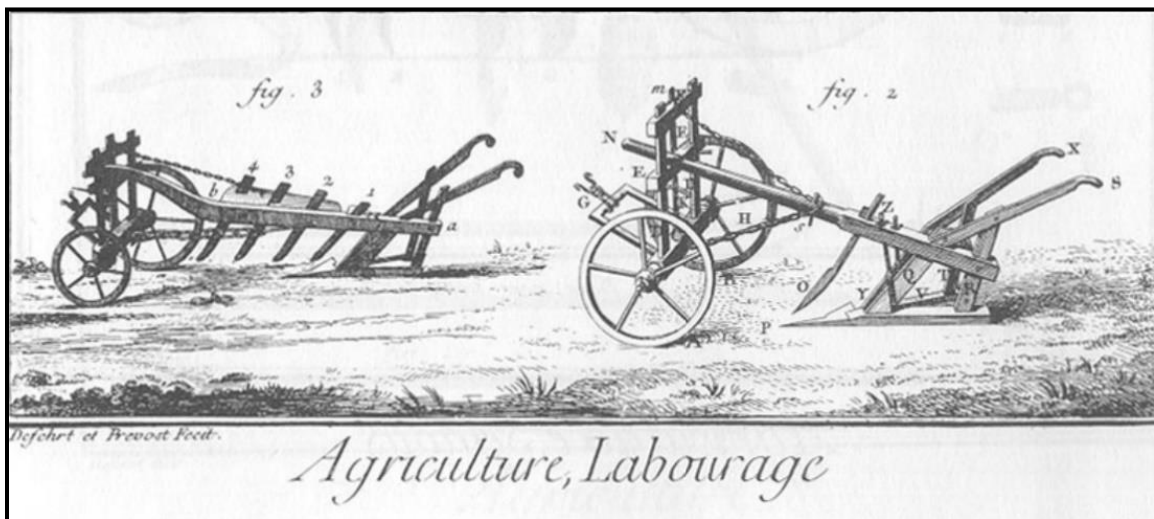


Image 2: left, Jethro Tull plow; right, Ordinary plow

***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/encyclopedia1117/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 guildens.

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 life in the village.

Salt: A Side Note

In the fourteenth century, the King of France began taxing salt and the revenue became 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 ripened cheeses could be stored for a year or 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.

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.

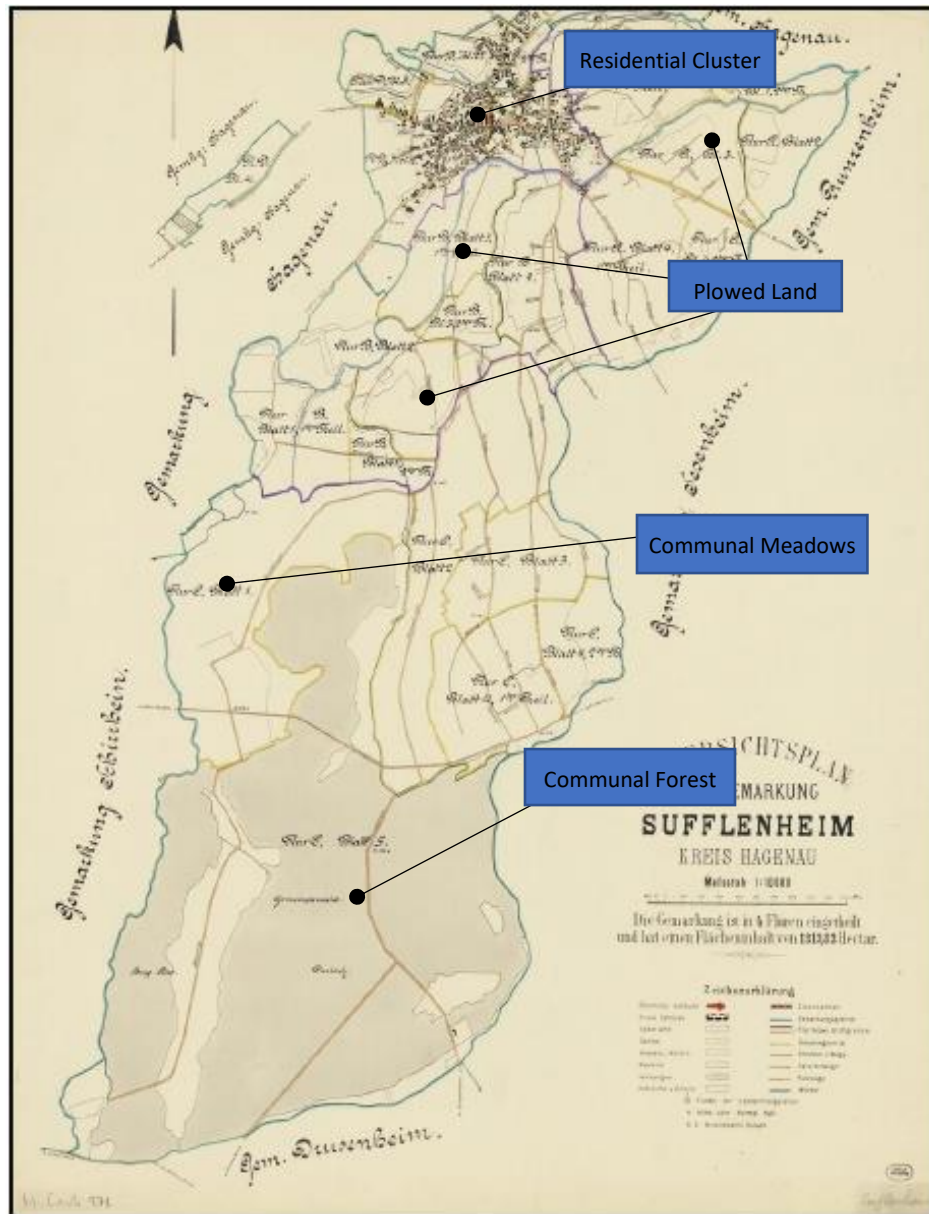
Although pigs were individually owned, they were cared for within a cooperative system. Each resident did not keep their own animal at their home. Instead, the animals were kept in a single herd and the pig herder managed the combined pig herd. Pig breeding was an important matter for the town burghers 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).



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.

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 Bonaparte, 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.

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

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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

Age	All occupations		Household heads		Dependents	
	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	

THE ESTATE OF FRANZ NUBER: 1717-1763

By Michael J. Nuwer, June 2021

In the nineteenth century New York State used probate petitions to identify the legal heirs to an estate and to certify the validity of a last will and testament. For the historian, probate records may give a deceased person's date of death, the names of a spouse and children, and their places of residence. Many records also included lists of personal property and debts.

Something similar existed in eighteenth century Alsace. An estate inventory described the real and personal property left by an individual at the time of death. These inventories were presented to the local notary, who was a public official similar to a judge in the United States. Soufflenheim residents who were heirs to an estate appeared before the notary of Haguenau where the estate was enumerated, and the parties decided details for the distribution of assets. These estate records still exist in the government archives of Alsace, France.

An English translation of the estate inventory for Frantz Nuwer was recently made. That document is discussed in the following pages. The full translation is reproduced at page six below.

Frantz Nuwer was born in Jockgrim, Palatinate on January 13, 1717 and was baptized George Francis Nuber.¹ At that time, Jockgrim was ruled by the Kingdom of France. Although we don't know the year he migrated to Soufflenheim, we know he married Anna Müller in that town on August 21, 1744. He was 27 years old.

Church records tell us that Frantz worked in Soufflenheim as a potter (*figuli*). The records also tell us that he was a Soufflenheim citizen (*civis huius soci*), that is, a burger of the town. The role of citizenship in Alsatian towns was discussed in greater depth in a previous essay.² There we saw that Frantz Nuwer gained citizenship status when he married the daughter of a Soufflenheim citizen.

Frantz Nuwer's estate inventory was an "inventory and description ... of all property and debts without any omission" of Frantz Nuwer "former burgher here in Soufflenheim" at the time of his death. It was dated September 27, 1763. The document tells us that he had died four months earlier, which means he died sometime in June 1763. He was, thus, 46 years old at the time of his death and had been married 19 years and 10 months.

¹ "Frantz" is the German spelling of his given name and was the spelling used in notary documents. "Francis" is the Latin and French spelling and is found in church documents. "Frank" is the English spelling of the name.

² see "The Nuwer Family in Europe," <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1SU2e4EoD8aERvYbTBO021mTt9Wal2XQw>

The inventory document begins by identifying the heirs of Frantz Nuwer's estate. They were "first the named widow Anna Müller, ... then secondly ... the children issued of this union, minor of age and named Maria Anna 16 years old and Frantz Antoni 3 years old." At the proceedings, Anna Müller was assisted by Michel Häussler while Georg Adam Ludwig acted as guardian for the two children.

The son, Frantz Antoni Nuwer, was our ancestor. He would become the grandfather of the immigrants John and Frank X Nuwer. Antoni was only 3 years old when his father died, and he was 13 years younger than his sister, Maria Anna. Antoni was the only Nuwer in our line who was born and died in Soufflenheim.

Seven children have been identified from the marriage of Frantz Nuwer and Anna Müller. Those children are listed in the table below. We have church baptism records for each of the children except Maria Anna, and each of the records indicate that the child was baptized the same day he or she were born.

Church documents from Soufflenheim do not contain a baptism record for Maria Anna Nuwer because baptism records before 1748 have been lost. We know she was Frantz Nuwer's daughter from this inventory document. She also appears in her marriage contract (dated November 1, 1769) and her mother's inventory document (dated March 4, 1779). Frantz Nuwer's inventory stated that Maria Anna was 16 years old in 1763 which implies she was born in 1747. Her record of baptism is thereby among the lost documents.

Children of Frantz Nuwer and Anna Müller

Name	Born	Died
Maria Anna	1747	23 December 1802
Frantz Joseph	8 January 1750	
Maria Catherine	13 October 1751	
Maria Magdalena	9 January 1753	
Maria Clara	12 August 1755	
Maria Eva	6 April 1758	
Frantz Antione	19 May 1760	22 April 1818

Another inference to make from Frantz Nuwer's estate inventory is that five of his seven children died before 1763. Only two of the children were listed as heirs to Frantz Nuwer's estate. This implies that the other five children died as infants or youths. Frantz Joseph, who was born in 1750, couldn't have been older than 13 years when he died, while the others would have been younger. It is likely that most died as infants.

The House

The next part of the estate inventory lists Frantz Nuwer's property. The primary asset in the estate was his house and barn. They were described as a "one story house and protected cattle shed." This property was located "on the common main street," which in Soufflenheim was probably the Grand Rue. On one side of the house was common property and on the other side was Barbara Kieffer. It was standard practice to identify property, both in the clustered village and in the agricultural fields, by the owners of neighboring parcels.

Frantz Nuwer did not own the land on which the house was built. His wife, Anna Müller, had inherited the land from her father and was thereby its owner. Only the buildings were included in Frantz's estate:

This house and cow shed have been built on a garden inherited by the widow during the union from her father deceased, so that the building only can be divided between heirs....

The value of these structures, absent the land, was estimated to be 160 guildens. Although the King of France was the sovereign of Alsace, the district did not use the French livre for its money. As we have noted in other essays, Alsace retained a high degree of autonomy in the 17th and 18th centuries, including, in this instance, the choice of money. Consequently, instead of the French livre, Alsace continued to use the money of the Holy Roman Empire. The monetary units used until the French Revolution were the gulden (R), shilling (s), and denier (d). A gulden was equal to ten shillings and a shilling was equal to twelve deniers. (We mustn't forget to brush-up on our base-12 arithmetic.)

Although Frantz Nuwer worked as a potter, craftsmen in Soufflenheim, as elsewhere across Alsace, produced their own food. "They were craftsmen-farmers." Soufflenheim's families grew wheat, oats and barley in the fields, vegetables in gardens, and raised cattle, pigs, and fowl. "All this farming activity was based on consumption of what was produced and not on commercialization." Thus, craftsmen, too, needed land to produce food for their families.³

There was, however, no farmland in Frantz Nuwer's estate. Before his 1744 marriage, Frantz Nuwer was not permitted to buy land in Soufflenheim. This is because only Soufflenheim citizens could own land. Furthermore, the inventory document states that no land was purchased after his wedding: "The widow declares that no property was acquired nor sold during their union." This does not mean the family had no land to farm, however. Like the "garden" on which the Nuwer family house was built, Anna Müller may have inherited farmland from her father. If there was such land, Frantz Nuwer could have farmed it for the family's food needs, but it would not have been part of his estate. Indeed, the inventory includes "one half field [of] cereals," implying that the family had at least half a field of farmland. The next step in our historical investigation is to obtain translated copies of the estate inventories for Anna Müller (March 4, 1779) and her father André Müller (February 8, 1746) to see whether Anna received farmland from her father and whether her son Antoni received farmland from her estate. Stay tuned.

Net Value

In addition to his house, Frantz Nuwer owned various household and farm items. These were considered "moveable property" "to be divided" among the heirs. The heirs and their guardians agreed that Anna Müller could take ownership of all the moveable items and that she would pay her daughter and son the money value of the items. The value of all the moveable property was estimated to be 82 guildens, 8 shillings, and 2 deniers.

Thus, the value of the moveable property plus the value of the house and barn totaled the gross value of Frantz Nuwer's estate. The outstanding debts were subtracted to produce the net value of the estate. It was the net value that would be divided among the heirs. The following account was presented in Frantz Nuwer's inventory document.

³ Lucien Sittler, Marc Elchinger, and Fritz Geissert, *Soufflenheim, A city in search of its history*, (1987). Translated by Marie-Odile Peres. Excerpts available here: (<https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/c0db0dfe-27d2-4632-889f-eeb26fbb14e1/downloads/Soufflenheim%20Une%20Cite.pdf>).

The Estate Account of Frantz Nuwer, 1763

House and cow shed.....	160 R		
Moveable property	82 R	8 s	2 d
For a total estimation of	242 R	8 s	2 d
Total debt	93 R		
Amount "to be divided"	149 R	8 s	2 d
"The third share due to the widow"	49 R	9 s	4 $\frac{2}{3}$ d
"And to the children ... from their father"	99 R	8 s	9 $\frac{1}{3}$ d
"So to each of them a half"	49 R	9 s	4 $\frac{2}{3}$ d

Since there were three heirs to this estate, each received one-third of its value. But inheritance laws gave a widow one-third of an estate and all surviving children divided the remaining two-thirds of the estate. If there were more than two surviving children, their individual shares would be less than one-third.

As for the family's debt of 93 guldens, Anna Müller was permitted to take it over rather than pay it off "as the widow still has young children to raise, especially the one until his 14 years of age." She needed to "care for them in health or illness, send them to school and church and care for needs of subsistence." It was agreed by the notary and the guardians that Anna Müller was, therefore, not "obliged to pay interest on their due."

In addition, "The share [of the estate] due by the widow to Anna Maria is paid to-day in liquidity or can be considered as debt to be paid, [and] the share due to Frantz Antoni will be put aside until he reaches his 14 years, without interest." These conditions meant that Anna Müller did not need to liquidate assets and could retain them for use in support of her family.

Moveable Property

The estate inventory also contained an itemized listing of all the moveable property owned by Frantz Nuwer. Although no farmland was included in the estate, there were farm animals, fodder (i.e., animal feed), and farm implements. The following items were identified and valued as moveable property.

one grey horse	12 R		
a young bull one year	12 R		
2 pigs.....	5 R		
4 geese 4s each	1 R	6 s	
3 old hens		6 s	
one half measure (sester) peas		3 s	
20 measures hay each 6s	12 R		
10 measures oats each 4s	4 R		
one half field cereals	2 R		

Also identified and valued were farm tools and other barn-yard materials.

two old axes	5 s		
one old hay knife [faulx or scythe]	1 s	6 d	

a hawk [i.e. hatchet] and another one.....	4 s	
old tools	1 s	6 d
an old sickle		9 d
2 old hawks	2 s	6 d
an old shovel	2 s	
an iron tool	1 s	6 d
one small barrel	4 s	
2 water vans [carriers]	2 s	
one old same		9 d
one old plow and belongings	2 R	
an old lantern	4 s	
other old material	5 s	

The ownership of a plow raises an interesting issue. In 1744, the year he married Anna Müller, Frantz Nuwer was working as a potter. Soufflenheim had long been a center of pottery making and there were many pottery shops in the town. Indeed, Frantz Nuwer may have migrated from Jockgrim to Soufflenheim specifically to enter the pottery trade. Church documents for 1748, 1750, 1751, and 1753 each identified Frantz Nuwer as a potter. However, the 1755 baptism records for his daughter Clara identified him as a “mercenary,” which was the Latin term for day laborer. It seems that sometime between 1753 and 1755 Frantz Nuwer’s economic status in the community changed and he lost his place in the pottery trade. Becoming a day laborer and working for a money wage was a bit like a middle manager in today’s world losing their job and entering the ranks of the unemployed.

It is difficult to determine Frantz Nuwer’s occupation between 1755 and his death in 1763. His estate inventory does not contain any pottery tools, suggesting he did not return to that trade. There are baptism records for two children during this period, one from 1758 and the second from 1760, but they do not give an occupation. This may tell us something about his status or it may have been an oversight by the parish priest.

Evidence from his inventory, however, suggests Frantz Nuwer may have decided to become a plowman. A plowman was a common occupation or trade in preindustrial Europe. The plowman owned a plow and a team of oxen or horses which enabled him to plow his own fields and to rent his services to others in the town. Most “craftsmen-farmers” had fields on which they produced food for their families and these fields needed to be plowed. The typical craftsmen did not, however, own the needed draught-animals. We see something similar today when farmers hire harvesting services rather than buy the expensive equipment to do it themselves. Frantz Nuwer’s estate lists a horse, a young bull, and an old plow. These may have been the beginnings of his occupational transition from potter to plowman.

Most of the tools listed in Frantz Nuwer’s inventory were considered old and together they were a sparse collection. Nevertheless, the sickle and hay knife suggest that he worked his own grain fields. The plow might suggest that after losing his place in the pottery trade, an event which threatened to reduce his social status and make him a permeant wage laborer, Frantz Nuwer decided to become a plowman. The ownership of draught-animals would have been a sign of status and a source of cash income characteristic of an independent craftsman.

The household items found in Frantz Nuwer’s inventory were even more sparse than the farm tools.

one linen overbed of good plume	1 R	2 s
one more plume pillow		5 s
a linen old overbed in the fashion of Köln		3 s

another pillowcase	1 s	6 d
3 good worked table clothes 1s 4d each	4 s	
one old linen toil	2 s	
3 worked good hand towels at 9 d	2 s	3 d
an old iron pan	1 s	
a small tin pan	1 s	6 d
a mold		8 d
a pair of scissors	1 s	3 d

Only four items were found in the kitchen, two pans, a mold, and a pair of scissors. Other Soufflenheim kitchens might have had a few additional items, but, compared to other Soufflenheim families, this list was not unusually meager. On the other hand, there was no furniture of any kind listed in the inventory. The document noted that Anna Müller “took in her hands the marriage bed” which was not included in the estate. Aside from that item, there were no tables, stands, chairs, stools, or chests. Nor was there a spinning wheel or butter pot. Some household furniture was common in the inventories of other Soufflenheim families, but none was found in Frantz Nuwer’s document.

Finally, the inventory included Frantz Nuwer’s clothing. Again, a sparse collection of items. These clothes were given to “the son,” Frantz Antoine.

a woolen costume	1 R	
a linen gown	1 R	
another of the same	1 R	3 s
an old pair of woolen stockings		4 s
3 good shirts	3 R	

Frantz Nuwer appears to have been a lower middle-class resident of Soufflenheim. His inventory shows he was neither rich nor poor. He arrived at Soufflenheim with no wealth and obtained a small stake in the town when he married the daughter of a Soufflenheim citizen. Over the next nineteen years—between his wedding and his death—Frantz Nuwer built a small estate. At the time of his death, he owned his house, a horse, and a bull, as well as a small collection of agricultural implements. On the other hand, his belongings tended to be “old,” and he owned no furniture. He owed money to five different lenders, but his debts totaled only 38 percent of his gross wealth. Neither poor nor rich, Frantz Nuwer fits the description of a middling craftsmen-farmers.

Translation of the Notary Record for Frantz Nuwer

Note: the document contained some marginal notes written by the notary. These are offset to the left in the following pages.

Soufflenheim 1763

Inventory and description of all property and debts without any omission established after the death of Frantz Nuber former burgher here in Soufflenheim husband of honorable Anna Muller, husband died 4 months ago, which inventory of property was required by first the named widow Anna Müller, assisted by Michel Häussler burgher here, then secondly the honorable Georg Adam Ludwig burgher here and guardian of the children issued of this union, minor of age and named Maria Anna 16 years old and Frantz Antoni

3 years old, document established in presence of the royal bailiff in Haguenau, royal notary who made a careful quest and complete description, in further assistance of Herr Ignatz Friedmann, provost, and Andres Mössner, burgher and justice counsellor, as representant of the widow, record Soufflenheim the 27th September 1763.

The widow declared that no marriage contract nor any other type of will of any kind were passes between the deceased and herself.

For information.

Page 3

Follows the description and division of property left and first:

The House

Same one house here in Soufflenheim on the common property street one side, and Barbara Kieffer, other side, and for part Antoni Mössner, upper side the same Barbara Kieffer, down on the common main street, one story house, and protected cattle shed.

This house and cow shed have been built on a garden inherited by the widow during the union from her father deceased, so that the building only can be divided between heirs, as authorized by the guardian and estimated by provost and justice counsellors to: 160 R

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On this estimation, the share due to the widow is of:	82 R	8 s	2 d
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For a total estimation of:	242 R	8 s	2 d
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So that on this the widow must repay to the other heirs a sum of:	93 R		
---	------	--	--

And what is disponible to be divided is:	149 R	8 s	2 d
--	-------	-----	-----

The third share due to the widow on this is so:	49 R	9 s	4 2/3 d
---	------	-----	---------

And to the children comes a third share from their father of:	99 R	8 s	9 1/3 d
---	------	-----	---------

So to each of them a half or:	49 R	9 s	4 2/3 d
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The share due by the widow to Anna Maria is paid to-day in liquidity or can be considered as debt to be paid, the share due to Frantz Antoni will be put aside until he reaches his 14 years, without interest.

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Other Property in Fields from Father's Side

None

Property Acquired During the Union in Fields

The widow declares that no property was acquired nor sold during their union.

Property in Clothes

This has been left to the widow for the estimate with agreement of the guardian and to the son in further property.

First a woolen costume estimated:	1 R	
Same a linen gown:	1 R	
Same another of the same:	1 R	3 s
Total:	3 R	3 s

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Same an old pair of woolen stockings:		4 s
Same 3 good shirts:	3 R	
Total:	3 R	4 s

Property to be Divided

All to the widow with consent of
her guardian for the estimate.

Bed and Plume

After the widow took in her hands the marriage bed are still found:

Same one linen overbed of good plume:	1 R	2 s
Same one more plume pillow:		5 s

Toil and Bedclothes

Same a linen old overbed in the fashion of Köln:		3 s	
Same another pillowcase:		1 s	6 d
Same 3 good worked table clothes 1 s 4 d each:		4 s	
Total:	2 R	5 s	6 d

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Same one old linen toil:		2 s	
Same 3 worked good hand towels at 9 d:		2 s	3 d

Joinery

None

Kitchen Tools

Same an old iron pan:		1 s	
Same a small tin pan:		1 s	6 d
Same a mold:			8 d
Same a pair of scissors:		1 s	3 d

Material of Farm

Same two old axes:		5 s	
Same one old hay knife:		1 s	6 d

Same a hawk and another one:		4 s	
Same old tools:		1 s	6 d
Total:	2 R		8 d

Page 8

Same an old sickle:			9 d
Same 2 old hawks:		2 s	6 d
Same an old shovel:		2 s	
Same an iron tool:		1 s	6 d

Barrels and Vans

Same one small barrel:		4 s	
Same 2 water vans:		2 s	
Same one old same:			9 d

Farming Material

Same one old plough and belongings:	2 R		
Same an old lantern:		4 s	
Same other old material:		5 s	

Horses

Same one grey horse:	12 R		
Total:	16 R	2 s	6 d

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Property to be Divided

Cattle

Same a young bull one year:	12 R		
-----------------------------	------	--	--

Pigs

Same 2 pigs:	5 R		
--------------	-----	--	--

Poultry

Same 4 geese 4 s each:	1 R	6 s	
Same 3 old hens:		6 s	

Food

Same one half measure (sester) peas:		3 s	
--------------------------------------	--	-----	--

Fodder

Same 20 measures hay each 6 s:	12 R		
Same 10 measures oats each 4 s:	4 R		
Same one half field cereals:	2 R		
Total:	37 R	5 s	

Active Debts in this Inheritance to be Deducted from the Children's Share Only

None

Debts in this Inheritance Contracted during the Marriage

Nothing to be divided.

Debts

To the widow, to be paid as mentioned.

Same due to Hans Georg Hön in Rountzenheim a loan of money according to bill:	57 R
Same to Antoni Mössner here for loan of money:	6 R
Same to Georg Adam Ludwig here for loan of money:	3 R
Same to Mathis Lehmann here for interest on property:	15 R
Same to Leyser Jew in Haguenau for loan money:	12 R
Total debts:	93 R

After all this has been amounted and divided between widow and guardians on both sides, as the widow still has young children to raise, especially the one until his 14 years of age, she will care for them in health or illness, send them to school and church and care for needs of subsistence, so will not be obliged to pay interest on their due, the guardians agree to these conditions with the estimators and the notary, after lecture made of this document.

Passed in Soufflenheim on year month and day as above.

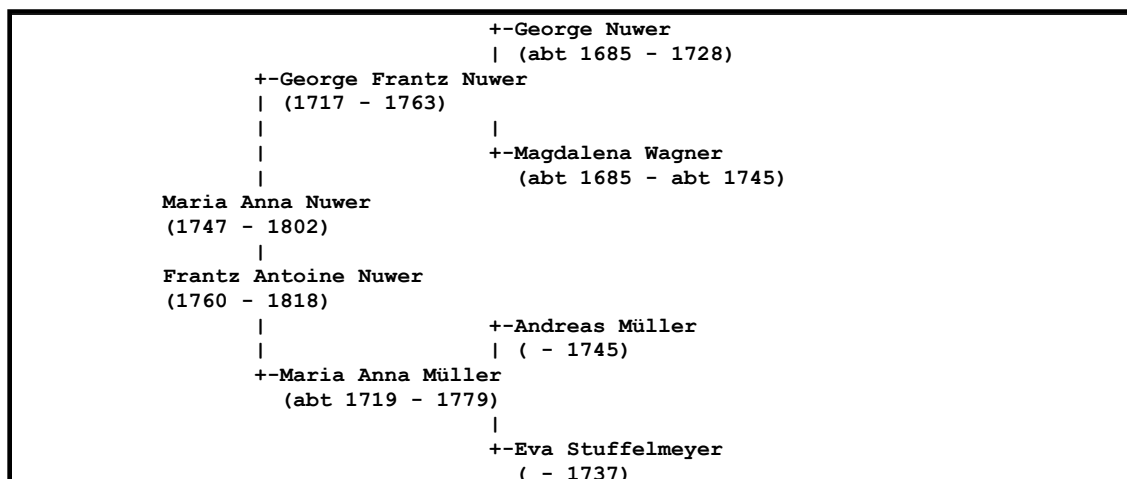
Undersigned:

Anna Müllerin X (sign)
Georg Adam Ludwig
Hans Michel Heissler
Andres Mössner
Fridmann provost
Arnold royal notary

Examined and closed the present Inventory in Haguenau 21 February 1765.

Signed: Loyson Barth

Andreas Müller was Frantz Nuwer's father-in-law. Frantz and Anna Müller were married in Soufflenheim in August 1744. When Frantz died in 1763, his estate contained no farmland, although there were suggestions that Anna Müller may have inherited farmland from her father. Below we explore Andreas Müller's estate to better understand Anna Müller's inheritance and the family resources available to Frantz Nuwer during his married years.



Before the nineteenth century, a young woman living in central Europe needed a dowry in order to secure a marriage. A dowry was the money, goods, or real estate that a woman brought to her marriage. In many Alsatian families, daughters received their dowry from their family, and it was often considered part of their inheritance. Under German law, women had property rights over both their dowry and inheritance, which was a valuable benefit as high mortality rates resulted in successive marriages.

Andreas Müller's estate inventory was filed with the Haguenau notary on February 8, 1746 and stated that he "died about a quarter year ago." Thus, his date of death would have been late October or early November 1745. This was 14 or 15 months after Anna Müller and Frantz Nuwer were married. The inventory also stated that his wife, Eva Stiffelmeyer, had died eight years earlier. We do not know when either spouse was born, nor do we have the date of their wedding.

The estate inventory identified four heirs. They are listed in the first column of the following table.

Heirs of Andreas Müller and Eva Stiffelmeyer

Name	Born	Died	Spouse	Marriage
Catharina Müller		1775	Johann Georg Friedmann Benedict Schreiber	? 5 May 1744
Adam Müller		10 Feb 1750	Dorothea Köhlhofner (? – 1745) Margaretha Kientz (? – 1763)	Nov 1736 Feb 1746

Jacob Müller		Mar 1762	Barbara Kieffer	12 Feb 1743
Anna Müller		Feb 1779	Frantz Nuber (1717 – 1763)	1 Aug 1744

We do not have the birth dates for these four individuals. The estate inventory listed the heirs as “1) Catharina Müller, wife of Benedict Schreiber ... 2) Adam Müller, ... 3) Jacob Müller, ... [and] 4) Anna Müller, wife of Frantz Nuber.” Historical documents from this period tended to list children in birth order, so we believe the order in the above table from top to bottom was the birth order. Anna Müller was, thereby, the youngest of the four children.

A rough approximation of birth dates can be made based on the marriage dates. Alsace was characterized by relatively late marriage. One historical study found that the median age of marriage for Catholic men in rural villages was 28 years old. (Kevin McQuillan, “Economic structure, religion, and age at marriage: Some evidence from Alsace,” *Journal of Family History*, Vol. 14, No. 4, 1989, pp. 331-346.) Frantz Nuwer was, for example, 27 years old when he married Anna Müller. Thus, if Adam Müller was between 25 and 30 years old when he married in 1736, he would have been born between 1706 and 1711. Similarly, if Jacob Müller was within the same age range when he married, he would have born between 1713 and 1718.

Catharina Müller was the oldest of Andreas Müller’s heirs. Archive documents from 1775 tells us that she had married twice.¹ Her first husband was Johann Georg Friedmann and they had one daughter who survived, Maria Anna Friedmann. Her second husband was Benedict Schreiber. That marriage took place in May 1744, and the union produced two children, Anton Schreiber was born in 1749 and Catherine Schreiber was born in 1752. When Catharina Müller died in 1775, however, her estate identified only Maria Anna Friedmann and Anton Schreiber as surviving heirs.

Adam Müller was the oldest surviving son of the family. He was also married twice. His first marriage to Dorothea Köhlhoffer took place in late November or early December 1736.² Dorothea was a widow and had a six-year-old son named Joseph Mössner. Dorothea Köhlhoffer’s dowry included a house in the village of Soufflenheim: “the bride gives to her new husband the half of her house and yard, garden and rights.” Two children from her union with Adam Müller were identified, Eva Müller was born in 1737 and Andres Müller was born in 1739.³ Dorothea Köhlhoffer and Adam Müller had been married only nine years when she died in November 1745.

Three months after Dorothea’s death Adam Müller married a second time. His new wife was Margaretha Kientz. There were two children from this union, Joseph born in 1748 and Margaretha born in 1749. Adam Müller died four years later, on February 10, 1750.⁴ He was probably 40 to 45 years old at the time of his death and was survived by four children, two from his first marriage and two more from his second marriage.

Jacob Müller was the third child. He married Barbara Kieffer on February 12, 1743. The ceremony took place 18 months before Anna Müller and Frantz Nuwer were married. Jacob Müller’s oldest child, a daughter, was born in 1746, which was the year before Frantz Nuwer’s first child was born. He and Barbara Kieffer had seven children and archive documents identified Jacob as a farmer.

Jacob Müller died in March 1762. Like Frantz Nuwer, he was in his 40s when he died and had been married 19 years. His heirs were his widow Barbara Kieffer and five children ranging in age between sixteen and five.⁵

Andreas Müller's Estate

The primary asset in Andreas Müller's estate was his house in the village. It was described as "one house with barn and garden." The value of this property was 283 gulden and it paid a yearly tax of 2 gulden to the church.

Andreas Müller and Eva Stiffelmeyer had owned the house for at least 30 years. Archive documents tell us that the married couple borrowed 38 gulden in 1715 and secured the loan with a mortgage of "one garden in the village ... plus one piece [of land]" in the Niederfeld district. Fifteen years later, in 1730, the house was mortgaged again, this time for a sum of 50 gulden. The money was secured with "a garden in the village ... [and] one piece field, district Niederfeld."⁶

Finally, in 1738, the year after Eva Stiffelmeyer died, Andreas Müller refinanced this mortgage. The new loan was for 40 gulden with the money borrowed from Jacob Haasser, "guardian of deceased Barbara Harter." The loan was secured by "a complete mortgage on his property in Soufflenheim namely his house, farm and yard."⁷ As we will see below, this loan was included among the debts of Andreas Müller's estate.

Upon his death, Andreas Müller divided his village property, giving half to his son Jacob Müller and the other half to his daughter Anna Müller. Jacob received the half which contained the house and barn. That parcel was valued at 213 gulden. Anna was given the other half of the property. Her portion was valued at 70 gulden.

We learned from Frantz Nuwer's 1763 estate that Anna Müller inherited the land on which she and Frantz built their house and barn. The 1763 document stated that Frantz Nuwer's house and barn "have been built on a garden inherited by the widow during the union from her father ..., so that the building only can be divided between [Frantz Nuwer's] heirs." Thus, the land was owned by Anna while the house and barn, built during the marriage, were included in Frantz Nuwer's estate. In other words, the land was part of Anna's dowry and, under the law, she retained property rights over that parcel.

Anna Müller and her brother Jacob Müller inherited a divided interest in their father's house and garden, and their two families were next door neighbors for almost 20 years. Recall that Frantz Nuwer's 1763 inventory described his house by identifying Barbara Kieffer as a neighbor. We now know that Barbara Kieffer was Jacob Müller's widow. As next door neighbors from the mid-1740s to the early 1760s, the two families would have shared many life events. Moreover, after 1763 both widows continued to live as neighbors with young children.

Debts Considered in the Inheritance

In addition to the mortgage on his house, Andreas Müller had acquired some additional debt during his lifetime. His estate was responsible for these debts. The specifics at the time of his death were listed as follows:

- Jacob Haas guardian of the children of Barbara Hartler in money on a capital: 48 R
- Andreas Müller here as guardian of Georg Fridmann's children: 13 R
- Jacob Müller son of the deceased on capital due for his needs and never paid for: 14 R 1 s 8 d
- Anna Müller a loan to father in liquidity: 20 R

- Anna Müller again for same object to her father: 3 R
- Jacob Stickelreysser: 4 R
- Michael Burger for work: 13 R 6 s
- Herr Hueber on fiscal due: 6 R
- The heirs of the Italian NN in Fort Louis due: 1 R 5 s

The first and largest loan was for 48 guldens, which was an obligation to the children of Barbara Hartler. This debt was the mortgage on the family house acquired in 1738. We assume the additional 8 gulden was accumulated interest.

Four loans in the list were obligations to family members. There was a 13 gulden debt owed to the guardian of Georg Fridmann's children. This was Maria Anna Friedmann. Georg Fridmann was Catharina Müller's first husband and Maria Anna Friedmann was Catharina's daughter. The estate also had debt obligations to Jacob Müller for about 14.2 gulden and to Anna Müller for 23 gulden. The four remaining debts totaled 24.5 gulden and the aggregate debt was 123.3 gulden. This amount was about 18 percent of the gross value of the estate. Although this debt ratio would be considered low by today's standards, Andreas Müller was a debtor not a creditor in the village of Soufflenheim.

Jacob Müller was given the responsibility for paying the debts. This is because he was given the family house which was valued at 213 gulden and the debts were to be paid out of that valuation. After the total debts were subtracted from the value of the family house, the net value that Jacob inherited was 89.7 gulden.

Farmland

Archive documents from 1743 and 1744 identified Andreas Müller as a farmer (*agricola*) and his estate inventory identified the land he owned in Soufflenheim's agricultural fields. His estate listed twelve pieces of land which were described in terms of a "vierzel" of land. We know a "vierzel" was a quarter of a "morgen," but we cannot convert these into modern measurements of area. Part of the problem is that, before the French Revolution, area was not an absolute size. A morgen was the amount of land that could be plowed in a particular time period. That quantity, however, varied greatly from place to place. Objective measurement of area is a concept of the very recent past. For most of the early modern period, property lines between agricultural fields were known by local custom and tradition, and this knowledge was passed verbally to each successive generation.

Andreas Müller divided his twelve pieces of land among his four heirs. Adam was given three parcels, two were single "vierzels," while the third was one and a half "vierzel." Jacob Müller received two pieces of farmland. The first was one "vierzel," the second was half a "vierzel." It is not clear why Adam was given more farmland (3.5 vierzel) than Jacob (1.5 vierzel). Perhaps it was because Jacob received the family house, but the difference was not explained in the notary document.

Alsace, along with most of southwest Germany, was an area of partible inheritance. Under this system agricultural land was partitioned among all the heirs, not just the oldest son, and it was split equally among the sons and daughters. Typically, daughters received their share of an inheritance in the form of a dowry.

Thus, Andreas Müller's two daughters also received a shared of their father's estate. Catharina and Anna Müller each received three and three-quarter "vierzel" of farmland. For the older sister, there were four distinct parcels while Anna Müller received three parcels.

In addition to the farmland, each of the four heirs were given property that had other uses. As discussed above, Jacob and Anna received a share of the family house and garden in the village. In addition, Adam was given a piece of property that was described as “half of an empty farm” and Catharina was given “one orchard” on the road to Bischwiller.

The following table summarizes the properties given to each of the four heirs.

Name	Parcels	Units	Other property
Catharina	4	3.75	Orchard
Adam	3	3.5	Empty farm
Jacob	2	1.5	Family house
Anna	3	3.75	Family garden

Cash Distribution

To determine the final cash distribution of the estate, the values of the four non-farmland properties were used. The sum of these four properties was 367.7 gulden and therefore a one-quarter share was 91.9 gulden. This was the claim for each heir. The final cash distribution was then computed by the difference between the individual's equal share and the value of the property that individual received. Thus, in Anna's case, her equal share of the estate was 91.9 gulden while the value of the family garden she inherited was 70 gulden. Her cash distribution from the estate was, therefore, 21.9 gulden (note that this amount is separate from the 23 gulden debt that she was owed). The following table shows the cash distribution for each heir.

Name	Property	Value	Distribution
Catharina	Orchard	138 R	-46 R 1s
Adam	Empty farm	70 R	21 R 9s
Jacob	Family house	89 R 7 s	2 R 2s
Anna	Family garden	70 R	21 R 9s

In summary, Anna Müller and Frantz Nuwer were married in 1744, and Anna Müller brought a dowry to the union. That dowry included her family's garden in the village of Soufflenheim and three pieces of farmland. Under local laws, Anna Müller retained property rights over her dowry which meant that, when Frantz Nuwer died in 1763, the garden and farmland were not part of his estate. Frantz Nuwer and Anna Müller did not acquire or sell any property in the years between 1744 and 1763. Thus, their family produced their food on the 3.75 “vierzel” of farmland Anna inherited.

Endnotes

¹ “Inventory and description of all property left at time of death by Catharina Müller, wife of Benedict Schreiber, burgher in Soufflenheim, established on request of the widower, and of the children from first and second marriage: Maria Anna Friedmann, wife of Joseph Vogel burgher in Soufflenheim, born of marriage to deceased Johann Georg Friedmann, first husband; Anton Schreiber, single, born from the second marriage; in assistance of the royal notary who received the oath, of Anton Kieffer provost, of Niclaus Daul, member of the local justice.” (25 November 1775, Notary Records, Roeschwoog 6E33/66)

² "Came here to pass a marriage contract: Adam Müller and Dorothea Köhlhofner, as new young couple and assisted of their parents on both sides. What has been decided is: the bride gives to her new husband the half of her house and yard, garden and rights. In case of death of the bride, her widower will keep the half the house; this house is in the village of Soufflenheim one side Georg Kayser, other side Adam Kayser, upper part on Jacob Schäffter, down on Dominic Meyer. In case he dies before her, the property of the half house in question will be her property, and the Müller side will have no right on this." (17 November 1736, Notary Records)

³ "Inventory and description of property left at time of death by Dorothea Köhlhoffner, wife of Adam Müller burgher in Soufflenheim where she died November 8, 1745, established on request of 1) the named widower, and second husband of the deceased, 2) Michael Mössner, elected guardian of the three minor children born from two marriages, named Joseph Mössner, 16 years old, Eva Müller, 8 1/2 years old, and Andres Müller 6 years old." (10 February 1746, Notary Records, Roeschwoog 6E33/60)

⁴ "Inventory and description of all property left at time of death by Adam Müller, burgher in Soufflenheim where he died: the 10 February, established on request of: 1) Margaretha Kientz, the widow, assisted by Hans Meyer burgher of Soufflenheim, 2) Michel Mössner burgher of Soufflenheim as guardian of the two children minor or years from first marriage to deceased Dorothea Köhlhofner and named: Eva, 12 years old, Andreas 10 years old; second guardian is Jacob Müller as for minor children of second union named: Joseph 2 years old, Margaretha, 1 year old. Record written by the royal notary in Haguenau, in further assistance of Andres Vögele, mayor of Soufflenheim, Anton Kieffer and Hans Georg Klipfel, members of the justice council of Soufflenheim. A marriage contract has been passed in Herrlisheim 31 January 1746 but not repeated here as the very little amount inherited does not need so." (13 May 1750, Notary Records, Roeschwoog 6E33/61)

⁵ "Inventory and description of property left at time of death by Jacob Müller, burgher of Soufflenheim who died here in Soufflenheim 1/4 year ago. Established on request of 1) Barbara Kieffer assisted by Mathis Kieffer burgher here 2) Hans Müller burgher here and guardian of the minor children born from this union named: Barbara 16 years old, Catharina 12, Joseph 8, Ottilia 7, Theresia 5. The oath was taken in front of the royal notary in presence of Ignatz Fridmann, mayor, Andres Mössner burgher and member of the town council." (19 June 1762, Notary Records, Roeschwoog 6E33/63)

⁶ "Compared Andres Müller and Maria Stiffelmeyer his wife declared that they contracted an obligation of 38 Gulden towards the honorable Michel Köhlhoffner burgher here and his heirs, which obligation dates back to years 1715 and 1716, which sum they, debtors, had promised to reimburse yearly setting a mortgage on their property and namely one garden in the village, one side Hans Jacob Scheffter, second side Georg Scherer, in front the road to Bischwiller, and the river, plus one piece district Niederfeld in dem langen Strängen, one side Gertrudta Ertz, second side Michel Sensenbrener, up on Carl Daul's property, and an ending, in all free property, both promise to reimburse as they took engagement for. Signed: X Andres Müller, Michel Köhlhoffer, X Maria Eva Stiffelmeyer, Brendle witness, Adam Schäffter provost, Wolff notary." (28 February 1728, Notary Records, Haguenau 6E16/131)

"Compared in front of the notary Andres Müller and Eva Stiffelmeyer his wife declared that they together engaged in an obligation in money towards Joseph Schäffter guardian of the children of deceased Adam Schäffter former provost here, leaving five children named Joseph, Michel, Hans, Adam and Anna Maria Schäffter, received fifty gulden in liquidity, that he will repay totally setting a general mortgage of his property on this and namely property in Soufflenheim, and first a garden in the village one side Jacob Schäffter's heirs, second side Ursula Moss, then one piece field district Niederfeld, in all free property, undersigned." (27 October 1730, Notary Records, Haguenau 6E16/120)

⁷ "In front of the Royal notary compared Andres Müller burgher in Soufflenheim declared that he engaged into an obligation of 40 Gulden towards Jacob Haasser burgher and guardian of deceased Barbara Harter to be repaid by quartal in the year, for better guarantee of this he has set a complete mortgage on his property in Soufflenheim namely his house, farm and yard in Soufflenheim one side Georg Götz, second side near Michel Ulrich, in front the road to Bischwiller, and the river in all free property, passed in presence of Philips Kieffer, provost, Frantz Friedrich Joseph Eggs, scribe, undersigned 14 July 1738: X Andres Müller, X Jacob Haass, Philips Kieffer, Eggs, Wolff." (14 July 1738, Notary Records, Haguenau 6E16/123).

Translation of the Notary Record for Andreas Müller

Soufflenheim 1746

Inventory and description of the property left by deceased honorable Andreas Müller former burgher here in Soufflenheim where he died about a quarter year ago also of Eva Stiffelmeyer already died for eight years here, inventory established on request of 1) Catharina Müller, wife of Benedict Schreiber, present here, 2) Adam Müller burgher here

and 3) Jacob Müller also burgher here, 4) Anna Müller, wife of Frantz Nuber, burgher here, present to this, in all fidelity, after the heirs had presented their oath, in further presence of witnesses who also presented their oath, named Andres Vögele, provost, Joseph Daul and Michael Albrecht members of the local justice, passed in Soufflenheim, dated 8th February 1746.

Page 2

Follows now the description of the property left, beginning with:

House

One house with barn and garden containing one viertel two ruthen and fifteen shoe one side Claus Dreher second side the main common street, and in front and behind the common property as on page 281a of land record. Pays yearly 2 gulden to the church plus interest.

This house has been considered as property of daughter Anna Maria for half on the main street here as from decision of her father and estimated: 70 R

The second half of the same to Jacob Müller son near Claus Dreher's heirs, as from the marriage contract of the same son, and estimated: 213 R

On this amount has to be given back an amount from the heirs of: 123 R 2 s 8 d

Page 3

After division and due paid remains on this house to be divided: 89 R 7 s 4 d

And to each heir: 22 R 4 s 4 d

This payment occurred here from hands of Anna Maria and Jacob as proposed above, in all regular way.

Page 4

Property in Soufflenheim Fields

District Girlenfeld near Stockmatten

Same one viertel and a half twelve ruthen one side Joseph Daul, second side Michel Daul, upper side an ending and down the Stockmatt for part Hans Jacob Scheffter as on page 79b of land record. To Catharina.

District Niederfeld on the Long Fence:

Same one viertel and one ruth four shoe, one side unexploited, second side the church, and on other property as on page 139a of land record. To Adam.

District named In der loangen Stängen towards the Buben See

Same one field of one viertel one ruth and eight shoe one side Michel Sensenbrenner, second side Michel Kieffer, upper side another district as on page 157a of land record. To Anna.

District Heckloch Hecklum near so named Kleinen Wäldel.

Same one viertel makes one and of half two ruthen seven shoe, one side the church, second side the following on Heckloch Wäldel as on page 216b of land record. Goes to Adam and half of an empty farm place.

Page 5

Same one viertel makes one half viertel twelve ruth and nine shoe one side the above named, second side Jacob Mosack's heirs, up same as on page named above. Goes to Jacob.

District die Lange Anwand auff das Eckloch district

Same one viertel field makes one and a half viertel ten ruthen and eight shoe, one side Catharina Dobler's heirs other side Lorentz Wagner, upper part the Feldberg? Down the common woods and Eckloch as on page 243a. Goes to Anna and Catharina for half each one.

Same one drittel field there makes one viertel and 3 ruth, one side Gertuda Ertz heirs, second side Michel Ulrich, up and down the same as on page 245a. Goes to Jacob and Adam each for a half.

Same one orchard containing a half viertel five ruthen and eight shoe, one side Hans Jacob Scheffters heirs. Second side Hans Georg Götz, down is the Obermatt, and road to Bischwiller as on page 262a. Goes to Catharina as from promise of her father for 150 R. On this to each heir due 12 R.

Same the half of an empty farming place, and garden, contains one half viertel ten ruthen and fifteen shoe one side Michel Uhri, second side is the Niederfeld, in front the common street behind Michel Mäder as on page 282a. Goes to Adam promise by the father and estimated 70 R.

Page 6

District Im Gefäll neben Acker weeg up the woods and road to Bischwiller

Same one acre field six ruthen and eleven shoe one side Jacob Burger, up and down as mentioned above in title. As on page 323a. Goes to Jacob and Catharina, half to Anna.

Same one viertel field there near the path, second side Anthoni Götz, up and down as described before as on page same named. Goes to Adam.

Active Property

This has been taken in liquidity by all heirs and shared by themselves between them and each of them took his share into his hands without claim.

Property in Indivision

has not been Distributed

Page 7

Debts to be Considered into the Inheritance

The evaluated debt has been attributed to Jacob Müller who inherits the farm as from his mother's share to him and their due paid to the other heirs each one his share and paid by the heir who has inherited personally the farm as such

Due to Jacob Haas guardian of the children of Barbara Hartler in money on a capital of: 48 R

Same to Jacob Stickelreysser: 4 R

Same to Michael Burger for work: 13 R 6

Same to Andreas Müller here as guardian of Georg Fridmann's children: 13 R

Same to Jacob Müller son of the deceased on capital due for his needs and never paid for: 14 R 1 s 8 d

Jacob, who receives the farm, has still to pay as follows

Same to Herr Hueber on fiscal due: 6 R

Same to the heirs of the Italian NN in Fort Louis due: 1 R 5 s

Same to Anna Müller a loan to father in liquidity: 20 R

Same to Anna Müller again for same object to her father: 3 R

Total: 123 R 2 s 8 d

Note well: This will be accounted for in general total amount due and divided as such.

Page 8

Distribution

The heirs in question have presented the following pretense [i.e. to be claimed] one towards the other

Has been agreed between heirs as such Jacob Müller must receive from the different amounts due a total of: 89 R 7 s 4 d

So still due to him a result of: 22 R 4 s 4 d

Anna Müller on different posts mentioned must receive: 70 R

So after what she receives from the inheritance is still due on 40 R capital an amount of: 20 R

Follows a regulation due of 10 R and also 30 R

A total of 40 R makes a fourth share of: 10 R

Page 9

Catharina Müller must receive from her father a total including 12 R due, makes: 138 R

Left to be paid: 34 R 5 s

Adam Müller must receive: 70 R

So left a due of a fourth or: 17 R 5 s

Has so been inventoried, divided, compared, and considered and accepted by all interested in this inheritance as in good form of law

Page 10

Paid as mentioned here, promise made by heirs.

Accepted in good form of law by all the heirs.

Undersigned on 9th February 1746.

Signatures:

Catharina Müller X

Adam Müller

Jacob Müller

Anna Müller X

Michel Albert

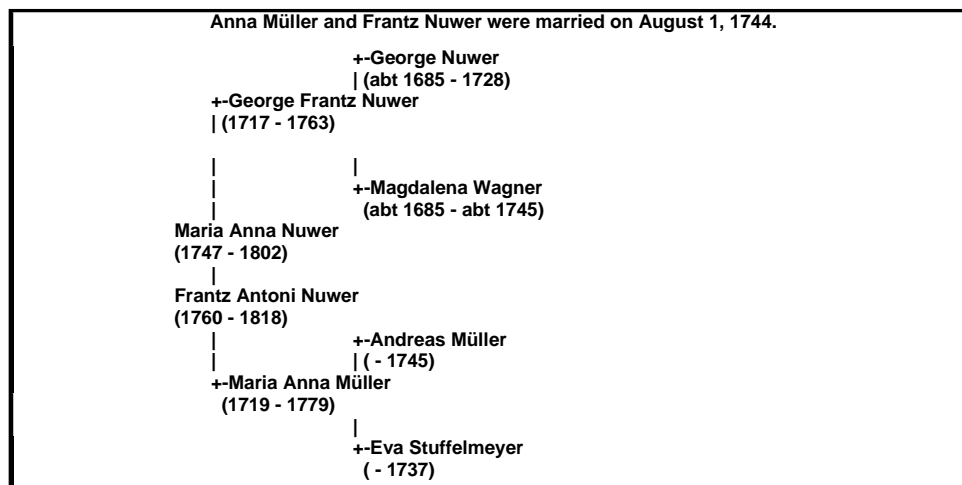
Joseph Daul X, member of the justice

Andres Vögelle, provost

THE ESTATE OF ANNA MÜLLER: ABT 1717-1779

By Michael J. Nuwer, November 2021

This essay is the third in a series investigating the estates of Frantz Nuwer, Andreas Müller, and Anna Müller. In the first essay we explored Frantz Nuwer's estate. Among other things it was found that he owned no farmland to bequeath to his children, and that the land on which his house was built came from his wife's inheritance. The second essay explored the estate of Andreas Müller, who was Frantz Nuwer's father-in-law. In that essay we saw that Andreas Müller gave his daughter, Anna Müller, land in the village on which to build a house and three parcels of farmland in the Soufflenheim "Ban," (i.e., the farmland surrounding the village). The land was Anna's dowry, in which she retained sole ownership. The current essay seeks to learn the distribution of Anna Müller farmland to her heirs, one of whom, Frantz Antoni Nuwer, was our direct ancestor



As a family, Frantz Nuwer and Anna Müller built a house on Anna's village property and worked her farmland. They were married about 19 years. When Frantz Nuwer died in 1763, his heirs were his wife and two surviving children, Maria Anna Nuwer who was 16 years old and Frantz Antoni Nuwer who was 3 years old.

The net value of Frantz Nuwer's estate was determined to be 149 guildens, 8 shillings, and 2 deniers. The terms for closing the estate gave Anna Müller the house and all the moveable property, including both the household items and the barn yard items. She was to "buy-out" the interest of her children in the estate for the sum of 49 guildens, 9 shillings, $4\frac{2}{3}$ deniers each.

Anna Müller had shared her father's inheritance with two brothers and a sister. One of her brothers was Jacob Müller. He married Barbara Kieffer on February 12, 1743. This was 18 months before Anna married Frantz Nuwer. Their father's estate gave Jacob the family house and divided the land on which it was built between Jacob and Anna. Thus, Jacob Müller and Barbara Kieffer were next door neighbors of

Frantz Nuwer and Anna Müller. The two families lived next to each other for about 18 years, from 1744 to 1762.

Jacob Müller died in the spring of 1762, the year before Frantz Nuwer died. Jacob was survived by his wife, four daughters, and a son. The children were Barbara who was 16 years old, Catharina 12 years old, Joseph 8 years old, Ottilia 7 years old, and Theresia 5 years old. Thus, both Anna Müller and Barbara Kieffer lived as widows and next-door neighbors for the next 15 years and their children were first cousin.

Anna Müller's daughter, Maria Anna Nuwer, was 16 years old when Frantz Nuwer died. Maria Anna and her younger brother lived at the family house for six years, when, at the age of 22, Maria Anna Nuwer married Jacob Wilhelm. The wedding took place in November 1769 at St. Michael's church in Soufflenheim.

Jacob Wilhelm was the son of Joseph Wilhelm and Veronica Hasser. He was born in 1742 making him five years older than Maria Anna Nuwer. His father worked as a carpenter in Soufflenheim and other nearby towns. Joseph Wilhelm died in Soufflenheim in 1753, leaving a widow and three young boys. His heirs were Veronica Hasser and sons Antoni, 13 years old, Jacob, 11 years old and Joseph, 3 years old.

Joseph Wilhelm's estate was settled in 1758, five years after his death. He had few assets. Their aggregate value was only about 98 guildens. He owned a small house, but not the land on which it was built. The house was valued at 33 guildens. He also owned a separate garden in the village worth 50 guildens, a cow worth 12 guildens, and some personal property which was worth a bit more than 3 guildens.

Against these assets, Joseph Wilhelm had accumulated a considerable amount of debt. He owed money for wood and for the labor of other carpenters and craftsmen. He also owed innkeepers in Soufflenheim, Drusenheim, Schirrhoffen, and Schirrhein for lodging and meals. At the time of his death, Joseph Wilhelm's debt was 133 percent greater than the value of his assets.

Because the debts were greater than the assets, the heirs of Joseph Wilhelm's estate declined the inheritance. "The widow declared that in regard of the very important amount of debts in this inventory, ... she renounces to this succession.... The widow and her assistant and guardian of the children refuse to sign the present inventory for fear of further prejudice to them."⁴ Thus, Jacob Wilhelm would have brought no land to his union with Maria Anna Nuwer.

Eleven years after Joseph Wilhelm's estate was renounced, Jacob Wilhelm and Maria Anna Nuwer were married. Jacob was 27 years old and a marriage contract was signed November 16, 1769.

A marriage contract was used to regulate everything that was brought into a marriage. This included possessions and real estate as well as the rights of children from previous marriages. The contracts often included what was to become of the possessions, real estate, and children in case one of the spouses died. For the historian, these contracts can be a good indication of a family's social standing.

In many parts of France, the law gave the husband full authority over all money and property brought to the marriage by the wife. However, in Alsace, parts of southern France, and in southern Germany, the wife retained property rights in everything that she brought into her marriage. Frantz Nuwer and Anna

⁴ "Soufflenheim Inventories, 1750-1792," page 28, <https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/c0db0dfe-27d2-4632-889f-eeb26fbb14e1/downloads/Inventories%201750-1792.pdf>

Müller were married without a marriage contract, therefore, the law held that Anna Müller was the owner of the garden and farmland she inherited from her father. If a marriage contract was used it could modify the legal rule. Anna Müller's family could have, for example, used a marriage contract to make the garden and farmland community property or to make Frantz Nuwer the sole owner of the real estate if his wife pre-deceased him. These contractual rules would thereby preempting the legal rule.

When Jean Kieffer and Catherine Messner were married in 1811, French law had been imposed on Alsace in an attempt to assimilate Alsace into the French state. Thus, Jean Kieffer would have full authority over all money and property brought to the marriage by Catherine Messner. They used a marriage contract to reinstate the old Alsatian custom. It stated that "community [property] is limited to the acquired property that will come to them during the union." In addition, the contract specified the contributions each family made to the marriage. "The bride gives 700 francs." The groom's father, "Laurent Kieffer gives a house in Soufflenheim ..., for 800 francs." The contract further specified other arrangements: "The father keeps his right to live in the house and receive all his needs. The new couple will pay the taxes."⁵

In November 1769, Anna Müller gave her daughter and new son-in-law "her house with barn and garden and dependances in the village of Soufflenheim." The contract specified that, if the husband or wife died, the surviving partner would become the owner of the house. In exchange for the house, the new couple agreed to take over Anna Müller's debt of 95 guildens. They also agreed to pay "their brother Frantz Antoni Nuber [57 guildens] for his portion of the [1763] inheritance of the bride's father." This left the new couple a value of 123 guildens which they agreed fulfilled Maria Anna Nuwer's portion of her father's inheritance. After all the debts were accepted, Maria Anna Nuwer's net gain was still 66 guildens.

The marriage contract further established that the married couple would pay Anna Müller 6 gulden a year and that "the mother can continue to live in the house her life long, with place in the main room and near the oven⁶ for her warmth, also place to cook in the kitchen and her own bedroom, with her furniture, in the barn her fodder for her cow and one pig, one third of the garden for her own."

Children of Maria Anna Nuwer and Jacob Wilhem

Name	Born	Died	Spouse	Married
Catherine Wilhelm	2 Jan 1773	21 Apr 1824 age 51	Michel Mary 1761-1842	28 Feb 1803
Marie Eve Wilhelm	25 Feb 1775	10 May 1831 age 56	Jean Bonn ca 1775-1843	1 Nov 1802
Marie Anne Wilhelm	6 Oct 1777	before Jun 1784		
Frantz Joseph Wilhelm	22 Feb 1779	15 Feb 1834 age 55	Marie Eve Haertal 1773-1842	about 1803
Frantz Anton Wilhelm	21 Feb 1782	24 Feb 1810 age 28	Marie Marguarite Gottgeb 1780-1837	26 Aug 1805
Marie Anne Wilhelm	10 Jun 1784	23 Dec 1789 age 5		

⁵ "Soufflenheim Marriage Contracts, 1676-1811," page 108, <https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/c0db0dfe-27d2-4632-889f-eeb26fbb14e1/downloads/Marriage%20Contracts.pdf?ver=1637110355662>

⁶ An oven was a space heater made from stoneware. It was one of many products made in pottery shops.

Joseph Wilhelm	17 Aug 1788			
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The needs of Frantz Antoni Nuber were also provided for in the contract. Antoni was 9 years old when his sister was married. He was given the right to “live in the same house as long as he is not married.” Further, Jacob Wilhelm agreed to provided Antoni with a profession, including payment of any money costs that might arise.

Maria Anna Nuwer gave birth to seven children and the birth records of six children identified Jacob Wilhelm as a linen weaver. Linen was produced from flax, a fiber that grew well in Northern Europe. Cloth made from flax had been manufactured in Europe for many centuries. Across Northern Europe, including Alsace, linen cloth was produced in large quantities during the pre-industrial period. Church records tell us that Frantz Antoni Nuwer worked as a linen weaver. Clearly, Jacob Wilhelm passed the trade to his younger brother-in-law.

Anna Müller, Maria Anna Nuwer, Jacob Wilhelm, and Frantz Antoni Nuwer lived together for the next nine years. Maria Anna Nuwer’s first three children were born before her mother died and Maria Anna was pregnant with her fourth child when Anna Müller died in early February 1779. This was just a few weeks before Frantz Joseph Wilhelm was born. Although we do not have an exact date for Anna Müller’s birth, 1717 to 1719 is a reasonably good estimate. She was probably between 60 and 62 years old when she died.

Anna Müller’s Estate

The estate’s notary document began by identifying Anna Müller’s heirs. They were “Marianna Nuber, wife of honorable Jacob Wilhelm, burgher here,” and “Frantz Antoni Nuber aged 19 years.” The document then listed the inventory and the division of property.

The House

The notary document restated the terms on which the “house with all rights and dependences [had] been inherited by Marianna the heir and her husband Jacob Wilhelm.” The family house was described as “one house of one floor, in this village with barn and roof along with yard and kitchen garden.” Barbara Kieffer was still identified as a neighbor. The document also stated that a land tax of 6 deniers was paid “yearly to the Holy Congregation.”

The property was given a value of 275 guildens, which was the same valuation used in the marriage contract nine years earlier. We saw in the notary documents of Andres Müller and Frantz Nuwer that in 1745 the land was valued at 70 guildens and in 1763 the buildings were valued at 160 guildens. Thus, between 1763 and 1779 the value of the property increased 45 guildens which was about 1.3 percent per year over the 15-year period. This rate of growth was well below the five percent rate of interest that was paid on money loans.

Debt

When Frantz Nuwer died, his debts totaled 93 guildens. There were four money loans totaling 78 guildens and a 15 guildens debt described as “interest on property.” Anna Müller inherited these debts when Frantz Nuwer died, and they were transferred to Maria Anna Nuwer and Jacob Wilhelm under the terms of their marriage contract. Anna Müller had four additional money debts, totaling 19 guildens, 1 shilling, and 6 deniers. Maria Anna Nuwer was responsible for these debts plus some expenses that totaled about 10 guildens.

Moveable Property

Frantz Nuwer’s estate inventory contained 82 guildens and 8 shillings of moveable property. The notary document for his estate gave ownership of all the items to Anna Müller and credited his daughter and son the money value of the items.

There were four kitchen items found in Frantz Nuwer’s inventory, an old iron pan, a small tin pan, a mold, and a pair of scissors. Fifteen years later, Anna Müller’s kitchen contained two iron pans with covers, one pan, one old baking mold, a large spoon, and a large knife with holder.

As for household furniture, Frantz Nuwer’s inventory contained only a bed frame. By contrast, Anna Müller’s inventory contained a pine bed frame, two chests with keys, a wooden chest, and a stool.

There is some uncertainty about the origin of the household goods that Anna Müller possessed when she died. If she had owned the goods before her marriage to Frantz Nuwer, then they would not have been community property and they would not have appeared in Frantz Nuwer’s inventory. Goods acquired during a marriage were considered community property owned by both the husband and the wife. These items would have appeared in Frantz Nuwer’s inventory, as the bed frame did. Finally, it is possible that Anna Müller acquired any or all the chests with keys, the wooden chest, and the stool after Frantz Nuwer’s death. She would then be their sole owner.

Since the two chests with keys, the wooden chest, and the stool were not listed in Frantz Nuwer’s inventory, we can say they were not acquired after his marriage to Anna Müller. We do not know, however, if Anna Müller brought these items to her marriage or if she acquired them after the death of her husband.

In addition to the kitchen and household goods, Frantz Nuwer’s inventory contained an assortment of farm tools, barn yard animals, and animal feed. All the farm tools were absent in Anna Müller’s inventory and the only barn yard animals were two hens. Anna Müller no longer had the horse, bull, pigs, and geese.

The inventory must be read with some caution. The document contained only the items that Anna Müller owned and could bequeath. It does not necessarily contain all the items available for use by a family unit. When Jacob Wilhelm entered the household through marriage, he could have become the owner of farm animals and farm tools. Thus, the items were used by the family to meet their consumption needs, but they were not owned by Anna Müller.

Agricultural Fields

In 1745 Anna Müller inherited three parcels of farmland from her father’s estate. When she died in 1779, she was the owner of two parcels. It is not clear from the descriptions whether these are same parcels

that were inherited or different parcels. Nevertheless, Maria Anna Nuwer inherited one of the parcels and Frantz Antoni Nuwer inherited the other.

Frantz Antoni Nuwer continued to live with his sister and brother-in-law until he married in 1788. So, we assume that both parcels of farmland were used to supply the needs of Frantz Antoni Nuwer, Maria Anna Nuwer, Jacob Wilhelm and the children of the married couple.

Partible Inheritance

Three generations of land transfers illustrate the potential difficulties that divisible inheritances caused. When Andreas Müller was farming in the early part of the eighteenth century, he owned about 12 parcels of farmland. When he died in 1745, this land was divided among his four children. One of those children, Anna Müller, received 3 of the parcels. She and her husband Frantz Nuwer used that land to produce food for their family. We know from historical documents that this was the only land they owned.

When Anna Müller died, her estate had only two parcels remaining which were further divided between her two heirs. Frantz Antoni Nuwer started his family in 1788, and he had only one parcel of land in Soufflenheim's agricultural fields on which to produce food.

This pattern illustrates how the system of divisible inheritances put pressure on a family's ability to support those who depended upon the land. By the end of the eighteenth-century declining farm size was becoming a generalized problem in Alsace and elsewhere. It was exacerbated by a falling death rate which led to growing family size and more heirs for the land. (Although we know the Nuwer family in Soufflenheim had an unusually high death rate.)

The general pattern was that family plots decreased in size and remained marginal or submarginal in terms of its capacity to support the family who depended upon it. The partible system made it difficult to earn a living in agriculture. The responses to this pressure varied.

When possible, a farmer inheriting a marginal or submarginal farm could buy more land. In some cases, one sibling might buy the small inheritance to another sibling. The other sibling, therefore, would leave farming altogether, which in Bas-Rhin, Alsace, also meant leaving the village for work in a burgeoning industrial city. In other cases, the farmer might migrate to an industrial city where he would work until he earned enough funds to return home and buy more land. This solution to population pressure was temporary, not permanent, emigration.

Alternatively, many people simply keep their smaller farms and looked for ways to supplement the reduced farm income. One method of doing this was to work part-time on the farm and part-time at some nonfarm tasks. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries Europe witnessed an expansion of what an historian calls "proto-industry," in which farm families worked at industrial tasks in their own household. Cutting leather, spinning yarn, and weaving fabric were tasks commonly performed in the household during this time period.

Another method of supplementing one's farm income was to spend some days or seasons working for someone else. A plowman would use his plow and animal team to cultivate fields for others who did not own a plow and team. A day laborer might own his own land and work another's land to supplement the reduced farm income. The day laborer might alternatively leave their home village and work elsewhere for a season. They might head for the vineyards and work at the grape harvest, for example.

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries many of these methods of supplementing farm income were found in Soufflenheim. However, in the case of the Nuwer family's history, there are still some facts that remain unknown. When Frantz Antoni Nuwer married in 1788, his wife, Marie Anna Schutt, may have brought some farmland to the marriage. Or Frantz Antoni Nuwer and Marie Anna Schutt may have purchased some farmland after their wedding. Either of these events would have increased the size of their farm. What we do know is that Frantz Antoni Nuwer relied on proto-industry to supplement his farm income. Specifically, he worked as a linen weaver. We also know that his son, Anton Nuwer, was the only child to survive to adulthood and was the only heir to his father's and mother's land. We know that Anton Nuwer supplemented his farm income by working as a weaver and later as a plowman. Finally, we know that, at the age of 57, Anton Nuwer decided to sell his land in Soufflenheim and emigrate. As is often the case for an historian, intentions and beliefs must be read through the actions of the historical subjects.

Translation of the Notary Record for Anna Müller

Soufflenheim the 4th of March 1779:

Anna Müller

Sent One Exemplar

Inventory and description, also division of property active and passive without any exception of all left by deceased Anna Müller former wife of honorable Frantz Nuber in his life a burgher here, after her death which occurred about four weeks ago; inventory established on request of the named heirs and guardian, undersigned by the royal notary named in Haguenau by the bailiff, and witnesses in the end of this as usual, Herr Antoni Kiefer and Johannes Hummel members of the local justice, also responsible of the evaluation in all truth faithfully recorded, Soufflenheim the 4th March 1779

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List of Heirs

The deceased has left as her heirs the under named her children born with her deceased husband 2 children.

1) Marianna Nuber, wife of honorable Jacob Wilhelm, burgher here, assisted by her husband.

2) Frantz Antoni Nuber aged 19 years, assisted as minor of age by the honorable Georg Adam Ludwig, his guardian and burgher here, present to this from beginning to end.

Follows the Inventory and division of the property and starting with:

The House

One house of one floor, in this village with barn and roof along with yard and kitchen garden one side Jacob Müller's widow, 2 for one part Antoni Messner, other part all-round the common property, pays yearly to the Holy Congregation here 6 d on land tax.

This house described above including all dependances.

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This house with all rights and dependences has been inherited by Marianna the heir and her husband Jacob Wilhelm according to a private record passed on the 16 of November 1769 in front of the notary of this place for a sum of: 275 R

As has been agreed by the guardian on this has also been noted that in her marriage contract in this church here several amounts were foreseen so: 20 R

Also to Michel Gutmann's heirs here: 75 R

So a total of: 95 R

After deduction of this due is left as estimation on the house: 180 R

So that the house is left in this inventory for: 8 R 6 s

Property amounting to: 188 R 6 s

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(the marriage contract has been included in this notary)

On this amount must be deducted the following passive debts of: 39 R 1 s 3 d

After this deduction are left: 149 R 4 s 9 d

And so to each heir an amount of a half so: 74 R 7 s 4 1/2 d

So that Frantz Antoni can pretend on this house a sum of: 74 R 7 s 4 1/2 d

Also because of bad allotment an amount of: 10 R

On the crops in field in money: 1 R 5 s

Same for father's clothes in the passive included and interest until today: 8 R 3 s 9 d

To a total of: 94 R 6 s 1 1/2 d

On this amount, the couple Marianna and husband were authorized with the witnesses to pay in three terms the first one on Martin's Day of this year, Martin's Day 1780 and 1781, each for a third with interest.

But it must also be remembered that the two heirs have received on inventory of their father Frantz Nuber on the 27th September 1763 an amount of 49 R 9 s 4 2/3 d which has never been paid to both heirs.

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Fields in the District of Soufflenheim

District Zwischen den krummer Acker und Bischweiler Weeg

- About one vierzel 5 ruthen field there one side Benedict Schreiber, second side Frantz Kielhofe upper part the forest, down an ending as on page 323a of land record. To Marianna she gives back 10 R to Frantz Antoni.
- Same one viertzel field there one side Joseph Vogel, second side Jacob Müller's heirs, upper part the forest and down an ending as on page 323a of land record. Goes to Frantz Antoni gives 10 R to Marianna therefore.

Active Property Description

Clothes of the Father

The mother's clothes were given to Marianna as usual in this occasion.

The bedclothes have already been shared.

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Continued

One old bed cover

One old pillow cover

One new straw sack

2 half Köln way old bed cover

2 same pillows

6 measures of toil

2 worked same

1 half worked same
1 hand towel
12 pieces of toil
2 iron pans with covers
2 chests with keys
1 wooden chest
1 pine tree old bed frame

Follows More

To Marianna
2 measures of white flour: 3 R
1 barrel: 3 s
1 iron tool: 5 s
1 stool: 4 s

Kitchen Tools

1 large spoon: 2 s
1 pan: 1 R 5 s
1 mist hawk: 5 s
1 old baking mold: 3 s
2 vinegar barrels: 1 R
1 large knife with holder: 5 s

Total: 8 R 2 s

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Continued

Poultry
2 hen : 4 s

Crops in the Fields

This will be shared later on condition that both will be paid, Marianna to her brother in due time.

General amount is: 8 R 6 s

Active Debts

None

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Passive Debts

First to Joseph Moser burgher here a loan in money: 6 R
Same interest on this: 3 s
Same Catharina Meder same: 3 R
Same interest for 3 years: 4 s 6 d
Same Hans Roth for carrying goods: 3 R 4 s
Same Georg Adam Ludwig loan of money: 6 R
Cost of burial: 5 R 2 s 6 d
Same to Frantz Antoni as from the inventory of his father and clothes of father: 6 R 7 s
Same on interest: 1 R 6 s 9 d
Same the trips necessary to this inventory costs: 5 R 3 s 6 d
Same justice rights for ending: 1 R
Total debts: 39 R 1 s 3 d

Will be paid by Marianna.

Page 9

All this sufficiently verified, inventoried, accepted as named in the beginning of this record, passed in Soufflenheim 4 March 1779.

Signatures:

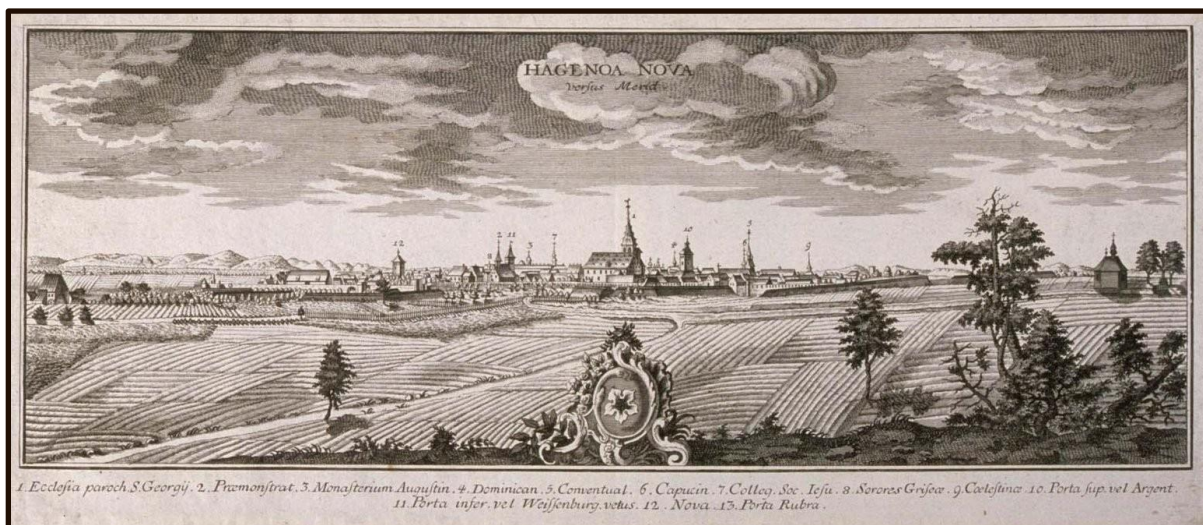
Marianna Nuber x marks,
Jacob Wilhelm,
Georg Adam Ludwig,
Johann Humpel,
Kieffer provost,
Ballet royal notary.

Arrested the present inventory and division by the Royal Procurator undersigned in Haguenau 6 July 1781. Meyer

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.



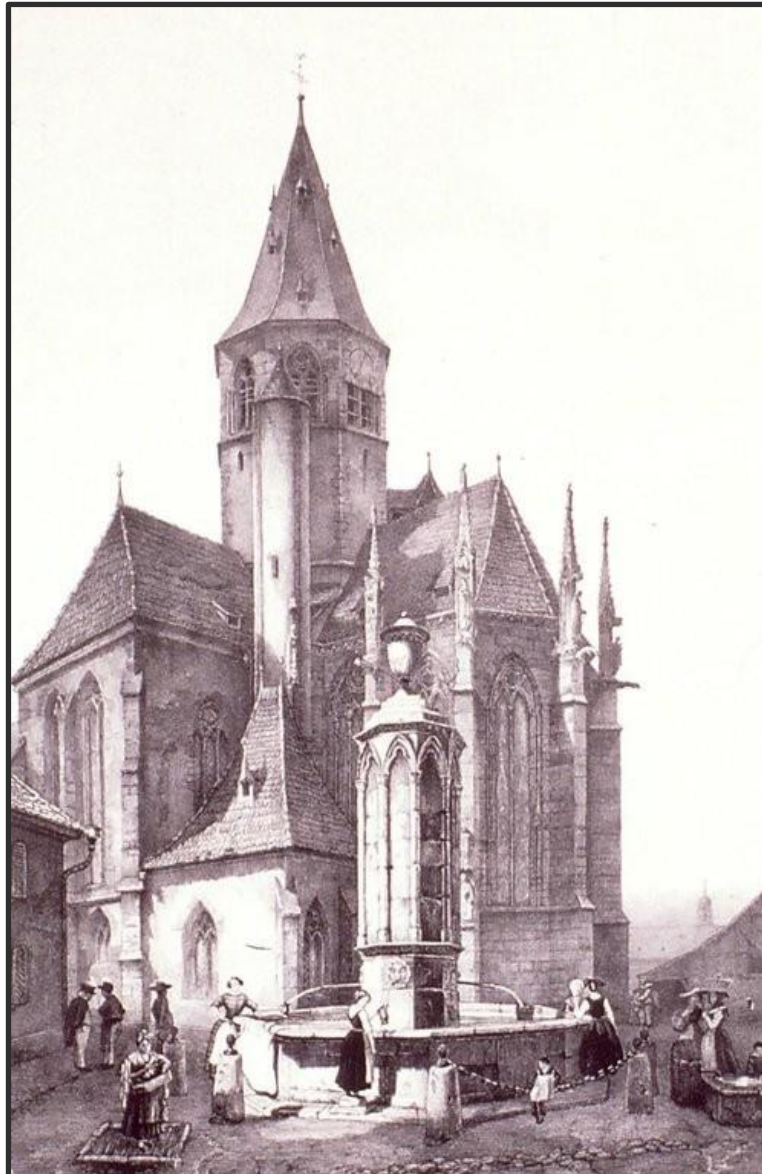
Haguenau, 1751. Source: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b102011807.r=Haguenau?rk=5064402;4>

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 m²) 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.

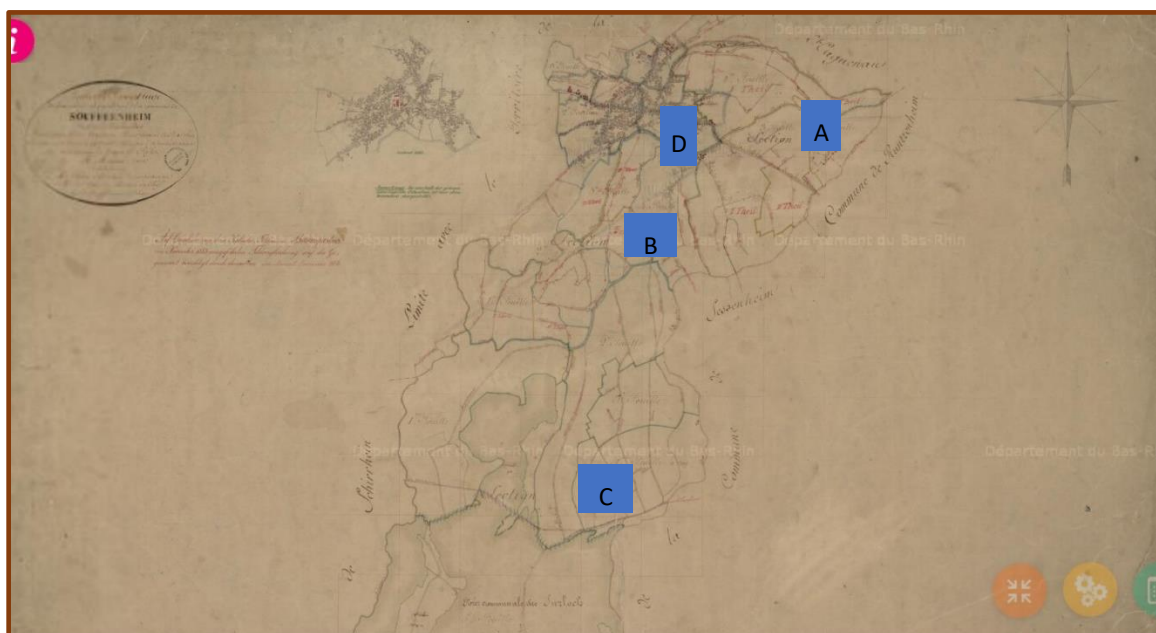


Image 2

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

There were about 3,000 strips, which is an average of about 5 strips per family. The *Cadaastre* registry



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.

Hyperlinks to Soufflenheim's *Cadastre* Maps

- Index of maps : <http://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/LIGEO-1513765#visio/page:LIGEO-1513765-14312>
- Section A, sheet 1 : <http://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/LIGEO-1513766#visio/page:LIGEO-1513766-14306>
- Section A, sheet 2 : <http://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/LIGEO-1513767#visio/page:LIGEO-1513767-14305>
- Section A, sheet 3 : <http://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/LIGEO-1513768#visio/page:LIGEO-1513768-14311>
- Section A, sheet 4 : <http://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/LIGEO-1513769#visio/page:LIGEO-1513769-14313>
- Section B, sheet 1 : <http://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/LIGEO-1513770#visio/page:LIGEO-1513770-14323>
- Section B, sheet 2 : <http://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/LIGEO-1513771#visio/page:LIGEO-1513771-14318>
- Section B, sheet 3 : <http://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/LIGEO-1513772#visio/page:LIGEO-1513772-14309>
- Section B, sheet 4 : <http://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/LIGEO-1513773#visio/page:LIGEO-1513773-14308>
- Section C, sheet 1 : <http://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/LIGEO-1513774#visio/page:LIGEO-1513774-14307>
- Section C, sheet 2 : <http://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/LIGEO-1513775#visio/page:LIGEO-1513775-14315>
- Section C, sheet 3 : <http://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/LIGEO-1513776#visio/page:LIGEO-1513776-14320>
- Section C, sheet 4 : <http://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/LIGEO-1513777#visio/page:LIGEO-1513777-14319>
- Section C, sheet 5 : <http://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/LIGEO-1513778#visio/page:LIGEO-1513778-14314>
- Section C, sheet 5, part development A and B :
<http://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/LIGEO-1513779#visio/page:LIGEO-1513779-14322>
- Section D, sheet 1 : <http://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/LIGEO-1513780#visio/page:LIGEO-1513780-14310>
- Section D, sheet 2 : <http://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/LIGEO-1513781#visio/page:LIGEO-1513781-14317>
- Section D, sheet 3 : <http://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/LIGEO-1513782#visio/page:LIGEO-1513782-14321>
- Section D, sheet 4 : <http://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/LIGEO-1513783#visio/page:LIGEO-1513783-14316>

SAINT MARTIN'S DAY

By Michael J. Nuwer, November 2022

It is Thanksgiving week in the United States, and I noticed some interesting parallels from Alsace history.

An Alsace Feast: Saint Martin Day

When I was a kid growing up in the western United States, the Christmas season began the day after Thanksgiving. The Macy's Thanksgiving Parade always ended with Santa Clause opening the season. Now, at an age where I have grandchildren, it seems the Christmas season is beginning well before America's Thanksgiving. Walmart has been selling Christmas stuff for weeks and the Macy's Parade has yet to start.

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.