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

Otillia Metzler (4 March 1774)	Margaretha Wilhelm (6 February 1778)	Anna Pauli (5 February 1781)
1 old copper cauldron 2 large iron pots 1 iron spoon skimming spoon one meat fork 1 stone oil jug	3 different iron pots 2 iron pans 1 brass cauldron 1 skimming spoon, another kitchen spoon, one meat fork, another one 1 old iron pan several kitchen tools 1 oil jug	one iron pot and its cover one iron pan one iron pan one with a cover one oil pan one bowl one skimming spoon and spoon plus meat fork several pots one old copper cauldron
Valentin Eisenkirch (22 February 1783)	**Joseph Kieffer (18 February 1785)**	**Stephan Zettwooch (11 January 1786)**
Two iron pots Two material for cattle Two pans One copper van	5 spoons and one fork 1 iron pan 1 small jug	1 old copper cauldron 1 iron pan 1 skimming spoon 4 old spoons 1 cup 2 basins 1 tool to cut 1 knife 1 sack 3 saws in iron

Iron Pots and Pans

The cookware found in Soufflenheim inventories included cast-iron pots and kettles as well as those made from brass and copper. These heavy pots were used for wet-cooked foods such as stews and soups. For dry-cooked food that required high temperatures, cast-iron fry pans (sometimes called spiders) were used, and these too were found in the Soufflenheim inventories. Eighteenth century kitchens also

used gridirons for broiling and tin reflecting pans for roasting, but neither of these items were found in the Soufflenheim inventories.

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

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

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

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

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

Food was cooked on a hearth over an open flame

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

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

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

Food

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

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

Potatoes had a significant effect on European demographics. The product yielded about three times the calories of grain from the same amount of land and was more nutritious. Moreover, potatoes grew in a wider variety of soils and climates. These factors significantly improved agricultural production in the early modern era. For the local populations, potatoes were cheaper than bread, just as nutritious, and did not require a special mill for grinding. On the other hand, grain was much easier to transport and store so the production of both grain and potatoes coexisted.

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

How to Make Sauer-kraut

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

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

"The proper way to make sauer-kraut is as follows: The receipt is for the manufacture of one barrel. Take about thirty or forty heads of cabbage, (the number will depend on the size of the heads,) and first clean them and cut them up fine with a slough cutter or sharp carving-knife. Next mix the cabbage well with salt; for thirty good sized heads two quarts of salt will be sufficient. Pack the cabbage in the barrel, (a wine or

liquor barrel, well cleaned and scalded, is perhaps the best,) and after it is packed, put a clean muslin cloth on the top of the cabbage, entirely covering it. Then put a wooden cover on the cloth, and on the cover place a clean stone weight, (an iron weight would rust and flavor the 'sauer-kraut.') Put the barrel in a dry place, and every week be careful to wash the cloth, the weight, and the wooden cover. The cabbage will not be transformed into good 'sauer-kraut' in less than three weeks; it would be better if it could remain in pickle for two months. When the cloth cover and weight are washed each week the brine on the top of the cabbage should be tasted, and if it is rather fresh, more salt should be sprinkled on; the cabbage must always be covered with brine. If by evaporation or soakage the brine becomes low, it will be necessary to make a brine strong enough to float an egg or potato, and pour enough of it on to cover the cabbage. Before it is ready for use it must be thoroughly washed several times in clear cold water. To be eaten raw it may be mixed with vinegar and spices. To prepare it for cooking, boil it in clear water for ten minutes, then put it into a colander, squeeze the water out of it, and it is then ready to cook and serve with meat."

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

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

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

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

Salting pork was a remarkably effective technique for its preservation. Europeans had long known the techniques of curing food in salt or salty brine. It was basically a pickling process. Salting pork was used to produce ham, bacon, and sausage. Shoulders and legs were commonly cured to make ham, whereas sides, belly, and back were cured to make bacon. In continental Europe, bacon was used as a cooking ingredient primarily in cubes (called "lardons"). It was valued as a source of fat and for its flavor.

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

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

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

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

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

Bread

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Flour Mill

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

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

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

while the top stone rotated. The rotary motion, combined with the weight of the stone, ground the grain down to flour.

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

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

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

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

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

The Bakery

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

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

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

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

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

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

No doubt some fraction of the population baked their bread at home while others relied on the bakehouse. However, it is less clear whether the eighteenth-century bakehouse was privately owned or a

communal resource. Although commercialization favored the entrepreneurial enterprise by the second half of the nineteenth century, it is not clear when that transition took place in towns like Soufflenheim.

The Dining Table and Tableware

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

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

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

Closing Observation

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

APPENDIX I
Soufflenheim Inventories: 1700-1749

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

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

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

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

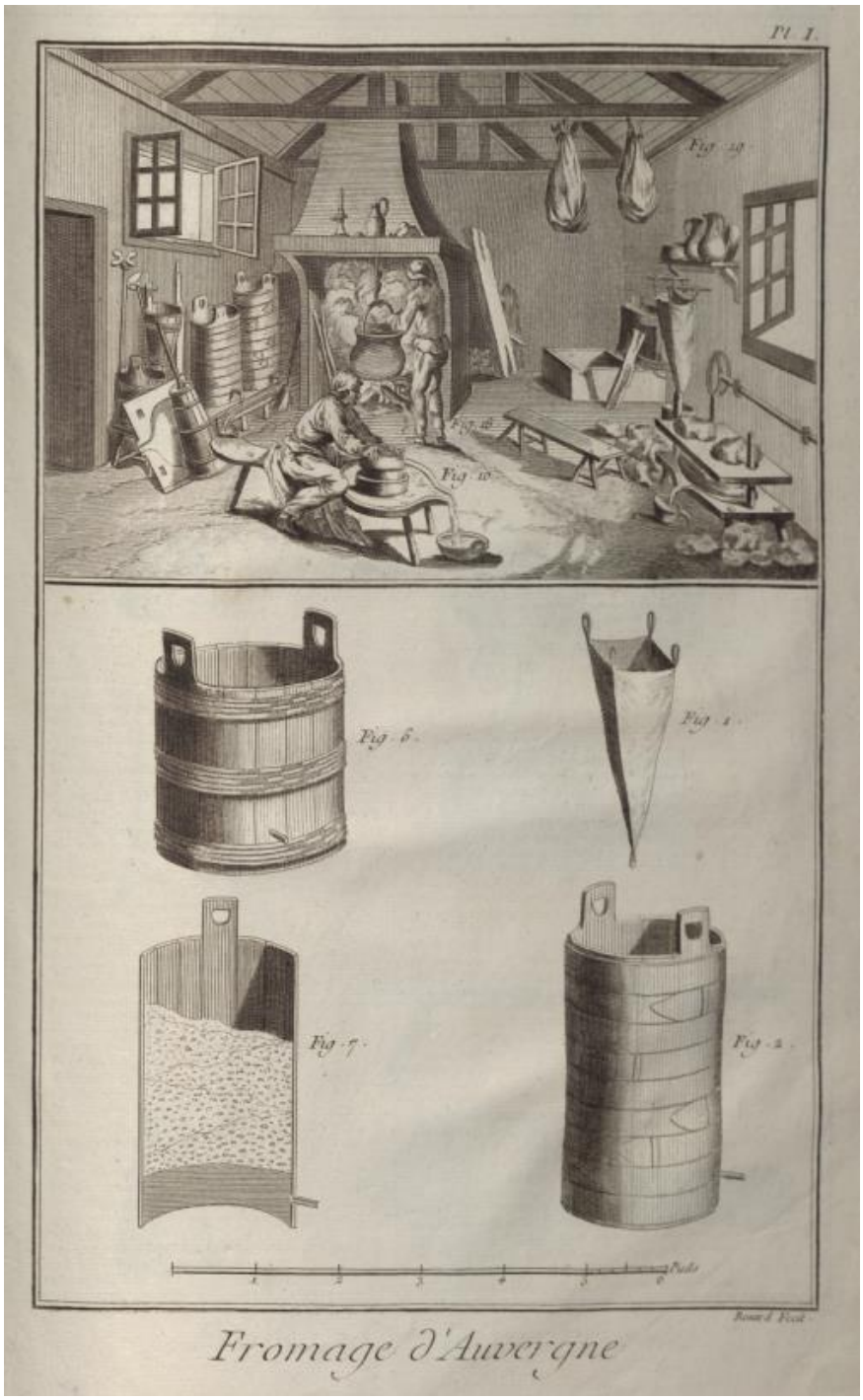
The first image is a household kitchen with a hearth. The household depicted in this kitchen scene was making cheese.

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.

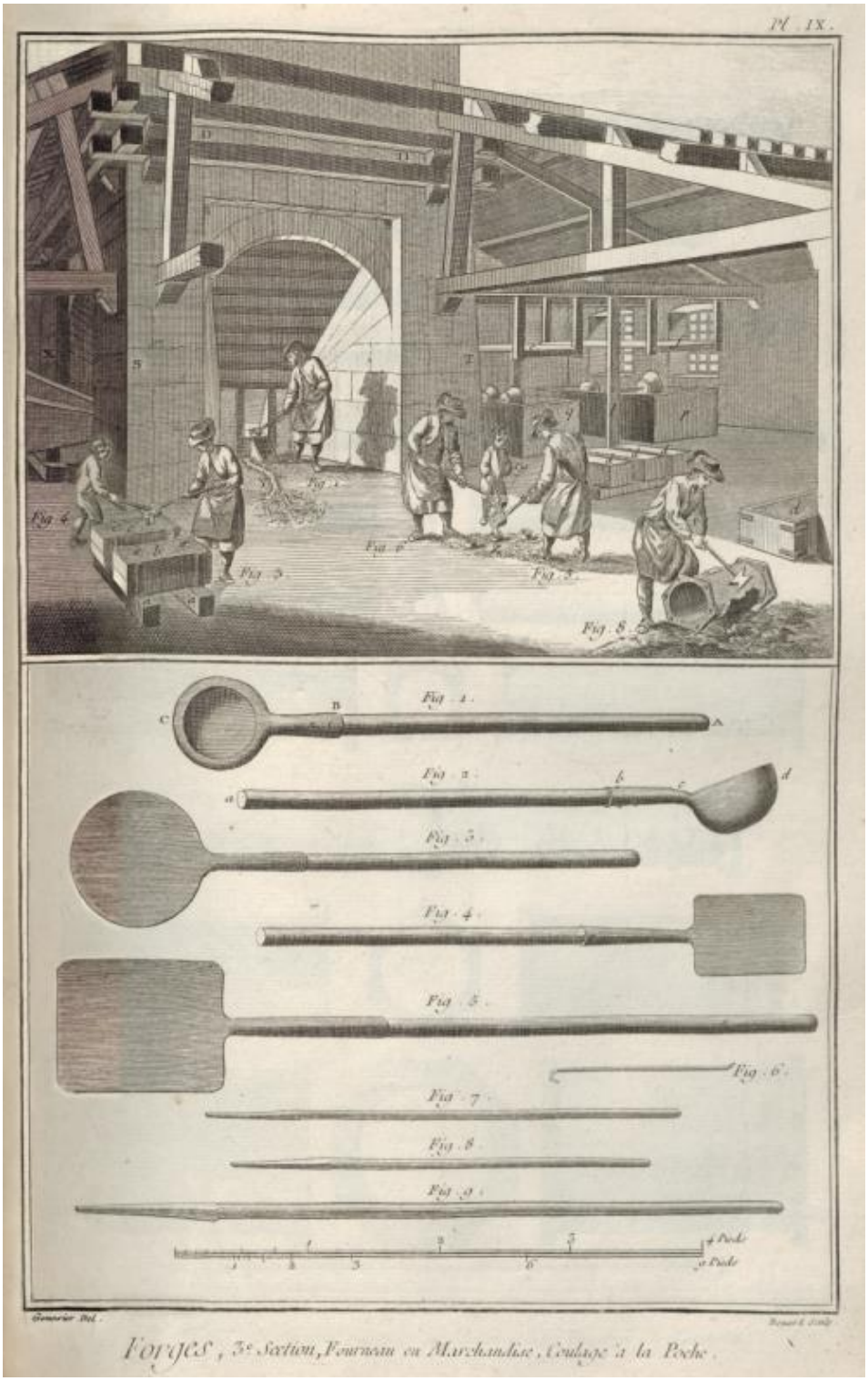
The next two images are from a grouping of wind and water mill plates. The first image shows an interior view of a flour mill powered by a water wheel. The second image shows details of a mill's grindstone.

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.

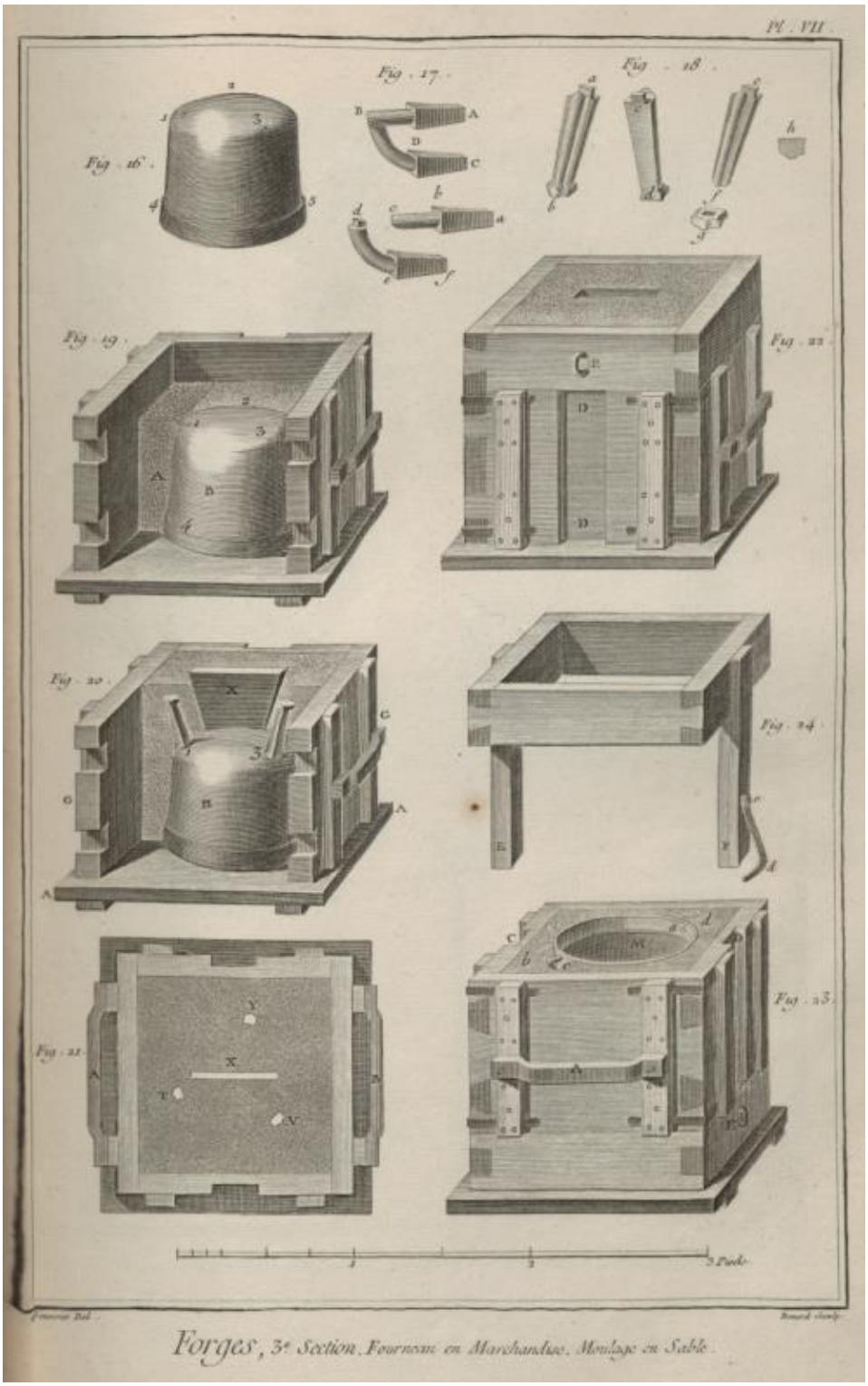
The URLs (i.e., web links) that accompany the images include the original texts which explain the plates in detail. Although written in French, Google Chrome does a reasonably good job of translating them into English.



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



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



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

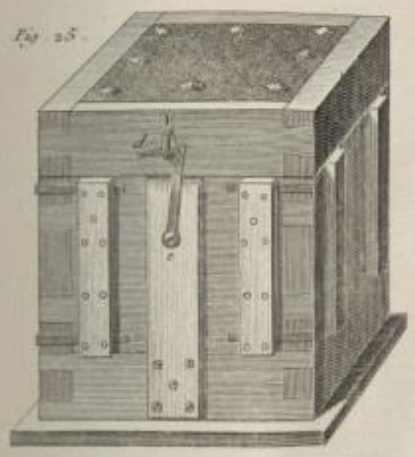


Fig. 25.

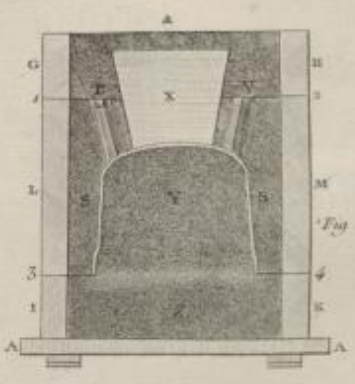


Fig. 29.

Fig. 26.

Fig. 30.

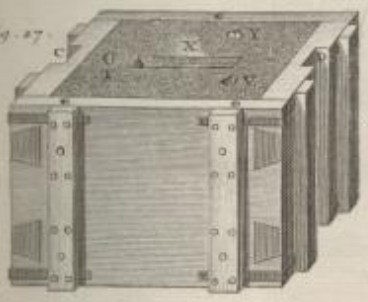


Fig. 27.

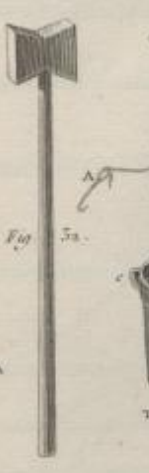


Fig. 31.

Fig. 34.

Fig. 35.

Fig. 32.

Fig. 33.

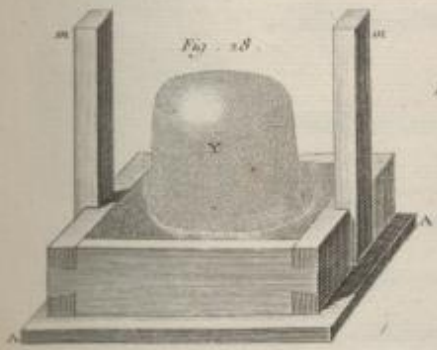
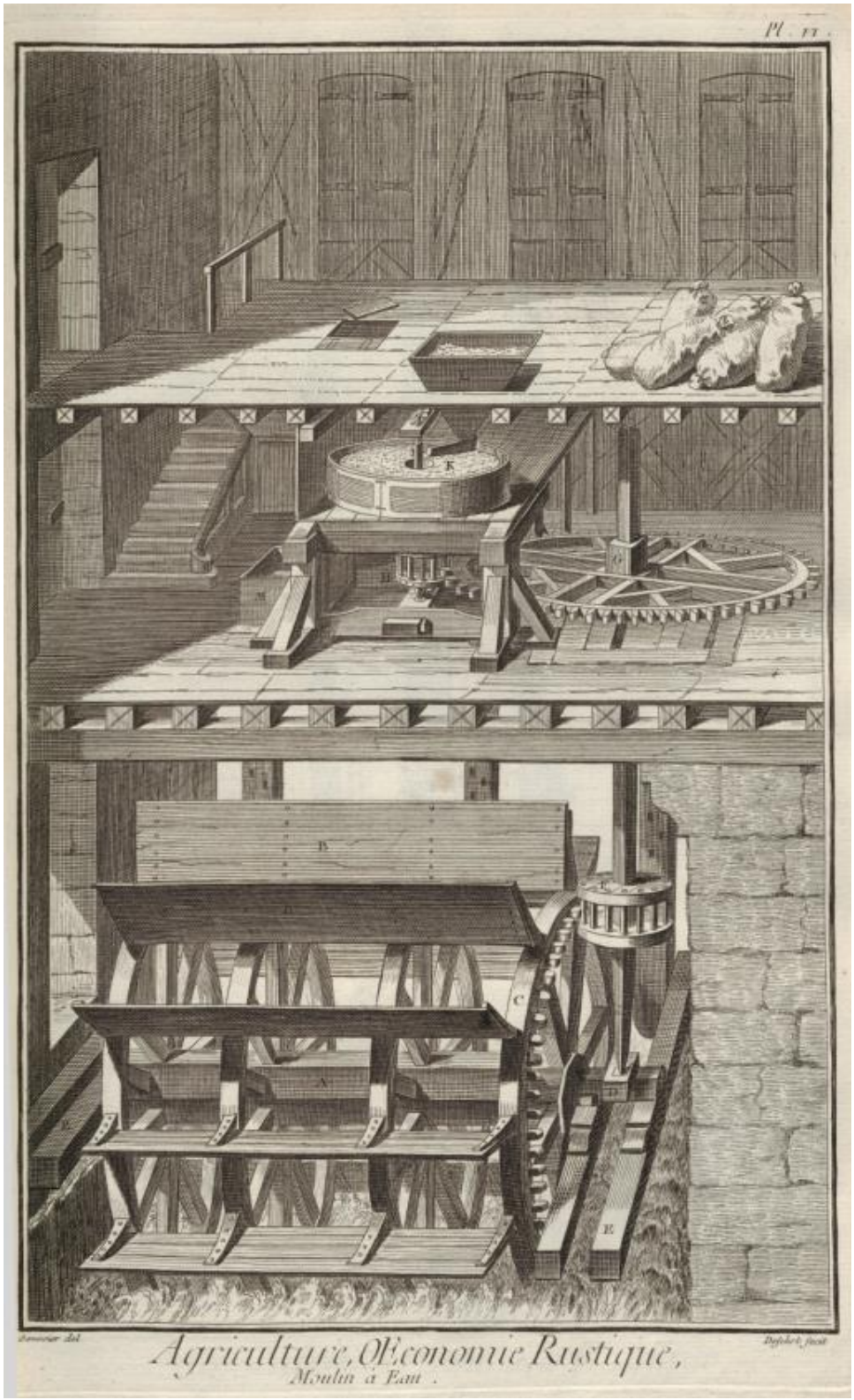


Fig. 28.

Fig. 36.

3 Pieds

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



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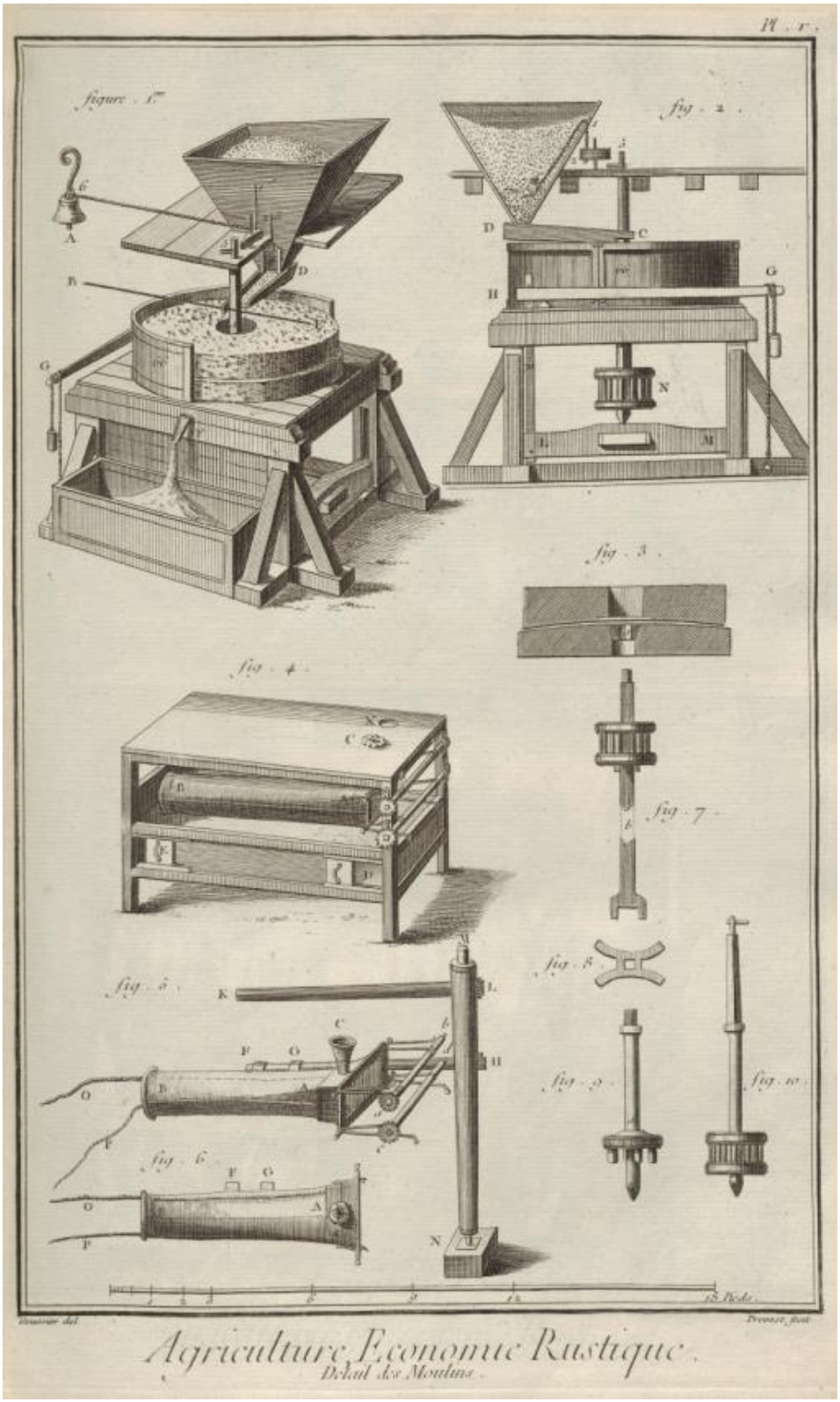

Agriculture Economie Rustique.

Détail des Moulins.

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WEAVERS OF SOUFFLENHEIM

By Michael J. Nuwer, January 2023

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

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

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

More Soufflenheim Weavers

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

Linen was produced from flax, a fiber that grew well in Northern Europe. The predominant fibers used for textiles in Western Europe during the late Middle Ages were wool followed by linen. Nettlecloth and hemp were additional fibers used for making textiles. Flax, hemp, and nettle were important plant-based textile material in Europe because they grew in Northern European climates. Cotton did not grow well in these climates. Linen cloth made from flax had been manufactured in Europe for many centuries. Across Northern Europe, as well as in Alsace, linen cloth was produced in large quantities during the pre-industrial period.

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

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

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

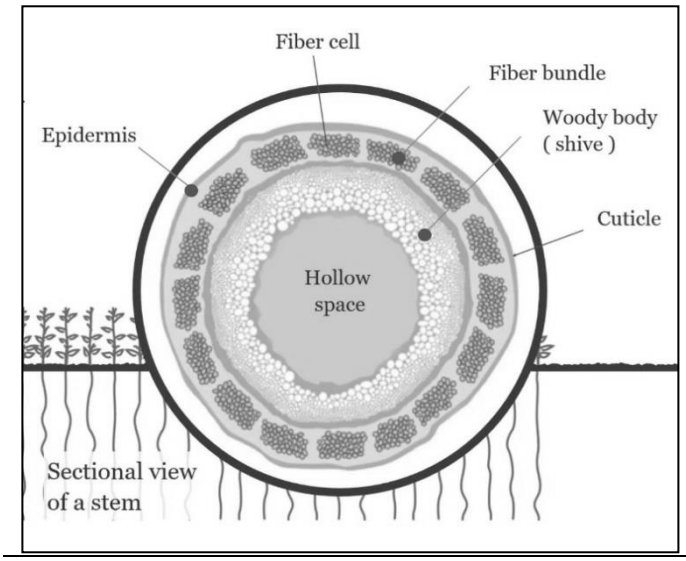
Raw Flax and Hemp in the Soufflenheim Estate Inventories

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

Cultivated flax plants have slender stems and grow about four feet tall. The flax fibers used to make linen come in bundles under the bark of the slender stems. These fibers must be extracted from beneath the

surface of the stem. The image below illustrated this structure. Flax is stronger than cotton fiber, but less elastic. It is soft, lustrous, and flexible, with the appearance of blonde hair.

When harvested, the flax plant is pulled up with the roots (not cut), so as to increase the fiber length. After this, the flax is allowed to dry, the seeds are removed, and it is then processed. Before the flax fibers can be spun into linen, they must be separated from the rest of the stem. The first step in this process is called retting, which is a technique of rotting away the inner stalk and leaving the outer parts intact. While retting, the flax lays on the ground in the field between two and four weeks, depending upon the weather and field conditions. As a result of alternating rain and sun, an enzymatic action loosens the fibers bound to the straw. The farmer turned the straw during retting to evenly rett the stalks. When the straw is retted and sufficiently dry, it is rolled up and can be stored before extracting the fibers.



Left: Cross section of Flax Stem

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

Right: Retted Flax Ready to be Dressed

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

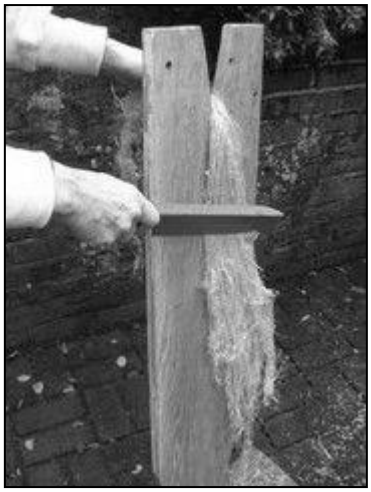
To remove the straw, the flax stems are first broken. This means the straw is cracked and broken-up into small, short bits, while the actual fiber is left unharmed. Second the flax stems are scutched which removes some of the straw from the fiber. This operation scrapes the outer straw from the fibers. Finally,

the stems are pulled through hackles, which are a bed of sharp, long, tapered nails driven into wooden blocks at regular spacing. A hackle block acts like a comb which removes the straw and some of the shorter fibers, leaving the long flax fibers.

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

Dressing Flax

Step 1: Breaking



Step 2: Scutching

Step 3: Hackling or combing

Raw flax

Bleaching

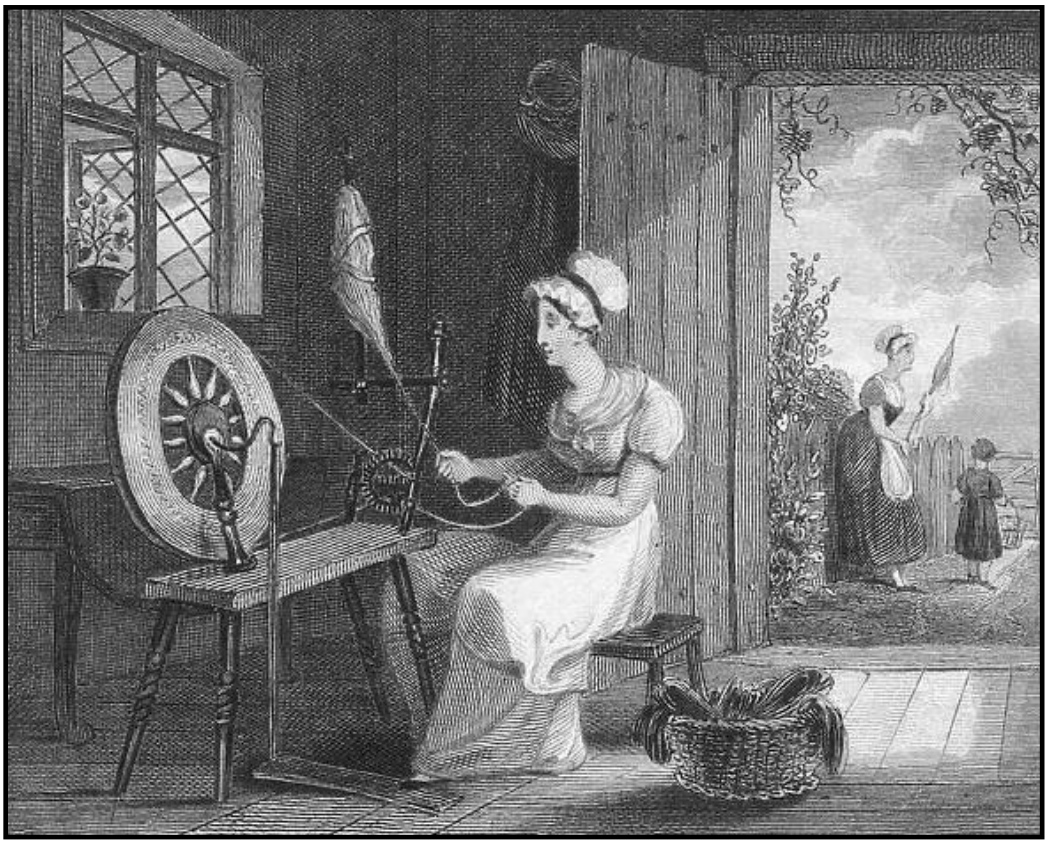
Bleaching is a process of decolorizing the raw textile material. It can be carried out at various stages of production. The raw fiber could be bleached, or the spun yarn could be bleached, or the bleaching could be performed on the woven cloth. One Soufflenheim inventory, dated 1727, contained “unbleached hemp toil” while another inventory, dated 1746, contained “measures of whitened flax.” These items suggest

that bleach was used in eighteenth century Soufflenheim, but it is less clear at which stage in the production process bleaching occurred.

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

Spinning Flax into Yarn

Spinning is an ancient art in which fibers are drawn out and twisted together to form yarn. In the case of flax, the natural fiber is slightly turned counter-clockwise, and so most flax is spun counter-clockwise—opposite the direction of wool or cotton spinning. Spinning could be done by hand with a drop-spindle or with the use of a spinning wheel. The now iconic spinning wheel was first introduced in the eleventh century. Initially the wheel was turned by hand and later a treadle or foot peddle was added to turn the wheel.



A Spinning Wheel for Spinning Flax

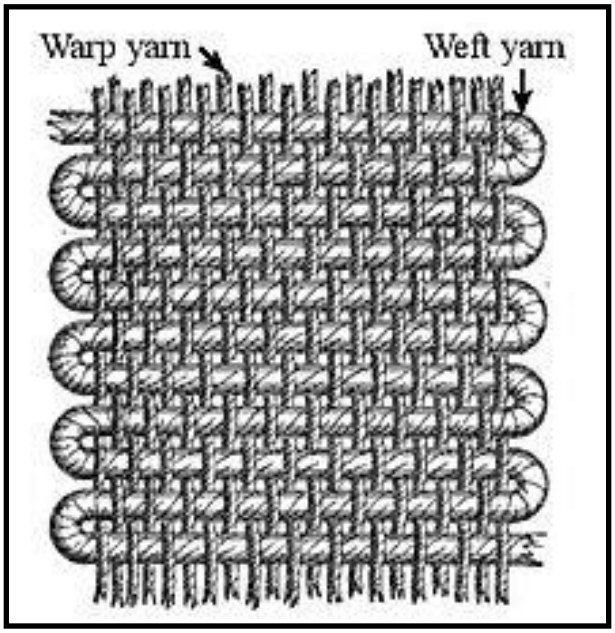
The raw flax was wound on a stick called a distaff. The spinner's right fingers draft the fibers and her left fingers wet the fibers with water. The wheel, powered by a treadle, is used to turn the spindle (located in front of the spinner's right knuckles) which twists the fibers into linen yarn.

Spinning Wheels in the Soufflenheim Estate Inventories

Name	Items
Anna Maria Christmann (1711)	Two spinning wheels
Michael Kieffer (1747)	1 spinning wheel with its seats, 1 spinning wheel
Maria Träher (1747)	2 spinning wheels
Mathis Beckh (1749)	1 spinning wheel
Hans Georg Biff & Anna Maria Witt (1762)	1 spinning wheel
Johannes Beckh (1762)	1 spinning wheel
Jacob Kieffer & Margaretha Liechteisen (1765)	1 spinning wheel and tools
Barbara Stäblerin (1766)	1 good spinning wheel
Otillia Metzler (1774)	1 spinning wheel, with hemp, winding
Margaretha Wilhelm (1778)	two spinning wheels, and related tools for spinning
Margaretha Geiger (1788)	spinning wheel

Weaving

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

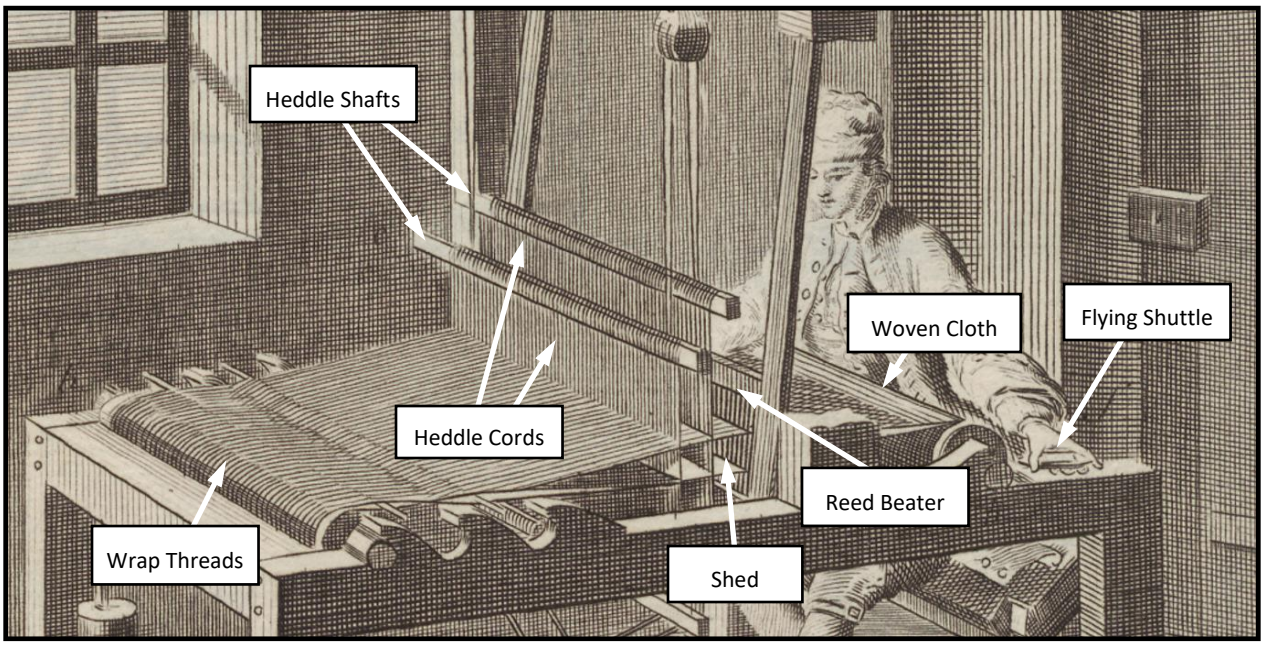


Plain Weave

The warp yarns alternate above and below the weft yarn.

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

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



A Simple Handloom

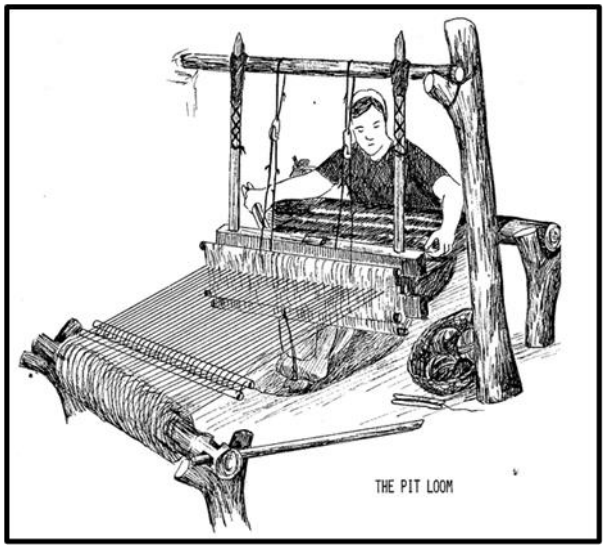
The image is taken from The Encyclopedia of Diderot. The Encyclopedia was published in France under the direction of Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert between 1751 and 1772.

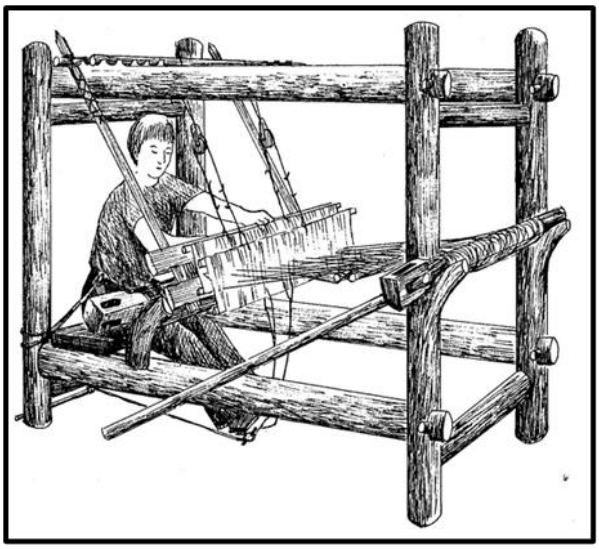
Source: https://artflsrv04.uchicago.edu/philologic4.7/encyclopedie0922/navigate/18/18

A hand loom might be wide or narrow. Hand weavers could only weave a cloth as wide as their arm span. To weave cloth that needed to be wider, two people were required to do the task. This ceased to be necessary after the flying shuttle was invented in 1733. “The weaver held a picking stick that was attached by cords to a device at both ends of the shed. With a flick of the wrist, one cord was pulled, and the shuttle was propelled through the shed to the other end with considerable force, speed, and efficiency. A flick in the opposite direction and the shuttle was propelled back.” A single weaver could control this motion and the flying shuttle could be used to weave much wider fabric than an arm’s length.

The shuttle and the picking stick sped up the process of weaving. It is not known when the flying shuttle was introduced at Soufflenheim, but it seems reasonable to suppose that it was used there by 1780.

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





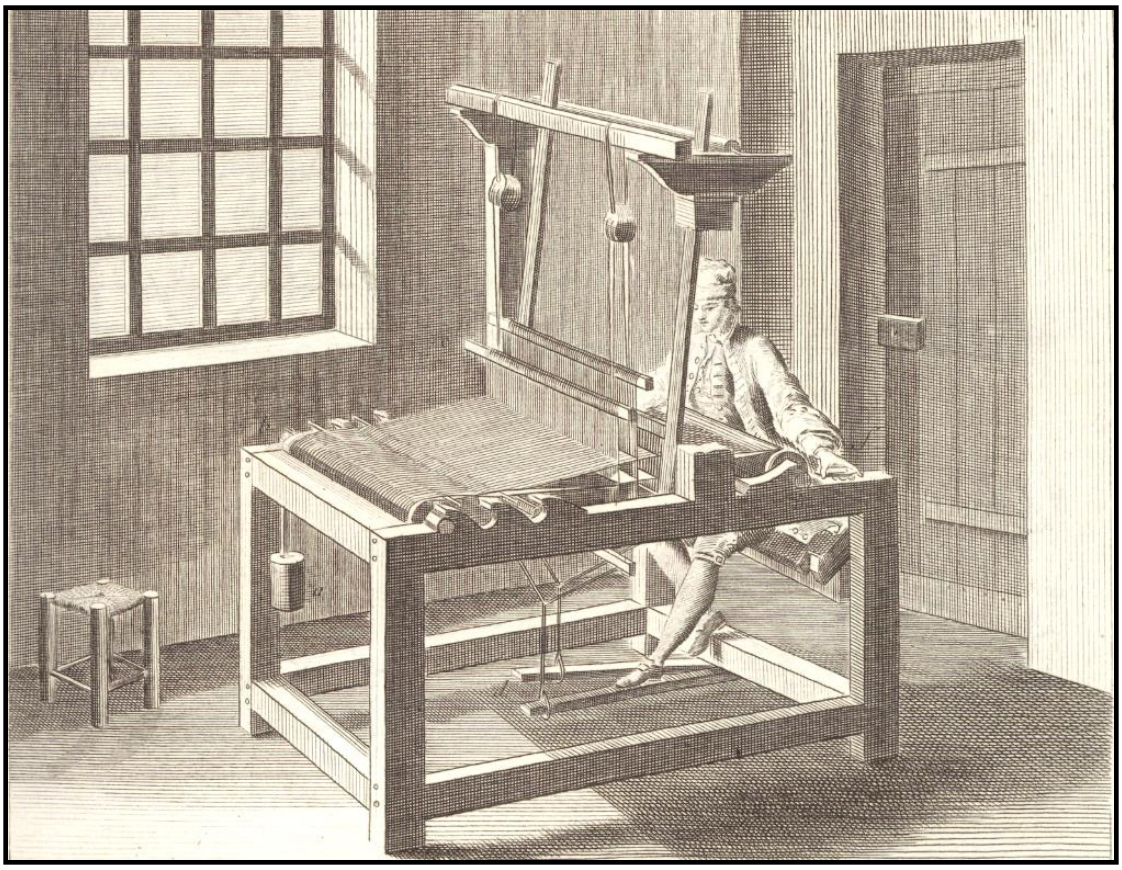
Pit Loom **Frame Loom**

Two Variations of the Horizontal Loom

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

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

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



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

Organization of the Work

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

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

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

The work of a rural handicraft weaver differed from that of an urban craft weaver. Urban weavers also worked at home, but they marketed their cloth at fairs and sold it to merchants. In other words, the cloth was produced before there was a customer. Craft weavers did not produce cloth for a specific customer, but rather for a market in the expectation that a customer would be found. Due to the uncertainties of finding these customers, urban weavers in Europe formed guilds to regulate their trade. The craft guilds controlled the quality of the cloth and the training needed for an apprentice. A cloth merchant then acted as a middleman between the craft weavers and the customers.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

— § § § —

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

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

It may have also influenced his decision to leave Soufflenheim and immigrate to America in 1844. As described by the historian Mack Walker, "The prospect of joining the wage-labor class, the lowest he

knew, was abhorrent to the pride, training, and traditions of the independent freeholder or [handicraftsman]. Despite his difficulties and his fears, he was reluctant to move to the city; better to go to America, where his hope for success *in the old ways* was higher." (Emphasis added)

Sources

Primary Data

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Barnyard Animals : The Animals Found in Soufflenheim Inventories.

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

Maria Irr	1738	3	2	1	4	8	8
Margaretha Balbierer	1740			3	1		
Peter Wilhelm	1740		2	3	3	5	4
Maria Göltzer	1740			3	2		1
Conrad Beck	1740			4			
Philipp Kieffer	1746	2	2	4	11	6	9
Catharina Wölf	1746		2	2	4	18	7
Michael Kieffer	1747			1	2		
Maria Träher	1747	5		1			
	Year	**Horses**	**Oxen**	**Cows**	**Pigs**	**Hens**	**Geese**
Mathis Beckh	1749			3	1	5	
Veronica Messner	1753			2	2	4	3
Peter Strack	1753			2			
Lorentz Estreicher	1758	1				2	
Joseph Wilhelm	1758			1			
Salome Metzler	1762		4			2	
Michel Mössner	1762			1	1		
Hans Georg Biff & Anna Maria Witt	1762			1			
Jacob Mössner	1762		2	3	4	3	4
Johannes Beckh	1762		4	1	3	3	
	Year	**Horses**	**Oxen**	**Cows**	**Pigs**	**Hens**	**Geese**
Franz Nuber	1763	1			2	3	4
Jacob Kieffer & Margaretha Liechteisen	1765			2	2	2	
Barbara Stäblerin	1766	1	2	3			
Maria Magdalena Brotschy	1768			3	3	4	
Otillia Metzler	1774			2	1		
Margaretha Wilhelm	1778			3		2	3
Anna Pauli	1781	1	2	2		4	2
Valentin Eisenkirch	1783			1			
Stephan Zettwooch	1786			1	1		4
	Year	**Horses**	**Oxen**	**Cows**	**Pigs**	**Hens**	**Geese**
		29	**29**	**85**	**93**	**99**	**60**

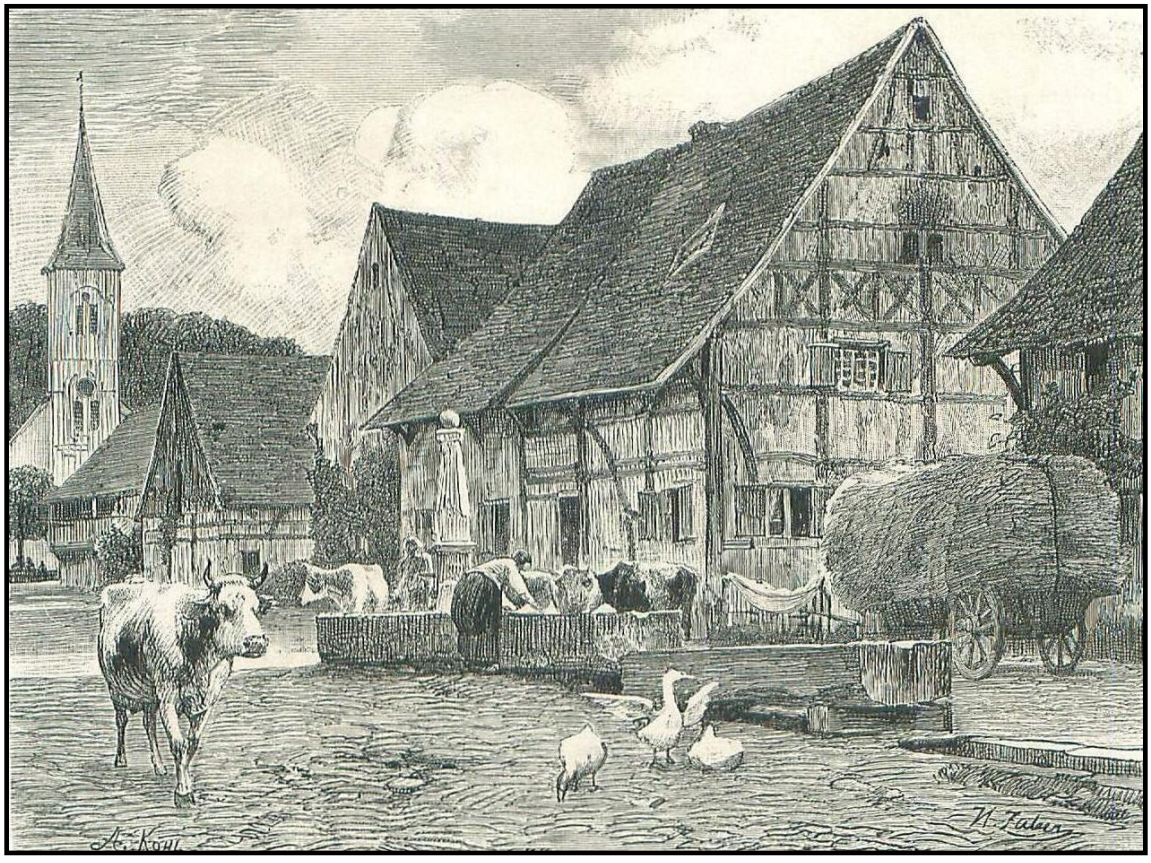
During the Medieval and early modern periods, the rural regions of Alsace were organized into what can be called clustered settlements, which is in contrast with the idea of a dispersed settlement pattern. North Americans are accustomed to the dispersed settlement of rural land. In such a territorial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

Throughout the Middle Ages central government across Europe was generally weak and townspeople needed protection from bandits and lawless nobles. Rural populations therefore tended to cluster close together in order to ensure their common security. Due to such social clustering, houses in the open country were very rare. A typical European clustered village consisted of houses on either side of a main

street, each with a small garden. The plowed agricultural land was located away from the housing cluster. People did not live on their farmland.

The Soufflenheim inventory of Frantz Nuber, who died in 1763, illustrates this pattern. Frantz Nuber and his wife Anna Müller lived in the village of Soufflenheim. Their home was described as a “house and cow shed … built on a garden inherited by the widow.” In other words, residents owned a small plot of land inside the residential cluster on which they had their barn and vegetable garden, in addition to their house. Their next-door neighbor would have likely had the same arrangement. Thus, as depicted below in the image of a typical Alsatian town, the animals were living within the residential cluster.

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



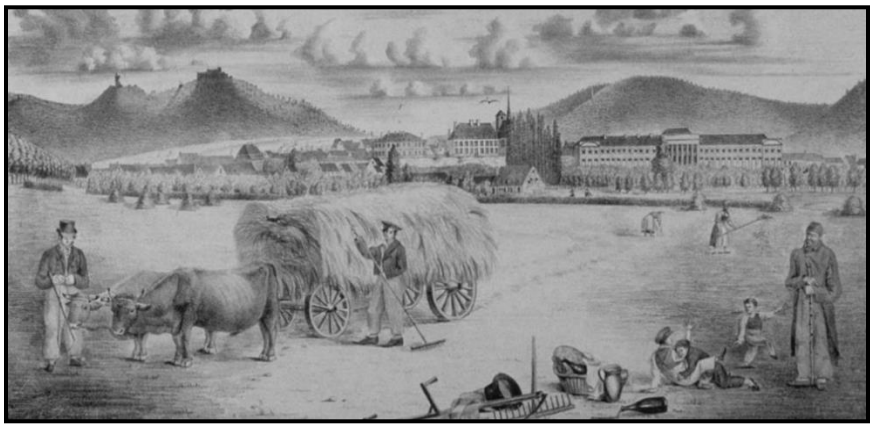
A Typical Alsatian Town

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

Draft Animals: Oxen and Horses

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

Oxen are cattle trained as draft animals. They were often adult, castrated males. An ox was usually over three years old due to the need for training and to allow it to grow to full size. Working oxen needed to be trained to respond to signals from the ox-driver. Signals to stop, go, back up, turn to the right, etc. were given by verbal command and reinforced by a goad or whip.



Vue de la ville de Saverne, 1800
Harvesting hay from the fields. The hay wagon is drawn by two oxen
Source: 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).

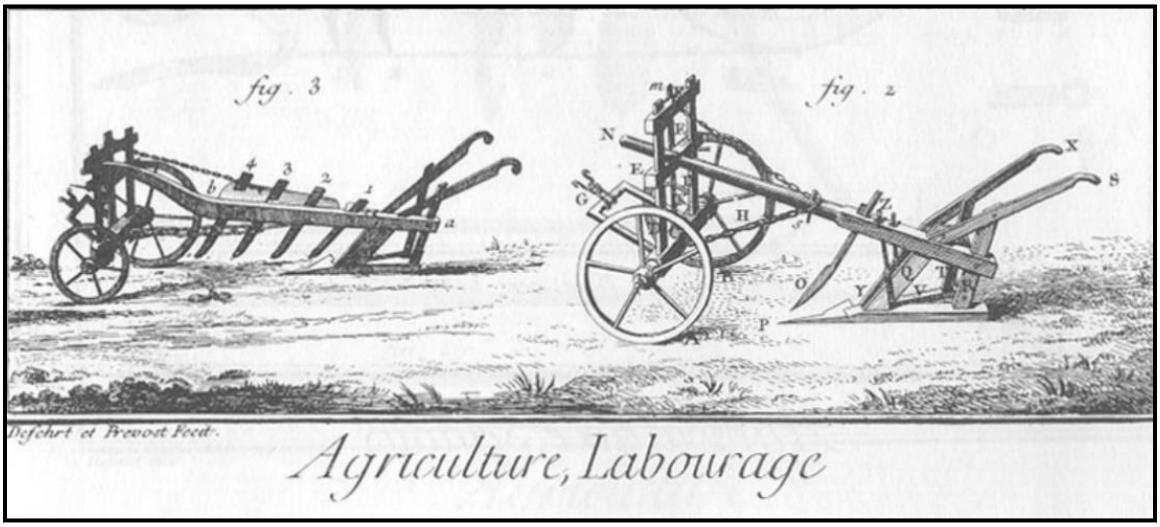


Image 2: left, Jethro Tull plow; right, Ordinary plow

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/encyclopedie1117/navigate/18/8/

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

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

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

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

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

Fowl: Chicken and Geese

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Pigs

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The inventories included in our data set did not contain sausage, nevertheless, it would be strange if the Soufflenheim households had not made sausage. It seems likely that sausage was made and consumed in eighteenth century Soufflenheim. Salt, too, was not found in the Soufflenheim data set although one inventory contained a debt to “the salt maker in Rountzenheim.” We know salt was available because of

its use in the curing and pickling processes. Estate inventories are a valuable source of information, but it remains true that they provide a limited picture of daily live in the village.

Salt: A Side Note

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

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

Dairy Cows

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

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

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

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

The critical feeding problem for cattle came in the winter. A cow ate about forty pounds of hay a day, with a supplement of oats, buckwheat, potatoes, turnips, peas, or carrots. Hay was the staple food for any

animal keep through the winter and the Soufflenheim data set contain seventeen inventories that had stores of hay.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Communal Herds

Farm animals must be fed, which constituted their primary cost. A plowman who owned a team of oxen, needed to feed his animals. A farmer who owned a dairy cow and some pigs needed food for these animals. To produce the animal food, farmer needed land, even if the animal was a forager. The

organization of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century farming in towns like Soufflenheim relied on communal land to help feed the animals.

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

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

Historical documents also make reference to grazing the pig herd in forests that neighbored Soufflenheim. The Haguenau forest was both the largest forest in Alsace and a royal forest owned by the King of France. In the 1750s and 1760s the town of Soufflenheim paid the royal authorities for access to graze the Soufflenheim pig herd in the royal forest. Similarly, in the 1730s the burghers of Soufflenheim leased forest land from the neighboring town of Drusenheim. Leasing forest land to graze pigs was known as pannage, suggesting it was a common practice.

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.

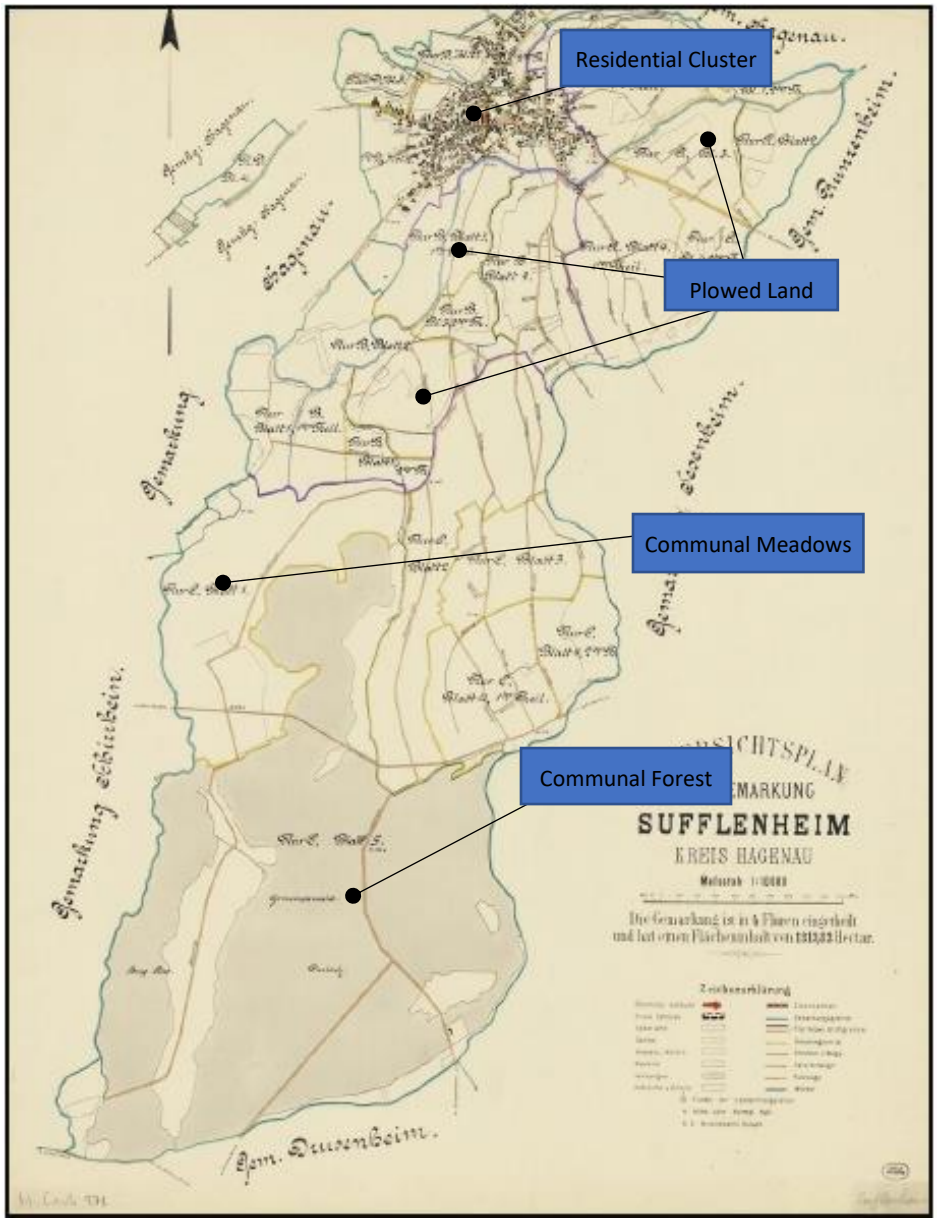
Although pigs were individually owned, they were cared for within a cooperative system. Each resident did not keep their own animal at their home. Instead, the animals were kept in a single herd and the pig herder managed the combined pig herd. Pig breeding was an important matter for the town burghers 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 Boneparte, which brought so much change to the realms of cities and politics, had only slight impact on the agricultural system. The extensive system of animal husbandry survived until the end of the nineteenth century.

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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

	All occupations		Household heads		Dependents	
Age	count	percent	count	percent	count	percent
less than 20	36	5.4	0	0.0	36	16.9
20-29	183	27.5	46	10.2	137	64.3
30-39	149	22.4	121	26.7	28	13.1
40-49	118	17.7	112	24.7	6	2.8
50-59	95	14.3	94	20.8	1	0.5
60-69	60	9.0	57	12.6	3	1.4
70 and over	25	3.8	23	5.1	2	0.9
Total	666	100.0	453	100.0	213	100.0

Distribution of Female Occupations : 1836 Census

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

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

Age distribution of females with an occupation

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

Mendicants

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mendicants (Paupers) in the 1836 Census

Street	House	Entry	Family	Surname	Name	Profession	Age	State	Sex	Remarks
Rue Dite im Gübel	68	387	69	**DOPPLER**	**Michel**	Pauper	72	W	M	
Rue Dite im Gübel	68	388	69	**DOPPLER**	**Modeste**	Soldier	24	S	M	
Rue Dite im Gübel	68	389	69	**LENGERT**	**Bibiane**		33	W	F	Widow of Doppler; daughter-in-law of Michel
Rue Dite im Gübel	68	390	69	**DOPPLER**	**Joseph**		8	S	M	
Rue Dite im Gübel	68	391	69	**DOPPLER**	**Madeleine**		9	S	F	
Rue Dite im Gübel	68	392	69	**DOPPLER**	**Antoine**		6	S	M	
Rue Dite im Gübel	99	573	103	**BRAUN**	**Joseph**	Pauper	43	M	M	
Rue Dite im Gübel	99	574	103	**THOMEN**	**Marguerite**		44	M	F	
Rue Dite im Gübel	99	575	103	**BRAUN**	**Clotilde**		14	S	F	

Rue Dite im Gübel	99	576	103	**BRAUN**	**Catherine**		11	S	F	
Rue Dite im Gübel	99	577	103	**BRAUN**	**Louise**		9	S	F	
Brunnenberg	240	1348	247	**MESSNER**	**Joseph**	Pauper	57	W	M	
Brunnenberg	240	1349	247	**MESSNER**	**Gilles**	Day Laborer	21	S	M	
Brunnenberg	240	1350	247	**MESSNER**	**Marguerite**		15	S	F	
Brunnenberg	240	1351	247	**MESSNER**	**Veronique**		12	S	F	
Brunnenberg	240	1352	247	**MESSNER**	**Madeleine**		7	S	F	
Brunnenberg	255	1430	263	**GRAN**	**Louis**	Pauper	66	M	M	
Brunnenberg	255	1431	263	**MEY**	**Marguerite**		52	M	F	
Brunnenberg	257	1432	264	**EBERHARD**	**Georges**	Pauper	54	M	M	
Brunnenberg	257	1433	264	**SEILER**	**Odile**		46	M	F	
Brunnenberg	257	1434	264	**EBERHARD**	**Marie Anne**		22	S	F	
Brunnenberg	257	1435	264	**EBERHARD**	**Madeleine**		15	S	F	
Brunnenberg	257	1436	264	**EBERHARD**	**Georges**		12	S	M	
Brunnenberg	257	1437	264	**EBERHARD**	**Odile**		5	S	F	
Brunnenberg	279	1540	287	**MARTIN**	**Antoine**	Pauper	55	M	M	
Brunnenberg	279	1541	287	**WOHLIUNG**	**Catherine**		47	M	F	
Brunnenberg	279	1542	287	**MARTIN**	**Suzanne**		23	S	F	
Brunnenberg	279	1543	287	**MARTIN**	**Michel**		14	S	M	

OCCUPATIONAL STATUS IN SOUFFLENHEIM, 1836

By Michael J. Nuwer, July 2024

Information collected in cadastre tax documents provides a lens through which we can explore characteristics of social status in Lower Alsace during the early nineteenth century. The current article uses cadastre data from the town of Soufflenheim to explore aspects of agricultural land and occupational status.

During the rule of Napoléon Bonaparte (1799–1814), the French government developed a plan to create a registry of real property for the purpose of determining ownership and for assessing property taxes. This land registry is called the *Napoléonic 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 combined into a set of ownership registries, one for each property owner. These registries listed each parcel of land, identified their respective tax rate, and set the tax amount. Surveys in Lower Alsace began in 1808 and continued through 1844. Soufflenheim's initial survey was conducted in 1836. The plan was used until 1884 when it was modified by German administration.

Information taken from the first year of Soufflenheim's cadastre shows details about the ownership and usage of land within the town. The data presented in Table 1 and Table 2 were aggregated from the individual registers found in Soufflenheim's cadastre plan. Soufflenheim had 3,250 acres of land. Table 1 shows the type of landowner. 97 percent of Soufflenheim's land was taxable. The Commune of Soufflenheim was the largest landowner with 62 percent of the land. Residents of Soufflenheim owned only 32 percent of the land. Table 1 also shows that residents of other towns ("foreigners") owned a minor amount of Soufflenheim's land.

Table 1
Acres of Land by Ownership Type

	Acres	Percent
Total land	3,249.9	
Taxable land	3,155.6	97.1
Owned by residents	1,032.3	31.8
Owned by the town (taxable)	2,021.6	62.2
Owned by foreigners	101.7	3.1

Table 2
Acres of Land by Use

	Acres	Percent
Taxable land	3,155.6	
Village Yards, gardens, orchards	94.3	3.0
Plowed land	1287.4	40.8

Meadows	826.1	26.2
Forest	943.1	29.9

Table 2 presents the uses of land as reported in the cadastre documents from 1836. The primary division of the land was between the village housing cluster and the agricultural fringe. The village cluster accounted for only three percent of the town's land. This land included the yards on which residential houses were constructed, as well as plots for family gardens and for small orchards. Agricultural land was located away from the village cluster and was composed mainly of plowed land and meadows. These two categories of land accounted for two-thirds of all the land. Finally, Soufflenheim contained a large track of forest land, which accounted for 30 percent of the town's land.

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

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

Soufflenheim Folios

When Soufflenheim's cadastre plan was developed in 1836, 782 folios were created. On January 1, 1837 the owners of these folios were obliged to pay the assessed taxes on their property. A small quantity of land was owned by residents of towns other than Soufflenheim. 72 of the folios belonged to residents of towns such as Rountzenheim, Sessenheim, and Roeschwoog. Thus, 709 folios belonged to Soufflenheim residents who owned 1,032 acres of land.

Many folio owners were also the owners of a house. There were 533 folios that contained a house. That is, 68 percent of all folio owners were also homeowners. 544 houses were identified in the folios.[1] Eight folios reported the ownership of two or more houses. There were also three instances where the folio owned only a fraction of a house, one-half, one-third, or one-quarter of the house. Only two houses were owned by non-Soufflenheim residents. One of those owners lived in Sessenheim the other in Schirrhoffen. Almost all of the houses were owned by Soufflenheim residents, and a very large majority of those were owner-occupied dwellings.

There were 249 folios that had farmland but no house. Almost all the non-resident folio owners had only farmland. In addition, a single Soufflenheim household might have multiple landowners. In these cases, the house was typically listed on the folio of the household head while one or more of his children owned some farmland recorded on a separate folio. Occasionally, a household-head was the son of a household member. The father of that household-head might also be a folio owner. For this reason, the land listed on the folio of a homeowner may not constitute the full size of the family farm. Folios without a house are difficult to match with census households and are not included in the current study.

There were 50 landowners who owned two folios, 49 were residents of Soufflenheim. Although the reason for this is beyond the scope of the current article, it was related to the collection of taxes for specific parcels of land. Normally, taxes were paid to and collected by the mayor, but some taxes were paid to the Soufflenheim town *censière*.[2] Separate folios were kept for these two recipients of the tax revenue. The data used in the current article combines information for the landowners who had two folios.

Census Occupations, 1836

The numbering system used for houses in the 1836 census and the system used in the cadastre folios was the same. This provides a mechanism to link a census household with a cadastre folio.

The 1836 census of Soufflenheim counted 2,962 residents living in the town.[3] That population was organized into 562 households. The census is useful because it gives the age, sex, marital status, and household relationship of each resident. The document also gives the house number for a dwelling and the occupation of adult males.

The 562 households found in Soufflenheim were living in 501 houses. The house numbering system used in Soufflenheim recorded the house numbers for each household in the 1836 census. There were, however, nine households for which no house number was reported. The 1836 census, therefore, contains only 553 households living in a dwelling identified with a house number.

Five occupations were selected from the census to be explored in this article. Table 3 presents the number of Soufflenheim residents and the mean age for those occupations. There were, for example, 28 residents who worked as a weaver and their mean age was 36 years. Nineteen of the weavers (68 percent) were heads of a household, while the other nine weavers were members of another person's household. For each of the occupational groups, more than half of the craftsmen were household heads.

Table 3
1836 Census, All Residents of Soufflenheim

	All Residents		Household heads	
	Number	Average Age	Number	Average Age
Bakers	24	37.5	16	45.3
Weavers	28	36.3	19	40.8
Masons	21	36.5	12	41.3
Day Laborers	106	38.8	69	45.7
Plowmen	100	46.7	75	53.0

Matching Cadastre Folios with Census Households

The data set used for this article was derived by matching cadastre folios with census households. This enabled us to group and categorize landowners by demographic characteristics. To make a match, the house number given in a cadastre folio was matched to the house number given in the census. If both house numbers matched, then the name on the folio was compared to the name in the census. A data match was confirmed if both the house number and the name matched.

This matching procedure was supplemented in the case of widows. The census reported a widow as the head of a household and used her birth name. The cadastre folios used the late husband's name as the owner of the land. This was true even for instances where the husband had died many years before the folio was first created. In many cases, the late husband of a widow was identified in the remarks field of the census. Thus, widows in the census were matched to folios when the house numbers in the two data sets matched and when the name on the folio matched the name in the census remarks field.

There are 544 houses found in the cadastre folios. Matches to census households were found for 443 of those houses. The 101 non-matches are accounted for as follows. There are 27 folios that had a house number, but that number was not found in the census. There are an additional 13 folios with a house, but no house number was given. Finally, there are 61 folios with a house number that matched a census house number, but the folio name and the census name did not match. Perhaps these census residents were renting the house from the folio owner. The results discussed below are based on 443 confirmed matches.

Making a Living in Soufflenheim

Many rural craftsmen during the nineteenth century retained a link with the land. "Most" craftsmen, writes René Clauss, "have had to cultivate a plot of land or raise a cow or a pig to subsist."[4] In the first half of the nineteenth century, the craftsmen in Soufflenheim represented about fifty percent of the adult male population. However, employment was not as specialized as it is today. "It's important to remember, that many craftsmen also farmed. They were therefore farmer-craftsmen." wrote Lucien Sittler, Marc Elchinger and Fritz Geissert of early nineteenth century Soufflenheim.[5]

Many subsistence farmers augmented the income from their agricultural land (and livestock) by working at an occupation. In some cases, the work was simply labor paid by the day (so-called day laborers). In many cases the work was more specialized such as weaving cloth or tailoring garments. Craftsmen, like bakers, butchers, or shoemakers seldom spent all their work time at their craft. They worked part-time at their craft and part-time at the farm.

Consider two very traditional crafts which required considerable amounts of training and skill: the blacksmith and wheelwright. The 1836 Soufflenheim census found 8 blacksmiths and 14 wheelwrights working in the town, five of the former and eight of the latter were household heads. Four blacksmiths and five wheelwrights were matched with cadastre folios. All nine of these craftsmen were owners of a house and yard, while seven of them were owners of farmland in the Soufflenheim fringe. Three wheelwrights and two blacksmiths owned more than one acre of farmland, while four of the craftsmen owned more than three acres. Craftsmen also had the option to rent farmland. Their landlord may have been another resident who owned land, a foreigner who owned land, or the largest landowner of all, the commune.

Even the plowman's occupation was structured like a craft. Plowmen trained cattle to be oxen. The ox was typically an adult, castrated male cow 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. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the plowman owned a plow and a team of oxen or perhaps a horse.[6] This enabled him to plow the fields he owned and to rent his services to others in town. The ownership of draught animals was a sign of status and a source of cash income. Many artisans and craftsmen who owned fields hired a plowman's service because the landowner did not have the animals needed to pull a plow.

Table 4 presents a summary of the matched cadastre folios and census households for the five occupations explored below. Consider the bakers of Soufflenheim. Table 3 above showed that there were 24 individuals who worked as bakers and 16 of them were household heads. Table 4 shows that 15 folios were matched with census households who were bakers. Similar matches were identified for weavers, masons, day laborers, and plowmen.

Table 4
Five Occupations

	Number	Average Age
Bakers	15	44.9
Weaver	15	39.7
Masons	9	45.4
Day Labor	58	45.1
Plowmen	69	53.0

Measures of Social Status

The data contained in the cadastre folios offer three overlapping measures of social status. They are the quality of a house, the quantity of land, and the value of a tax assessment. In this section three social status scales are created from these measures. The scales are created from the set of all matched folios, that is, from 443 cadastre folios.

The first measure is the quality of a house. To compute a folio's tax assessment, each piece of property was assigned a type (like plowed land, yard, garden, orchard, house) and a class. Each type and class of property had a corresponding tax rate, and the tax assessment was derived from that rate.

For dwellings, the Soufflenheim cadastre contained seven classes of houses. Class 1 was the highest quality house, and it carried a tax rate of 40 francs per dwelling. Class 7 was the lowest quality house with a tax rate of 4 francs per dwelling. Table 5 presents each of the classes, their corresponding tax rate and the distribution of houses among the classes.

Table 5
Tax Rates for Soufflenheim Dwellings

Class of House	Tax rate per dwelling (francs)	Number of houses	Percent
1	40	8	1.8
2	32	13	2.9
3	25	31	7.0
4	20	79	17.9
5	15	143	32.4
6	8	165	37.3
7	4	3	0.7

The second measure of social status is the quantity of land owned by an individual. Land ownership was the overwhelming way in which people stored their wealth and it was a major symbol of status.

In this article, percentile statistics are used to define the social class of residents with various amounts of land ownership. Statisticians use percentiles to indicate the percentage of a value that falls below a particular fraction of a group. Percentiles tell us where a value stands relative to other values. The 50th percentile, for example, is the median, which splits a dataset in half. Half the values are below the 50th percentile, and half are above it.

Quartiles are percentiles values that divide data into quarters. The first quartile is the value of the 25th percentile. One-quarter of the values fall below this value, while three-quarters fall above it. The second quartile is the median and the third quartile is the value of the 75th percentile. The top quarter of the values fall above the third quartile, while three-quarters fall below it.

Quartiles for Soufflenheim landowners are shown in Table 6. Looking at the first row, 25 percent of homeowners in Soufflenheim owned less than 0.097 acres of land, that is, less than 1/10th of an acre. These homeowners probably owned no farmland. Looking at the third row, 75 percent of homeowners own less than 1.861 acres of land.

Another way to read this table is that the value in row one tells us that 75 percent of homeowners own more than one-tenth of an acre and the value in row three tells us that 25 percent of homeowners own more than 1.9 acres.

Table 6
Quartile of Acres for Landowners with a House

Quartile	Landowners w/ a House
25th percentile	0.097 acres
50th percentile (median)	0.499 acres
75th percentile	1.861 acres

The third measure of social status is the tax assessment recorded in a homeowner's folio. It was noted above that the cadastre tax was assessed against the rental revenue that one might receive from a property if it was rented. Although the full rental value of property cannot be derived from the available information, the tax assessment is an index of that value and can be used to make relative comparisons among the folios. Each piece of property was valued according to the quality of the asset, its class. Property that commanded a higher rent due to better quality had a higher tax. The tax assessment thus reflected the monetary value of the assets. It captured both the quality and the quantity of the land owned. The tax assessment also captured the quality of a village house. Although the tax assessment will correlate closely with the quantity of land owned, it additionally reflects the quality variations of both the land and the house.

Table 7 presents the quartiles for tax assessments among Soufflenheim landowners who owned a house.

Table 7
Quartile of Tax Assessments for Landowners with a House

Quartile	Landowners w/ a House
25th percentile	10.06 francs
50th percentile (median)	17.69 francs
75th percentile	39.09 francs

These three measures of social status can be used to construct a social classification structure. Table 8 arranges the dwellings reported in Table 5 into four social status groups. For example, houses that were assessed as class 1, 2, or 3 are here defined as upper class dwellings. 11.8 percent of the houses in 1836 were in this group. These status groups will be used in the next section to explore the social status of the five selected occupations.

Table 9 uses quartiles values to define a four-part classification scale similar to the scale constructed in Table 8. Table 9 uses the quantity of land owned by a resident to determine the social class of the landowner. Thus, the lower class is defined by the first quartile. A resident homeowner who owned less than 0.097 acres of land is defined as lower class. A resident homeowner who owned between 0.097 and 0.499 acres of land is defined as lower-middle class.

Finally, Table 10 presents the social classifications derived from the value of the tax assessment. For example, any resident whose tax assessment was between 17.69 francs and 39.09 francs is defined as upper-middle class.

Table 8
Definition of Social Class, Quality of House

Social Class	Class of House	Percent of Houses
Upper	1, 2, or 3	11.8
Upper-middle	4	17.9
Lower-middle	5	32.4
Lower	7 or 6	38.0

Table 9
Definition of Social Class, Quantity of Land Owned

Social Class	Quartile	Land in Acres
Upper	Fourth quarter	Greater than 1.861
Upper-middle	Third quarter	0.499-1.861
Lower-middle	Second quarter	0.097-0.499
Lower	First quarter	Less than 0.097

Table 10
Definition of Social Class, Tax Assessment

Social Class	Quartile	Tax in Francs
Upper	Fourth quarter	Greater than 39.09
Upper-middle	Third quarter	17.69-39.09
Lower-middle	Second quarter	10.06-17.69
Lower	First quarter	Less than 10.06

We now have three overlapping measures for the status structure in Soufflenheim in the year 1836.[7] The next task is to consider where specific occupations are placed in this structure. Are all the bakers in the lower and lower-middle class groups? Or are they all in the two upper class groups? Perhaps, instead, the bakers are evenly distributed among the four classes, with 25 percent of them in each class. This is the type of question we can now explore.

Results

First consider day laborers and plowmen. These two occupations were among the largest in terms of number of people. They are also among the most common occupations in Early Modern Europe. Historians often describe plowmen as the "peasant aristocracy." They were the peasants who could live exclusively from their own patrimony. The day laborers are described as the poor, that is, peasants with small holdings of land (or no land at all) who supplemented their income by working for a money wage on neighboring farms or elsewhere in town.

The median quantity of land owned and the median tax assessment confirm the historian's observations. These data are shown in Table 11. The median quantity of land owned by the 57 day laborers included in this study was 0.11 acres. In other words, half of the day laborers owned less than one-tenth (1/10th) of an acre of land. On the other hand, plowmen tended to own large quantities of land (by Alsatian standards), the median amount of land for a Soufflenheim plowman being 3.15 acres. Similarly in the case of tax assessments. The median assessment for day laborers was 11.22 francs while the median assessment for plowmen was 46.04 francs. These assessments suggest that the property owned by plowmen was four times more valuable than the property owned by day laborers.

Table 11
Median Size and Value of Property

	Day Laborers	Plowmen
Number	57	68
Median Acres	0.11	3.15
Median Taxes	11.22	46.04

Table 12, parts A, B, and C, present the distribution of day laborers and plowmen across the three status measures constructed in the previous section. Each measure highlights the same pattern. Two-thirds of

the day laborers owned a lower class house while more than half of the plowmen owned an upper-middle class or upper class house. Even more striking, 65 percent of the plowmen owned an upper class quantity of land (Table 12B) while 46 percent of the day laborers owned a lower class quantity of land. Looking at the value of assets (Table 12C), more than 83 percent of the plowmen owned assets that put them in the upper-middle or upper class, while 86 percent of the day laborers were in the lower-middle or lower class.

Plowmen and day laborers engaged primarily in agricultural activities. Bakers, weavers, and masons were traditional residential crafts requiring specialized skill and knowledge. Nevertheless, social status was distributed unevenly among these three crafts.

Bakers owned more land, and the value of their assets was also larger than the other two crafts. Masons owned less land and had a lower value of assets. Table 13 shows that the median number of acres owned by bakers was 1.75 but the median number of acres owned by masons was only 0.41. Weavers were in between, with the median amount of land owned being 1.09. The median tax assessment was similarly structured. The value for bakers was almost 36 francs while the median value for masons was about 13 francs.

Table 12A
Percent of Occupation within Class by Dwelling

Class	Day Laborers	Plowmen
Upper	0.0	11.8
Upper-middle	1.8	39.7
Lower-middle	31.6	38.2
Lower	66.7	10.3

Table 12B
Percent of Occupation within Class by Acres

Class	Day Laborers	Plowmen
Upper	3.5	64.7
Upper-middle	17.5	19.1
Lower-middle	33.3	10.3
Lower	45.6	5.9

Table 12C
Percent of Occupation within Class by Taxes

Class	Day Laborers	Plowmen
Upper	1.8	60.3
Upper-middle	12.3	23.5
Lower-middle	42.1	14.7

Lower	43.9	1.5

Table 13
Median Size and Value of Property

	Bakers	Weavers	Masons
Number	14	14	12
Median Acres	1.75	1.09	0.41
Median Tax	35.67	21.32	13.30

Soufflenheim's bakers were prosperous. Table 14, parts A, B, and C, presents the distribution of the three crafts in the social status structure. Well over 80 percent of bakers owned an upper class or upper-middle class house. 64 percent of the bakers owned an upper class or an upper-middle class quantity of land with 50 percent owning a fully upper class quantity of land. As for the value of their assets, fully half of the bakers had an upper class estate.

Masons were found mainly in the lower classes. Almost 64 percent lived in the lower quality houses; half of the masons owned a lower class or lower-middle class quantity of land, and fully 75 percent were in the lower and lower-middle class tax groups. In other words, the value of the assets owned by three-quarters of the masons was in the lower half of Soufflenheim's status structure.

Weavers were better off than masons, but not as well off as bakers. None of the weavers owned an upper class house and only 14 percent owned an upper-middle class house. In the case of land ownership, 75 percent of the weavers owned an upper-middle or lower-middle class quantity of land. Similarly, 90 percent of the asset value owned by weavers was located in the two middle class categories while none of the weavers owned enough value to be in the upper class category.

The status hierarchy is clearest in Table 14C where 58 percent of the masons are in the lower-middle class, 57 percent of the weavers are in the upper-middle class, and 50 percent of the bakers are in the upper class.

Table 14A
Percent of Occupation within Class by Dwelling

Class	Bakers	Weavers	Masons
Upper	28.6	0.0	9.1
Upper-middle	57.1	14.3	0
Lower-middle	14.3	57.1	27.3
Lower	0.0	28.6	63.6

Table 14B
Percent of Occupation within Class by Acres

Class	Bakers	Weavers	Masons
Upper	50.0	14.3	16.7
Upper-middle	14.3	50.0	33.3
Lower-middle	28.6	25.6	41.7
Lower	7.1	7.1	8.3

Table 14C
Percent of Occupation within Class by Taxes

Class	Bakers	Weavers	Masons
Upper	50.0	0.0	8.3
Upper-middle	35.7	57.1	16.7
Lower-middle	14.3	35.7	58.3
Lower	0.0	7.1	16.7

Summary

This article discussed the Napoléonic Cadastre that was implemented at Soufflenheim in 1836. It showed the general structure of land ownership in the town and discussed specific details about property ownership as it was reported in the cadastre folios. The article then presented a discussion that showed how cadastre folios were matched to households reported in the 1836 Soufflenheim census. This was followed by a detailed discussion showing how three measures of social status were derived from cadastre folios.

Matched folios permitted a study of property ownership controlling for various demographic characteristics found in the census. This article focused on five specific occupations and explored their relative location in the social structure. The results showed that plowmen and bakers were, generally, prosperous occupations. Day laborers and masons were less well off, but it must be remembered that the workers in these two groups were property owners. The current article did not consider residents of Soufflenheim who owned no property.

Sources

1. This study was able to identify 544 houses in the folios. The Mayor of Soufflenheim reported in 1837 that the town collected taxes for 551 houses. This study failed to identify seven houses.

2. The *censière* system was a holdover from (or artifact of) the *Ancien Régime* and its system of “tax farming.”
3. The 1836 Soufflenheim census was transcribed by Mark Drexler, May 2021. https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/c0db0dfe-27d2-4632-889f-eeb26fbb14e1/downloads/1836%20Census.pdf
4. “Ainsi, les artisans representaient environ 50% de la population, le reste etant commercants. Il faut cependant retenir que de nombreux artisans exploitaient aussi des terres. Ils etaient donc artisans-paysans.” René Clauss, Raymond Schwengler, and Joseph Walter, *Oberrœdern Stundwiller: Deux Villages, Une Paroisse*, (Strasbourg: Editions Coprur, 1993), p. 187.
5. Lucien Sittler, Marc Elchinger and Fritz Geissert, *Soufflenheim Une cite à la recherche de son histoire*, (Societe D’Histoire Et D’Archeologie Du Reid Nord, 1987), p. 168.
6. “Plows and harrows were exclusively drawn by animals, some horses, but most farmers used one or two oxen.” René Clauss, *op*. *cit*.
7. It is important to note that these scales are created from the 443 folios that matched with the census. These scales are therefore statistically biased toward homeownership. The lowest economic class did not own a house or farmland. That class is not represented in the three scales created here.

STRUCTURE OF LAND IN 1836 SOUFFLENHEIM: A COMPARISON OF THREE BAS-RHIN TOWNS

By Michael J. Nuwer, October 2024

The primary purpose of the *Napoléonic Cadastre* was fiscal. Cadastre plans for each town were created in the early nineteenth century as the foundation for a new system of taxation. In the *Ancien Régime* (that is, before the French Revolution) the royal tax was levied against the income (money or in-kind) of an entire town and the town leadership was responsible for distributing the tax among its inhabitants. At Soufflenheim, and elsewhere in lower Alsace, the obligation to pay taxes fell on the town's burghers. In the spirit of the Revolution (the emancipation of the individual and a greater division of landed property), the Cadastre introduced individual taxation based on property ownership. In lower Alsace, the Cadastre project began in 1808 and town after town was added until 1844 when all were surveyed.

Under the new fiscal system, property, not income, was taxed. That tax was levied on the value of land and buildings owned by individuals. Value was measured against the rental revenue that one might receive from property if that property had been rented. Rental value was determined when the land was originally surveyed. It was recorded in the land registers, and it remained fixed for decades. New dwellings were added to the tax rolls and demolished dwellings were removed. If land parcels were divided or joined together, the rental values (and hence the tax obligations) also would be divided or joined together. However, French law had no provision for updating rental values. An assessment made on a parcel of land in, say, 1824 would be exactly the same in, say, 1864.

Folio pages made for each landowner identified detailed information about the land and its corresponding tax obligation. The folios were then aggregated for the town. The present article explores the aggregated data for three towns in lower Alsace. The first town is Soufflenheim. It was surveyed for the Cadastre in 1836. The article seeks to gain insights into Soufflenheim's land structure by making a comparison with the land structure in two other towns.

The second town discussed in this article is Stundwiller. It was surveyed in 1839. In the early part of the nineteenth century Stundwiller was a small agricultural town. It is located in the fertile Outre-Forêt region of lower Alsace. The 1836 census found 575 residents living in 104 households.

The third town discussed here is Roeschwoog. It was also a small agricultural town, but it was located in the less fertile Petit Ried region of lower Alsace. Roeschwoog was surveyed for the Cadastre in 1836. The census for that year found 1,446 residents living in 261 households.

Soufflenheim

Soufflenheim is about three miles west of Roeschwoog and about eight miles south of Stundwiller. It was larger than either Stundwiller or Roeschwoog. The 1836 census found 2,964 residents at Soufflenheim living in 562 households. The village cluster is located on the Haguenau terrace sandwiched between the Haguenau Forest and the Petit Ried.

In the early part of the nineteenth century, Soufflenheim's population grew significantly. In 1800 the population stood at 1,549 people. By 1836 it had almost doubled to 2,964. Similar rates of population growth were witnessed in towns and villages everywhere in lower Alsace. Improved agricultural productivity during the eighteenth century led to declining mortality in the nineteenth century. Population growth at Soufflenheim leveled off after 1836 and the aggregate population hovered around 3,000 residents for the remainder of the nineteenth century.

During the nineteenth century Soufflenheim, like the rest of France, was struggling with the convulsions brought about by industrialization and large-scale factory production. Before the French Revolution the residents of Soufflenheim engaged in subsistence farming (agricultural activities intended for self-consumption, not for commercial trade) and, at the same time, the farmers were occupied in various cottage industries. Subsistence farmers practiced trades such as bakers, butchers, shoemakers, sawyers,

Table 1
Population Growth

	1793	1836	Percent
Soufflenheim	1,110	2,964	167.0
Stundwiller	250	575	130.0
Roeschwoog	690	1,446	109.6

carpenters, masons, tailors, and others in order to earn money that could be used to purchase goods not manufactured on a farm. Goods like cast iron cooking pots, for example. In the words of Sittler, Elchinger, and Geissert: "it's important to remember that many artisans also farmed. They were therefore farmer-craftsmen."[1]

The Cadastre plan and survey for Soufflenheim was conducted in 1836. The plan was used until 1884 when it was modified by German administration.[2] The initial Cadastre plan calculated that Soufflenheim contained 3,250 acres of land.

Table 2.1 presents the amount of land in Soufflenheim grouped by three types of owner. The Table shows that 97 percent of the land was taxable. Residents of Soufflenheim owned about 32 percent of the town's land while foreigners, that is, residents of other towns, owned a minor amount of land in Soufflenheim. Table 2.1 also shows that almost two-thirds of the land was owned by the Commune of Soufflenheim.

Table 2.2 shows the uses of land as reported in the Cadastre documents from 1836. The primary division of the land was between the village housing cluster and the agricultural fringe. The village cluster accounted for only three percent of the town's land. That land was used for the yards on which residential houses were constructed as well as plots for family gardens and for small orchards. Soufflenheim also contained a very large tract of forest land, which accounted for 30 percent of the town.

Agricultural land, which was composed mainly of plowed land and meadows, accounted for the remainder of the town's land. Plowed land was almost 41 percent of the land while meadows were 26 percent of the land.

Table 2.3 shows that a significant amount of Soufflenheim's farmland was owned by the Commune of Soufflenheim. About two-thirds of all taxable land was owned by the Commune. It owned 100 percent of

the forest as well as a significant amount of agricultural land. The Commune owned 48 percent of all the plowed land and 56 percent of all the meadows.

Table 2.1
Acres of Land by Ownership Type Soufflenheim

	Acres	Percent
Total land	3,249.9	
Taxable land	3,155.6	97.1
Owned by residents	1,032.3	31.8
Owned by the town (taxable)	2,021.6	62.2
Owned by foreigners	101.7	3.1

Table 2.2
Acres of Land by Use Soufflenheim

	Acres	Percent
Taxable land	3,155.6	
Village yards, gardens, orchards	94.3	3.0
Plowed land	1,287.4	40.8
Meadows	826.1	26.2
Forest	943.1	29.9

Table 2.3
Land Owned by the Commune of Soufflenheim

	Acres	Commune Land	Percent
Taxable land	3,155.6	2,021.6	64.1
Village Yards, gardens, orchards	94.3		
Plowed land	1,287.4	613.0	47.6
Meadows	826.1	464.5	56.2
Forest	943.1	943.1	100.0

Stundwiller

The village of Stundwiller is in the far north of Alsace. The region is known as the Outre-Forêt, which means “beyond the forest.” It is beyond the Haguenau Forest relative to the direction of the Rhine River. The Outre-Forêt is bounded by the Haguenau Forest to the south, the Bienwald Forest to the north, the Northern Vosges mountains to the West, and the Petit Ried to the east. It is approximately the same as the Seltzbach Basin which drains the lands north of the Seltzbach River.

Unlike the adjacent forests, hills, and ried, the Outre-Forêt is a region with good arable land. The loamy top layer is a fertile soil composed of clay, sand, and humus. The soil lends itself to a productive form of

mixed farming.[3] The economy of Stundwiller was exclusively agrarian for many centuries. Villagers, both landowners and tenants, operated small farms and engaged in mixed farming to meet their own food requirements and those of their livestock. Little had changed by the nineteenth century.[4]

The Cadastre plan and survey for Stundwiller was conducted in 1839. The initial Cadastre tax was made on January 1, 1840. For purposes of the Cadastre, the town of Stundwiller was divided into five sections, each labeled with a letter A through E. The residential village was found in Section E. The other four sections contained agricultural land. Sections A and B were north of the Seebach River, while Section C and D were south of the river.[5]

The closest census year to the initial Cadastre plan was 1841. That census counted 101 households in Stundwiller, while the Cadastre registers identified 305 people who owned land in the town. Among the landowners, 128 (42 percent) were residents of Stundwiller, 157 (51 percent) were residents of the neighboring towns of Oberroedern, Aschbach, Buhl, or Hatten, and the remaining 20 landowners (6.5 percent) were residents of other nearby towns.

Table 3.1 presents the amount of land in Stundwiller grouped by three types of owner. The town was composed of 786 acres of taxable land plus 23 acres of untaxed public land and church land. Residents of Stundwiller owned two-thirds (66.6 percent) of all the land. Foreigners owned less than one third of the land (27.3 percent). In other words, Stundwiller residents were only 42 percent of the landowners, but they owned 67 percent of the land. This tells us that Stundwiller residents owned larger amounts of land than foreigners.

Some of the land owned by foreigners was rented to tenet farmers. In fact, the largest landowner in Stundwiller had 35 acres of land and was a resident of Wissenbourg. It is likely that this individual was an absentee landlord and rented the land to Stundwiller farmers.

Other foreigners who owned land in Stundwiller may have farmed the land themself. There were, for example, 48 residents of Oberroedern who owned 54 acres of land in Stundwiller. The two towns were next-door neighbors and a resident of Oberroedern could use Stundwiller land as a supplement to their Oberroedern farm.

Stundwiller had 23 acres of land on which no tax was required. These lands included the church and cemetery, public roads and paths, the public square, and rivers and stream. In addition to these lands, the Commune of Stundwiller owned 25 acres of land on which taxes were required.

Table 3.2 presents the uses of Stundwiller's land. In 1839, the village cluster, which included yards on which houses were constructed as well as individual gardens and small orchards, accounted for 15.5 acres or about two percent of the taxable land. The vast majority of land was farmland in the town's agricultural fringe. In Stundwiller, most of the land in the fringe was arable land, 78 percent of the taxable land was classified as plowed land and another 16 percent as meadows.

Stundwiller's Cadastre recorded no forest land. In the eighteenth century, residents of Stundwiller had the right to collect wood in seigneurial forests that were some distance away from the town. The French Revolution abolished seigneurial rights, and the residents of Stundwiller had to use market transactions to obtain wood.

Table 3.3 presents the usage of land owned by the Commune of Stundwiller. The commune owned a trivial amount of land, which was a notable contrast to the Commune of Soufflenheim and, as we will see below, the Commune of Roeschwoog. The Commune of Stundwiller owned 5.2 acres of pastureland, 4

acres of meadow land, and 16.6 acres of plowed land. The commune probably rented this land to local farmers.

Table 3.1
Acres of Land by Ownership Type Stundwiller

	Acres	Percent
Total land	809.0	
Taxable land	785.9	97.1
Owned by residents	539.0	66.6
Owned by the town (taxable)	25.8	3.2
Owned by foreigners	221.1	27.3

Table 3.2
Acres of Land by Use Stundwiller

	Acres	Percent
Taxable land	785.9	
Village yards, gardens, orchards	15.5	1.9
Plowed land	614.8	78.2
Meadows	129.9	16.5
Forest	0.0	0.0

Table 3.3
Land Owned by the Commune of Stundwiller

	Acres	Commune Land	Percent
Taxable land	785.9	25.8	3.3
Village Yards, gardens, orchards	15.5		
Plowed land	614.8	16.6	2.7
Meadows	129.9	4.0	3.1
Forest	0.0	0.0	

Roeschwoog

Like Stundwiller, Roeschwoog is located in the northern part of Alsace, but not in the fertile Outre-Forêt. Roeschwoog is on the left bank of the Rhine River, in a region known as the Petit Ried. The ried is north of Strasbourg in the alluvial plain of the Rhine River. Before the late nineteenth century, the river's meandering behavior created marshes and meadows that were prone to flooding in any given year. Sandy soil and poor drainage were a constant challenge for agriculture in Roeschwoog and elsewhere in the ried.

The Cadastre plan and survey for Roeschwoog was conducted in 1836. For purposes of the Cadastre, the town of Roeschwoog 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 contained agricultural land.[6]

At Roeschwoog the initial Cadastre plan counted 820 folios, but 196 of the landowners had two folios. Thus, there were 624 individual landowners, of which 320 (or 51 percent) were residents of Roeschwoog.

Table 4.1 presents the amounts of land owned by types of owner. Roeschwoog had 2,396 acres of land with 96 percent of the land being taxable. Residents owned 43 percent of the land and foreigners owned 26 percent of the land. The remainder of the land (27 percent) was owned by the Commune of Roeschwoog.

Table 4.2 presents land usage at Roeschwoog in 1836. The village cluster accounted for 84 acres of land, which was less than four percent of the town's total land. Like Stundwiller, Roeschwoog was an agricultural community, and the vast majority of land was in the agricultural fringe. 80 percent of the land was plowed, while meadows and forests each accounted for just under five percent of the land.

The Commune of Roeschwoog owned 27 percent of the town's land. Table 4.3 presents the amount and proportion of that land by usage. The commune owned about one fifth of the plowed land, one-third of the meadows, and more than two-thirds of the forest land.

Table 4.1
Acres of Land by Ownership Type Roeschwoog

	Acres	Percent
Total land	2,396.0	
Taxable land	2,314.6	96.6
Owned by residents	1,035.2	43.2
Owned by the town (taxable)	656.8	27.4
Owned by foreigners	622.6	26.0

Table 4.2
Acres of Land by Use Roeschwoog

	Acres	Percent
Taxable land	2,314.6	
Village yards, gardens, orchards	84.1	3.6
Plowed land	1,866.0	80.6
Meadows	113.9	4.9
Forest	109.8	4.7

Table 4.3
Land Owned by the Commune of Roeschwoog

	Acres	Commune Land	Percent

Taxable land	2314.6	656.8	28.4
Village Yards, gardens, orchards	84.1		
Plowed land	1866.0	406.8	21.8
Meadows	113.9	38.0	33.4
Forest	109.8	75.7	68.9

Discussion

There were several ways in which the structure of land at Soufflenheim differed from the structures at Stundwiller or Roeschwoog. Five specific items are discussed here.

First, Soufflenheim had a large forest. Forests were the source of firewood and building materials everywhere in Alsace. Hardwood, like oak and beech, was used for building houses and other structures and was the most valuable type of wood. Dead wood was collected as firewood and was the main source of energy in rural communities. Other products taken from the forest were dead leaves and acorns. Forests also were used by the livestock. Cattle grazed in them and pig herds used them to forage. Sheep were forbidden to be taken into the Royal Haguenau Forest, and that may have been true for the Soufflenheim forest as well.

Soufflenheim's forest accounted for 30 percent of the town's land. It can be found in the south of the town, in Section C (sheet 5) of the Cadastre plan. The size of the forest was 943 acres, which was more area than the entire size of Stundwiller. Roeschwoog had a small forest which totaled 110 acres (4.7 percent of the land) while Stundwiller had no forest land. An historical exploration of Soufflenheim's forest might be a fruitful project for future investigation.

A **second** difference between Soufflenheim's land and the land at Stundwiller or Roeschwoog was that Soufflenheim had a much lower proportion of plowed land compared to the other two towns. Plowed land combines parcels owned by both individuals and the commune. As a proportion of all land in the town, plowed land in Stundwiller was 78.2 percent, in Roeschwoog it was 80.6 percent, but in Soufflenheim it was only 40.8 percent. (See Table 2.2, Table 3.2, and Table 4.2.)

Soufflenheim, however, had a very large forest which biases the proportional distribution of other types of land. Since the other two towns had little or no forest land, we may not be making a fair comparison. The effect of Soufflenheim's forest can be removed by standardizing the land categories among the three towns. Table 5 presents three types of land and the percent distribution across these categories. Still Soufflenheim had a significantly smaller percent of plowed land compared to the other two towns. In Soufflenheim, 58 percent of the land in these three categories was plowed while 81 and 90 percent of the land was plowed in Stundwiller and Roeschwoog respectively.

Table 5
Percent of Land by Use

	Stundwiller	Roeschwoog	Soufflenheim
Village yards, gardens, and orchards	2.0	4.1	4.3
Plowed land	80.9	90.4	58.3
Meadows	17.1	5.5	37.4
	100.0	100.0	100.0

Caution is required here. Plowed land was not necessarily used exclusively for planting grain and potatoes intended for family consumption. By the nineteenth century many agricultural communities were growing marketable products. Some of the plowed land in Stundwiller, for example, grew hemp and oilseeds and some of that production was marketed.[7] Although hemp disappeared around 1850 with the widespread use of cotton, it was still an important fiber at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Hops growing was another commercial crop that was sown on plowed land. Hops grew well in the soil of the Petit Ried and Soufflenheim's neighbor, Schirrhein, became an important hop-growing community. In 1813, Schirrhein used 150 acres of land for growing hops.[8] Roeschwoog, too, may have sown some plowed land with this or other marketable grain.

The flip side of a lower proportion of plowed land at Soufflenheim was a higher proportion of meadows. The Cadastre included both meadows and pastures as distinct categories of land, and so meadows were not the areas used for grazing livestock. Instead, meadows were grasslands intended for hay. Soufflenheim had proportionally more hay fields than Roeschwoog or Stundwiller. This may have been because Soufflenheim had proportionally more farm animals to feed.

The use of farmland at Soufflenheim was different. However, the reasons for and implications of the difference remain a question for future investigation.

Third, the Commune of Soufflenheim owned a very large amount of land. The Commune of Soufflenheim owned a bit more than 2,000 acres of land. As noted above, the communal forest was 943 acres. In addition, the commune owned 1,077 acres of plowed land and meadows. The Commune of Stundwiller owned only three percent of Stundwiller's land while the Commune of Roeschwoog owned 27 percent of the land in Roeschwoog. The Commune of Soufflenheim owned a whopping 62 percent of the town's land. This was a major difference between Soufflenheim and the other two towns.

The French Revolution (1789-1799) had triggered an earthquake in the political and economic landscape of France. The fires lit in Paris spread throughout the country. Seigneurial authority broke down and peasants in the French countryside refused to pay their seigneurial dues. The National Assembly nationalized noble property and made it available for sale. Soufflenheim's southern neighbors, Schirrhein and Schirrhoffen, saw lands belonging to the Baron of Türckheim and the Baron of Flaxland placed in state receivership and sold at auction. Church property, too, was nationalized and sold.[9]

The sale of national property was a far-reaching economic and social phenomenon. It enabled many peasants to become owners of small plots of land. Soufflenheim had no noble estates, but Soufflenheim's large amount of communal property was targeted for state receivership by revolutionary authorities. Soufflenheim's communal property was to be "shared equally between the burghers who owned houses and stables" while "abandoned communal property was to be shared between the young burghers."[10]

By the end of the Napoléonic Wars (1815), however, "the division of communal … property prescribed by the French Revolution had not taken place. As a result, the commune had large estates—over 800 hectares—which, divided into lots, were leased to the inhabitants for a given period."[11] The Commune continued to own this land until at least 1883!

Forth, and probably related to the previous item, Soufflenheim had smaller farms than Stundwiller or Roeschwoog. Table 6 presents quartiles for the amount of land residents owned in each of the three towns. Consider quartile 2, which is the same as a median average. Half of the farms at Stundwiller were smaller than 2.52 acres while at Soufflenheim half of the farms were smaller than 0.54 acres. Indeed, the bulk of Soufflenheim's farms were considerable smaller than Stundwiller farms, with 80 percent of them being smaller than 2.52 acres. At the third quartile, 75 percent of the farms at Roeschwoog were smaller

than 3.44 acres while at Soufflenheim 75 percent of the farms were smaller than 1.85 acres. Table 6 shows that, at all three quartiles, Soufflenheim's farms were smaller than farms at either Stundwiller or Roeschwoog.

Table 6
Farm Size for Residents of Three Town

	Stundwiller (acres)	**Roeschwoog** (acres)	**Soufflenheim** (acres)
Quartile 1 (0.25)	0.64	0.31	0.13
Quartile 2 (0.50)	2.52	1.15	0.54
Quartile 3 (0.75)	6.53	3.44	1.82

Farmland owned by the Commune and leased to the inhabitants is not included in the calculations of farm size. Thus, residents who owned no farmland could have rented farmland from the Commune. Similarly, residents who owned farmland could have supplemented their farms by renting land from the Commune. It is, therefore, probable that Soufflenheim's farms were larger than those reported in Table 6.

Fifth, and finally, at Soufflenheim, foreigners (that is, non-residents of a town) owned a small proportion of the land compared to foreign ownership at Roeschwoog or Stundwiller. Tables 2.1, 3.1, and 4.1 show that at Soufflenheim foreigners owned only 3 percent of the town's land while at Stundwiller and Roeschwoog foreigners owned 27 and 26 percent respectively.

However, the fact that the Commune of these three towns owned significantly different proportions of land presents a problem for the foregoing comparison. For that reason, Table 7 shows only the quantity of land owned by residents and non-residents of the towns. These two groups make up what today we would call privately owned land. At Roeschwoog, 37 percent of the private land was owned by people who lived outside of Roeschwoog. At Stundwiller, that ratio was 29 percent. The ratio at Soufflenheim was significantly lower at only 9 percent.

Table 7
Land Ownership by Residents and Foreigners

	Soufflenheim	**Roeschwoog**	**Stundwiller**
Owned by residents (acres)	1,032.3	1,035.2	539.0
Owned by foreigners (acres)	101.7	622.6	221.1
Total private land (acres)	1,134.0	1,657.8	760.1
Percent owned by foreigners	9.0	37.6	29.1

The distinction between natives and foreigners was long understood to mean that a foreigner was one who did not live in town. "It was thus entirely possible for someone to live within sight of a nearby village where he would none the less be considered a foreigner." Strangers were often regarded with profound suspicion. "Nobody knew or could know what sort of person a wanderer was. Strangers were, by definition, preceded by no reputation."[12]

In eighteenth century Alsace, as well as in many other parts of the Holy Roman Empire, town dwellers had a very strong sense of their distinctiveness. That local identity found concrete expression in the

institution of *Bürgerrecht*, or citizenship. Most people were the subject of some sovereign (in Alsace the sovereign was the King of France), but some people were also citizens of a town. To be a citizen of a town was to have privileges in that town. Only citizens had use rights to the town lands and only they were eligible for public office.[13]

During the Middle Ages German towns throughout the Holy Roman Empire restricted ownership of a town's real estate to citizens of that town.[14] In Alsace, too, ownership of property was restricted to the town's citizens. Moreover, the right to own property was simultaneously an obligation to pay the town's taxes. The roots of this concept of land were embedded in the concept of mutual rights and duties. Towns functioned as mutual benefit organizations for the welfare of the local citizens, and property was therefore held for the mutual benefit of those citizens. Naturally, foreigners (i.e., outsiders) could not be the beneficiaries of a town and its land.[15]

The French Revolution abolished local privilege and therefore abolished the numerous rights and obligations of local burghers. As a result, the old concept that land ownership created mutual rights and duties was replaced by a commercial concept of land as a factor of production—the famous process that turned land into a commodity which we call the commodification of land. Commercial rights in land included the right to cultivate it as the owner wished, to enclose it to exclude others, and the universal right to buy and sell it.

After the French Revolution and the abolition of local privilege, native and foreigner alike could buy the right to use land as a factor of production. Since land had become a marketed and marketable commodity, residents of towns surrounding Stundwiller, Roeschwoog, and Soufflenheim were able to acquire farmland in these jurisdictions. And, at the same time, residents of Stundwiller, Roeschwoog, and Soufflenheim were able to acquire farmland in neighboring towns. That transition was fueled by the sale of national land which put considerable quantities of arable land on the market. As noted above, this process was truncated at Soufflenheim.

After the Napoléonic Wars, lower Alsace witnessed "intense competition for land"[16] which caused the real cost of land to rise. Peasant farmers held a passionate desire for land ownership because of the security it represented. The sale of national property stimulated that passion for ownership while population growth and the introduction of foreign buyers fueled the competition.

Thus, by 1825, the price of land was becoming disproportionately high compared to the income it produced. "But the same high land prices which prevented the small farmer from acquiring enough land to feed his family made it possible for him to move it; he might be able to liquidate his inadequate holding at a price enabling him to cross the sea to America and buy a larger farm…."[17]

Summary

Soufflenheim, Stundwiller, and Roeschwoog were three agricultural towns in the lower Alsace region of France. In the early nineteenth century, each town experienced dramatic population growth. Fueled by falling mortality rates in Europe, population growth created problems in agricultural communities as fixed amounts of land were being divided among a growing number of surviving children.

Inheritance law passed property among a family's sons and daughters, and thus farms were divided and subdivided among all the heirs. Farmland in each of these three towns was highly fragmented. The plots were small and far apart which required extra energy and time to cultivate. The family farm decreased in

size and remained marginal or submarginal in terms of its capacity to support those who depended upon it.

Although these three Alsatian towns shared some important similarities, the structure of land at Soufflenheim differed from the structure in the other two towns. At Soufflenheim the Commune owned almost two thirds of the town's land and it owned half of all the farmland. In addition, foreigners owned very little of Soufflenheim's land. It almost seemed like the effects of the Revolution (the sale of national property and its transformation into a means of production) had somehow bypassed Soufflenheim.

Differences among the three towns were also found in the proportion of plowed land and the size of farms. Soufflenheim's farms had proportionally less plowed land and more hay fields than farms at Stundwiller or Roeschwoog. Also, Soufflenheim's farms were noticeably smaller than the farms at Stundwiller or Roeschwoog. A tentative explanation for these patterns might point to the beginnings of industrialization.

Although Soufflenheim was an agricultural community, it supported a ceramics industry that marketed its products beyond the town's borders. The development of manufacturing for a larger market than the local area is known as a necessary (but not sufficient) factor for industrialization.[18]

An export commodity provided the means for an increase in specialization and a growth in money income. In 1836, Soufflenheim had 55 pottery shops and 100 potters producing items that were sold elsewhere. As a result of this export commodity, residentiary activities geared to local demand for consumption goods (and services) developed. Blacksmiths and wheelwrights, bakers and butchers, tailors, carpenters, masons, and more produced goods and services for residents of Soufflenheim whose income was derived from the export of pottery. Export earnings from the ceramics industry stimulated this local demand.

Industrialization emerges when an export commodity creates linkages encouraging the growth of complementary and subsidiary industries.[19] At Soufflenheim tile making complemented the pottery industry and charcoal making was a subsidiary activity. However, this is where Soufflenheim stumbled.[20] For whatever reason (or reasons), sufficient complementary and subsidiary industries did not emerge. Be that as it may, Soufflenheim took more steps in the direction of industrialization than Roeschwoog or Stundwiller took. There was no industry manufacturing an export commodity in Roeschwoog or Stundwiller similar to the pottery industry found in Soufflenheim. Roeschwoog and Stundwiller were exclusively agricultural economies which might have led to larger farms and more plowed land than Soufflenheim.

Sources

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10. « Quant aux biens communaux, ils seront partagés à parts égales entre les bourgeois qui possèdent maisons et écuries ; ceux qui en possèdent sont soumis aux corvées locales ; les biens communaux abandonnés seront partagés entre les jeunes bourgeois. » Lucien Sittler, Marc Elchinger and Fritz Geissert, *Soufflenheim Une cite à la recherche de son histoire* (Societe D’Histoire Et D’Archeologie Du Reid Nord, 1987), pp.132-133.
11. « Le partage des biens communaux (Allemands) prescrit par la Révolution française ne s'était pas fait. Ainsi, la commune avait de grandes propriétés, plus de 800 ha, qui, divisés en lots, étaient loués aux habitants pour une période donnée. » *Ibid*., p. 166.
12. Govind P. Sreenivasan, *The Peasants of Ottobeuren, 1487-1726: A Rural Society in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 68-69.
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MAGDALENA NUBER AND JOHANNES MOCKERS

By Michael Nuwer, November 2024

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The French Revolution erupted in 1789 and on July 12, 1790 the new government enacted the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. This law had great significance in towns like Soufflenheim. It sought to put the Franch Catholic Church under the control of French society. Key provisions included the local election of

bishops and priests, the payment of their salaries by the state, and the requirement that electors sign an oath of loyalty to the constitution. The effect of this law was to eliminate the authority of the Pope over the appointment of clergy. As a result, a schism was created, resulting in a “constitutional church” that was subservient to the state and an illegal and underground Church loyal to the Papacy.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Links to Mockers' marriage and baptism records.

Marriage (left side, 1st full entry): https://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/ETAT-CIVIL-C480-P3-R253551#visio/page:ETAT-CIVIL-C480-P3-R253551-1789972

Baptism (right side, 6th entry): https://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/ETAT-CIVIL-C480-P3-R253546#visio/page:ETAT-CIVIL-C480-P3-R253546-1790108

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

Sources

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

EMIGRATION

JOURNEY TO LE HAVRE

By Michael J. Nuwer, September 2022

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

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

Journey to Le Havre

Many of our Alsatian ancestors immigrated to North American in the years between 1828 and 1861. Historians have noted that, a great many of the German and Alsatian emigrants of this period, sold their house with its patch of land to raise the money for their journey. Land prices throughout southern

Germany had increased due to decades of population growth, which presented an opportunity for the freeholder. As one historian explained:

> The price of land [in southern Germany] was disproportionately high to the income it produced. But the same high land prices which prevented the small farmer from acquiring enough land to feed his family made it possible for him to move it; he might be able to liquidate his inadequate holding at a price enabling him to cross the sea to America and buy a larger farm. … (Mack Walker, *Germany and the emigration, 1816-1885* (1964), Chapter 2)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Cassini Maps of France

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Maps for the Journey

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

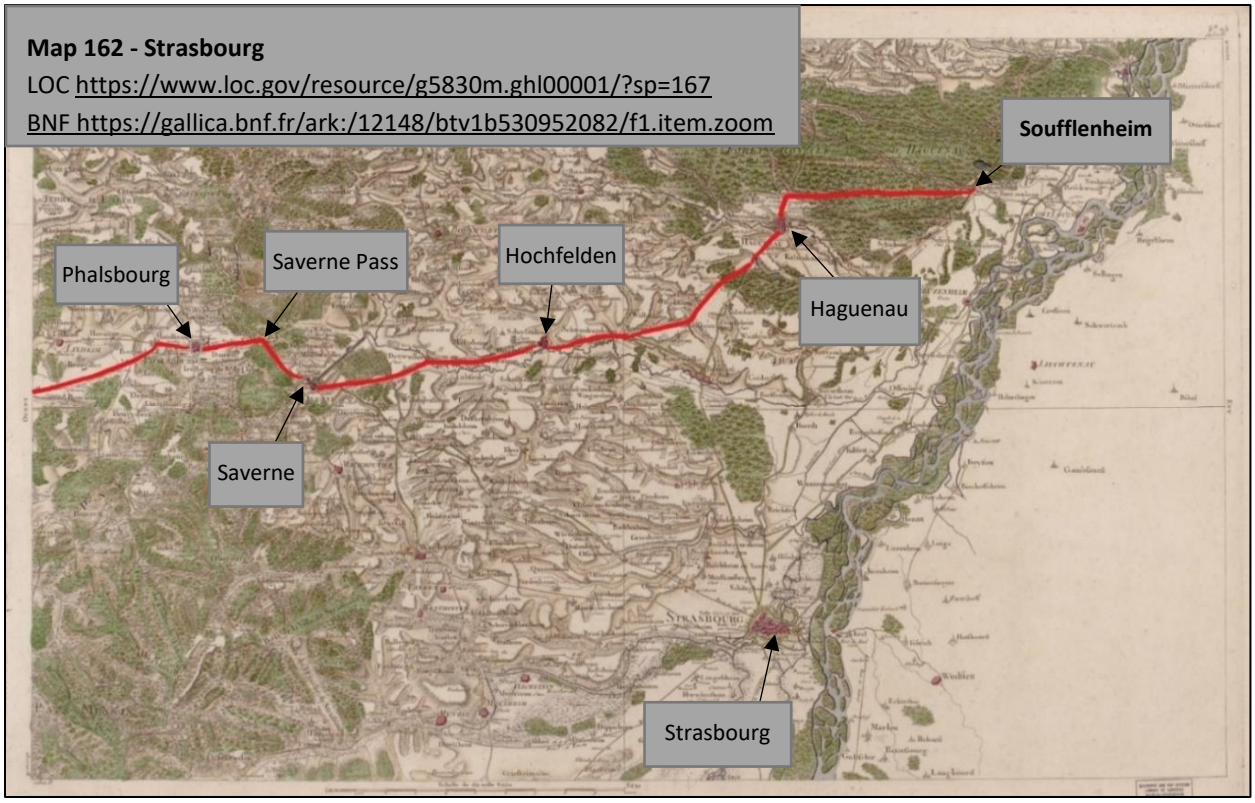
A second sets of Cassini maps is available from the National Library of France (*Bibliothèque nationale de France*). This map-set was made from the same surveys as the Library of Congress maps. However, they were colored somewhat differently and mounted differently. Each map in this collection was cut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

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

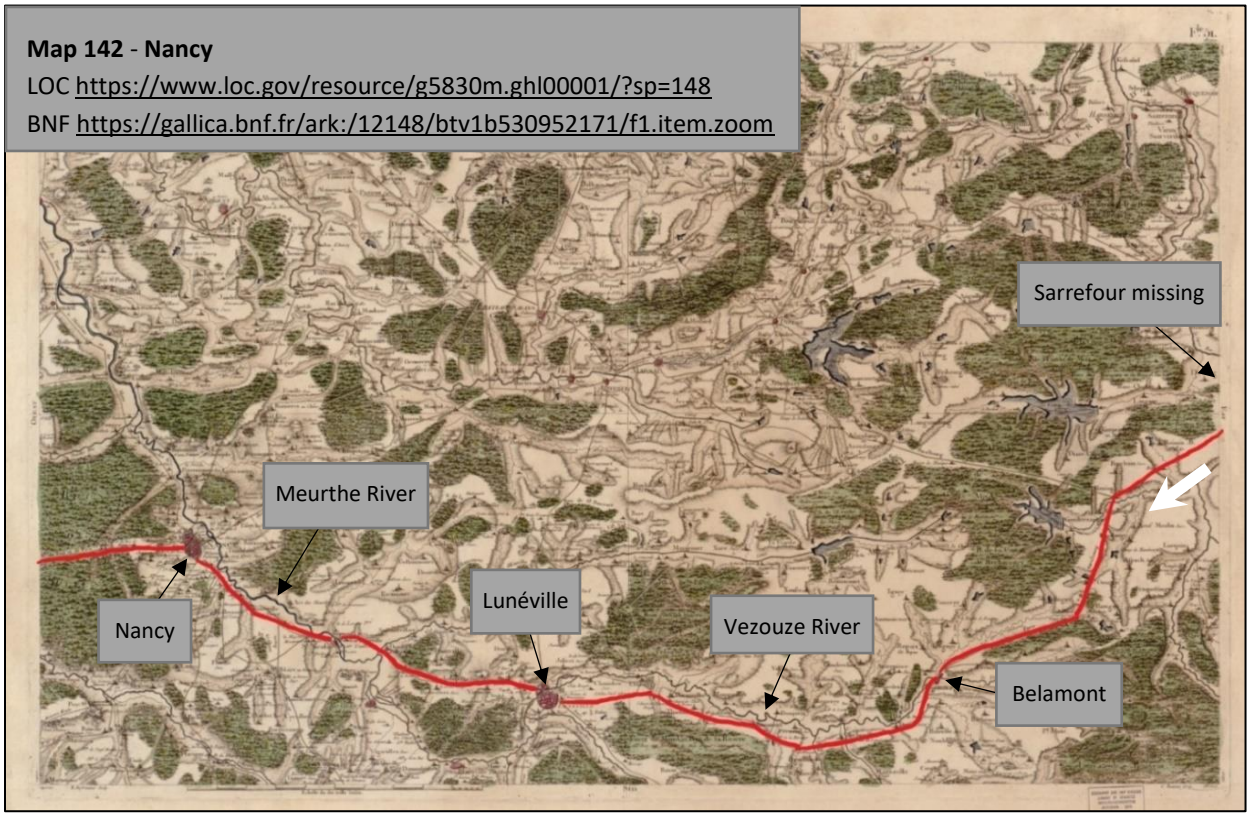
Digital copies of the Library of Congress maps were edited to trace the route our ancestors took from Alsace to Le Havre. A red line was used to mark the roads traveled and labels were added to show major places, rivers, and the like. These maps are reproduced on the next few pages so that the reader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

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

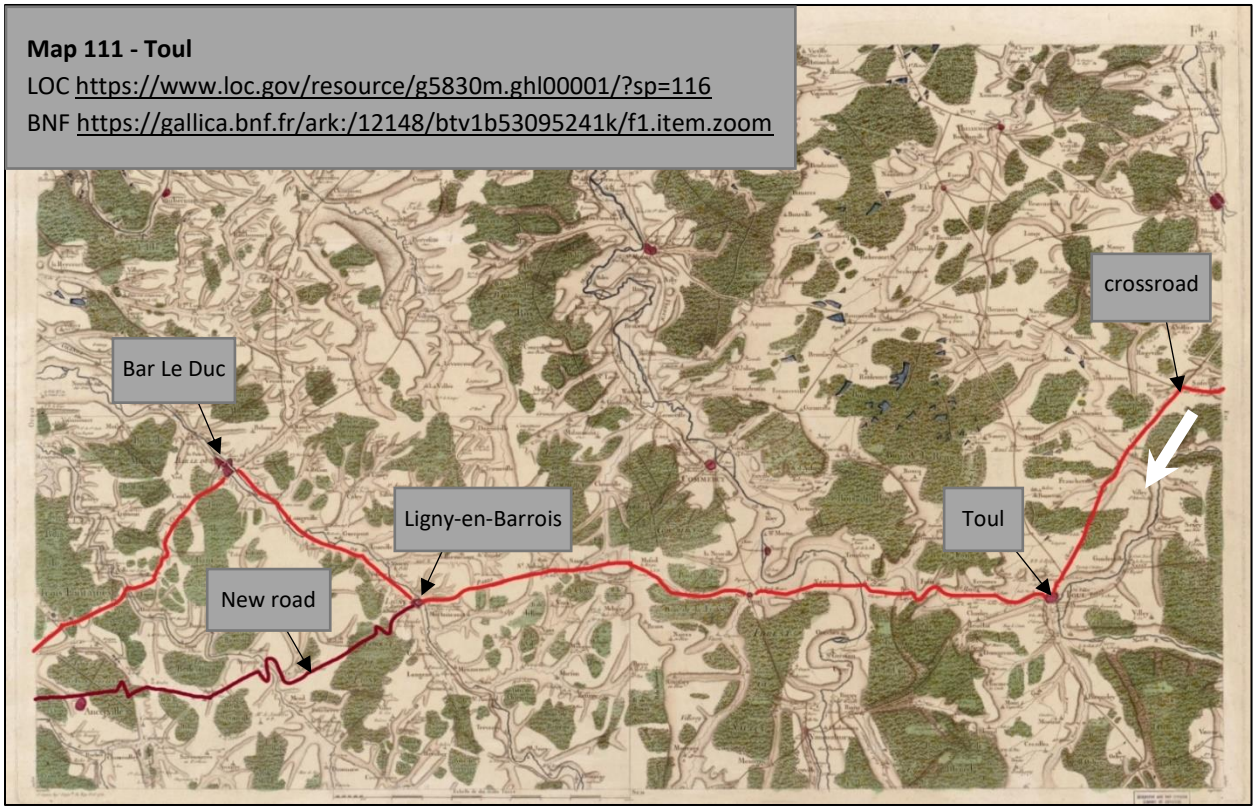
Map 162 - Strasbourg
LOC https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=167
BNF https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b530952082/f1.item.zoom

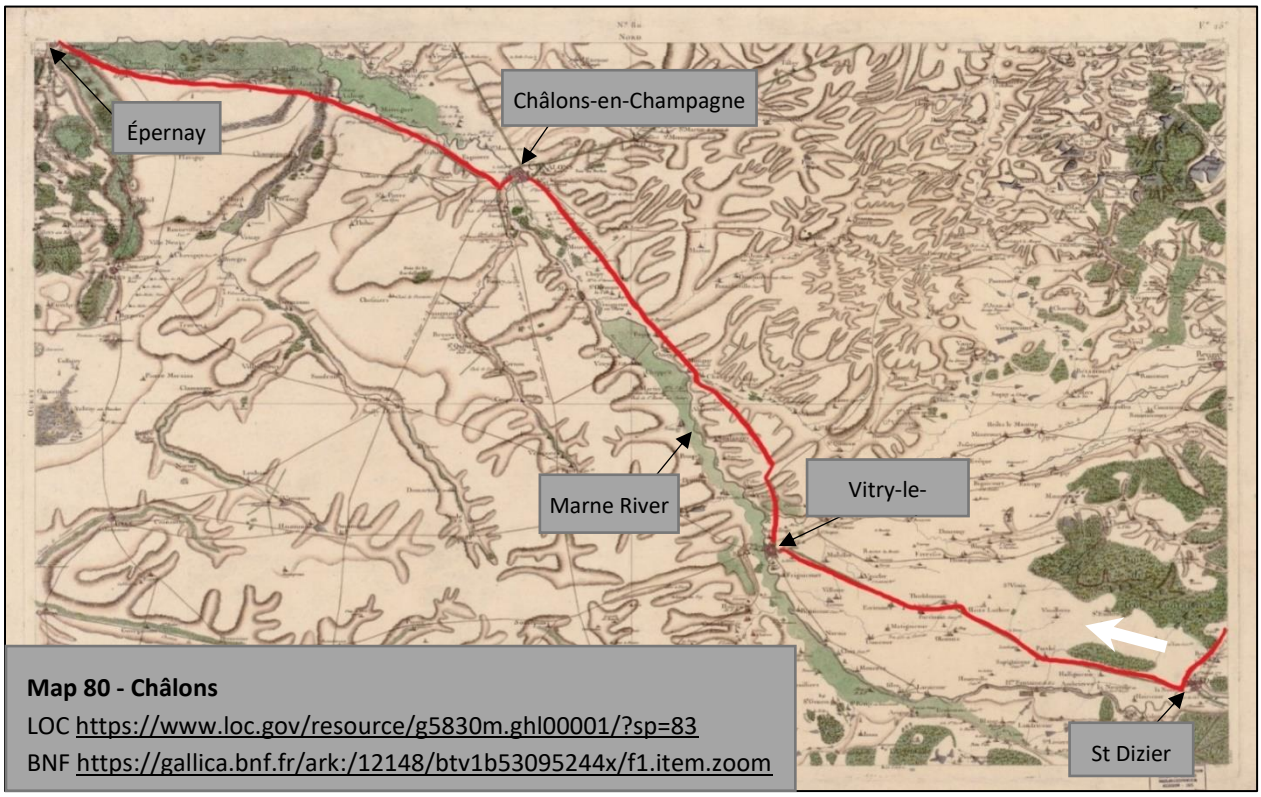


Map 142 - Nancy
LOC https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=148
BNF https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b530952171/f1.item.zoom



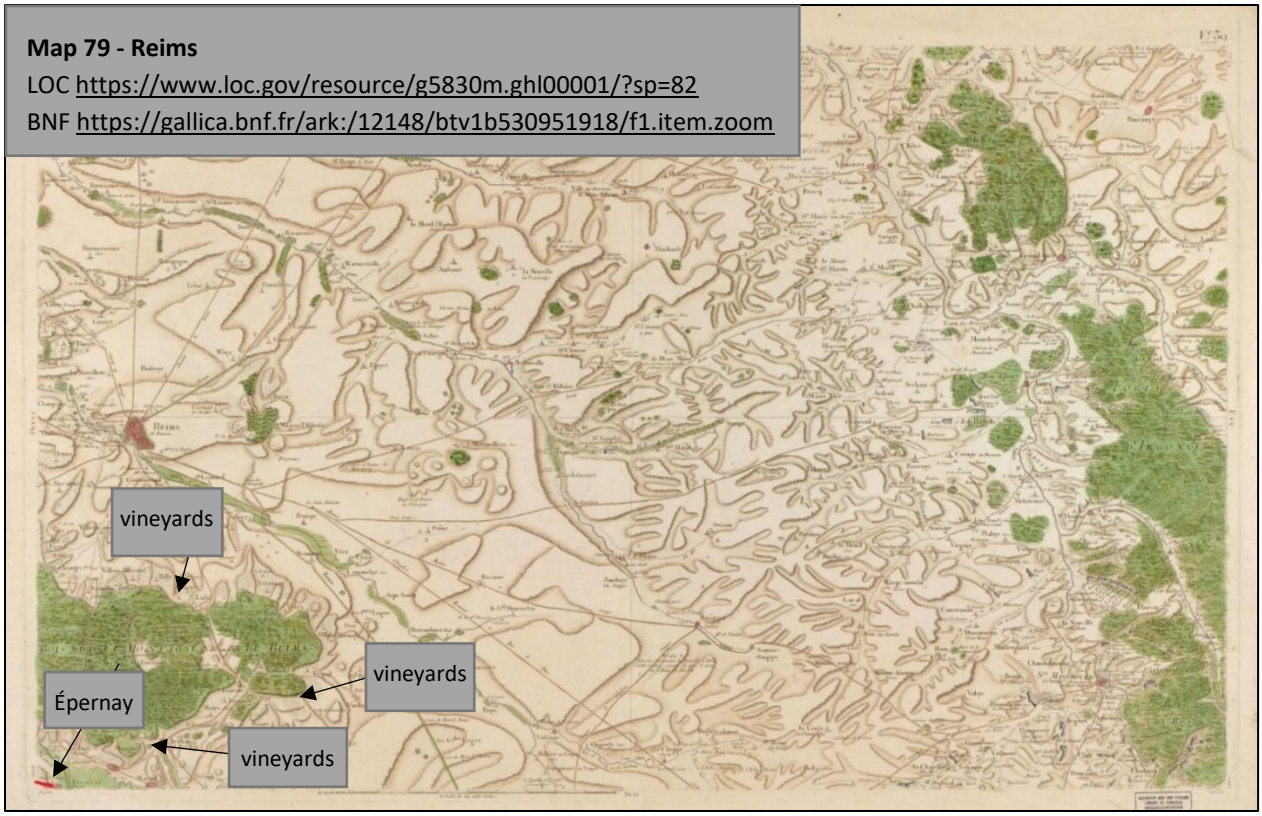
Map 111 - Toul
LOC https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=116
BNF https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53095241k/f1.item.zoom



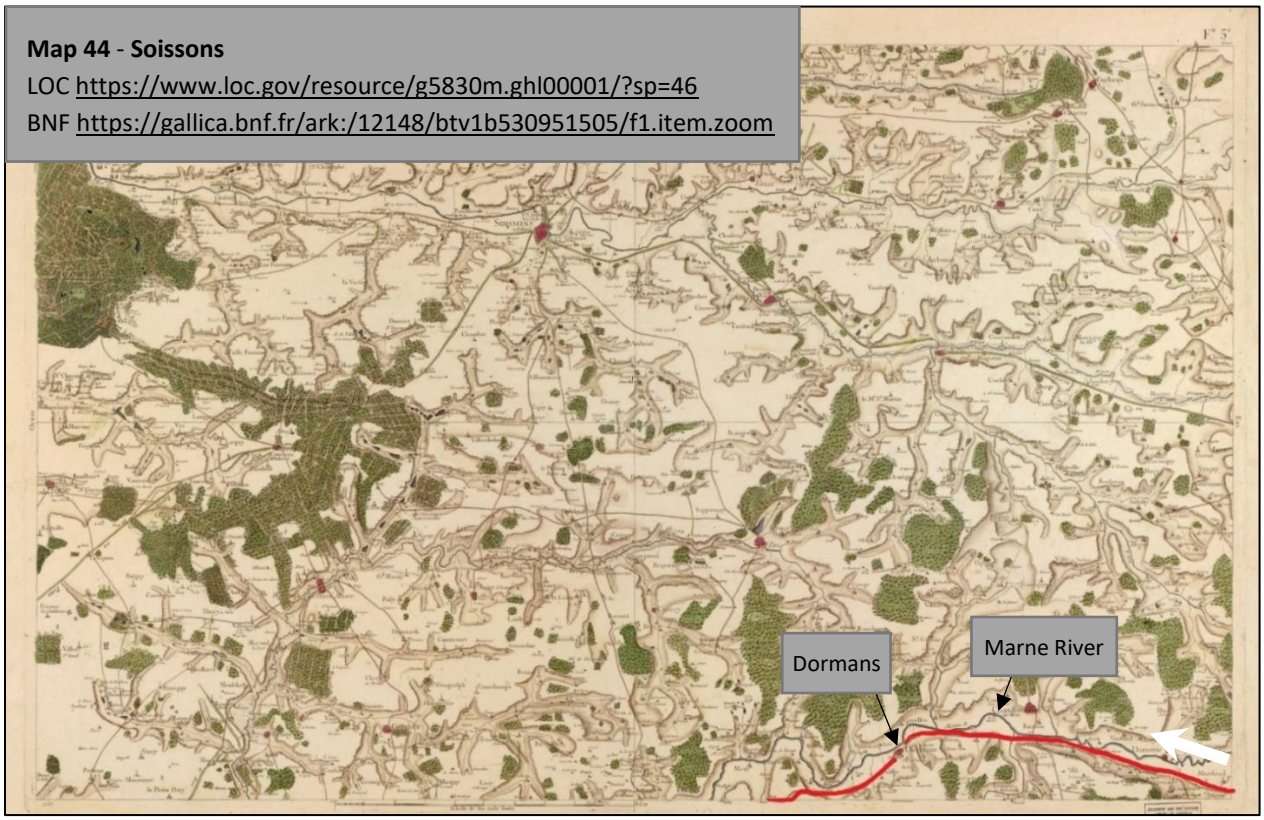


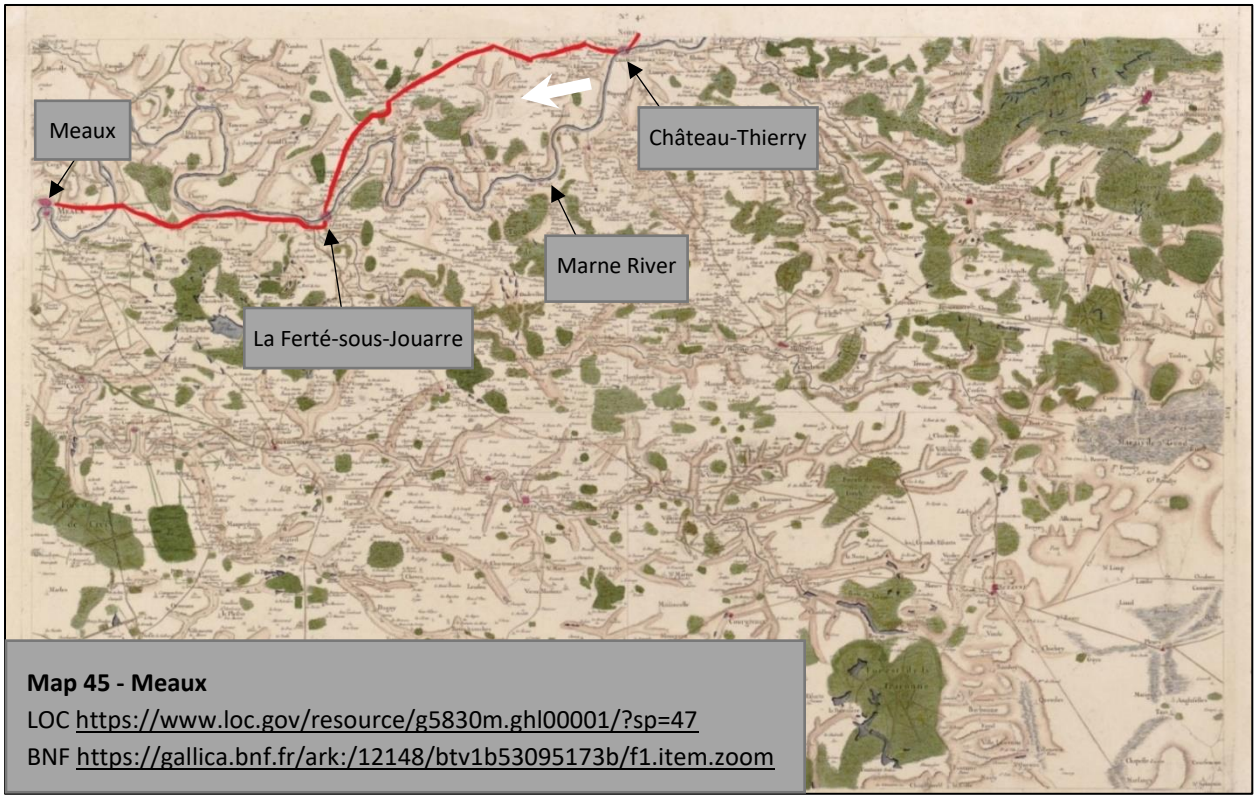
Map 80 - Châlons
LOC https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=83
BNF https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53095244x/f1.item.zoom

Map 79 - Reims
LOC https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=82
BNF https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b530951918/f1.item.zoom

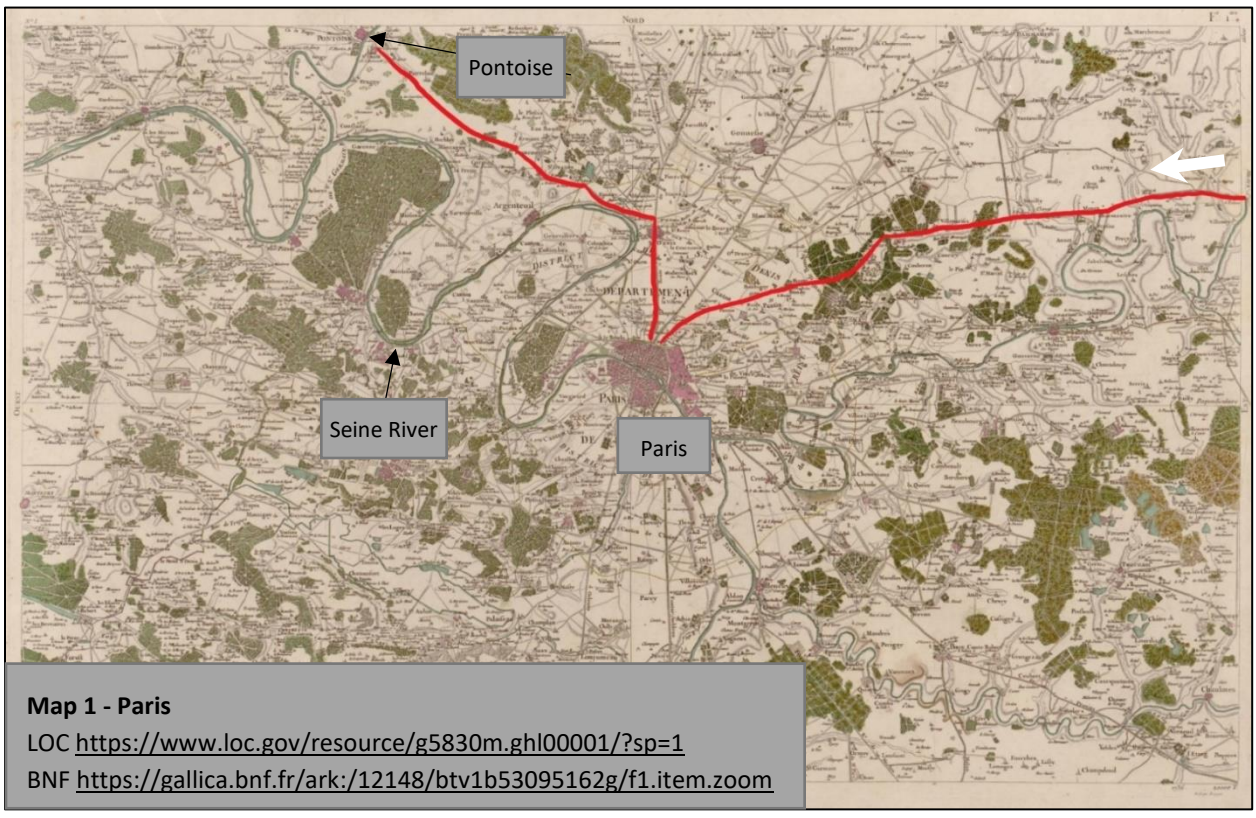


Map 44 - Soissons
LOC https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=46
BNF https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b530951505/f1.item.zoom



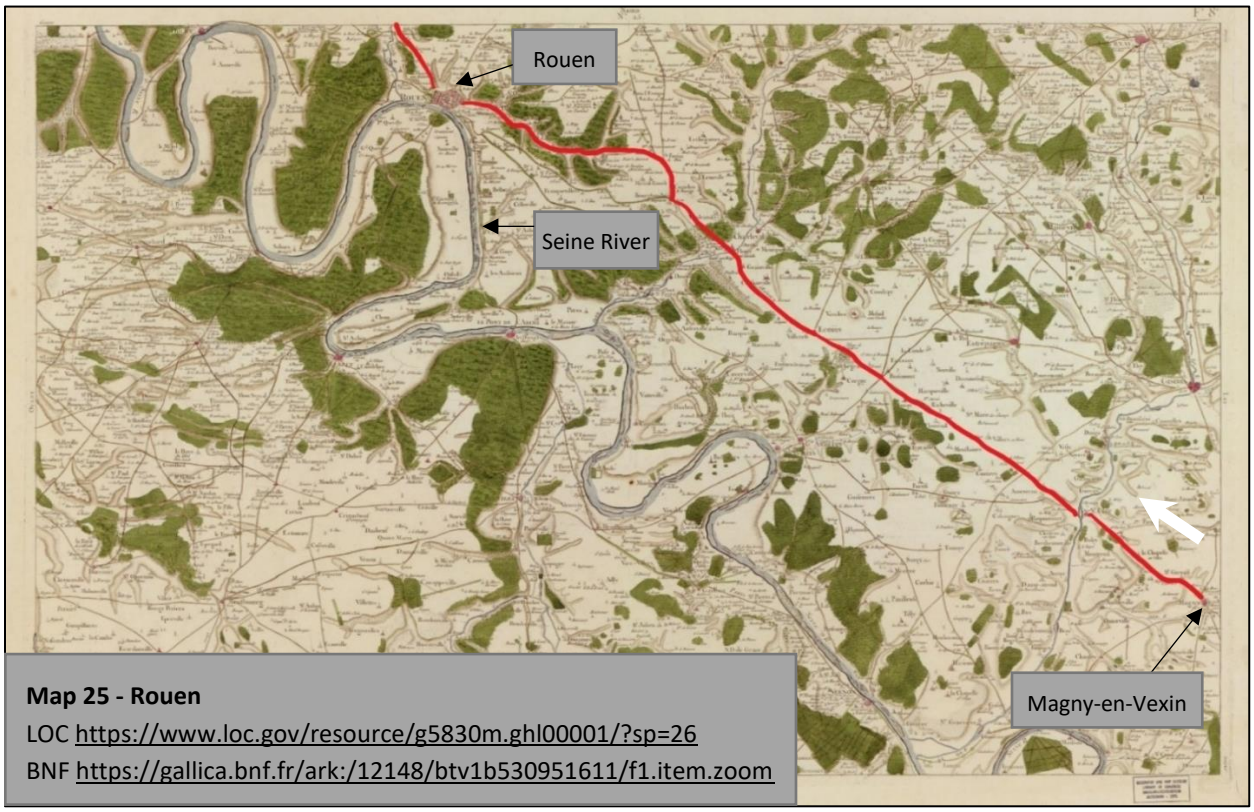


Map 45 - Meaux
LOC https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=47
BNF https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53095173b/f1.item.zoom



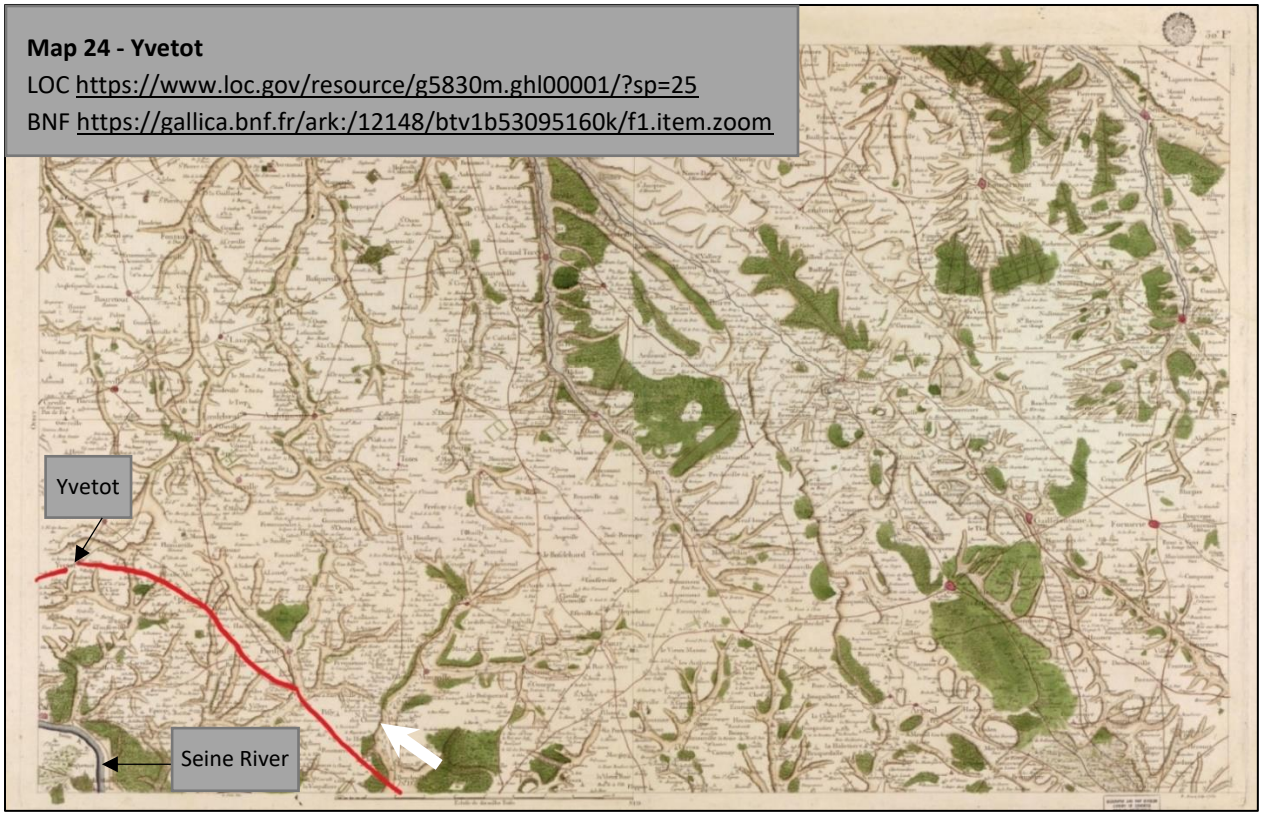
Map 1 - Paris
LOC https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=1
BNF https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53095162g/f1.item.zoom

Map 2 - Beauvais
LOC https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=2
BNF https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53095162g/f1.item.zoom

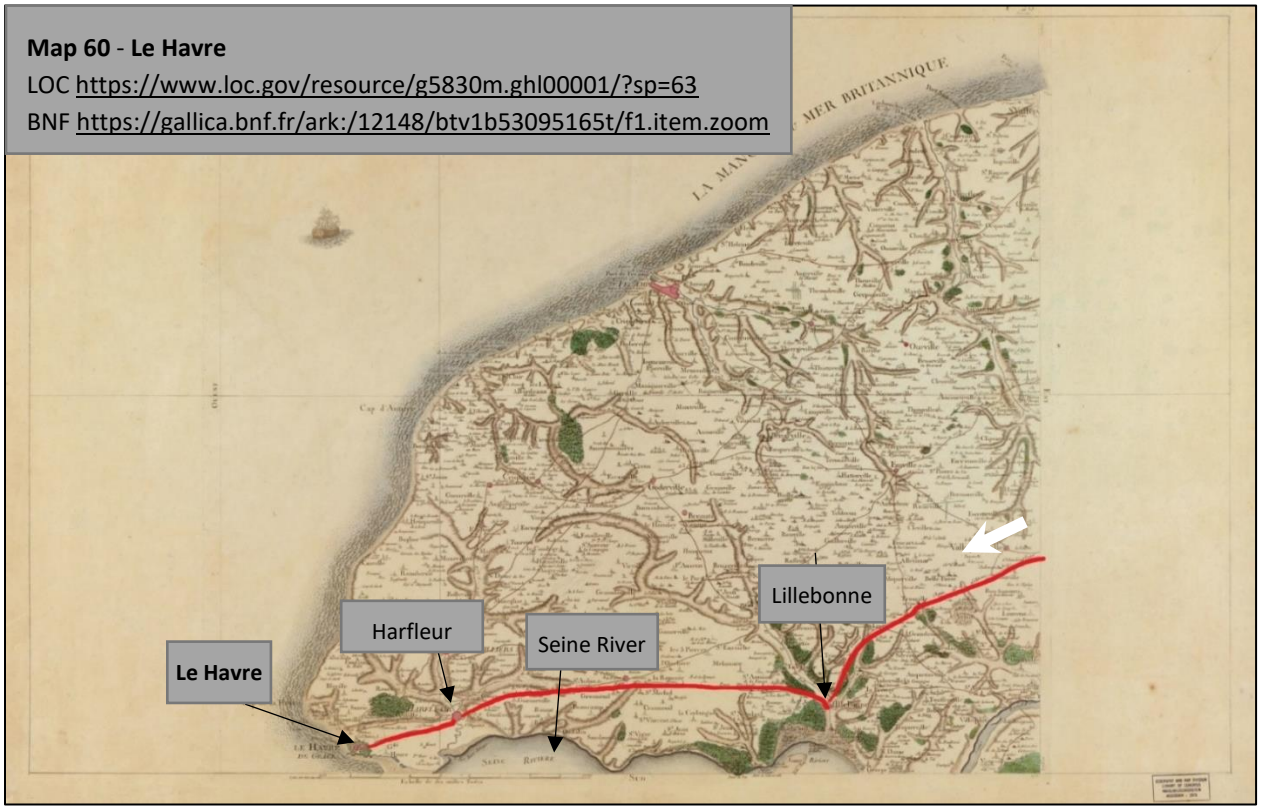


Map 25 - Rouen
LOC https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=26
BNF https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b530951611/f1.item.zoom

Map 24 - Yvetot
LOC https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=25
BNF https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53095160k/f1.item.zoom



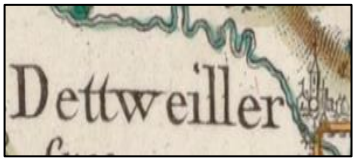
Map 60 - Le Havre
LOC https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=63
BNF https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53095165t/f1.item.zoom



Map Symbols Referred to in the Text

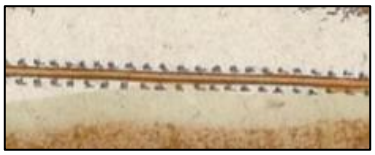
City (*Ville*)
Name written in capital letters

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



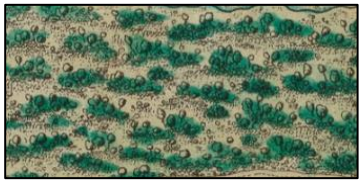
Village
Name written in normal roman letters

Paved walkway or road without trees



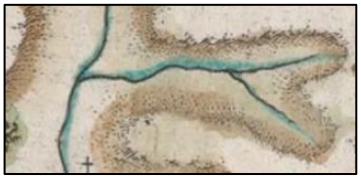
Paved tree-lined walkway or road

Dirt walkway or road

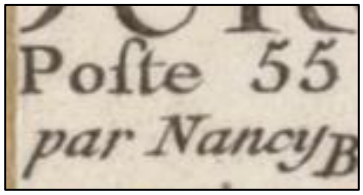


Woods or forest

River



Valley with river or stream



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

Grape vines

Swamp or marsh

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

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

Google translator, French to English

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

A Narrative of the Route to Le Havre

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

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

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

My paternal ancestor, John Nuwer, traveled from Soufflenheim to Le Havre in the summer of 1843. He was 24 years old and traveled with his new wife, Catherine Kieffer, who was the same age. They traveled with Jean Kieffer (John Nuwer's father-in-law), who was 59 years old and his second wife Barbara Voegele, who was also 59. Also in the group was Jean's son, Laurent Kieffer (aged 32), Laurent's wife,

Catherine Schmuck and a second son, Alexander Kieffer, who was 28 years old. Jean Kieffer's niece by marriage, Therese Messner (age 17) and Barbara Voegele's nephew, Alois Thomas (age 16) made the journey to America as well. Thus, a group of nine travelers, seven adults and two teenagers made the journey to Le Havre.

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

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

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

> Readers can follow this journey as an interactive exploration by using the internet links in the subsequent pages. The links will take you to the appropriate Cassini maps. The first link, labeled "Route," is a digital image of the map with the route marked in red—the same image as presented above. This link is followed by two links to the original maps. The first is to the Library of Congress's collection (LOC) and the second is to the collection at the National Library of France (BNF). These are slightly different versions of the same maps. They are water colored differently, mounted differently, and in some cases, errors were corrected on one or the other. The reader should decide for themself which version is preferred.
>
> **Map 162-Strasbourg**
> Route: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1L-PLcKxI4RvHrUvknBGwHyxN3CFwvnmn
> LOC (image 167): https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=167
> BNF: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b530952082/f1.item.zoom

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Travel Distance and Time Between Major Places

Place	To	Kilometers	Hours Walking	Posts to Paris
Soufflenheim	Haguenau	14	3	
Haguenau	Saverne	35	7.5	
Saverne	Phalsbourg	10	2	51
Phalsbourg	Sarrebourg	20	4	$49^1/_2$
Sarrebourg	Lunéville	55	11	$47^1/_2$
Lunéville	Nancy	28	6	$41^1/_2$
Nancy	Toul	24	5	$38^1/_2$
Toul	Ligny-en-Barrois	46	9.5	36
Ligny-en-Barrois	St Dizier	31	6.5	$31^1/_2$
St Dizier	Vitry-le-François	30	6.5	27
Vitry-le-François	Châlons-en-Champagne	32	6.5	24
Châlons-en-Champagne	Épernay	32	6.5	20
Épernay	Dormans	24	5	16
Dormans	Château-Thierry	23	4.5	13
Château-Thierry	La Ferté-sous-Jouarre	27	5.5	10
La Ferté-sous-Jouarre	Meaux	18	4	
Meaux	outskirts of Paris	41	8.5	5
Paris	Pontoise	27	6	
Pontoise	Magny-en-Vexin	28	6	$3^1/_2$
Magny-en-Vexin	Rouen	63	13	
Rouen	Yvetot	36	7.5	14
Yvetot	Lillebonne	21	4.5	
Lillebonne	Le Havre	32	7	$23^1/_2$

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

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

Phalsbourg lies high on the west slopes of the Vosges Mountains. It was 42 kilometers (26 miles) from Strasbourg, 103 kilometers (64 miles) from Nancy, and 440 kilometers (273 miles) from Paris. The Cassini map tells us that Phalsbourg was $49^1/_2$ posts from Paris. At Phalsbourg the traveler entered the historical and cultural region of Lorraine. Geographically, most of the historical province sits on a highland plateau, the Lorraine Plateau. It is bounded on the east by the Vosges Mountains and on the west by the plains of Champagne. The emigrant traveler must cross this plateau from east to west.

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

Map 142 - Nancy
Route: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Tk8hq1Jjvm4NlJ-zhDGOtgWMo-HPbBl4
LOC (image 148): https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=148
BNF: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b530952171/f1.item.zoom

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

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

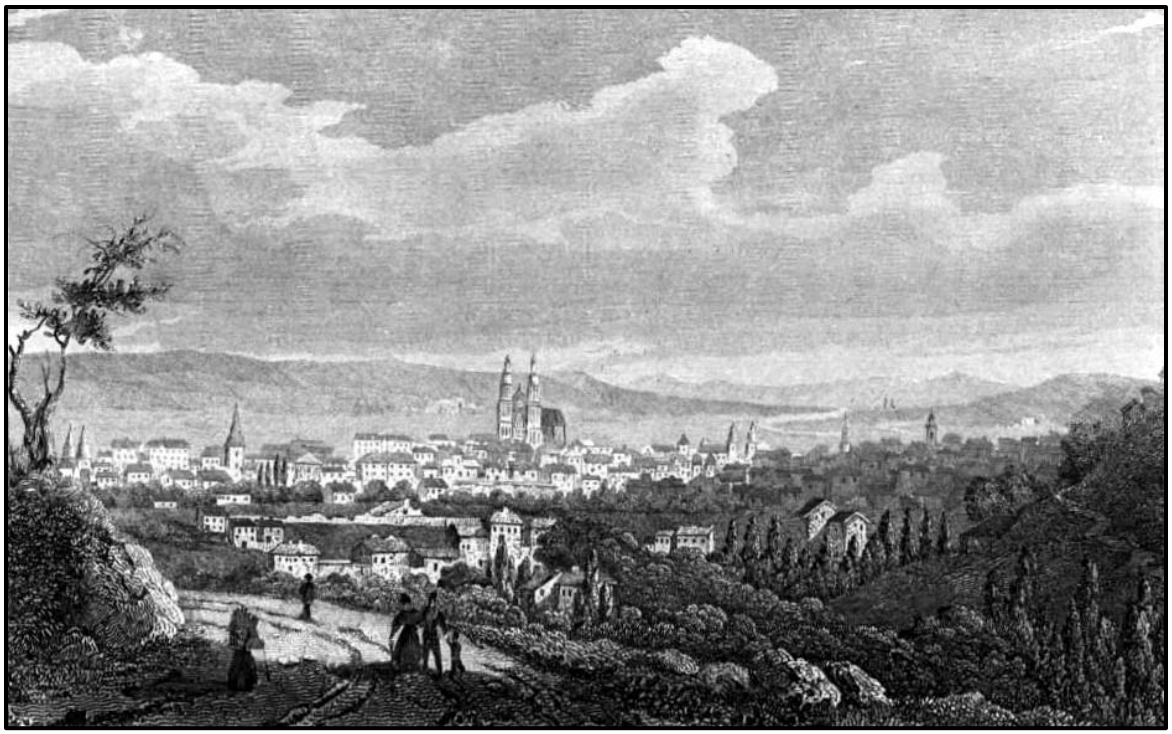
Also note that upon entering Lorraine, trees no longer lined the road. The eighteenth-century maps depict the road to Paris through the entire length of Lorraine without lined trees. However, between the 1750s and 1815 trees were planted along these roads. The 1815 versions of the Cassini maps show tree-lined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

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

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

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

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



Nancy, Lorraine 1838

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

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

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

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

From Nancy, the road to Paris turned west and entered a forested region (*Bois de Hayes*). On the other side of this forest was a crossroad and the road to Toul. The distance between Nancy and Toul was

about 24 kilometers (15 miles). The town, with a population of 7,000 in 1841, was located on the left bank of the Moselle River. Toul boasted a beautiful stone bridge. After the Duchy of Lorraine became part of France in 1766, the Bishopric of Toul was transferred to Nancy, and Toul declined as a major center.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Châlons-en-Champagne, 1838

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

> [We] ... left Meaux a little before seven and, after passing through a fine country for five leagues, arrived at La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, a neat little town on the banks of the rivers Marne and Morin, where we breakfasted. This town supplies the greatest part of France with mill stones, which are considered the finest in Europe. The banks of the river and each side of the road were covered with them as we passed. ... The road from La Ferté to Château-Thierry (seven leagues) is very hilly but the scenery very fine. (Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/La_Fert%C3%A9-sous-Jouarre)

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

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

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

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

Between 1853 and 1870 Napoleon III and his minister, Baron Haussmann, rebuilt the city center. They created the wide downtown boulevards and the squares where the boulevards intersected, imposed standard facades along the boulevards, and required that the facades be built of the distinctive cream-

grey “Paris stone.” They also built the major parks around the city center. But this was all done after our ancestors passed Paris.

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

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

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

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

Map 25 - Rouen
Route: https://drive.google.com/file/d/10396PPVVlA44cnqlge2OsO5mSfJwrEpZ
LOC (image 26): https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=26
BNF: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b530951611/f1.item.zoom

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

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

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

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

Rouen early 1800s

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

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

From Rouen, the road to Le Havre proceeded to Yvetot, a town of 9,100 residents. Located in Normandy, Yvetot was 36 kilometers (22 miles) northwest of Rouen. The prosperity of the town was linked to its

status as a tax haven in the seventeenth century, and to the expansion of cotton spinning mills and fabric manufacturing in the early nineteenth century.

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

Map 60 - Le Havre
Route: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1J-4DGLHnlOuEwuj_BWRgJuGNVtcLNeIu
LOC (image 63): https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=63
BNF: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53095165t/f1.item.zoom

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

For many individuals, the entire trip from their home to the United States was not very pleasant, and often proved more expensive than it needed to be. Not only did it take a while to get to the embarkation port but once there, the potential immigrants had to deal with “runners,” individuals who would meet the arriving groups and try to steer them to particular boardinghouses. At times, the runners would simply grab a person’s luggage and take it to a boardinghouse, regardless of the individual’s desires. Then, the rates actually charged at the boardinghouses were often higher than the runners had promised. If not paid, the immigrant’s luggage would not be returned. Sometimes, prepaid tickets were not honored, or the immigrants were told they needed to pay more on fully paid tickets.

(Source: Raymond L. Cohn, *Mass Migration Under Sail: European Immigration to the Antebellum United States*, (2009), Chapter 6.)

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

The journey from Soufflenheim to Le Havre described in the above pages offers details about the route our ancestors followed. From the roads traveled it is possible to estimate how long it took our ancestors to walk to Le Havre. Assuming people walked at a pace of three miles per hour, it would have required 146 hours to walk from Soufflenheim to Le Havre. But there is much that remains unknown. It is not clear how many hours per day our ancestors walked. Although they probably did not spend ten hours per day on the

road, we don't know whether they walked six hour, or eight hours, or some other amount. If they walked eight hours a day, every day, the journey could have been completed in 18 days (2 weeks and 4 days). If they walked six hours a day, their journey would have taken 24 days (3 week and 3 days). And this does not account for delays of any kind, like broken wagons, church attendance, bad weather, or some other delay.

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

The Emigrants of Alsace, Theophile Schuler, 1861

Alternate Routes to Paris

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

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

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

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

The Southern Route

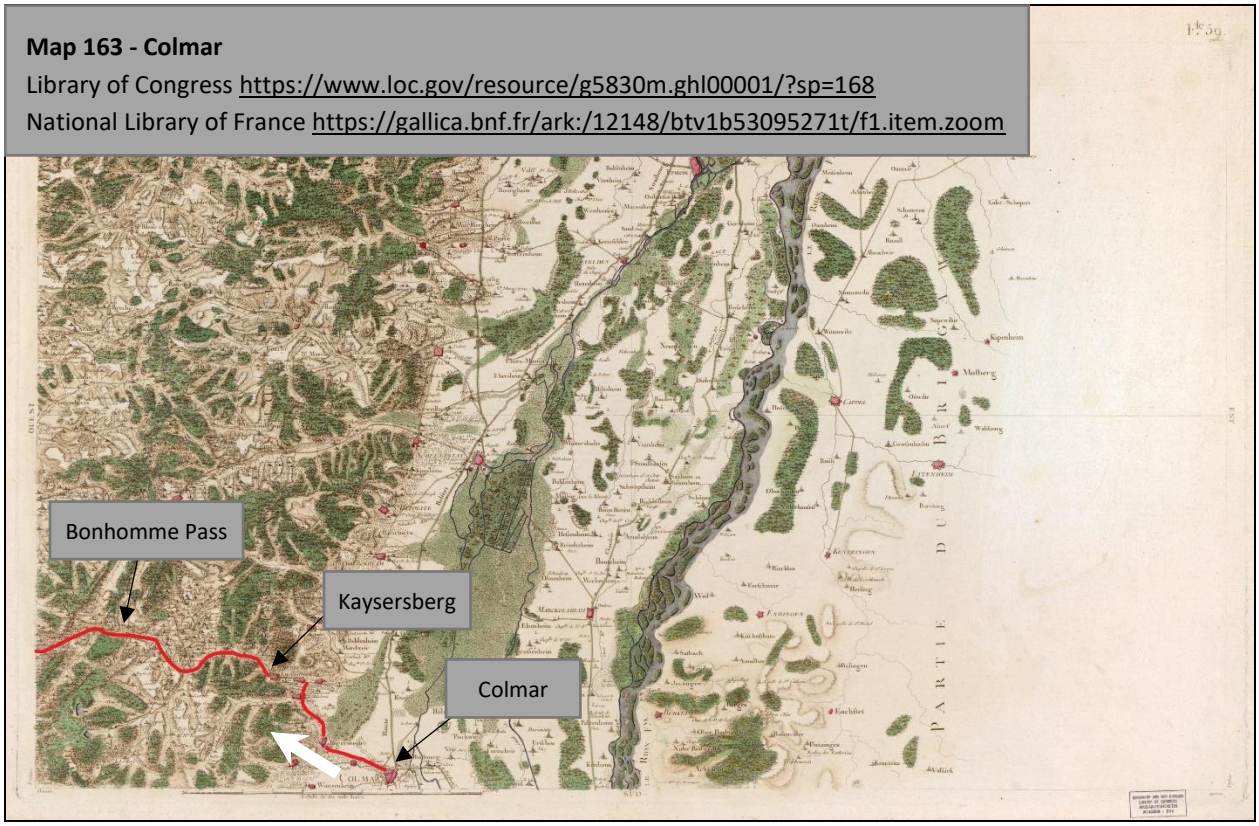
Many immigrants in my family tree originated from Bas-Rhin and certainly used the Strasbourg to Paris route when they left Alsace. But there are a few branches in my tree that originated from other areas of France. One example is the Sebastian Gundy family which arrived in New York Harbor in 1846. The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

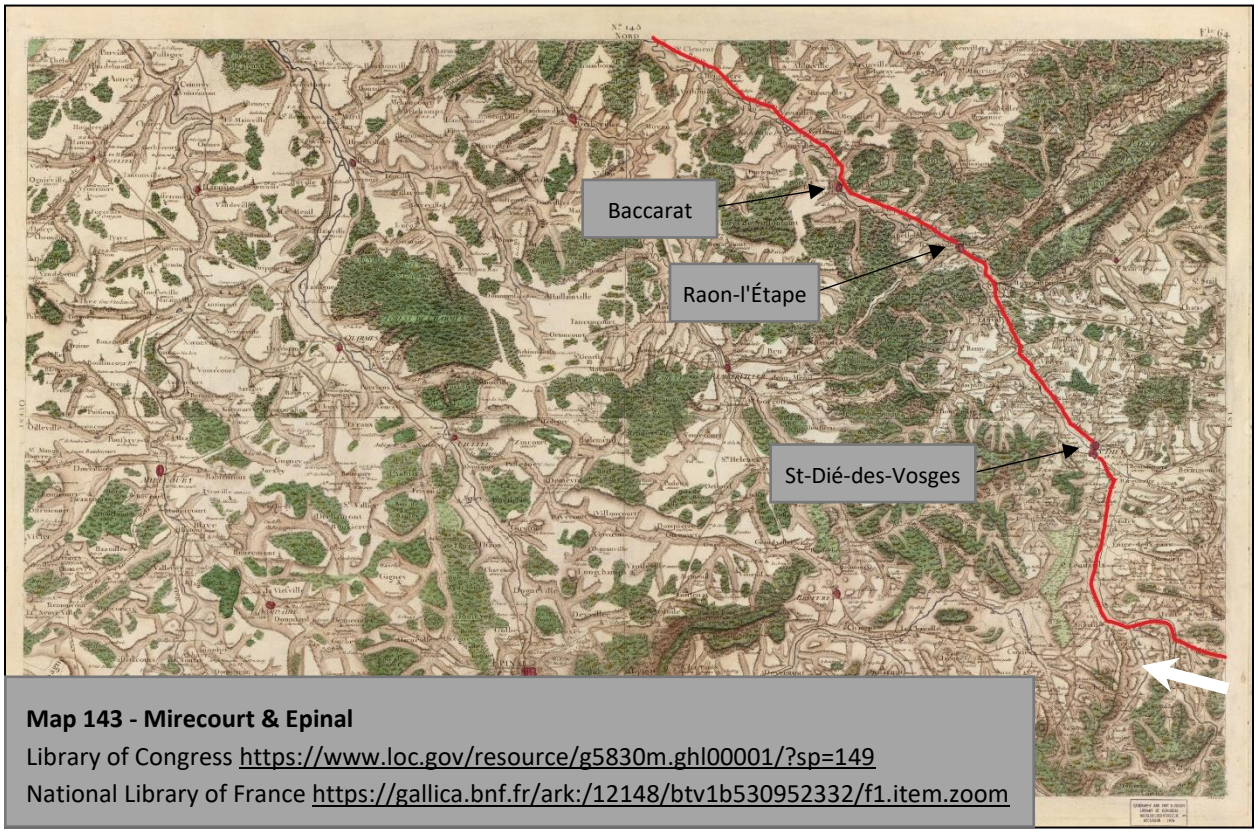
From Fulleren this group may have used the Strasbourg to Paris route on their journey to Le Havre. They would have traveled north to Colmar and then continue along the Rhine River valley to the Saverne Pass. There was, however, an alternative route this group of emigrants may have followed. At Colmar,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

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

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

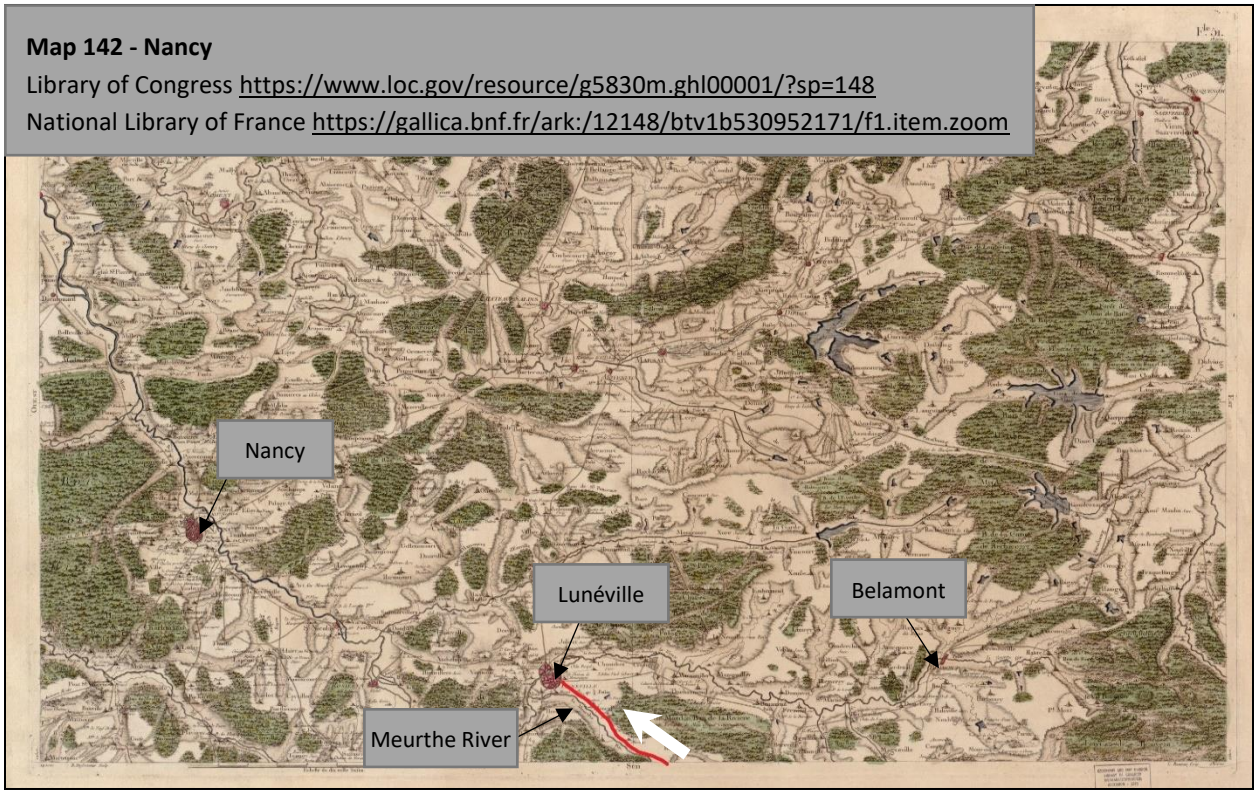
Map 163 - Colmar
Library of Congress https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=168
National Library of France https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53095271t/f1.item.zoom





Map 143 - Mirecourt & Epinal
Library of Congress https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=149
National Library of France https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b530952332/f1.item.zoom

Map 142 - Nancy
Library of Congress https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=148
National Library of France https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b530952171/f1.item.zoom



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

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

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

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

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

Kaysersberg was at the foot of the Vosges Mountains, and the town supported numerous vineyards. The Vosges Mountains are characterized by steep slopes on the Alsace side, with a gentler slope on the Lorraine side. This created a sunnier and drier climate on the Alsace plain compared to the Lorraine

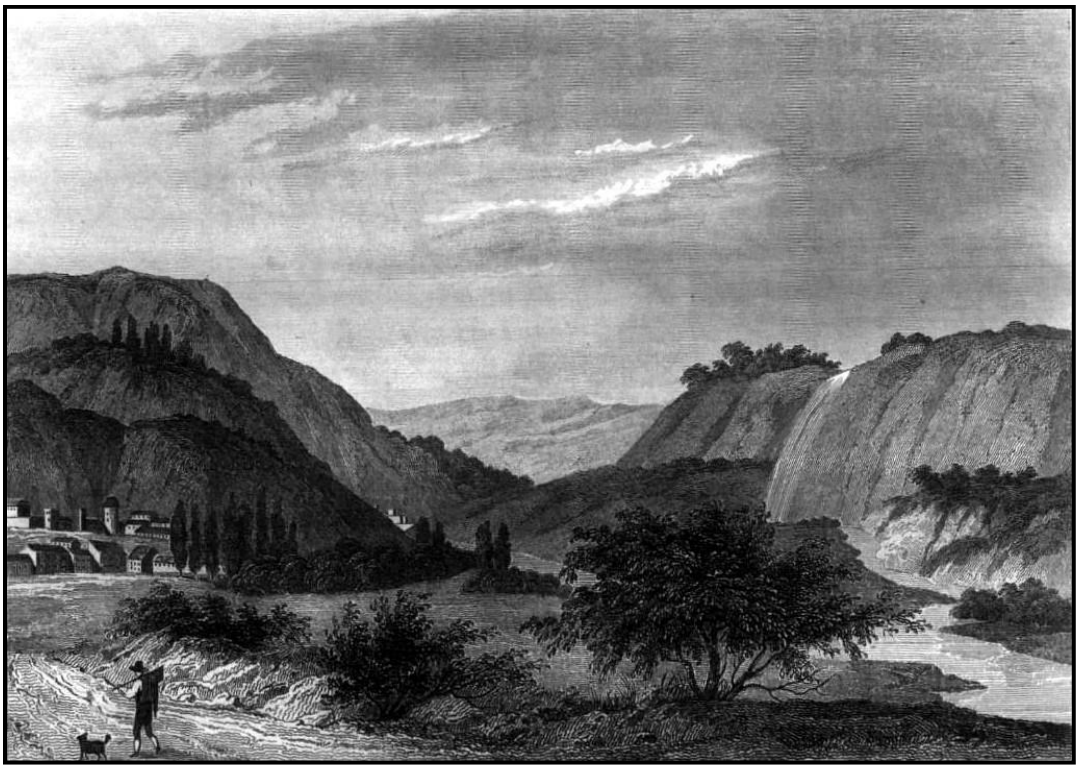
Plateau and favored the development of the Alsatian vineyards. In 1841 Kaysersberg had a population of 3,100 residents.

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

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

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

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



Raon-l'Étape in 1838

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

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

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

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

The Northern Route

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

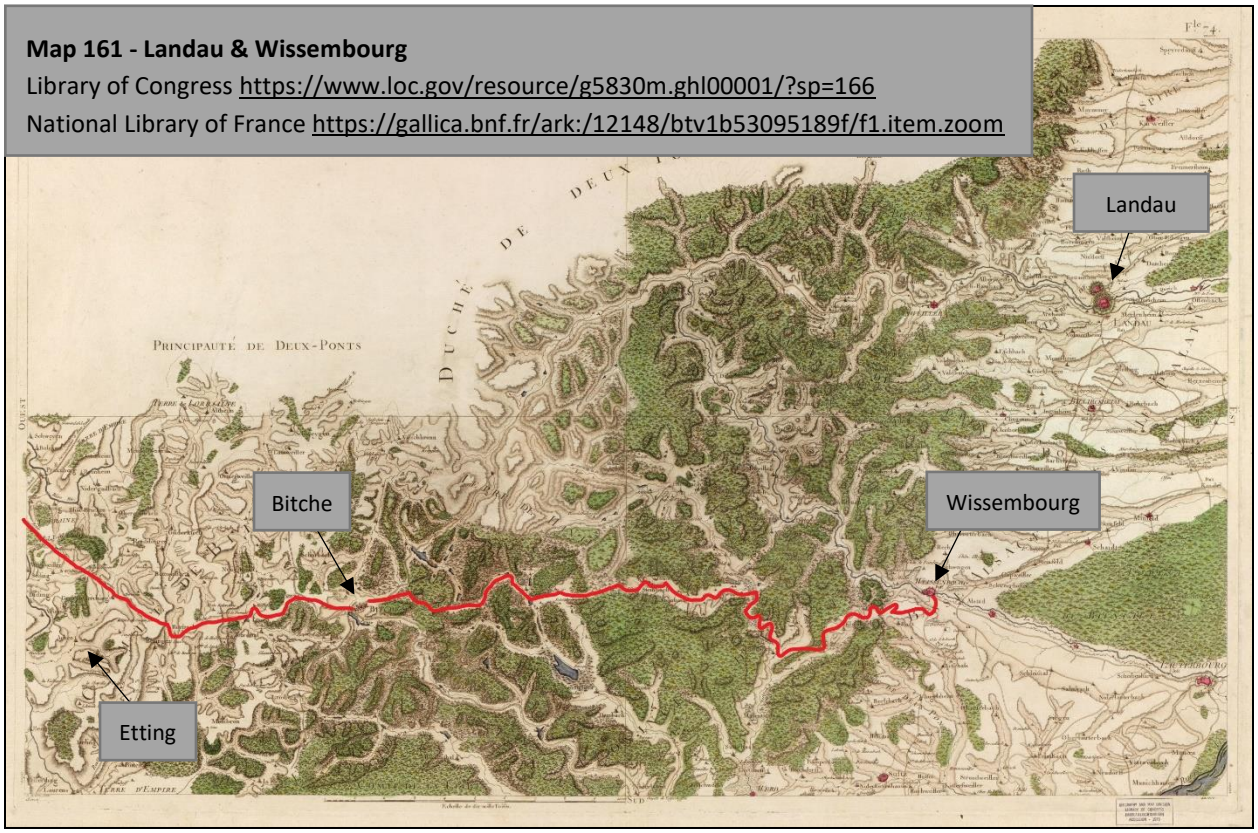
> Confusion can arise because sometimes “only the High Vosges … form the ‘Vosges mountains’ strictly speaking, while the Northern Vosges constitute a wooded area of low hills.”

Alsatian emigrants who originated from the districts around Wissembourg and emigrants from the Landau districts of the Bavarian Palatinate could consider two different routes to Le Havre. First, they could travel south to the Saverne Pass and join the emigrants using the Strasbourg to Paris route. Alternatively, they could pass through the Northern Vosges mountains between Wissembourg and Bitche, then proceed to Paris by way of Metz on roads that would take them through northern Lorraine.

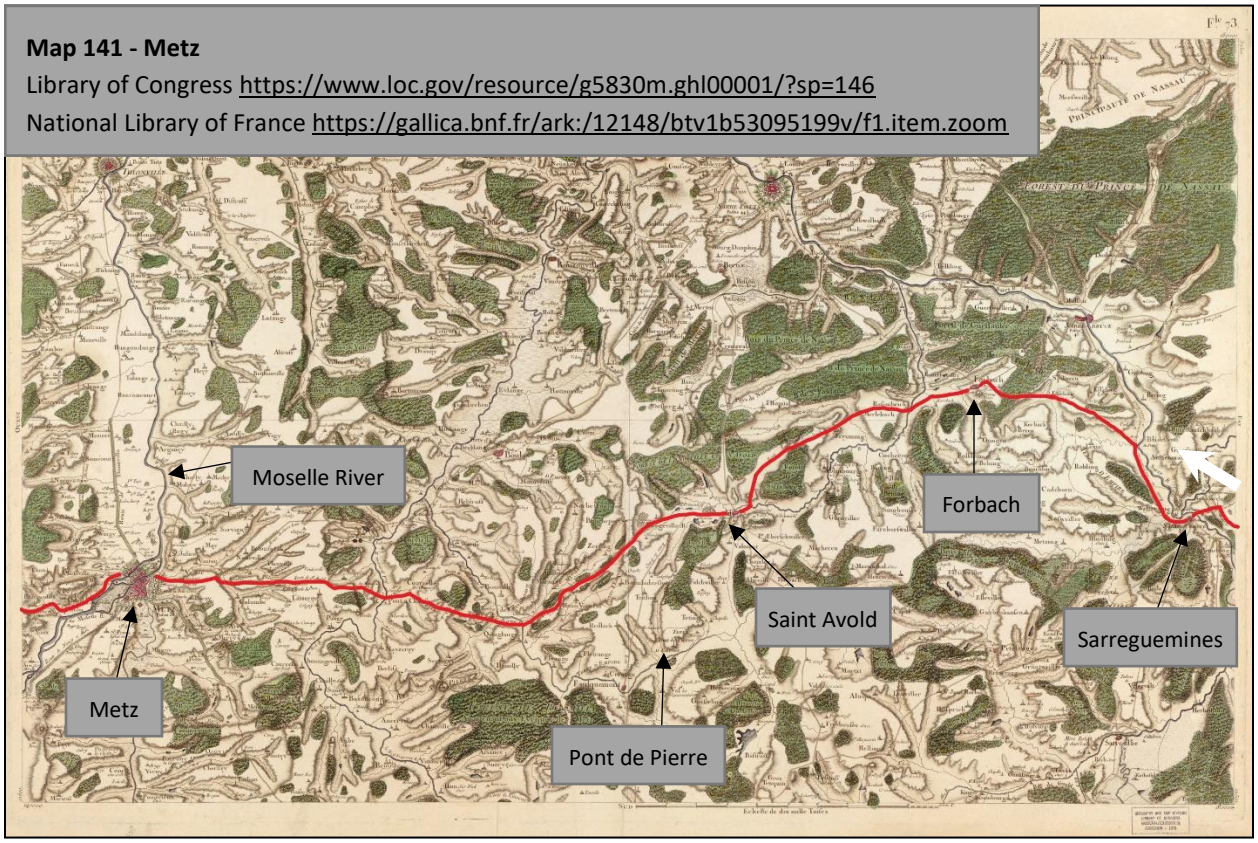
However, the road from Wissembourg to Bitche was a difficult path. It was a distance of 28 miles over which a traveler ascended about 1,200 feet. It would take 9.5 hours to reach Bitche by foot, if a traveler could walk at a pace of 3 miles per hour. But the terrain would have slowed that pace. At 2.5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

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

Map 161 - Landau & Wissembourg
Library of Congress https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=166
National Library of France https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53095189f/f1.item.zoom



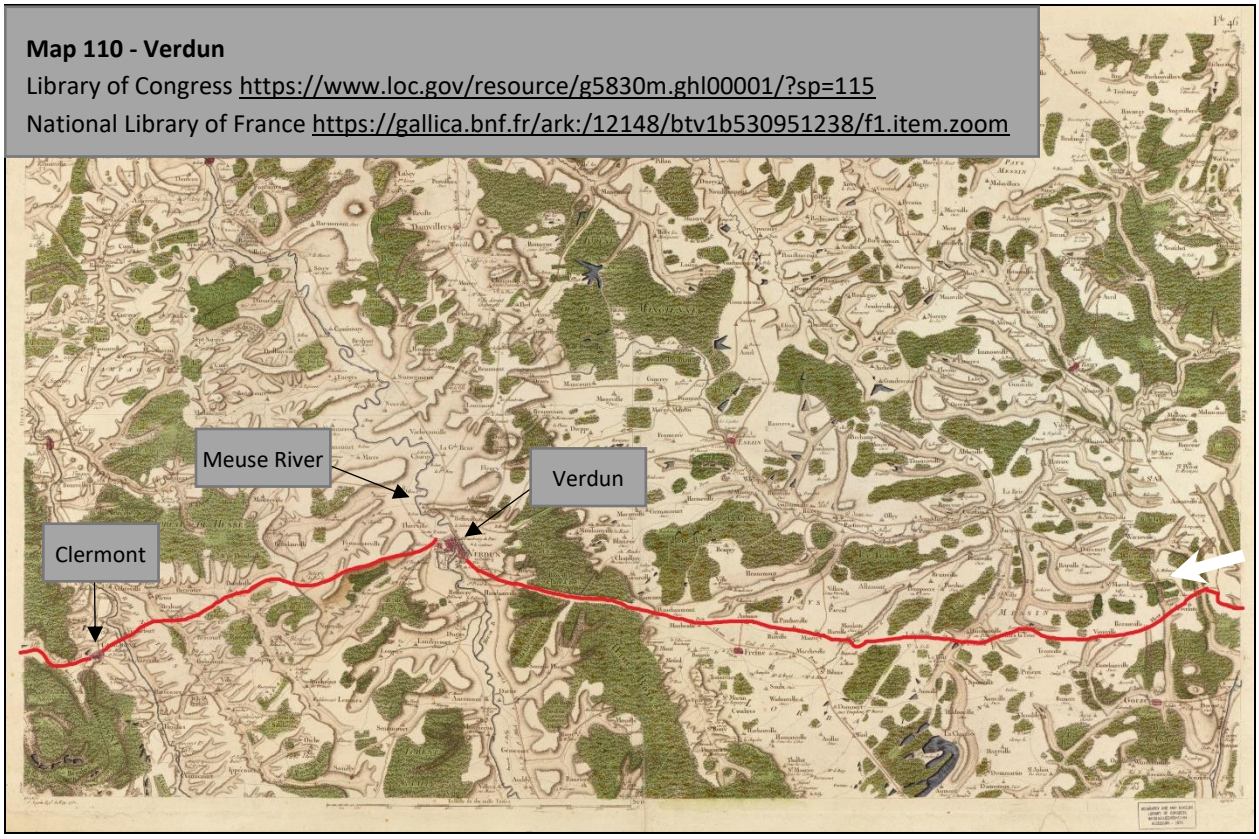
Map 141 - Metz
Library of Congress https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=146
National Library of France https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53095199v/f1.item.zoom



Map 110 - Verdun

Library of Congress https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=115

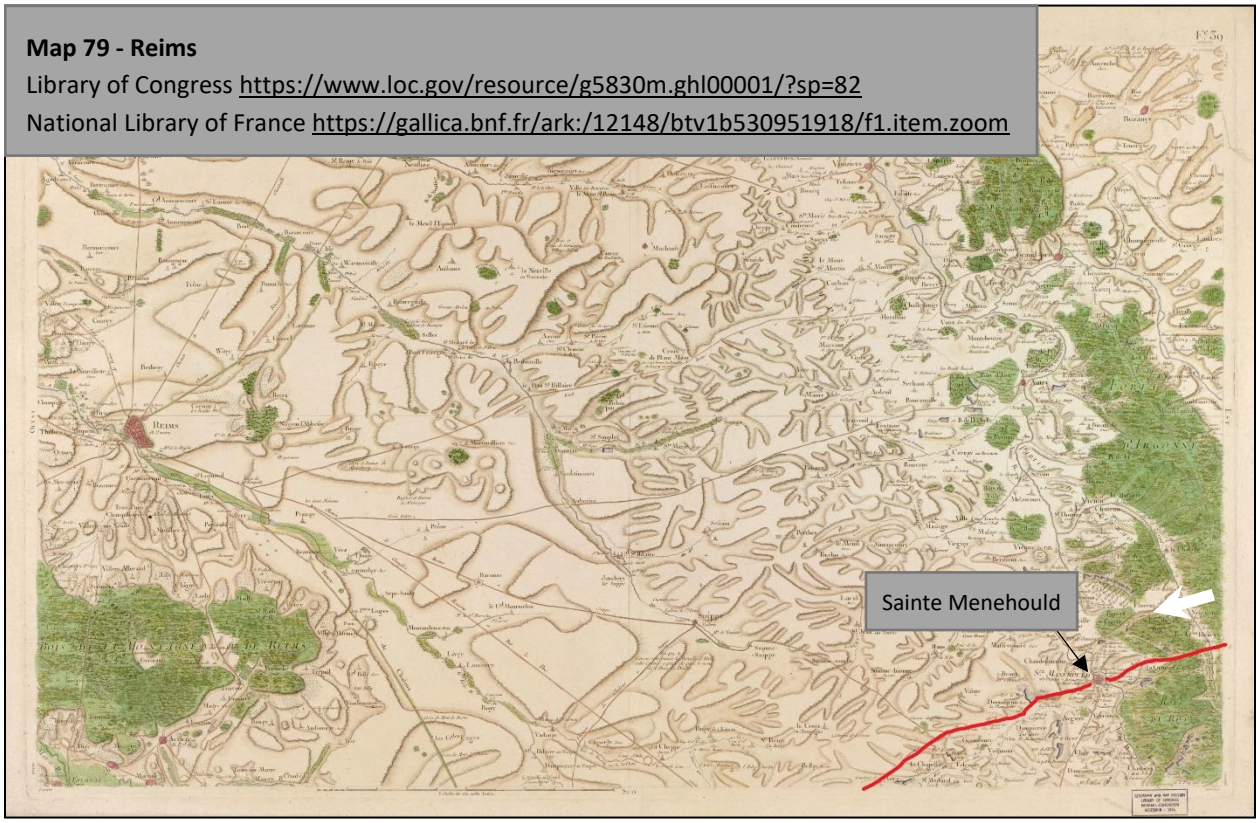
National Library of France https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b530951238/f1.item.zoom

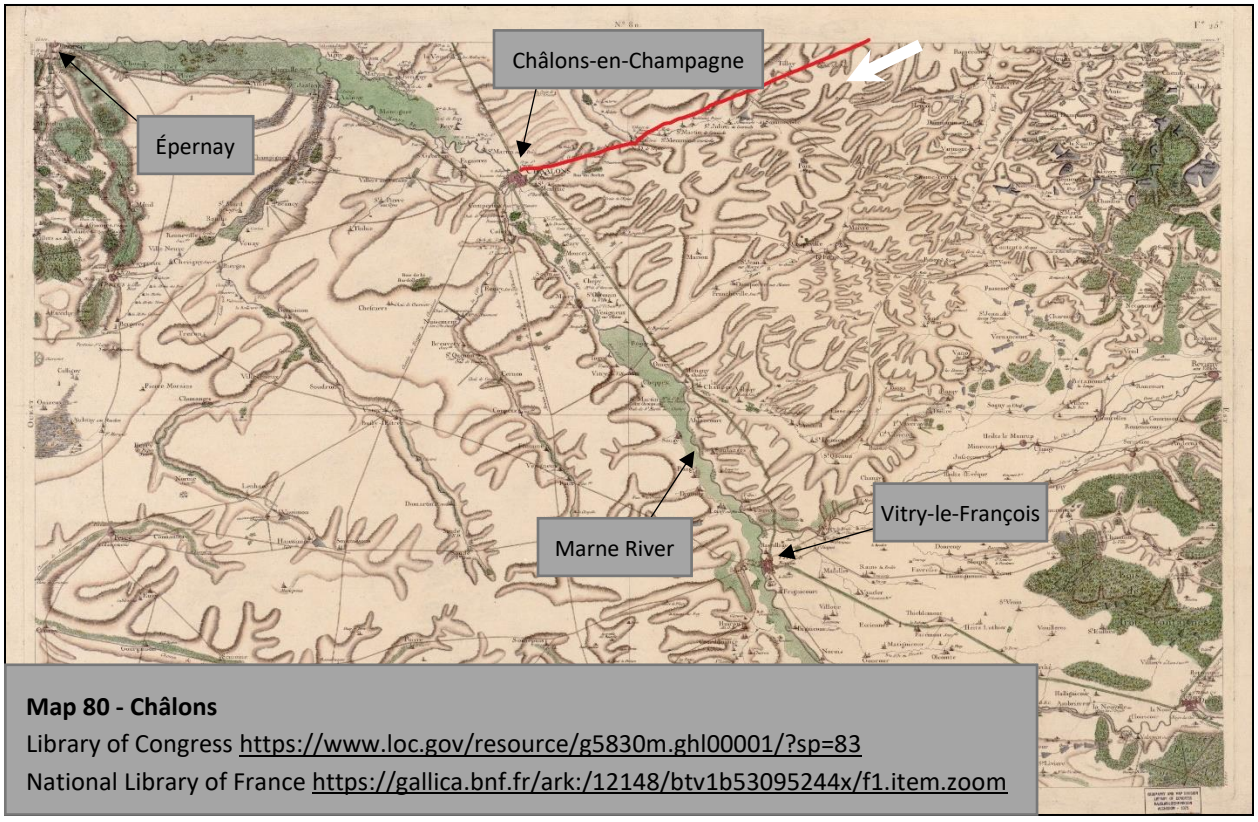


Map 79 - Reims

Library of Congress https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=82

National Library of France https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b530951918/f1.item.zoom





Map 80 - Châlons
Library of Congress https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=83
National Library of France https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53095244x/f1.item.zoom

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A second family in my family tree originated from this area of Lorraine. The Peter Bach family was from Pontpierre, which was south of Saint Avold. On the Cassini map (no. 141) the town is identified as Pont de Pierre. This family emigrated in 1846. Peter Bach (age 63), his wife, Anna Schmitt (age 54), and three children George (age 22), Catherine (age 20), and John Peter (age 17) made the voyage to America. A second daughter followed a few years later with her husband and three small children.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Appendix

Appendix 1: Journey to Le Havre

Major Places on the Road from Alsace to Le Havre

Place	Population 1841	Primary Source
Strasbourg	70,298	https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strasbourg
Soufflenheim	2,886	https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soufflenheim
Haguenau	10,349	https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haguenau
Saverne	5,226	https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saverne

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

There is a Wikipedia page for each of the towns and cities in English and in French. I found the French pages to be much more informative and relied mostly on those sources. I do not read French, so I opened each page using Google Chrome which includes translation functions. I found the translations easily readable in English.

Appendix 2: Cassini Maps

The individual Cassini maps

Sheet Number	Title	Year Surveyed	Year Published
Central Route			
161	Landau - Wissembourg	1755-1762	1763-1766
162	Strasbourg	1760-1767	1768-1770
142	Nancy	1754-1763	1758-1760
111	Toul	1756-1759	1759
80	Châlons	1754-1758	1757
79	Reims	1757-1759	1758-1760
44	Soissons	1750-1752	1757

45	Meaux	1750-1752	1757
1	Paris	1749-1755	1756
2	Beauvais	1751	1756
25	Rouen	1756	1757
24	Yvetot	1757	1759
60	Le Havre	1757	1757
Southern Route			
163	Colmar	1757-1760	1760-1761
143	Mirecourt - Epina	1754-1762	1761-1762
142	Nancy	1754-1763	1758-1760
Northern Route			
161	Landau - Wissembourg	1755-1762	1763-1766
141	Metz	1757-1762	1763-1766
79	Reims	1757-1759	1758-1760
110	Verdun	1754-1759	1760
80	Chalons-sur-Marne	1754-1758	1757
Source: https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carte_de_Cassini			

The Cassini maps hosted at the Library of Congress

Sheet Number	Title	URL (link to image)
Central Route		
161	Landau - Wissembourg	https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=166
162	Strasbourg	https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=167
142	Nancy	https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=148
111	Toul	https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=116
80	Châlons	https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=83
79	Reims	https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=82
44	Soissons	https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=46
45	Meaux	https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=47
1	Paris	https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=1
2	Beauvais	https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=2
25	Rouen	https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=26
24	Yvetot	https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=25
60	Le Havre	https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=63
Southern Route		
163	Colmar	https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=168
143	Mirecourt - Epina	https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=149
142	Nancy	https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=148

Northern Route		
161	Landau - Wissembourg	https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=166
141	Metz	https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=146
110	Verdun	https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=115
79	Reims	https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=82
80	Chalons-sur-Marne	https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5830m.ghl00001/?sp=83
Note: The map number and the image number used by the Library of Congress are not generally the same.		

The Cassini maps hosted at the National Library of France

Sheet Number	Title	URL (link to image)
Central Route		
161	Landau - Wissembourg	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53095189f/f1.item.zoom
162	Strasbourg	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b530952082/f1.item.zoom
142	Nancy	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b530952171/f1.item.zoom
111	Toul	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53095241k/f1.item.zoom
80	Châlons	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53095244x/f1.item.zoom
79	Reims	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b530951918/f1.item.zoom
44	Soissons	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b530951505/f1.item.zoom
45	Meaux	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53095173b/f1.item.zoom
1	Paris	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53095162g/f1.item.zoom
2	Beauvais	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53095162g/f1.item.zoom
25	Rouen	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b530951611/f1.item.zoom
24	Yvetot	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53095160k/f1.item.zoom
60	Le Havre	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53095165t/f1.item.zoom
Southern Route		
163	Colmar	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53095271t/f1.item.zoom
143	Mirecourt - Epina	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b530952332/f1.item.zoom
142	Nancy	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b530952171/f1.item.zoom
Northern Route		
161	Landau - Wissembourg	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53095189f/f1.item.zoom
141	Metz	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53095199v/f1.item.zoom
110	Verdun	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b530951238/f1.item.zoom
79	Reims	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b530951918/f1.item.zoom
80	Chalons-sur-Marne	https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53095244x/f1.item.zoom
You will find an internet landing page at this link: https://gallica.bnf.fr/html/und/cartes/france-en-cartes/la-carte-de-cassini The page is in French. I used Google Chrome to translate it to English. The page contains a list of all the maps by sheet number and a dynamic map that facilitates quick access to the different sheets.		

The Cassini maps published in 1815, "New Edition"

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

Additional References

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

Triangular map of all France

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

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

History of the Cassini maps

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Alternate Routes

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

SOUFFLENHEIM EMIGRATION 1839: OBERMEYER, MESSMER, AND SCHALL

By Michael J. Nuwer, August 2024

View of South Street, from Maiden Lane, New York City, circa 1827, William James Bennett
Metropolitan Museum, Edward W. C. Arnold Collection of New York Prints, Maps, and Pictures
https://www.americanyawp.com/text/08-the-market-revolution/

United States immigration data show that the years between 1827 and 1845 were marked by a sustained rise in the volume of immigrants to U.S. ports. “Immigrant volume underwent a substantial increase during a fairly short period of years, and … the increase occurred well in advance of the potato famine.”[1]

Although many of these immigrants originated from Ireland and Great Britain, large numbers also came from states in southwest Germany[2] (Baden, Wurttemberg, the Rhenish Palatinate, Rhenish Prussia, and Hessia), from Switzerland, and from Alsace, France.

Reviewing immigration volume during the period between 1820 and 1870, Nicole Fouché found that Alsatian emigration before 1845 was an important element of the mass immigration. She showed that Swiss and German emigration had “a very slow start” while Alsatian emigration “started very high and very strong.” Therefore, “the influence of foreign emigration on Alsatian emigration is not as obvious as is generally believed.”[3]

The French government expressed concern about Alsatian emigration well before 1845. “The Kingdom risks becoming impoverished” by the departure of “craftsmen or farmers who possess an establishment commensurate with their status and sufficient resources for their needs.” The flight of cash was part of

this concern. “Rich and poor alike took cash with them, which could pose a local problem at a time when cash was in short supply.”[4]

Evidence of that concern came in 1838, when the mayors of Alsatian towns were required to provide a list of all emigrants to North America for the years between 1828 and 1837. In particular, they were asked to provide the amount of cash taken from their commune.

Soufflenheim’s report contained 70 names. There were 42 solo travelers who left town with a median average amount of cash of 330 francs. There were also 28 families with a total of 159 individuals departing Soufflenheim. The families left with a mean average of 4.3 children and a median average of 1,600 francs.[5]

The following article discusses a group of 23 Soufflenheim emigrants who left their homes during the first phase of mass immigration (1827-1845), specifically in the year 1839. The article relies on information from Cadastre folios to show important characteristics about these emigrants.

The Emigrants

On September 6, 1839 the sailing ship *Lausanne* arrived in New York Harbor with merchandise for A.G. & A.W. Benson and 159 steerage passengers. Genealogists Brian J. Smith and Mark Drexler have identified 23 of those passengers as residents of Soufflenheim.[6] The immigrants left Le Havre, France on July 12, 1839 and spent a long 56 days crossing the North Atlantic Ocean.[7] The following table shows the names of the Soufflenheim immigrants onboard the *Lausanne*.

1839 Emigrants	Children
Ignace Obermeyer, age 54, and Richarde Buchmüller, age 49	Martin Obermeyer, age 11
Phillip Obermeyer, age 21	
Joseph Schall, age 38, and Marie Anne Messmer, age 40	Adrienne Messmer, age 24 Joseph Schall, age 14
Vincent Messmer, age 35, and Marie Anne Rund, age 37	Marie Messmer, age 3 Josephine Messmer, age 1
Marguerite Messmer, age 48, widow of Joseph Lengert	Joseph Lengert, age 23 Xavier Lengert, age 20 Vincent Lengert, age 18 Marie Anne Lengert, age 16 Ophilia Lengert, age 14 Josephine Lengert, age 13 Marguerite Lengert, age 10
Emmanuel Schmitter, age 31, and Madelaine Lengert, age 26	Michel Schmitter, age 2

Kinship ties connected 19 of the 23 emigrates who sailed on the *Lausanne*. Marguerite Messmer and Marie Anne Messmer were sisters. Vincent Messmer was their brother. The twelve children of these three families were cousins. One of those cousins was Madelaine Lengert (Marguerite Messmer’s daughter), who was herself married with a child.

The Data

Soufflenheim's Napoléonic Cadastre was created in 1836. The project produced records for each of the town's landowners. Cadastre registers (the folios) enumerated information about an individual's house, yard, garden, plowed land, meadows, and more. A numbering system was used to identify each parcel of land. Soufflenheim's Cadastre plan divided the town into four sections, each designated by a letter A through D. The residential village was found in section D. The other three sections contained agricultural land. These documents provide useful information about the emigrants on the *Lausanne*.

For purposes of the Cadastre, dwellings were assigned a classification number and a corresponding tax rate. The housing class is useful because it implies the quality of the dwellings. The table below shows the housing classes and tax rates for Soufflenheim in 1836. There were seven dwelling classes. Class 1 was the highest quality house, and it carried a tax rate of 40 francs per dwelling. Class 7 was the lowest quality house with a tax rate of 4 francs per dwelling.

A social status scale can be constructed from this classification system. Houses in class 1, 2, or 3 are defined as upper class houses, which comprise 10.5 percent of Soufflenheim's housing stock. Houses in class 4 are defined as upper-middle class dwellings (17.4 percent of the housing stock). Houses in class 5 are defined as lower-middle class dwellings (32.7 percent of the housing stock). And houses in class 6 or 7 are defined as lower class dwellings (39.3 percent of the housing stock).

Soufflenheim Houses, 1836

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

At the age of 54, Ignace Obermeyer was the oldest of the 1839 emigrants. His wife was 49 and they had an adopted son named Martin. The 1836 census reported that Ignace worked as a baker and lived in the village at house number 190.

Ignace Obermeyer's Cadastre registry provides information that supplements the census. His records were found in folio 580. That document identifies his house and yard. The dwelling number was 190, which matches the number found in the census. In the Cadastre plan, that house was located at parcel number D 311. The house was a class 4 dwelling which was an upper middle-class quality. There was also a garden (parcel D 312) and an orchard (parcel D 310) at the same address. Finally, Ignace Obermeyer owned one small parcel of farmland. It was one-tenth of an acre and located in Section A.

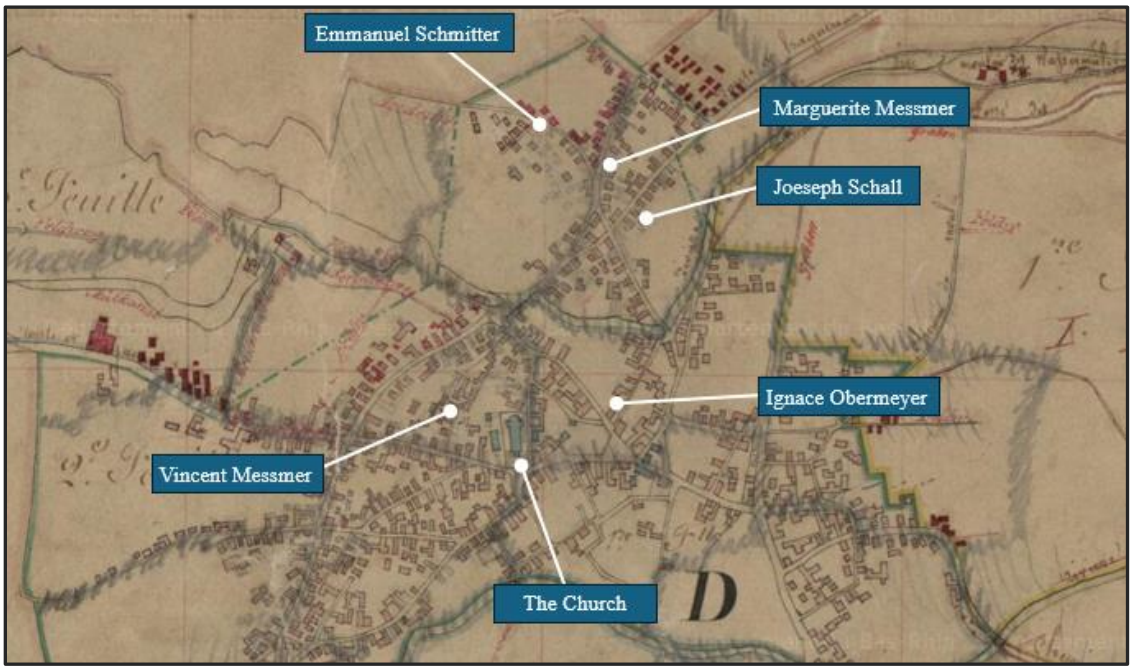
In 1836 Vincent Messmer was 32 years old, married to Marie Anne Rund, and the father of one daughter, also named Marie Anne. He earned a cash income as a well digger. The census counted Vincent as family number 363. They were living in house number 355. Vincent and his wife had a second daughter born after the census was recorded, and they emigrated in 1839 with two young girls.

Vincent Messmer's Cadastre folio was number 523. He owned a house and yard in the village and three parcels of farmland. The house was at parcel number D 735 and the yard was 0.08 (2/25th) of an acre. The house was assessed to be a class 6 dwelling. The three parcels of plowed farmland totaled 0.92 acres.

The 1836 census counted Joseph Schall, his wife, Marie Anne Messmer, and his son, Joseph, Jr. as family number 231. They were living in house number 224. Joseph, Sr. was identified as a tailor. When he emigrated in 1839, Joseph Schall was 38 years old; his wife was 40 and they traveled with two children, Joseph, Jr., who was 14 years old and Adrianne who was 24 years old. Adrianne was born before her mother married Joseph Schall.

Joseph Schall's Cadastre folio was number 618. It identified his village house at number 224, which was located on parcel number D 831 of the Cadastre plan. The house was in the Brunnenberg neighborhood of the village. The yard was very small, only 150 sq meters—that is, 0.04 (1/25th) of an acre. There was no attached garden nor was there an orchard. The house was rated as a class 6 dwelling. Joseph Schall owned no farmland.

The 1836 census identified Marguerite Messmer as the household head of family number 252. They were living at house number 244. Marguerite Messmer was a widow with 9 children. (The tenth child listed in the census, Ferdinand Lengert, was a stepson.)



The Soufflenheim Village Cluster, 1836

Marguerite Messmer's husband, Francis Joseph Lengert, had died in January 1830. When the Cadastre was created six years later, Joseph Lengert's property was recorded in his widow's folio (number 425). The house number was 224, which matched the number found in the census. The house and yard were at parcel D 883 and an attached orchard was at parcel D 884. The Cadastre rated the family house as a class 6 dwelling. Marguerite Messmer owned no farmland.

Marguerite Messmer's oldest daughter, Madelaine, was a member of her household in the 1836 census and married Emmanuel Schmitter later that year. Emmanuel Schmitter did not own property, and it appears that his parents had very little property to pass down. His father, Roman Schmitter, died in 1809 and his mother was the owner of a class 6 house in the village. She owned no farmland. Emmanuel Schmitter grew up in a lower-class house and in 1836 he was working as a day laborer.

The following table summarizes key characteristics of the emigrants discussed in this article.

Characteristics of Emigrants

	Emigration Age	Class of House	Farmland (acres)	Garden Orchard	Profession
Ignace Obermeyer	54	4	0.11	Y / Y	Baker
Joseph Schall	38	6	0.00	N / N	Tailor
Vincent Messmer	35	6	0.92	N / N	Well digger
Marguerite Messmer	48	6	0.00	N / Y	
Emmanuel Schmitter	31	6	0.00	N / N	Day laborer

"[Alsatian] emigrants," writes Nicole Fouché, "did not systematically come from the poorest classes." The above pages have shown that the Soufflenheim emigrants discussed in this article were lower-middle class residents of a rural community. They were owners of property and they possessed craft skills. Nevertheless, they were not well off. If they owned farmland, it was not much land—even by Alsatian standards.

Fouché also writes that the Alsatian emigrants "came from the countryside, [not the city]. They were rural people who, even if they didn't all work the land, were at least familiar with field work." The Soufflenheim emigrants had craft skills: a baker, a tailor, and a well digger, and they were very likely familiar with field work.

Finally, Fouché writes that the Alsatian emigrants traveled in family groups. "Emigrants were fathers. There is every reason to believe that those who left alone, often young men, were single." Again, the characteristics of the Soufflenheim emigrants are consistent with this conclusion.

Nicole Fouché concludes that "Alsatian emigrants to the USA in the nineteenth century did not belong to an unstable or marginal population. They were, it seems, highly representative of the Alsatian population of the nineteenth century."[8]

Settling in North America

Following their arrival in North America, Marguerite Messmer and her seven children settled in New York City. Genealogist Kelly Cooper has identified marriage documents for each of the children. All the documents are from Manhattan. Six of them were dated in 1844, 1845, or 1846. The seventh child, Joseph Lengert, was married in 1849 and another document indicates that he worked in New York City as a laborer. Cooper also reports New York City death records for six of these children.

Madelaine Lengert and her husband Emmanuel Schmitter also settled in New York City. Kelly Cooper has birth records for four children born in Manhattan between 1840 and 1847.

The other three immigrant families settled in Western New York—in the City of Buffalo. Ignace Obermeyer was found in the 1840 census living in Buffalo's 4th Ward, which was the heart of the city's "German Village." The Obermeyer household included Ignace, Richarde, and their son, Martin. Ignace was employed in manufacturing.[9]

On April 27, 1842 Ignace Obermeyer became a property owner. This purchase was made roughly two and one-half years after he arrived in North America. The house was located at 12 Walnut Street and the purchase price was $500.[10] No mortgage was found.

The 1850 census found Ignace (age 65) and Richarde (age 60) living in a two-family dwelling. Many houses in Buffalo were two-family wood-frame structures. The typical layout was one flat on the first floor and a second flat upstairs. This style of home made it possible for a working-class family to afford home ownership by residing in one of the flats and renting the other flat to another family. The census indicates that Ignace was the owner of the two-family dwelling; the second family was a young immigrant couple (ages 30 and 24). The household head worked as a joiner.[11] Ignace Obermeyer owned this property until April 25, 1859.[12]

Vincent Messmer and his family were found in the 1840 census living in Cheektowaga, a town immediately east of Buffalo. He was employed in commerce.[13] Early the next year, on January 7, 1841, he purchased a parcel of land in the City of Buffalo. The land was located on the south side of Kane Street and was 100ft by 50ft, that is, 0.11 of an acre.[14] Vincent Messmer paid $200 for the land and he financed the purchase with a mortgage.[15] Vincent purchased a second residential lot in 1848. The deed was dated October 12, the purchase price was $200, and the lot was located on Genesee Street near Spring Street.[16]

Vincent Messmer's entry in the 1850 census is similar to Ignace Obermeyer entry. It shows a two-family structure. Vincent Messmer was the owner and his family of six was living in one of the flats. An immigrant family of eight was living in the second flat. Unfortunately, the census does not offer a way to determine whether the Messmer family was residing at the Genesee Street property or at the Kane Street property.

Vincent's wife, Marie Anne Rund, died on August 20, 1850 (age 48). One year later he sold the Kane Street property. The original lot was 100ft by 50ft and he sold it in two pieces of 100ft by 25ft each. The first piece was sold on August 13, 1851 for $125 and the second sold on September 6, 1851 for $325.

In 1855 the New York State census found Vincent (a widower) and his 9 years old son living in Buffalo's 7th Ward. Vicent was 52 years old and working as a pump maker. He was probably living at the Genesee Street house, as it was within the 7th Ward.[17] The building was at that time a three-family structure.[18]

On August 23, 1855 Vincent Messmer sold his Genesee Street house and about that time he and his son moved to New Germany, Canada.

Joseph Schall's history in Buffalo has been a bit more difficult to assess. He was found as the head of a household in the 1840 census. The family of three was living in Buffalo's 4th Ward.[19] A year later, Joseph Schall became a Buffalo property owner. On November 29, 1841 he purchased a residential lot near the intersection of Jefferson and Sycamore Streets. The price was $58, and the purchase occurred a full two years after Joseph arrived in North America.[20]

The 1850 Census found Joseph Schall living in Cincinnati, Ohio; he was working as a tailor in Cincinnati's first ward. His wife, Marie Anne Messmer, and his son, Joseph, Jr., had contracted cholera and died there in June 1849. Joseph Schall, Sr. remarried in 1850. At that time, he was still the owner of a house in Buffalo. The Buffalo house was sold July 19, 1853. Joseph Schall received $90 for the property.[21] Joseph Schall then disappears from history.

Summary

The Soufflenheim immigrants discussed in this article can be described as middle-class members of a rural community. They were property owners with craft skills, but their resources were meager even by Alsatian standards.

Nicole Fouché identified the economic status of two groups of emigrants: those who left Alsace with enough money to settle in North America under good conditions and those who left with just enough to pay for their travel.

> It would be a mistake to think it was always the poorest Alsatians who emigrated. To take the example of the Bas Rhin from 1828 to 1837, it was found that 35 percent of the families took with them large sums of money which probably enabled them to settle in the United States under good conditions. 7 percent of people asking for passports took even larger sums with them and this brings the number of families able to settle in America without any problem up to 42 percent from the financial point of view. The remaining 58 percent had just enough to pay their passage and the overland journey.[22]

Vincent Messmer, Ignace Obermeyer, Joseph Schall, Marguerite Messmer, and Emmanuel Schmitter were not poor nor were they from the unstable and undesirable elements of society.

They "sold their little house with its patch of land" to raise the money for their journey to North America. They traveled in family units, indeed four of the families formed a kinship network. These emigrants may not have been among the 42 percent who settled in America under good conditions, but they were among the group who had enough to pay for their passage and the overland journey.

Ignace Obermeyer, Vincent Messmer, and Joseph Schall sold land in Soufflenheim and became landowners in Buffalo. However, neither of the three immigrants purchased Buffalo land within a year of their arrival. Ignace Obermeyer purchased his property 31 months after arriving; Joseph Schall purchased his property 26 months after arriving; and Vincent Messmer purchased his property 16 months after arriving in North America and that purchase was made with a mortgage. The evidence does not suggest that these immigrants liquidated their Soufflenheim holding at a price enabling them to cross the sea to America *and* buy property immediately upon their arrival.

The emigrants discussed above were lower-middle class members of Soufflenheim's community. They were neither large landowners nor unskilled laborers. They did not travel under indentured contracts nor on behalf of a colonization company; they were not funded by a labor recruiter; they were not transported

at government expense attempting to be rid of undesirables. This article has shown that these emigrants were people “who traveled on their own resources;” who “had property that could be turned to cash;” and who “relied upon their own skills and wished to do so in the future.”[23]

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SOUFFLENHEIM EMIGRATION 1847: HALTER, VOEGELE, AND ZINGER

By Michael J. Nuwer, August 2024

Soufflenheim Emigration in the Agrarian Crisis of 1845-1848

On July 9, 1847 a sailing ship named *Exchange* arrived at New York Harbor. Three families from Soufflenheim were among the arriving passengers. The Halter family of seven, the Voegele family of nine, and the Zinger family of eleven disembarked on North American soil. The names of these passengers are presented in Table 1. The sailing ship had departed from Le Havre, France on June 7th, in ballast, with 170 passengers—a 32-day transatlantic voyage.

Historians generally agree that the main reason Europeans immigrated to new places in the first half of the nineteenth century was because of a shortage of land to support their family. Inheritance law in Alsace and southwest Germany passed property equally among a family's sons and daughters, and thus farms were divided and subdivided among all the heirs. This left each heir with smaller parcels of land than their father had. These laws became especially problematic in the early nineteenth century when falling mortality in Europe caused faster population growth. In other words, fixed amounts of land were being divided among a growing number of surviving children. The parcels of land became smaller and smaller for each generation and by the nineteenth century the size of many parcels was not viable to sustain a family. This phenomenon produced an incentive to emigrate, as people sought farmland in North America, a place that was seen to have an abundance of land. In the words of historian Mack Walker:

> The principal means of production was agriculture; its main capital resource was land, which permitted of little expansion. In southwestern Germany, an area of divisible inheritances, agricultural lands had been divided and subdivided to match increased intensification. The family plot decreased in size and remained marginal or submarginal in terms of its capacity to support those who depended upon it, so that in Baden, Wurttemberg, the Rhenish Palatinate, Rhenish Prussia, and the Hesse a large part of the landowning population stood perpetually on the verge of hunger.[1]

United States immigration data shows that the years between 1827 and 1845 were marked by a sustained rise in the volume of immigrants to U.S. ports. This period marked the beginning of mass immigration and was characterized by travelers with the intension of permanent settlement in North America. Beginning in 1846, immigrant volume again rose sharply, finally peaking in 1854. It is common to explain this second jump in the volume of immigration to the 1846 spread of the potato blight across Europe.[2]

The potato blight in Europe was first noticed in June 1845 in Belgium and quickly spread across Northern Europe. The failure of the 1845 potato harvest caused hardship, but it did not cause a crisis. The failure of the 1846 harvest was more severe. To make matters worse, in 1846 the continent lost almost half of its rye harvest and had a below normal wheat harvest, thereby exacerbating the failure of the potato crop. As a consequence of these crop failures, the prices of grains rose substantially throughout Europe and remained high into 1847.[3]

Table 1 : Immigrants on the Ship *Exchange*, June 7 to July 9, 1847

Family of Joseph Voegele

Name	Born	Age at immigration
Joseph Voegele	14 Jul 1790	56
Catherine Muller	11 Apr 1799	48
Joseph Voegele	23 Feb 1823	24
Henry Voegele	14 Jul 1827	19
Francois Xavier Voegele	06 Aug 1830	16
Jean Baptiste Voegele	06 Jun 1834	13
Madelaine Voegele	15 Jul 1836	10
Marie Anne Voegele	24 Apr 1838	9
Margueritha Voegele	01 Jul 1841	6

Family of Martin Halter

Name	Born	Age at immigration
Martin Halter	28 Nov 1796	50
Richarde Schmuck	10 Feb 1799	48
Antoine Halter	06 Jul 1825	22
Marie Eve Halter	25 Dec 1827	19
Martin Halter	11 May 1830	17
Auguste Halter	18 Sep 1835	11
Louis Halter	08 Aug 1839	7

Family of Joseph Zinger

Name	Born	Age at immigration
Joseph Zinger	10 Jun 1784	63
Catherine Schoeffter	02 Apr 1786	61
Jean Zinger	27 Dec 1826	20
Euphenie Zinger	14 Apr 1812	35
Mathieu Schlosser	20 Sep 1810	36
Caroline Schlosser	14 Jan 1835	12
Therese Schlosser	13 Feb 1837	10
Michel Schlosser	28 Sep 1840	6
Jean Schlosser	27 Jan 1843	4
Louis Schlosser	24 Nov 1844	2
Julius Schlosser		

Archival research has identified genealogical information about each of the three Soufflenheim families who arrived in New York on July 9, 1847. Marriages dates, birth dates, and death dates are transcribed and available.[4] That information is not reproduced here. Instead, this article uses the following pages to introduce new information taken from the Cadastre land registry.

Soufflenheim's Napoléonic Cadastre was assembled in 1836. The project contained two parts. First the Cadastral plan created a set of maps showing the boundaries of every parcel of residential and agricultural land within the commune of Soufflenheim. A numbering system was used to identify each house and parcel of land. The detailed maps divided the town into four sections, each labeled with a letter A through D. The residential village was found in Section D. The other three sections contained agricultural land.

The second part of the Cadastre land registry contained records for each landowner. Cadastre registers (the folios) recorded information about the land owned by an individual. On one page, information about an individual's house, yard, garden, plowed land, meadows, and more was enumerated. Cadastre folios were found for Martin Halter (folio 263), Joseph Voegele (folio 749), and Joseph Zinger (folio 832). Each of these folios was included in the original plan from 1836 when Soufflenheim's Cadastre was assembled.

The folios described the parcels of land owned by the three future immigrants. The information included the section letter and parcel number which locate each parcel on the maps. Also included was a description of the parcel. Farmland was described as either plowed land or meadows. Land in the village cluster included the yards on which dwellings were constructed, gardens, and small orchards. The dwellings were identified separately from their yard. The folio also contains the size, expressed in hectares, and the tax assessment, expressed in francs, of the respective land parcel. Finally, the folios contain the year each parcel of land was added to the folio and the year it was removed from the folio.

For purposes of the Cadastre, dwellings were assigned a classification number and a corresponding tax rate, which indicates the quality of the house. Table 4 shows the housing classes and tax rates for Soufflenheim in 1836. Soufflenheim's Cadastre contained seven dwelling classes. Class 1 was the highest quality house, and it carried a tax rate of 40 francs per dwelling. Class 7 was the lowest quality house with a tax rate of 4 francs per dwelling.

From Table 2 we can estimate a social status scale. Houses in class 1, 2, or 3 are defined as upper class houses (10.5 percent). Those in class 4 are upper-middle class (17.4 percent). Houses in class 5 are lower-middle class (32.7 percent). And houses in class 6 or 7 are lower class (39.3 percent).

It appears that the year in which a parcel was added or removed from a folio was not the year the property was bought or sold. A review made of folios for individuals whose date of immigration is known showed that in almost all cases their folio recorded the year a parcel was removed as the year *after* the property owner emigrated. Jean Kieffer, for example, emigrated from Soufflenheim in the second half of 1843. Before he left, he was the owner of 24 parcels of property. However, the year these parcels were removed from his folio (number 358) was given as 1844. The same issue appears on the folios of many others whose date of immigration is known. It seems doubtful that such a pattern would occur in so many cases. In this article, therefore, it is assumed the property was sold the year before it was removed from the folio.

Table 2 : Soufflenheim Houses

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

The 1836 Census

The year 1836 was a census year and the census information can be combined with the Cadastre information.[5] The census identified Martin Halter as the head of household number 368. The family was living at house number 361 Oberdorff. The census identifies Oberdorff as a street, but in fact it was a neighborhood which translates as “upper village.” Martin Halter was 40 years old. His wife Richarde Schmuck was 38 years old and they had four children: Antoine (age 11), Eve (age 8), Martin (age 6), and Auguste (age 9 months).

Joseph Voegele was found in the census as the head of household number 290. He was 44 years old and his wife Catherine Muller was 36. They had five children: Joseph (age 13), Marguerite (age 11), Henry (age 9), Xavier (age 5), and Jean (age 2). The Voegele family was living at house number 282. The street was given as Brunnenberg, but again this name was a neighborhood, not a physical street. Brunnenberg, which translates as “mountain spring,” was a region of the village north of the Eberbach River.

Joseph Zinger was identified in the census as the head of household number 110. He was 54 years old and his wife, Catherine Schoeffter was 51. They had four sons living in their household: Barnabe (age 22), Jacques (age 17), Joseph (age 12), and Jean (age 9). The family was living at house number 101 and the street was given as Rue Dite im Gübel, a street name that is not found on any known map of Soufflenheim.

The Cadastre folios that were created in 1836 used the same house number system as the census. This means that the house number from the census can be matched to the house number on a Cadastre folio, and, thereby, the specific location on the Cadastre maps can be identified. Table 3 presents that information and Figure 1 identifies the houses.

Table 3

Item	Halter	Voegele	Zinger
Census house number	361	281	101
Census street name	Oberdorff	Brunnenberg	Rue Dite im Gübel
Cadastre house number	361	281	101
Cadastre district	Village	Brunnenberg	Village

Cadastre parcel number	Sec D #729	Sec D #997	Sec D #170

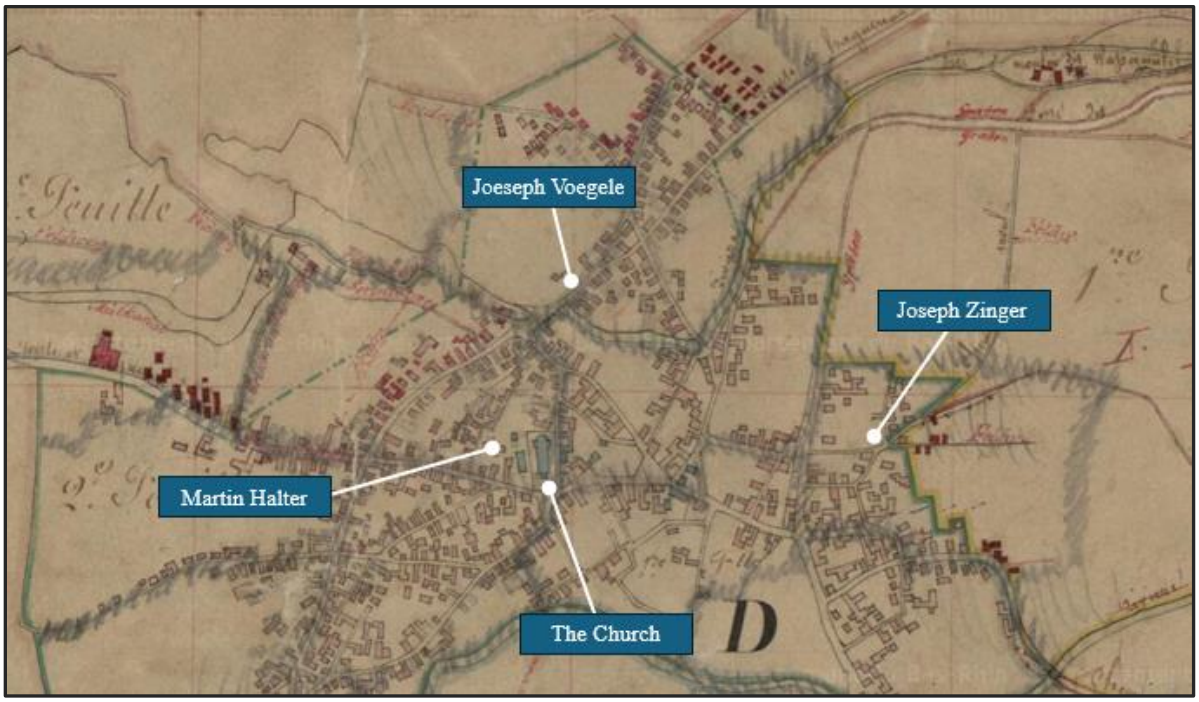

Figure 1 : The Soufflenheim Village Cluster, 1836

The Cadastre plan and the Census were both completed in 1836. The Halter, Voegele, and Zinger families lived in Soufflenheim another ten years before they emigrated. Yet many Soufflenheim residents had already immigrated to North America. In March 1838 the town Mayor submitted a report of all residents who had emigrated between the years 1828 and 1837. The list contained 70 names: 28 families and 42 solo travels. Martin Halter, Joseph Voegele, and Joseph Zinger would have known about these emigrants and probably had known some of them as friends. Be that as it may, it would be another 10 years before the Halter, Voegele, and Zinger families would leave their hometown.

Cadastre Property

Transcriptions of the Cadastre folios for Martin Halter (folio 263), Joseph Voegele (folio 749), and Joseph Zinger (folio 832) are presented in the Appendix of this article.

In 1836, the year that Soufflenheim's Cadastre plan was completed, Martin Halter was the owner of one-half acre of land (0.557 acre). The land included two houses and yards in the village and the yards were next door to each other. The parcel numbers were 728 and 729, the house numbers were 362 and 361 respectively. The Halter family was living at house number 361 and Marie Anne Lehmann, a 70-year-old widow, was living at house number 362. Both houses were rated as class 5 dwellings. Martin Halter also owned one parcel of plowed land in 1836, which was 0.4 acres in size.

In 1841, Martin Halter sold the house at number 361. He probably moved into the house next door. In the same year he acquired additional farmland. He purchased two parcels of plowed land and two parcels of meadow land. At the beginning of 1842 when taxes were due, Martin Halter was the owner of a house and yard in the village and 1.65 acres of farmland. The farmland included three parcels of plowed land totaling 0.98 acres and two parcels of meadow land totaling 0.66 acres.

Table 4 presents the occupations reported in the 1836, 1841, and 1846 censuses. Martin Halter worked as a woodcutter in 1836 and 1841, and he worked as a plowman in 1846. As a woodcutter, he may have been involved with the harvesting and transport of trees from Soufflenheim's communal forest and from the Haguenau Forest.

In 1846, on the eve of his journey to North America, Martin Halter was 49 years old, he had four sons and a daughter (the youngest, Louis, was seven years old), he owned a class 5 house, and he owned 1.6 acres of farmland.

Table 4 : Census Occupations[6]

	1836	**1841**	**1846**
Martin Halter	Woodcutter	Woodcutter	Plowman
Joseph Voegele	Charcoal Maker	Charcoal Maker	Charcoal Maker
Joseph Zinger	Plowman	Plowman	Plowman

Joseph Zinger was also a landowner. In 1836 he owned two houses and two yards in the village. Like Martin Halter, these houses were next door to each other. The parcel numbers were 170 and 171, the house numbers were 101 and 100 respectively. Joseph Zinger also owned an attached orchard. His folio suggests that the house at number 100 was demolished in 1836. Although it was recorded on the folio, it was never taxed. The demolition of this house did not change the quantity of land Joseph Zinger owned. Taken together the land in the village totaled one-quarter of an acre (0.245). The house at number 101 was a class 5 dwelling.

Joseph Zinger also owned farmland in the Soufflenheim fringe (the bann). In 1836 he had six parcels of plowed land. There were no meadows recorded in his folio. The farmland totaled almost two acres (1.96 acres). Between 1836 when the Cadastre was created and 1847 when he left Soufflenheim, Joseph Zinger purchased no additional land, nor did sell any of his land.

Each of the three census years presented in Table 4 report that Joseph Zinger worked as a plowman. In 1846, he was 62 years old, he had four sons and a daughter, he owned a class 5 house, and he owned 1.96 acres of farmland.

In 1836 Joseph Voegele owned a bit more than six and one-half acres of land (6.69 acres). He was also the owner of two houses. In 1836, the Voegele family was living in the house at parcel 997, house number 281. That house number matches the house number in the 1836 census. The second house was at parcel 1217, house number 321. According to the census, Joachim Strack was living at house number 321. This suggests that Joseph Voegele was a landlord. The house at number 321 was a class 4 dwelling.

Joseph Voegele's Cadastre folio tells us that his house at number 281 was demolished in 1836 (presumably after the census recorded him as a resident there). Evidence from the 1841 census tells us that the Voegele family moved into their house at number 321. We know Joachim Strack was living at house number 321 in 1836. His neighbors (at house number 322) were Joseph Schlosser and Appoline Besson. The 1841 census does not include house numbers, but it identifies Joseph Voegele as family number 360 and Joseph Schlosser and Appoline Besson as family number 361, suggesting that they were next door neighbors.

When the Cadastre was initially constructed in 1836, Joseph Voegele owned 5.58 acres of plowed land and 0.74 acres of meadows. His folio shows that seven parcels of farmland were added and three were removed in the years between 1836 and 1846. In 1847 he owned 19 parcels of farmland, and all but one was plowed land. Aggregated together, the farmland totaled 6.14 acres.

Table 4 shows that Joseph Voegele worked as a charcoal maker in 1836, 1841, and 1846. In 1846, Joseph Voegele was 56 years old, he had four sons and three daughters, he owned a class 4 house, and he owned 6.14 acres of farmland.

Leaving Home

We know that the Halter, Voegele, and Zinger families were in Le Havre, France on June 7, 1847, the day the sailing ship, *Exchange*, departed for North America. The journey from Soufflenheim to Le Havre would have taken about three weeks and the travelers would have waited in the port city before their ship departed, perhaps a week or so. Thus, the three families left Soufflenheim no later than the beginning of May.

In January 1847, the emigrants would have paid their property taxes. To obtain a passport needed to leave France, an emigrant had to certify with the town mayor that their taxes and debts were paid. Then between January and May most of the property owned by Martin Halter, Joseph Voegele, and Joseph Zinger was sold or otherwise transferred.

Martin Halter liquidated his house, yard, and five parcels of farmland, which was everything he owned. Joseph Voegele liquidated his house, yard, and garden in the village. He also sold 16 parcels of farmland. There were three parcels that remained unsold when Joseph left Soufflenheim. One was sold in 1848 and the other two in 1849.

The emigration story for the Joseph Zinger family was a bit different. Joseph and his wife Catherine Schoeffter left Soufflenheim with one son (Jean) and one married daughter (Euphenie). They had two other sons (Barnabé and Jacob) who did not emigrate. In 1847, Joseph Zinger transferred his property in the village, a house, yard, garden, and orchard to his son Jacob (0.25 acres of land). Jacob also received a parcel of plowed land which was 0.51 acre. Joseph Zinger then liquidated the other five parcels of farmland (1.45 acres).

In addition, Joseph Zinger's daughter, Euphenie, was married to Mathias Schlosser. They had six children who emigrated in 1847. Mathias Schlosser was the owner of a house and yard in Soufflenheim, but he had no farmland. When he left Soufflenheim with his family and in-laws, his brother Antoni became the owner of Mathias' village property.

In summary, Joseph Zinger sold 1.45 acres of farmland; Martin Halter sold 1.65 acres of farmland plus a house and yard in the village; Joseph Voegele sold 5.24 acres of farmland plus a house, yard, and garden in the village.

We don't know the money prices for this property, and so we don't know how much money each family carried with them when they left Soufflenheim. One estimate might be that a house and yard were worth about as much as 1.25 acres of farmland. In 1841, Martin Halter sold a class 5 house and yard in the village and purchased 1.25 acres of farmland. This may have been a zero-sum transaction. If that was the case, then Martin Halter would have left Soufflenheim with twice as much money as Joseph Zinger. Joseph Voegele would have left with considerably more than both Joseph Zinger and Martin Halter.

A common estimate for the cost of travel from Alsace to New York City in the era before the railroads is about 200 francs per adult. The Halter family traveled with seven people and the Voegele family traveled with nine. Martin Halter needed about 1,400 francs and Joseph Voegele needed about 1,800 francs. The Zinger family traveled with five adults and six children. The travel cost would have been about 2,200 francs. Prices for the Atlantic crossing may have been half for children aged seven and under. In that case, the travel cost would be closer to 1,800 francs (seven adults at 200 francs each and four children at 100 francs each).

After disembarking in New York City, the three Soufflenheim families traveled up the Hudson River to Albany, New York and then west along the Erie Canal to western New York. The families of Martin Halter and Joseph Voegele settled in the town of Lancaster, New York, about fifteen miles east of the City of Buffalo. The family of Joseph Zinger continued from western New York, north into Canada, and settled in the town of New Germany, in Waterloo County.

We know that the Halter and Voegele families proceeded directly from New York City to western New York. Their ship arrived on July 9 and on September 3, 1847 Joseph Voegele and Martin Halter purchased land in Lancaster, New York.[7] The purchase was an undivided interest in a 50-acre parcel of land located in the southeast part of town. Less than two months after arriving in North America, they paid Hiram Clark $600 for the northern part of lot 57. No record of a mortgage was found, and it is inferred that Joseph Voegele and Martin Halter purchased the land with money they brought from Alsace. Since one US dollar was worth 5.42 French francs, $600 was equivalent to 3,252 francs.

Summary

Martin Halter, Joseph Voegele, and Joseph Zinger emigrated from Soufflenheim during the second phase of mass immigration from central Europe. Phase one is recognized by historians to include the years between 1827 and 1845. Phase two began in 1846 and continued through 1854. The jump in the volume of emigration from central Europe was composed of two elements: an extension of the social sources of emigration to include a larger number of poorer people (propertyless day laborers) and a geographic extension to include new areas in central Europe (northern and eastern Germany).[8]

This change in the social composition of emigration from central Europe was "a response to the economic insecurity, the anxiety, the frustration, and the sense of impending crisis that characterized" the years after 1845. An economic crisis in central Europe began in 1845 and hit the rural lower classes especially hard. "The lower classes, who relied particularly on home-grown potatoes, now had to resort to more expensive grains. ... The increased prices left many families in dire need."[9]

In lower Alsace “the potato was hit by a terrible disease in 1845, which lasted for several years.” The general economic crisis, reflected in rising prices for grain, made “it extremely difficult to make a living. The phenomenon was amplified by a succession of agricultural crises linked to climatic conditions: 1837-1840, 1845-1846 and potato disease, which exacerbated food shortages.”[10]

At Soufflenheim “many people were threatened with hunger.”

> In 1846, according to the [Town] Council’s deliberations, Mayor [Joseph] Messner drew attention to the misery “currently weighing on a large number of families without work.” … He proposed the creation of a charity workshop. A number of people were also hired to build two dikes to protect the Obermattwald and Niederfeld fields from flooding. In November of the same year, the Council became aware of the high cost of living and the misery caused by the lack of work and granted a credit of 5,000 francs to the charity workshop. The commune had to abandon plans to install new organs, for which a credit of 9,000 francs had been earmarked. The charity workshop should be up and running as soon as possible.[11]

In 1845 the potato blight struck hard. Its effect was most severe where the population was dense and there was little industry. These areas depended most upon the potato. More harm was done by the disease in 1846. A very large proportion of central Europe’s potatoes were destroyed. The rye crop, too, was seriously damaged by frosts and food prices rose sharply under the pressure of consumer demand and speculation. “As the economic situation worsened and the tense atmosphere of foreboding grew more oppressive, the spring of 1847 brought unprecedented swarms of [emigrants] by road, river, and rail to the seaports of northwestern Europe.”[12]

The three Soufflenheim families discussed in this article joined that “swarm.” Yet, the three families did not exhibit the characteristics that defined the second phase of mass immigration. They did not originate from a new geographic area. Soufflenheim, and lower Alsace in general, had been a major source of immigration throughout phase one of the process. Moreover, the three families were not poor, propertyless day laborers.

Martin Halter, Joseph Voegele, and Joseph Zinger were people who had skills they could rely upon and who had property that could be turned into cash. They were from Soufflenheim’s middle class. Their choice to emigrate appears to have been rooted in characteristics that gave shape to the earlier phase of mass immigration, although their timing overlapped with the second phase. Thus, the jump in the volume of emigration that defined the second phase of mass immigration was not the result of a shift in the nature and character of emigration, but rather a transcendence which incorporated elements of the first phase while growing and spreading with new elements in the second phase.

Appendix

Voegele, Joseph, Charcoal maker of Soufflenheim : Folio number 749

Year Added	Section	Parcel Number	Parcel Type	Size (hectares)	Size (Acres)	Class	Year Removed
	A	218	Plowed land	0.0895	0.22		1848
	A	240	Plowed land	0.0965	0.24		1842
	A	304	Meadow	0.1540	0.38		1849
	A	699	Plowed land	0.0825	0.20		1848
	A	1033	Plowed land	0.1180	0.29		1850
	B	420	Meadow	0.0740	0.18		1847

	B	422	Meadow	0.0720	0.18		1847
	B	455	Plowed land	0.0920	0.23		1850
	C	297	Plowed land	0.1480	0.37		1848
	C	395	Plowed land	0.2710	0.67		1848
	C	397	Plowed land	0.1370	0.34		1848
	C	433	Plowed land	0.1440	0.36		1848
	C	527	Plowed land	0.0940	0.23		1848
	C	603	Plowed land	0.1830	0.45		1848
	D	977	Plowed land	0.0870	0.21		1842
	D	997	House				1842
	D	997	Yard	0.0705	0.17		1842
	D	998	Plowed land	0.4020	0.99		1842
	D	1217	House				1848
	D	1217	Yard	0.0570	0.14		1848
	D	1218	Garden	0.0230	0.06		1848
	D	1219	Plowed land	0.0770	0.19		1848
	D	1303	Plowed land	0.1075	0.27		1848
	D	1406	Plowed land	0.1300	0.32		1848
1839	D	776	House				1841
1839	D	776	Plowed land	0.0460	0.11		1841
1839	D	1201	Plowed land	0.1940	0.48		1848
1842	D	1202	Plowed land	0.0875	0.22		1848
1842	B	423	Meadow	0.0700	0.17		1847
1843	B	536	Meadow	0.0730	0.18		1846
1846	C	396	Plowed land	0.1510	0.37		1848
1847	C	586	Plowed land	0.1155	0.29		1848
1847	C	587	Plowed land	0.1050	0.26		1848

Martin Halter of Soufflenheim : Folio number 263

Year Added	Section	Parcel Number	Parcel Type	Size (Hectares)	Size (Acres)	Class	Year Removed
	D	728	House			5	1848
	D	728	Yard	0.0425	0.105	1	1848
	D	729	House			5	1842
	D	729	Yard	0.0210	0.052	1	1842
	D	1260	Plowed land	0.1620	0.400	5	1848
1842	A	866	Plowed land	0.0810	0.200	1	1848
1842	B	67	Meadow	0.1470	0.363	1	1848
1842	D	939	Plowed land	0.1550	0.383	5	1848
1842	B	314	Meadow	0.1210	0.299	1	1848

Joseph Zinger, son of Jacob, of Soufflenheim : Folio number 832

Year Added	Section	Parcel Number	Parcel Type	Size (Hectares)	Size (Acres)	Class	Year Removed
	A	51	Plowed land	0.0780	0.193	2	1848
	B	172	Plowed land	0.2060	0.509	5	1848
	B	768	Plowed land	0.0670	0.166	5	1848
	C	259	Plowed land	0.1570	0.388	4	1848
	C	559	Plowed land	0.1230	0.304	4	1848
	D	170	House			5	1848
	D	170	Yard	0.0065	0.016	1	1848
	D	171	House				démolie
	D	171	Yard	0.0645	0.159	1	1848
	D	172	Orchard	0.0280	0.069	2	1848
	D	1427	Plowed land	0.1620	0.400	4	1848

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8. Walker, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-75.
9. Gunter Mahlerwein, "The consequences of the potato blight in South Germany," in Cormac Ó Gráda, Richard Paping, and Eric Vanhaute, eds., *When the Potato Failed: Causes and Effects of the "Last" European Subsistence Crisis, 1845-1950*, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2007. pp. 213-221.
10. René Clauss, Raymond Schwengler, and Joseph Walter, *Oberrœdern Stundwiller: Deux Villages, Une Paroisse*, Strasbourg: Editions Coprur, 1993. pp. 174, 182.
11. Lucien Sittler, Marc Elchinger and Fritz Geissert, *Soufflenheim Une Cite à la Recherche de son Histoire*, (Societe D'Histoire Et D'Archeologie Du Reid Nord, 1987), p.173.
12. Walker, *op. cit.*, pp. 71-72, 100.

ESTATE INVENTORIES

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.

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

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[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/1SU2e4EoD8aERvYbTBO021mTt9WaI2XQw

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 immigrates 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 guldens. 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 guldens, 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.

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[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 2/3 d
“And to the children … from their father”	99 R	8 s	9 1/3 d
“So to each of them a half”	49 R	9 s	4 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
For a total estimation of:	242 R	8 s	2 d
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

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

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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:

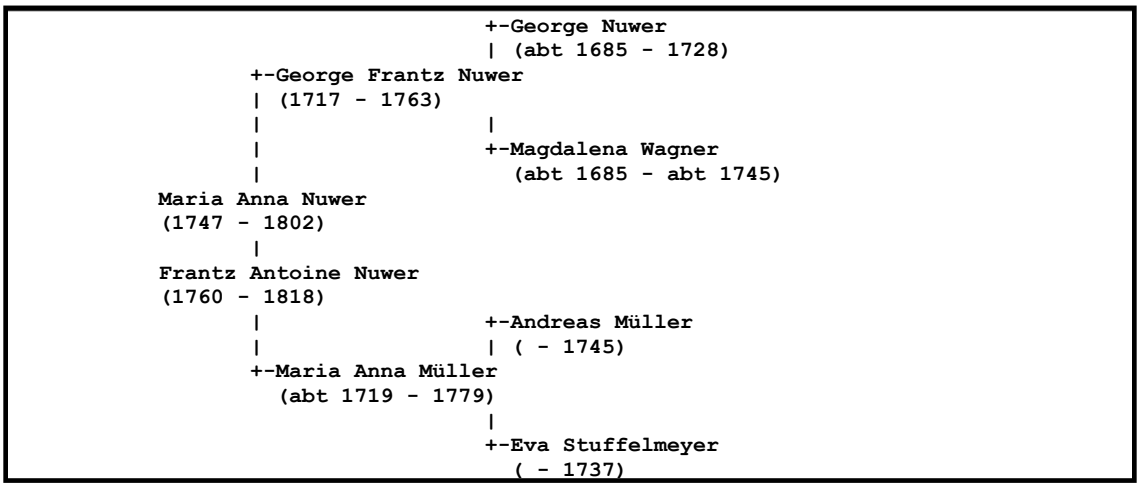
Anna Müllerin X (sign)
Georg Adam Ludwig
Hans Michel Heissler
Andres Mössner
Fridmann provost
Arnold royal notary

Examined and closed the present Inventory in Haguenau 21 February 1765.
Signed: Loyson Barth

THE ESTATE OF ANDREAS MÜLLER: -1745

By Michael J. Nuwer, July 2021

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 neigbors 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 neigbors 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 neigbors 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, Otttilia 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).

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 Drehers 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

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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

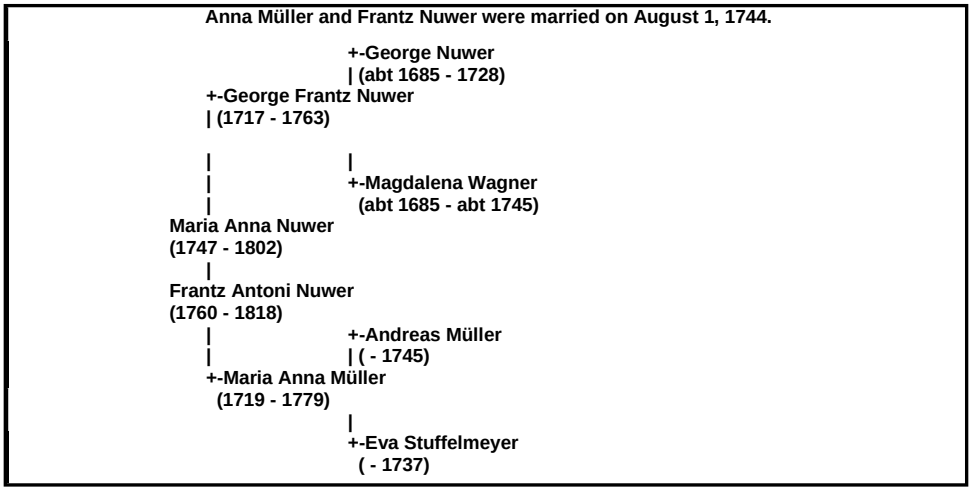
Joseph Daul X, member of the justice

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 guldens, 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 guldens, 9 shillings, $4^2/_3$ 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 guldens. He owned a small house, but not the land on which it was built. The house was valued at 33 guldens. He also owned a separate garden in the village worth 50 guldens, a cow worth 12 guldens, and some personal property which was worth a bit more than 3 guldens.

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 hires 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 guldens. They also agreed to pay "their brother Frantz Antoni Nuber [57 guldens] for his portion of the [1763] inheritance of the bride's father." This left the new couple a value of 123 guldens 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 guldens.

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 oven[6] 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			

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, Jocob 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 guldens, 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 guldens and in 1763 the buildings were valued at 160 guldens. Thus, between 1763 and 1779 the value of the property increased 45 guldens 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 guldens. There were four money loans totaling 78 guldens and a 15 guldens 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 guldens, 1 shilling, and 6 deniers. Maria Anna Nuwer was responsible for these debts plus some expenses that totaled about 10 guldens.

Moveable Property

Frantz Nuwer’s estate inventory contained 82 guldens 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

Page 2

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.

Page 3

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

Page 4

(the marriage contract has been included in this notary)

On this amount must be deduced 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 1/2d
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 ½ 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.

Page 5

Fields in the District of Soufflenheim

District Zwischen den krummer Acker und Bischweiller 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

Page 7

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

Page 8

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.

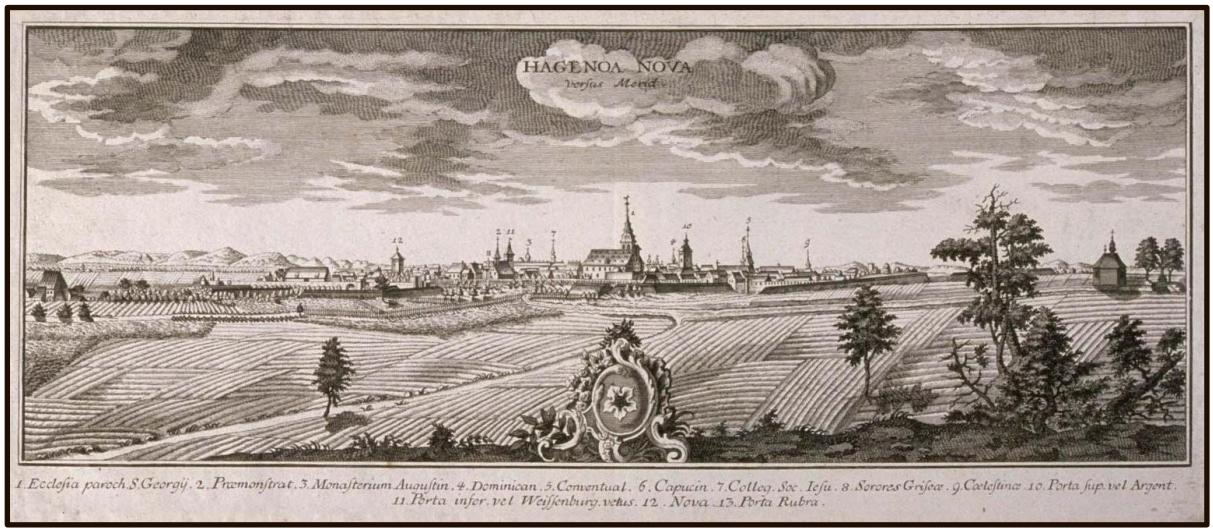
Arrested the present inventory and division by the Royal Procurator undersigned in Haguenau 6 July 1781. Meyer

ALSACE

AGRICULTURE IN ALSACE

By Michael J. Nuwer, February 2023

Below is an image of the city of Haguenau, France from 1751. In the early modern era (1492-1789), Haguenau was an important commercial center for northern Alsace and the administrative capital for the Prefecture of Haguenau. One of Alsace's ten free cities, Haguenau was governed by a council elected from families of merchants and nobles. The jurisdiction of the Prefecture extended to 45 villages, including Soufflenheim. The city is nine miles west of Soufflenheim, and a direct road through the Haguenau Forest connected the two places. Before the French Revolution, Soufflenheim was ruled by the Prefecture, to whom it paid seignorial taxes.



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

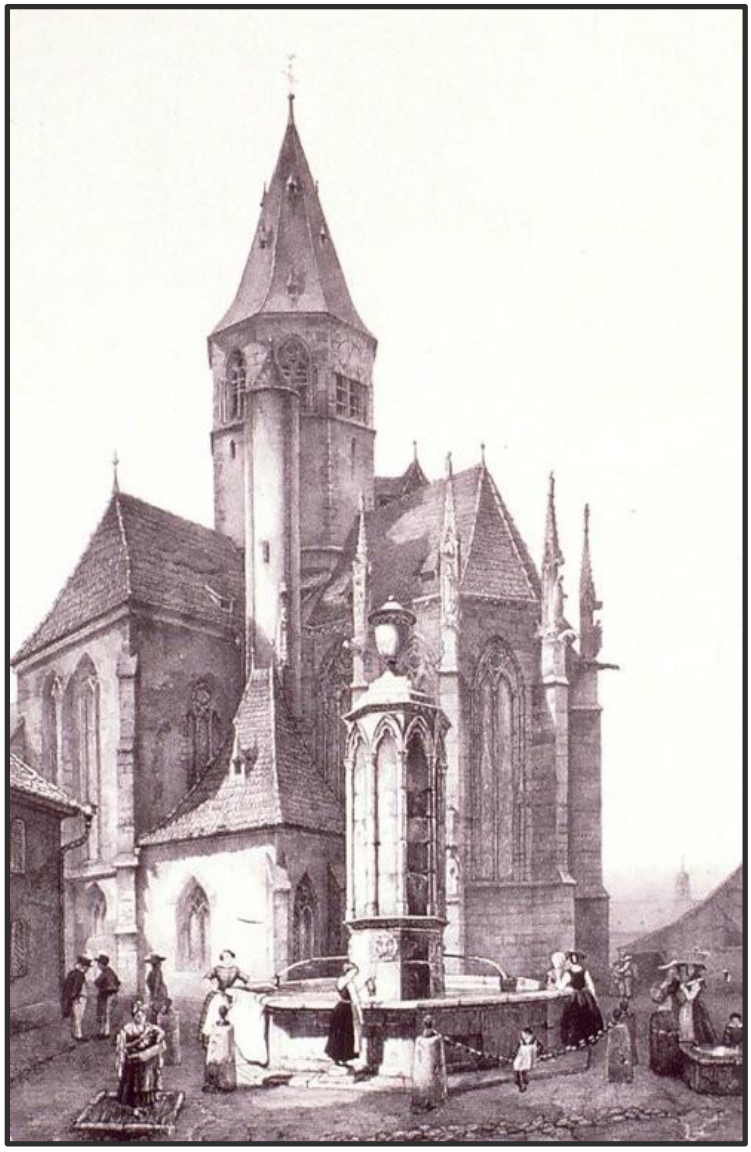
Haguenau was also the home of St. George church, the main Catholic church of the region. Although the Protestant Reformation (1517-1555) gained importance in Haguenau, the Jesuits took charge of St. George church and stopped the Protestant progression in the city. The Church of St. Michael in Soufflenheim was a dependency of St. George church. In the above image, St. George is in the center – the tallest building in the city.

This image of Haguenau illustrates the organization of Alsatian cities, towns, and villages during Mediaeval and early modern times. Throughout the Middle Ages central government was generally weak

and townspeople needed protection from bandits and lawless nobles. Rural populations therefore tended to cluster close together in order to ensure their common security.

Due to such social clustering, houses in the open country were very rare. A typical European clustered village consisted of houses on either side of a main street, each with a small garden. The plowed agricultural land was located away from the housing cluster. People did not live on their farmland.

A striking aspect of the agricultural system was the division of the plowed land into narrow strips. The above image highlights that agricultural organization. In the foreground, the horizontal and vertical rows are ridges of dirt which divide the fields into long narrow strips. Hence the term “strip farming” is sometimes used to describe the system.



St. Georges Catholic Church at Haguenau
Source: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10227411m.r=Haguenau?rk=2854091;2

The strips were long and narrow because farmers needed to minimize the number of times their plow-team had to turn around. As a rule, the longer dimension of a strip (its length) was determined by the distance a plow could conveniently be dragged by a team of oxen and the shorter dimension (its width) by the number of furrows the oxen could comfortably work in one day. The traditional size of a strip in English history was a furlong (220 yards) by a chain (22 yards), the area of which forms one acre. This is the historical origin of the acre in Great Britain, and the United States inherited that unit of measurement.

On the European Continent, the morgen was the traditional measurement of area. Like an acre, a morgen represented the amount of land that could be plowed in a unit of time—a "day's work." Of course, many barriers like rivers, streams, rocks, roads, and soil conditions modified the standard dimension of how much land could be plowed in a day. Thus, the size of a morgen varies from half to over two acres (2,000 to 10,000 m^2) of land.

A single family would have use-rights (ownership or otherwise) to multiple strips of farmland, but the strips did not typically lie side by side. Instead, they were scattered among the open fields.

Like Haguenau, Soufflenheim's agricultural land was located outside the clustered village and divided into long narrow strips. Survey maps from 1836 document almost 3,000 strips, which were owned by a population of about 560 families. This organization of land persisted well into the nineteenth century.

The *Cadastre*

During the rule of Napoleon Bonaparte (1799–1814), the French government put forth a plan to create a registry of property for the purpose of determining ownership and for assessing property taxes. This land registry is called the *Cadastre*. Beginning in 1807, a systematic land survey of France was undertaken. In each village, town, or city, plots of land were measured, classified according to usage, and detailed maps were drawn. The scattered plots of land were then combined into a registry for each owner. This determined the owner's income, and that income was made the tax base.

Surveys in Lower Alsace (Bas-Rhin) began in 1808 and continued through 1844. Soufflenheim's survey was conducted in 1836. For purposes of the *Cadastre*, the Commune of Soufflenheim was divided into four sections, each labeled with a letter A through D. The residential village was found in Section D. The other three sections contain agricultural land.

The following image shows the northern part of the Soufflenheim Commune as depicted in the *Cadastre* maps. The residential district is in the upper left of the image. The small dark squares represent houses. To the right in the image is plowed farmland, identified as Section A. Below the residential district is Section B of the maps. It too is farmland.

Image 1

The next image shows almost the whole of the Soufflenheim Commune. At the top is the residential district, designated Section D for the *Cadastre* maps. To the right of the residential district is the farmland of Section A. Below is the farmland in Section B and below Section B is more farmland designated as Section C. The area below Section C is lightly shaded and the shading protrudes into Section C; this is Soufflenheim's communal forest, where the inhabitants collected firewood and building materials.

Image 2

The next two images, three and four, show closeups of the residential district. Detailed representations of streets, houses, outbuilding, and gardens can be seen. In image three, St. Michael's church is in the lower right; in image four the Oelberg cemetery is at the left.

Image 3

Image 4

The last two images, five and six, show closeups of the plowed agricultural land. We see clearly the fields divide into long, narrow strips. Image five is from Section A of the maps and image six is from Section B.

Image 5

Image 6

The 1836 population census for the Commune of Soufflenheim found 2,942 inhabitants living in 562 households. The *Cadastre* survey identified and numbered each strip of land in the agricultural fields. There were about 3,000 strips, which is an average of about 5 strips per family. The *Cadastre* registry

maintained an index of these strips of land along with their owner. Information kept in the registry included the year a plot was purchased, the year it was sold, its location on the survey maps, its use, and the net income it generated.

The *Cadastre* data set makes it possible to identify the house and farmland owned by Soufflenheim families beginning about 1836. Digital copies of the survey maps are available online (hyperlinks are listed below); however, the registries of owners are available only at the Bas-Rhin Archive in Strasbourg. As of February 2024, the Soufflenheim Genealogy, Research, and History network has high quality images of the registry index for the Napoleonic *Cadastre* which covers the period 1836-1888. From this index, the registry (or folio) page for a landowner can be identified.

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
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Section D, sheet 1 : http://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/LIGEO-1513780#visio/page:LIGEO-1513780-14310
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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.