

Patronymic Changes of the name Schürch

Now it appears that the patronymic changes of the name Schürch are earlier than the arrival in the U.S.A. I'm working on the genealogy in Alsace of the Schürch from Sumiswald. In the Bruche Valley, over a period of two hundred years, about twenty name changes have been seen along the same branch. They are: Cheric, Cherich, Cherique, Chirk, Gerig, Goerig, Kerique, Koerique, Scherich, Scherig, Scherik, Scherique, Schir, Schirch, Schirk, Schirsch, Schoerich, Schoerique, Schurc, and Schurch.

It is probable that some of the US names are derived from these names. Most of the German and Alsatian names were not changed by US immigrants, including the use of ö ü ä etc. generally transformed into oe ue ae.

Christian Emig
Schürch historian and descendant living in France

Editor's note: Christian has very easy-to-understand charts, which show the results of his research, up on a web site. Most of the site is in French but there are places in the lower section of the following web page where you will find English. Christian has also written an article for us on his research of a branch directly connected to code H and to two other families who immigrated to the USA (one in Tennessee).

<http://emig.free.fr/GENEALOGIE/arbre-Schurch.html>

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The Tannhuser, a Schürch Lineage from Sumiswald by Christian C. Emig

In the genealogy of my grandparents, that of my grandmother Martha Schürch (1882-1957) was the most complicated to be established. Several reasons can be cited:

- With the death of my mother (1910-1989), the relationship with the Schürch family discontinued. Her cousins, with whom she maintained relationships, lived in Bolligen near Bern, Thun, and Sumiswald. Personally, aside from a few visits to Bolligen, I have had no contact with my Schürch family since I moved to Marseille in 1962.
- The only document I had was the tree established by my father (1909-1970) up to my great-great-grandfather Johann Schürch (1831-1887) in Huttwil, married to Anna Maria Burkhard (1834-1923).



Tannhuser seen from the obere Steg (Schonegg) - beyond the forest a part of the roof of Schürchtanne is seen. The three farms are aligned.

- From my first contact with the SGNS and its past-president Walter Schürch in 2006, I had received an answer in two points: (i) to establish the genealogy of my family in Switzerland, and of my origin, I must know the locality from which my family originated, my "Burgerort"! That's just what I was searching for. (ii) the new Swiss legislation no longer allows descendants to do genealogical research, but requires a professional genealogist who must pay for access to parish and registry office records. What a surprise to see all these constraints, while in the South of France, the Civil Registry (scanned databases) from cities and villages since the French Revolution in 1792, and from parish registers before that time, is available free on the Internet.
- The only connection I had to the Burgerort of my family was a cousin of my mother, Heinz Wernly, whose mother Johanna Schürch (1888~1970) was a sister of my grandmother, with whom I spent a holiday every year from my childhood until my teenage years. Leni, Heinz's sister, was my godmother. Heinz suggested that the Burgerort is probably Sumiswald, where Kurt Schürch lived (1906-2006), another cousin of my mother and godfather of my sister (1946-2003) - the only Schürch from Sumiswald who lived in his Burgerort during the last century!

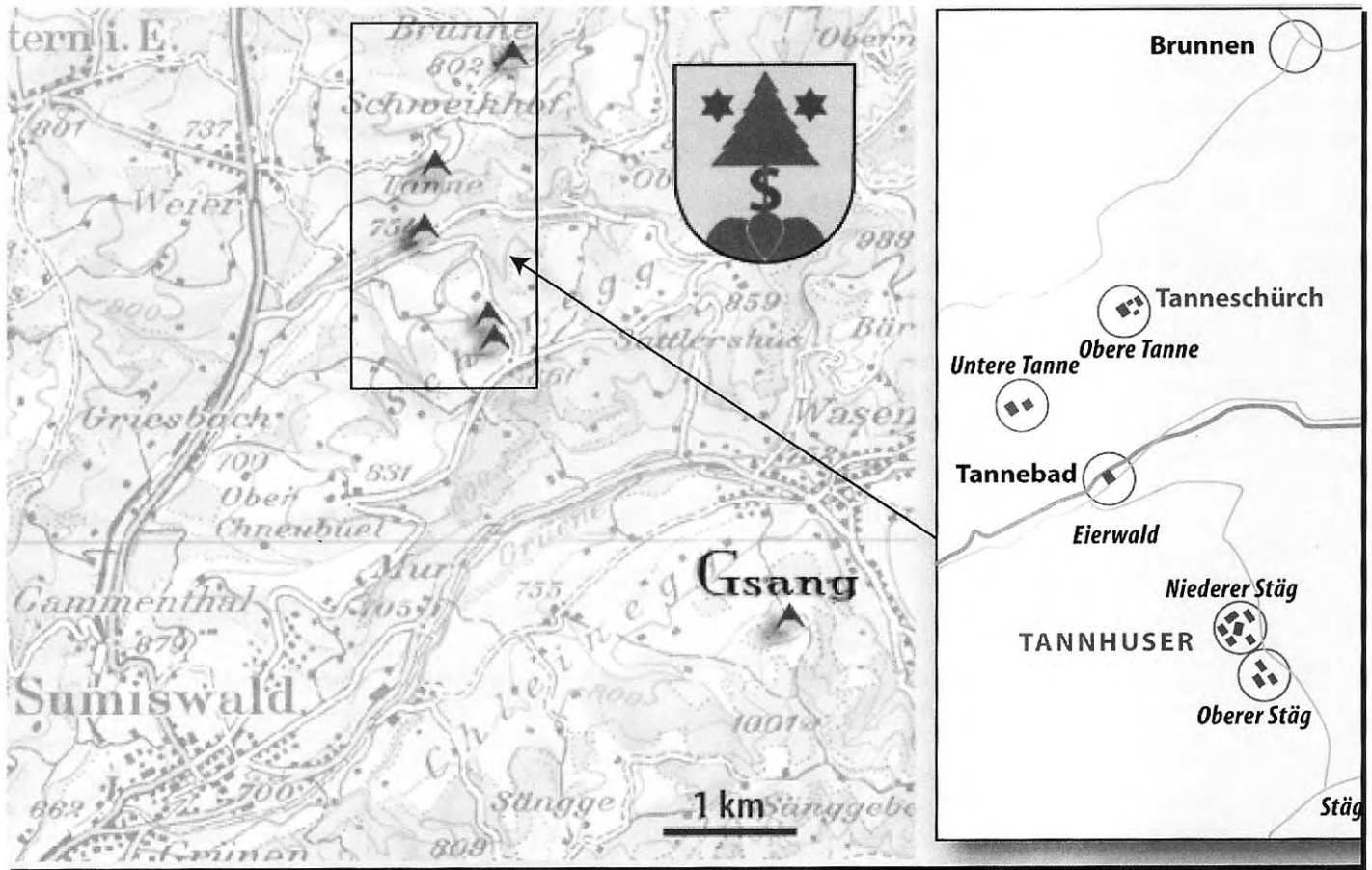
Research on several web sites in France and in the USA on Schürchs from Sumiswald quickly provided genealogical data. The pedigree of the descendants of Hanns Schürch (b. 1520) living on the farm named "Schürchtanne" began to grow, particularly that of the American families. Nevertheless it was impossible to find the ancestral link one generation above my great-great-grandfather Johann Schürch. What I knew about him is that he owned an inn and a sawmill in Huttwil.

So I felt it was time to reconnect with Walter Schürch (Spiez, Switzerland) who had promised help in my search some years ago. In early 2009, I wrote telling him the fruit of my research. He informed me that I am a member of the Tannhuser lineage, the farm from which the branch originates. The latter is derived from the ancestral farm Schürchtanne dating back to at least 1420. Walter said that it is one of the main branches in the Schürch family. In addition, Walter knew Mitti (b. 1910) from Thun, a cousin of my mother, with whom she spent holidays each year. But I still had to find the link to my great-great-grandfather.



René, Walter and Christian

Schürch in Bremgarten near Bern, as he was the right man to tell me about the Tannhuser branch. René's answer was surprising. He sent to me his recently collected information on the Tannhuser and he pointed out, as had Walter previously, that the Tannhuser were of reformed religion (Zwinglianism) and no Mennonite occurred among them.



Location of the cited Schürch farms in the Sumiswald vicinities.

Following is an outline of the Tannhuser branch focusing on my direct line.

The Tannhuser Ancestors

Originating from the Schürchtanne farm, Kaspar Schürch (b. circa 1586) and his wife Margaretha Trüssel moved to Kurzenei near Wasen in 1611, then in 1621 to Vogelgsang. They had eight children. One son Jakob (b. 1627) married Anna Muhmenthaler and had four children. In 1657 he married Christina (or Stini) Brechbühl and produced seven more children.

In 1688 the eldest, Kasper (b. 1648), Anna's son, married Verena Burkhard and had seven children. Their three youngest children immigrated to the USA (H-code, J-code). The link between H-code Kaspar Schürch, J-code Joseph Schürch and the other known Schürch was found in 2003 after years of researching by René Schürch.

The youngest, Hans (1673-1757), Stini's son, married Elsbeth Wisler in 1701. They lived in the unterer Stäg, far from Vogelgsang where Hans was born. One might suggest that the persecutions against the Täufer in Vogelgsang and the confiscation of the personal property of Ulrich Schürch (1663-1739) in Vogelgsang was connected with Hans' removal. In December 1713 they moved to their new farm. Their eleven children were born there and at least three of their sons lived and married. Later, this location was named Tannenhausershaus, and is known today as Tannhuser. The farm is located at unterer Stäg (or Stäg), niederer Stäg in Schonegg district, north of Sumiswald, a few miles from downtown.

Johannes (1726-1801), the penultimate of the 11 children of Hans and Elsbeth, was a farmer. He took over the farm in 1757 after the death of his father. He first married Verena Meier in 1756 and they had three children: Isaac (1759-1841); Christina (1762-1766); and Johannes (1765-1839), whose mother, Verena, died during childbirth. A widower, the father married Anna Kneubühler in 1767 and had two daughters.

In 1789 the eldest son Isaak (1759-1841), a cloth merchant, married Katharina Kneubühler whose family owned a farm in Brunnen. They lived in Tannhuser and had fifteen children. The youngest son, Johannes (1765-1839), a horse dealer, and his wife, Magdalena Sommer (fifteen children), took over the Tannhuser farm. As each family had many children, there was a lack of space. Thus, in 1807, Isaak and his brother Johannes built a second house in the northern section of Tannhuser.

Sons of Isaak:

1. Johannes (1781-1860) married Anna Ryser in 1803 and they had twelve children. In 1806, after the death of Peter Ryser, Anna's father, the old Ryser farm was divided into two parts. Johannes and Anna inherited the western part, the better of the two. They immediately constructed their own farm in the oberer Steg located south of Tannhuser, on the top of the hill. Later, the construction of a warehouse for tobacco, with his brother Samuel, who owned a tobacco factory in Burgdorf, led to bankruptcy and the auctioning of the domain in 1853. Since then no Schürch has lived in Schoneeg district. Anna died at Griesbach in 1853 and Johannes in 1860 in Schützenhaus. The Tannhuser estate in the niedere Stäg was sold in 1841 (see below point 4).
2. Andreas (1788-1855) married Verena Sommer; they had ten children. After the birth of Elizabeth in 1828, the family moved to Hölstein in the Canton of Basel Country.
3. Isaak (1786-1854) married Anna Stutzmann in 1823 and took over his mother's farm in Brunnen. They had three sons:
 - Isaak (1824-1887) married Elizabeth Sommer in 1856 (two children). He was a farmer in Brunnen.
 - Peter (1828-1898) was a farmer in Schweinbrunn near Huttwil, then in

Roschbach near Gutenberg. In 1849 he married Anna Barbara Hug (four children). One son, Christian Schürch (b. 1858), was the only one among the Tannhuser lineage, along with his wife Emma Zahnd, to immigrate to the USA. He arrived there in 1884 and his four children were born in Chattanooga (Tennessee, USA).

- Johannes (1831-1887) married Anna Maria Burkhard in 1853 (five children). They lived in Dürrenroth, then Huttwil where he was landlord and hotelier "zum Mohren" and at the same time owner of the sawmill. When I read this phase in René's letter, I realized that I had found the link for which I had been searching so hard. Isaak Schürch and Anna Stutzman were the parents of the grandfather of my grandmother, and my great-great-great-grandparents. Thus, I'm one among the many descendants of the Tannhuser lineage!

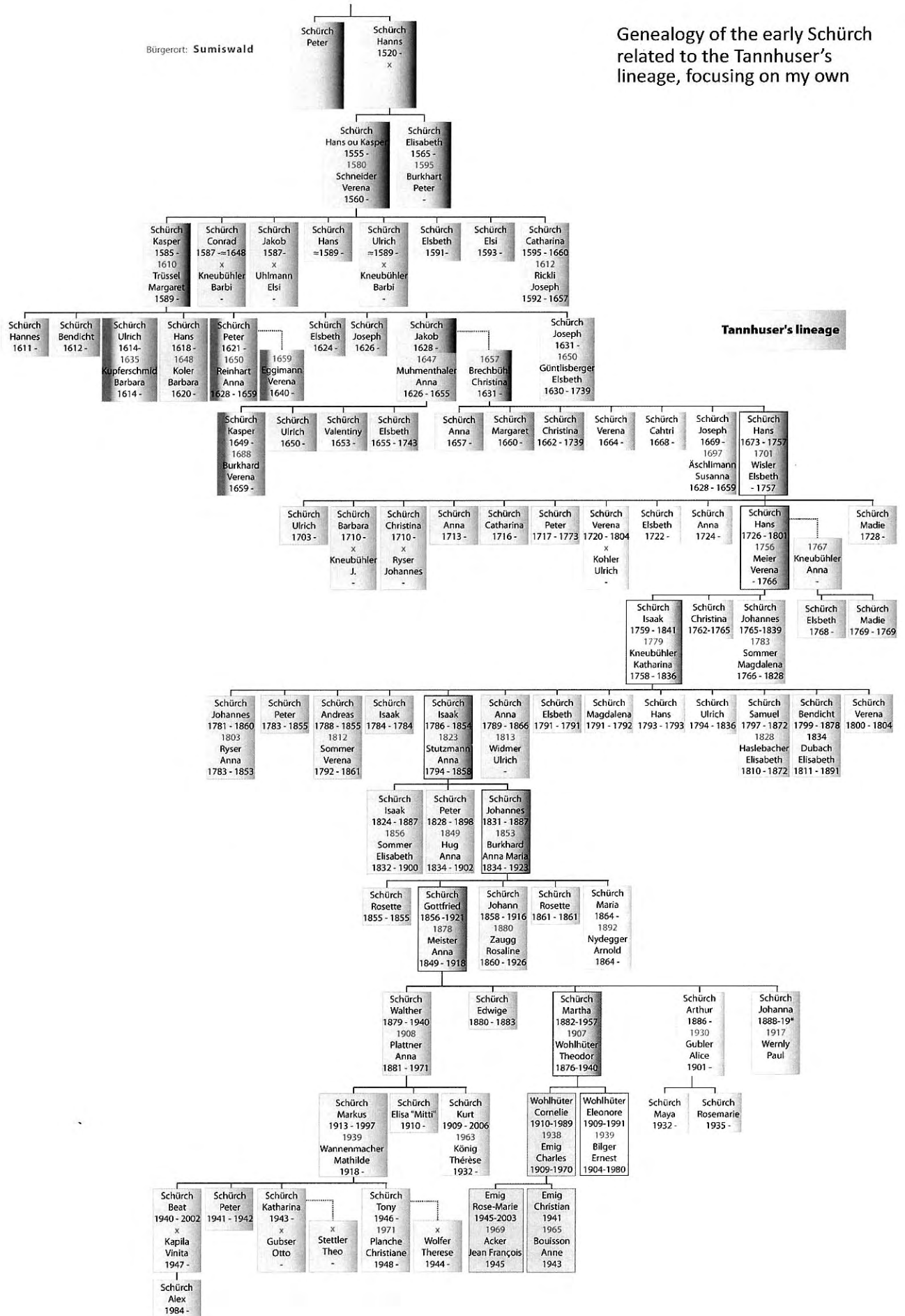
4. Samuel (1797-1874), a tobacco merchant in Burgdorf, married Elizabeth Haslebacher in Bern in 1828. In 1829 he obtained from his father Isaak the Tannhuser farm. But, after the death of his uncle Johannes in 1839 and of his father in 1841, problems related to inheritance and the non-profitable construction of a tobacco warehouse led to the end of the Tannhuser field. The estate was sold in 1841. Samuel founded the Schürch-Tobacco Company in Burgdorf, then in Biberist near Solothurn. Its last owner, Fritz Arnold Schürch, died in 1984 before the Schürch-Tobacco Company merged with Marlboro (Philip Morris International Group, now multinational Atria).
5. Bendicht (1799-1878) married Elisabeth Dubach in Burgdorf (seven children) and died in Rohrbach.

The idea that this branch of the family was without Mennonite practices should probably be revisited.

An up-to-date Tannhuser family tree can be downloaded <http://emig.free.fr/GENEALOGIE/Arbres.html> - An update is done at each new addition. New information is welcome.

Bürgerort: Sumiswald

Genealogy of the early Schürch related to the Tannhuser's lineage, focusing on my own



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