

November 2024 Association President's Message:

Firstly, Kathy and I would like to thank Margaret Sherk and her Executive for ensuring that our Family Association continued to investigate new ideas for our Association, participating in our genealogical research, and especially the running of our Executive meetings by Zoom these past two years. Also, we need to thank Kathy and Stephen Sherrick and their Committee for the planning and implementation of their excellent reunion this past year in Millersville, PA. The location worked for all of us and the presentations met our needs for family to meet and to learn new things about their heritage. It was great seeing Kurt and Judy Schürch as well as Katharina and Samuel Schürch.

Our Association has grown since it was created in 1982. We saw the first Reunion in July of 1982 and the first Newsletter published in April of 1983; first Heritage Tour in September 1985; creation of our website in April 1997; Y-DNA testing started in April 2006; Facebook first appeared in our November of 2010 Newsletter; first John S. Shirk Memorial Award presented in August 2012; by June of 2014 our new Database was online; the Flickr site began in June 2013 for our Historic Photograph Collections; by October 2013 Justin Houser had provided his first update to the Lost Year's Project; a digital Index and Table of Contents for our Newsletters was created in April of 2019, first Schürch Symposium Series was on Zoom in June of 2021; Tom Sherk's index to his book 'The Sherk Family' was first printed in April 2002 and the book reprinted in Nov 2023 with an updated Index. These were just a few that I remember, as well as our ongoing projects that keep all informed.

Our Canadian Treasurer Laurine Mills has passed over her responsibilities to Janice Sherk Henry. I would like to thank Laurine for her many years supporting our Executive and to welcome Janice to our team. Also, Vanessa Warner has assumed the duties and responsibilities as the Chair of our Historical Committee to allow me to be your President for 2024-2026. Thank you, Vanessa, for also carrying on your role as our Schürch Historical Photographs Collections contact for our Flickr site. This gives us another cousin who will become very



conversant by chairing a Committee of Historians and helping those individuals seeking their connection to our family tree. Past Chairs of this Committee have been Tom Sherk, Justin Sherk and me.

Lastly, a big thanks to Betty Sherk, our Website Chair, who will be working with Rick Evans as Co-Chairs of the 2026 Reunion Planning Committee for Markham, Ontario in 2026. I last chaired that committee in 1994-1996 when the Reunion was held in Markham, after which I became the President in 1996-1998. Much has changed in Markham. We look forward to visiting there again with our North American, and hopefully, our Switzerland cousins in 2026.

Plans are in the works for our Heritage Tour in 2025. Keep reading our Newsletters, Website, and Facebook site for more information to follow.

Stephen D. Shirk



**Welcome!
New and Renewing
Subscribers:**

Phyllis Gildehous of Washougal WA
Jeff Pulfer of Washington IL
Annette Gallagher of Sandusky OH
Elmer Weaver of Shippensburg PA
Josiah Jones of Morrisdale PA
R.P.Dengler of Lebanon PA

Codes: C/H/N:

Homesteads and Cemeteries Tour

**by Kathy Sherrick, Pennsylvania
Connections.**

Joseph Schürch, the immigrant ancestor of Code C, arrived in the Port of Philadelphia aboard the ship *James Goodwill* on September 27, 1727. Fourteen years elapsed from his arrival until a patent was issued for his first land purchase in 1735, in Hempfield, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, a British Colonial Province.

Casper Schürch, the immigrant ancestor of Code H, after a difficult, heart breaking, and tedious journey arrived at the Port of Philadelphia, on May 18, 1732. By December 1732 he was married (for a second time). He is later recorded as having a tract of land adjacent to Joseph Schürch, Code C, in Hempfield, Lancaster County, in 1735. By the time the warrant for the land was issued it is thought Casper had relocated to the land in Bethel Township, Lancaster County, now Lebanon County.

Ulrich Sherrg, the immigrant ancestor of Code N, arrived in the Port of Philadelphia aboard the ship *St Andrew*, on September 23, 1752. He was born in Sumiswald Switzerland in 1703, the son of Jacob Schürch, brother of Code E Ulrich Schürch. Code N Ulrich was in Hempfield Township, Lancaster County as of 1758 according to a tax assessment of that year. Immigrant Joseph was listed as an appraiser (tax) indicating he and Ulrich were well acquainted.

**Code C
Joseph Schurgh
1727**



Our tour begins:

Driving North about 10 minutes from Millersville, we pass thru an area where Peter Swarr (a Swiss Immigrant) had a very large farm. Peter had three daughters who married three sons of Code E Ulrich. The farm became known as Shirk Land, a stream thru the wooded area is known today as Swarr Run.

Continuing north another 30 minutes, we arrive at Wolf's Cemetery. A marker is located in the Cemetery, visible from the road to honor Casper Sr and Casper Jr. It is thought they are buried in the area near the steps which are adjacent to the roadway.

Nearby at Shirksville Mennonite Meeting House, we were met by Stephen Ebersole, Pastor, in the shade of a lovely tree at the edge of the church cemetery. The Church is on land once owned by Code H2, Casper, Jr. The church sits on a hill providing an excellent view of the surrounding land which once were all Shirk properties. Here Code H28 Rudolph and wife Elizabeth Frank are buried, along with their grandson, a civil war hero, Milton Sherk, and Barbara Scherk, wife of Code H26 Christian.

We depart the church and cross the street to visit the farm purchased by Casper Jr from his father in 1764. The was home built in 1769 and beside it is a small building believed to also have been a Shirk church.

A few more miles through farmland once owned by Schürch's, we visited the Code H Casper and Magdalena farm, where they resided 1738-1749. The original spring house from Casper's time remains. There are several logs in the back wall of the main house thought to be original to the first house.

Departing Code H territory, we head south 40 minutes to Code C and N territory. In Hempfield Township, we pass the Chestnut Hill Mennonite church where C1 Joseph, received the deed on behalf of the Mennonist Religious Society of Hempfield Township. A few miles down the road we visit the location of the mill that Immigrant Joseph and John Furry operated. Risser Mill, a non-operating mill, remains on the site. We visit the Schürch Cemetery, located off Kinderhook Road. In a shared surprise, several children had a lemonade and cookie stand. They were delighted to see a busload of visitors!

Heading to Code N territory, we pass the site where Code C Joseph and Code H Casper properties were side by side in 1735. It is amazing to think how many miles separated them as they moved about, it has taken our bus about 3 hours to cover the distances.

In Code N territory, we drive by the home of John Sherrick, N1B25. Our final stop is at a nearby farm house tenanted by Code N1 Johannes Sherrick. The Kage (Keagey) house has a date stone of 1756.

Code H
Kasper Schirch
1732



Code N
Ulrich Schürch
1752



Code E

Code E:

Bus Tour of Lancaster County

By Rena Kyle, Alberta

In 1728, Ulrich Schürch (Code E) landed in Philadelphia. During our July 2024 SFANA Reunion Bus Tour, we walked upon the same land, perhaps the same pathways as our ancestors. Doesn't that just give you chills when you think about the passage of time, the preservation of history and the excitement of new beginnings for our Schürch family?



What a delight to search throughout Lancaster County for a Schürch/Shirk headstone or remnants of an original farmstead. Weaverland, Linden Road, Shirk's Crossroads, Schoeneck Road, Indiantown, Lancaster County Baseball field at Schoeneck, Cherry Alley, Steinmetz Cemetery, Shirk/Eby Cemetery and Horton's Kennel. These are all place names that give us a glimpse of our heritage through family gravesites, monuments, landmarks, former farmhouses, farm sites, churches and rural communities.



From 1728 to present day, the Schürch family has left their mark on the heart and soul of Lancaster County. Our roots come to life when we can see and touch the remnants of their hard work and dedication to family. Early beginnings in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania have paved the way to our world today.



Codes J

Dafid Scherkh, 1747

Code M

Johan Scherick, 1751



Our Swiss Cousins at the Reunion

We were delighted to welcome four Swiss cousins to the 2024 Reunion! Kurt and Judy Schürch, Winterthur (near Zurich) have attended several past reunions in the U.S. and Canada.

After the reunion, they spent time in Ontario visiting with Judy's family and friends. Sam and Katherina Schürch, Oberhofen (Lake Thun area) joined the reunion between visits with their sons and families in Seattle WA and Blacksburg VA. Both couples arrived several days before the reunion to explore Lancaster County. Sam and Katherina extended their stay after the reunion. SFANA was pleased to host our cousins – and we hope to see everyone again soon!



Pictured left to right: Sam, Katharina, Judy, Kurt

Reunion Service Project

By Sue Shirk, Pennsylvania



Many Schürch descendants are aware of the emigration trail from Switzerland through Europe enroute to North America. Major assistance to expelled or fleeing Anabaptists via Holland was provided by the Dutch Mennonites (Doopsgezinden) in Holland during the late 1600's and 1700's. At the July 2024 reunion, local Lancaster County historian and researcher Edsel Burdge, gave a presentation about the Dutch Mennonite story. Edsel has been involved with the preservation efforts of that story thru three detailed volumes entitled "Documents of Brotherly Love: Dutch Mennonite Aid to Swiss Anabaptists."

While the Dutch organization disbanded in the 1800's, the reunion planning committee wanted to honor their historical assistance to refugees thru a modern day Anabaptist service project via Mennonite Central Committee (MCC.) In 1920, groups of Mennonites and other



Mennonite Central Committee Video

<https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=Mennonite+Central+Committee+Video&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:710d9380,vid:aANGFrKWsSc,st:0>

Anabaptists created MCC in response to requests for help from Mennonites in southern Russia (today Ukraine) as they experienced famine and disease. Packing hygiene kits was selected as the group project. Creating a kit is a small way to help families who have fled their homes because of disaster or war. Kits are also given to schools and orphanages to encourage good health habits for children. In 2023, MCC shipped more than 80,000 hygiene kits to El Salvador, Guatemala, Malawi, Ukraine, Zambia and the U.S. (including Puerto Rico). A kit contains:

- Adult sized toothbrush
- Nail clipper
- Bar of bath soap
- Wide toothed comb

Items were wrapped in a towel and placed in a hand-sewn cloth draw string bag. When kits are shipped, toothpaste accompanies each hygiene kit. In less than 30 minutes, reunion attendees packed 500 kits and boxed them for delivery to the local MCC relief center for future shipping! While it pales in comparison to the Dutch assistance to our ancestors, we hope this small token to displaced people around the world continues the compassionate Dutch response.



Correction

From page 23 of the April 2023 Issue, George Albert Hunsberger has three codes: C3812B421, E1658B21, H44352211

“Update of E-Code Lore”

by Pete Shirk

E1641722



My journey into Schürch family genealogy began in 2016 with the kindness from SFANA member, Tom Shirk (E43550121), who clarified my descendency from patriarch Ulrich, code E. Prior to the 2018 reunion in Pennsylvania I researched our early Lancaster County presence and became interested in finding land where my 4th great grandfather, Peter E1, lived in the 1700s. The old stone ruins I found intrigued me and I wanted to learn more.

“In 1528 the Protestant Reformed became the state religion in Canton Bern. The Anabaptist practice of “baptism of believers” who had come to their beliefs of their own free will was a violation of the State Church’s practice of infant baptism. The Anabaptist reforms were considered heretical. Being pacifists, the Anabaptists suffered at the hands of the church and state.” The following upheaval left many unanswered questions.

Ulrich Schürch, our foreign-born patriarch, was born March 9, 1663 in the area of Sumiswald, Canton of Bern, one of the cantons which became Switzerland. Barbara Grundbacher also was born in Sumiswald November 5, 1672. They were married August 14, 1696 in the Emmenthal Valley according to Reformed Church records. He was 33 and she 23 years old.

Ten children have been attributed from various sources to Ulrich, presumably with Barbara but family turmoil from imprisonment and deportation and thin documentation on several has raised the possibility he may have had a second mate.

A first Peter E1, was born about June, 1696 and was Baptized June 18, 1696 in the Reformed Church, Canton of Bern. There is evidence that he was alive at least until Nov. 2, 1702. After 1702 he disappeared from family records. It has often been assumed that he had died in infancy but that is apparently not correct.

Another male child born Oct. 24, 1709, 13 years after the first, was also named Peter and is coded E1. (This erroneous sequence has been clarified but the original E1 coding was left in place, as revising it would be infeasible.)

Other Ulrich children listed are Elizabeth E2 born 1698, Johannes E3 born 1701 (but thought to have died in infancy in 1701?), Ulrich E4 born 1704, and Johannes E5 born 1706. Others listed are Joseph E6, Casper E7, Michael E8, Martha E9, and Jeanette E10. Dates of birth for these last four are not known.

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Per “The Sherk Family” by Tom Sherk published in 1982, Joseph was listed as “E6” but Tom was uncertain. Per later research Joseph was determined to not be E6, but rather a C code, having arrived in 1727.

Deportation from Bern

Anabaptists were oppressed and under extreme pressure throughout much of Reformation and Counter Reformation Europe. Bern in particular was increasingly brutal and relentless in its persecution and attempts to completely expel anabaptists.

The Canton of Bern, in July of 1710 imprisoned Ulrich for his religious beliefs in Sumiswald Castle (“the Bern jail”). He and his family were to be expelled from Bern, and were to be sent to Holland via the Rhine River. In Amsterdam they would presumably be welcomed and assisted by sympathetic Dutch Mennonite and other anabaptist groups, more tolerant of views which differed from mainstream, dominant religions.

Bern’s efforts to completely expel non-conforming anabaptists were not succeeding. Many anabaptist deportees apparently managed to disembark and escape along the way, and attempted to work their way back into Switzerland.

On July 13, 1711 Ulrich & family departed Bern for Basel where more anabaptists boarded, and the Emmenthaler left there about July 16 heading down the Rhine. On August 3 what were left of the original emigrants from Bern, arrived in Amsterdam.

From recent research it appears that Ulrich did go to Amsterdam in 1711 although at the Mannheim Germany stop some of those aboard escaped into either the Palantine or doubled-back southwest into France and the Jura Mountains bordering Switzerland. The German-speaking Alsace area and Jura Mountains of France border Switzerland and the west bank of the Rhine River, so an escape would have been feasible.

1711-1728 After Deportation

It has long been thought that Ulrich and family lived in Holland but if they had managed to escape as so many other anabaptists did and not go to Amsterdam, then the Jura Mountain region might have offered a refuge.

Current information indicates that they were in (or near) Amsterdam at least until 1715.

Further study continues. The Schürch Heritage Tour planned for Sept. 9-20, 2025 begins in Amsterdam. Perhaps new information will be known by then.

Ship Mortonhouse to Penn Colony

Among other families fleeing religious persecution, Ulrich and his family boarded the ship Mortonhouse. Commanded by Master John Coultas they sailed June 15, 1728 from Rotterdam, first to England pausing at Deal where they restocked and prepared for the long trans-Atlantic voyage, and to wait for a favorable wind.

Tribulations of the voyage were increased by overcrowded vessels. Officially the passenger manifest of Mortonhouse indicated 80 men, 69 women, and 56 children, a total of 205 souls on board in addition to crew. Possibly there were actually more. The size and capacity of the Mortonhouse are not known but severe congestion of steerage passengers was likely. Sleeping accommodations, sanitation facilities, eating, and shelter must have been extremely harsh. Disease and death at sea was a great risk, and ships at sea were sometimes stopped and searched. It was a dangerous world.

Thousands of German-speaking Swiss anabaptists made this perilous trip.

According to the Mortonhouse passenger list Ulrich and his family arrived in the British William Penn Colony Port of Philadelphia on August 23, 1728. Official passenger lists however do not tell the complete story because typically men only were shown. Was Barbara Grundbacher Schürch aboard? She is a bit of a mystery as little is known of her after about 1713 or 1715. It was once thought that the Sumiswald church register “taufs” show Feb. 11, 1736 as date of death, but that has since been shown to be a different Barbara, and the time and place of her death are not known. Whether she died in Europe or North America is presently unknown.

In 1728 only males over the age of 16 were required by Colonial law to sign in and execute a loyalty pledge. Signators agreed to the oath of allegiance to the British crown and declaration of fidelity to the proprietor of the province. How strictly was the pledge-signature requirement enforced? For example, Ulrich’s son Peter (E1) born 1709 was almost certainly aboard and yet his signature does not appear on the Mortonhouse B list. Ulrich (Uli) code E, Ulrich code E4 then 24 years old, and 22 year-old Johannes code E5 signatures appear, but Peter code E1 does not appear. He was 19 years old at this time, older than 16 and therefore subject to the requirement to sign the pledge. Possibly it was hoped that a youngish-looking fellow could pass for being under 16 and therefore not have to sign a pledge counter to his Mennonite beliefs?

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The spelling of our family surname can be confusing. Upon arrival Ulrich's Schürch surname was recorded as Shirk, Sherk, Sherrick, etc. Many could not read and write, and translating from German to English would also create differences.

In 1728 when he arrived Ulrich was 65 years old, and Barbara would have been 56.

The family had made it through adversity and persecution to get to the New World.

On to Schoeneck and Weaverland

In about 1732 they settled at Schoeneck in Cocalico Twp., Lancaster County as indicated by tax records. Through their industrious and thrifty nature the Shirk family began acquiring farming land. Records of that time indicate that land in the Schoeneck Cocalico area was acquired.

In 1754 two deeds show that Peter purchased 199 acres and Michael purchased an adjacent 160 in an area known as Weaverland. It is about 1.5 miles north of Blue Ball, at the Conestoga River. The enclave was comprised of six families as described by M.G. Weaver in his brief 1933 monograph entitled "*Weaverland Settlement, Settlers, Graveyard, and its Four Plantations*". The monograph lists ownerships by Weber, Martin, Sensenig, and Shirk. The first home there was built in 1722 by Henry Weber who was married to Maudlin Kendig, granddaughter of Martin Kendig who had arrived from England with the first group of Mennonite settlers in 1710.

Weaverland Mennonite Church

These were among the first Europeans to settle in this area and their religion was all-important to them so establishing a church was a top priority.

At first prayer meetings were held in family homes. The Weaverland Mennonite Church reckons its beginning from around 1723 when unordained church members held prayer and worship meeting in their homes. In 1750 El Peter became the first ordained Weaverland minister. In 1766 a more substantial stone building was built and during the last four years of his life he preached there. It was on the very spot where the current church is located, but the original church has been re-built several times over the centuries. The foundation of one wall of the original stone building was incorporated into the current day church where it can be seen.

Weaverland Cemetery

Martins, Webers, Shirks and other family members are laid to rest in a tiny cemetery in the middle of a corn field, one-half of which was on land owned by Weber and the other half owned by Martin. It is located about one-half mile north of the Weaverland Mennonite Church. Today the current parcel line between the two still bisects this spot named Weaverland Cemetery. Peter died in 1770 and rests within the small, peaceful confines.

Blacksmith

Before becoming an ordained Mennonite minister Peter was a blacksmith by trade. When I first visited his Weaverland property in 2018 there was a scene that attracted my attention and curiosity. Near where Quarry Rd. crosses the Conestoga, are the ruins of a very old stone building, located on the northeast bank of the Conestoga river. The window openings are much wider than for a residence or barn, and one end of the structure appears to have been completely open. It appears that it was built by an owner-user. But what was the crude building's purpose and who built it?

A curiosity was a 3/4-inch iron rod which protruded from one of the stone walls. Only the very high heat of a blacksmith could have shaped the stout raw metal in this fashion. The wide windows would provide air circulation, the stone would provide fire protection, and the formed iron pieces all fit with the possibility that I had found a smithy on Peter's land and that perhaps he had constructed the building himself.

Now the building makes more sense. It appears that the mysterious stone ruins had been a smithy. The time of construction was likely around 1754 when Peter acquired the land.

Peter probably did not erect that stone building by himself. Mennonites are famous for things like cooperative "barn raising". The sense of community and commitment was strong.

Helena Myer

Another mystery of family lore is about a "French-Swiss girl". (Ref. Tom Sherk)

The genesis of this appears to have been Henry Yocum Shirk's "The Shirk Family History and Genealogy from 1664-1914" c. 1914. On page 1 he states "Ulrich Shirk (I) was born in January, 1665, in the Canton of Berne, Switzerland. He took up his abode later in Basle where

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Weaverland Mennonites: 300 Years of Growth, Division, and Faithfulness

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wqOd8OFmB0U>

he married Helene Myer, a peasant girl of French and Swiss ancestry. This union was blessed with the following eight children: Ulrich (II), Michael, John, Casper, Joseph, Peter, Martha, and Jeanette.”

Enough is wrong within such recitation that it invites total dismissal. On the other hand there is enough correct in it to coax further consideration. And who was Henry Y. Shirk and what gave him license to make such statements?

He was a mature and meticulous-minded Shirk native of Lancaster, writing about his third(?) great grandfather and possibly great grandmother!

He began researching and writing in 1912 and other than libraries and county deed records, his main references would have been Mennonite bibles which usually had family genealogies hand-inscribed within! Along with oral histories to enrich his interpretation and recount, it would be regarded as a prime source of record. And lastly, consider that his recount was accepted by the Mennonite Publishing Company of Indianapolis, IN. They didn't print and distribute salacious fiction.

But one might ask, what about histories attributing all those eight children to an unknown "peasant girl of French ancestry"? The number eight is close to correct, as it is known that Johannes E3 died in infancy and the Peter born in 1696 disappeared from family records which a family bible might not have recorded.

HYS's prominent mention of Helene suggests he believed her to have been part of his family history. If not related by betrothal, she might have lived with the family unit. Might she also have been a refugee of European turmoil, connected with Ulrich after expulsion from Bern? Perhaps she immigrated to Penn colony with them? Might she have actually been, as HYS states, mother of Martha "E9" and Jeanette "E10"?

If you enjoy mysteries, Schürch genealogy is perfect for you, but as Tom Sherk said to me when I started my study, ".... be prepared, you might find out you are not who you thought you are."

The Mortonhouse Passenger List
<https://www.family-history.com/yost/MortenhausePassengerList.htm>

Fidget Blanket Maker By Janice Sherlock Ulmer N1B2G121

When I retired June 1, 2023, one of my friends from our church (Mountville Church of the Brethren) encouraged me to join Stitch, Sew and Share, our fabric arts ministry. I was quite interested in joining this group, but most of the people either knit or crochet and I don't have either of those skills. Then I was asked if I could sew. Well, some years ago, I did make my clothing and some simple curtains. It was only a small leap from there that they decided I could make fidget blankets, especially since no one from our group made any.



First of all, I had no idea what fidget blankets were so I googled it and got some ideas. I didn't have a sewing machine, but thanks to the kindness of my step-daughter, I now have one although it is much fancier than I need, but I did figure out how to sew a straight line. She also gave me some material. I did a bit more research on Etsy and the ladies from our sewing group cleaned out their sewing baskets of unneeded notions and buttons. With rick-rack, zippers, buttons, yarn, D-rings and many other miscellaneous items, I set out to make fidget blankets. I must admit that I do enjoy making them even though I am not a very creative person.

As you can see, I've finished six so far. My fidget blankets, along with caps, lap robes and blankets crocheted or knitted by my friends at church, were donated to our local hospital as well as hospice. The folks at these two organizations were thrilled to receive our donations and asked, "when can you bring us more?"



Build Your Own Fidget Blanket
<https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=Fidget+Blanket+video&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8#fpstate=ive&vid=cid:0d8e248d,vid:bcF90LdG5pE,st:0>

Schürch Family Reunion

July 25-27, 2024

Millersville, Pennsylvania



The John S. Shirk Award: Background and Criteria for Evaluating a Nomination

The John S. Shirk Memorial Heritage Award was established in 2008 in honour and memory of the late John S. Shirk, 1916 - 2008, who made multifaceted contributions to the Schürch Family Association. The purpose of the award is to recognize an outstanding contribution on the part of any Schürch descendant that contributes to, encourages, or advances our understanding of our Schürch heritage, and to encourage participation in the Schürch Family Association, particularly among younger people. The award consists of a \$200 cash gift, a Certificate of Achievement, recognition at the Reunion and in our Newsletter and ongoing recognition on our websites.

The criteria for evaluating an award nomination are defined broadly, but with emphasis on those areas in which John S. Shirk took an active interest. Accomplishments for the purposes of this award would include, but are not limited to: authoring an outstanding article for the Schürch Newsletter; publishing a genealogy or other Schürch related paper in an outside journal or magazine; presenting an outstanding talk at a reunion; making a breakthrough research finding that leads to a significant advancement in understanding of Schürch heritage; researching and documenting a Schürch family lineage; the giving of meritorious service to the Schürch Family Association;

giving outstanding leadership; leading a heritage tour; promoting the association's interests; or being involved in community history.

Past Recipients

August 11, 2012	Justin K. Houser
August 2, 2014	Thomas A. Sherk
August 6, 2016	René Schürch
July 28, 2018	LaVerne G. Schirch
August 6, 2022	Susan D. Shirk

Nora Hassall (E142B161) receives the 2024 John S. Shirk Memorial Heritage Award

The 2024 Award, according to the stipulations of the award, has been granted to Nora Hassall, of Grande Prairie, Alberta, in recognition of her life-long dedication as a historian, preserving the lineage of the Schurch family for many generations.

Besides being an amazingly positive person, Nora is the matriarch of her family and the local Sherk historian of Northern Alberta Canada. She has kept meticulous hand-written records of the Amos (E142B1) and Candace (E153A3) Sherk family members and has shared these records for inclusion in the Schürch database.

She has diligently recorded names, dates, events and happenings of many generations of the Sherk family who ventured in 1909 from Sherkston, Ontario to the valley of the Beaverlodge River. Amos and Candace Sherk and four of their adult children were an instrumental part of the Bull Outfit - a community of

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At the July 2024 SFANA reunion, cousins of Nora Hassall accepted her award in her absence: from left to right – Dennis Froland (husband of Terry), Terry Vavrek (sister of Rena), Kari Bonnett (daughter of Rena), Rena Kyle (who nominated Nora), Margaret Sherk (president of SFANA).

31 people using 36 oxen to travel 450 miles over 83 days from Edmonton to Beaverlodge. Upon arrival in 1909, the Bull Outfit was credited with beginning settlement in the Beaverlodge area. Nora contributed the story to the SFANA newsletter of the Bull Outfit's tenacious journey through the wild frontier (Nov.1984).

Nora should be commended for her dedication to preserving and recording the Sherk Family history as well as being part of genealogy groups for the

Grande Prairie region. She is also a great supporter of cultural activities, has been an active organizer for the Grande Prairie Music Festival forever, golfs, curls, tends a HUGE garden and enjoys watching her grand/great grandchildren play hockey. She also sings in her church choir. Nora really is an amazing individual who willingly shares her stories with admiration for all generations. Nora has celebrated her 91st birthday. She is truly a life-long historian.

From Laurine Mills:

Mills and Stehle



My granddaughter E1445112131 Shawna Mills married Jarod Stehle August 3rd, 2024. The venue was held in the barn where I played as a child. They choose the barn and property for their wedding as it held special meaning to Shawna as it belonged to her Great great great great great grandfathers Peter Troup E1445 The barn held special meaning for me as I grew up on the farm as the barn was my gymnasium Shawna and Jarod choose the barn as it held special family connections belonging in her family since 1834 The original barn stood at the front of the family homestead and the present barn was built in 1930 and constructed of hand-hewn timbers and some of the lumber from the old barn. The barn is a bank barn and had a milking parlor and stables in the basement.

And the Venu was held in the barn where I played as a child. They choose the barn and property for their wedding as it held special meaning to Shawna as it belonged to her Great great great great great grandfathers Peter Troup E1445 The barn held special meaning for me as I grew up on the farm as the barn was my gymnasium Shawna and Jarod choose the barn as it held special family connections belonging in her family since 1834 The original barn stood at the front of the family homestead and the present barn was built in 1930 and constructed of hand-hewn timbers and some of the lumber from the old barn. The barn is a bank barn and had a milking parlor and stables in the basement,



Schürch Flipbook Has Arrived!

- Advantages of flipbooks:**
- Clearer Photos**
- Color**
- Immediate Links**
- Easy Searches**
- Lower Cost**
- Save Printing and Paper**

109th Benjamin and Esther Sherk Reunion

by Laurine Mills
E1484251, E14451121



Descendants of Benjamin Sherk and Esther Hershey gathered in the barn at the former Sahs/Sherk homestead on Saturday August 17th 2024. The Reunion has a long history and is held every year the third Saturday in August at noon. Each family brings a main course and a desert to be shared by all. Elerberry pie is a must have at each reunion. Benjamin E148, his son Christian, E1484, and his son, John M. Sherk operated a dairy on Point Abino Rd in Sherkston. They always provided the ice cream at the Reunions. That responsibility is now passed to his great granddaughter Barbara Sherk Fitzsimmons for all to enjoy. Sharing of family photos, news, games, and of course the water balloons abounded. Reunion activities almost completely duplicated those of the earliest gatherings



*Benjamin Sherk E148 and
Esther Hershev Sherk*




My cousin, Elaine, sent me the attached pictures of a Tobacco Chopper that is on exhibit at the Historical Society of the Cocalico Valley in Ephrata, PA. It was used to make 'chew' from the tobacco scraps after the tobacco was rolled into the cigar. It states the name F. W. Shirk, Manufacturer of U S Scrap Machinery, Patented, Ephrata, Pa.

In my youth, tobacco was a heavily grown cash crop in Lancaster County. The Amish especially could plant and harvest tobacco with horse drawn equipment.

Who is F. W. Shirk?

B Thomas Shirk,
Toledo, Ohio
tomshirk@bex.net

Fascinating Artifacts - Tobacco Cutter and Plug
 YouTube - <https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=Tobacco+Chopper+Video&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:7a1d29c1,vid:skVcEdhU0kl,st:0>



In Memory



Martha Marie Hart
1954 – 2024
H441151A

Martha Marie Hart passed away at the Orillia Soldiers Memorial Hospital – Orillia on Wednesday, August 7, 2024 at the age of 70. She was born on May 24, 1954. Martha of Orillia, formally of Matheson. Beloved mother of Mark (Andrea), Late Joe, David (Kathy), Trevor (Gail) and Shelly (Terry). Loving grandmother of Emily, Ben, Danté, Amy-Lee, Carsen, Rileah and Emily. Cherished sister of Mary, Tom, Jean and Velma (Mike). Martha is predeceased by her parents Howard and Violet Hart and her siblings Violet, Bernice, Bill, Jim, Bob, Helen, Joe and Harry David. Marty will also be missed by many nieces, nephews, extended family and friends. Cremation has taken place and a private Celebration of Life will be held at a later date. Arrangements have been entrusted to Nicholls Funeral Home, 330 Midland Avenue, Midland Ontario. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Canadian Cancer Society or the Heart and Stroke Foundation.



Dorothy Anna Diller Reesor
1930-2024
H4434022m



Dorothy Anna Diller Reesor died peacefully at home on June 3, 2024 in her 94 th year. Dorothy was the much-loved mother to Paul and Ann, Lois, Laura and Mark Brubacher, Barry and Lori. She was Gma to Chris and Matt, Katelyn, Jennifer and Jaclyn Brubacher, Emma (Graham) and Peter (Jessica). She adored you all! It is a tremendous comfort to know that she saw you both frequently and recently.

Dorothy is survived by brother Herb Diller, with whom she had a lovely visit days before her passing, and brother-in-law Howard Burkholder. Dorothy was predeceased by her beloved husband Murray in 2013, her grandson Jonathon in 1997 as well as her sisters Marie (in infancy), Eileen Martin (Alvin, Henry), Norma Smith (Albert) and Myrna Burkholder.

Dorothy had a strong and quiet faith. She loved her family, she loved food and she had a lifelong love of flowers. She was a talented cook and energetic farm wife. Until the past few years, none of us could keep up with her! Losing her feels like when the Queen died – we’ve never known life without her. She devoted herself to her family and we will miss her terribly.

Always an active person, Dorothy volunteered at the Markham-Stouffville Hospital, Markham Garden Club, Markham Fair, Pennsylvania German Folklore Society and the Markham Historical Society. Visitation will be held at Dixon-Garland Funeral Home on 166 Main Street North, Markham, (Markham Road) Memorial on Wednesday June 12th 2024 from 2-4 & 7-9 pm. Memorial Service will be held at Rouge Valley Mennonite Church, 7452 Reesor Road, Markham on Thursday June 13, 2024 at 1:30 pm. The family wishes to thank Dr. Mui for her exceptional care, as well as Armin and the other nurses at SRT. Donations to Mennonite Central Committee or The Foodgrains Bank would be appreciated.

Sherk Day in Beaverlodge June 22, 2024

What do you get when you mix together 70+ people from baby to 91 years of age, sunshine, Beaverlodge Campsite and a table laden with yumminess?

Why, you get a whole passel of Sherks and Sherk-Tails having fun, fun, fun!!

Welcome to SHERK Day, June 22, 2024 in Beaverlodge, Alberta Canada.

(Home since 1909 to the Amos E142B1 and Candace E15303 Sherk family.) Cousins gathered at the campsite for a pot-luck wiener roast and a day to visit with extended family. There were a few “Hey, I just saw you at hockey camp!!” and “Who do you belong to?” and “I didn’t know we went to the same family reunion!!” But, it didn’t take long for tongues to wag and partners to be found while stories were remembered. Between old fashioned games like three-legged and spoon race, butter was churned and the ice cream freezer cranked. Delicious - just like in the “olden days” (Nobody makes ice cream like that nowadays!)

Everyone was asked to check genealogy family records, update said records if necessary and to highlight their name on the Family Tree wall chart. A “people” treasure hunt also kept us busy discovering 50 talents and skills in our midst. Examples of some of our capable relatives included: a published author, a pilot, a pie maker, a doctor, many nurses and a horse jumper - we are an accomplished crew!!

Newcomers to the Grande Prairie Area Lynda Mann Paul E14155612 and her husband Bob Paul, also joined our Sherk Family Day. There were cousins everywhere having fun together!!!



Hand churned Butter for our hand-made biscuits and local jam preserves!



Taste testing Worms and Dirt!!! They were a hit!

Hand churned Butter for our hand-made biscuits and local jam preserves!



 **YouTube - All About Grand Prairie**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PzKAjy3QkFA>

2025 Schürch Heritage Tour

By Sue Sherk

Begin: September 10, 2025 in **Amsterdam** (with **pre-tour day arrival** on September 9)**

End: September 20, 2025, departing from **Zürich**

Tour Leader: Schürch family historian Justin Houser, PA

Travel agency: Tour Magination, Manitoba/Ontario

For the first time, the 2025 Schürch Heritage tour includes the Netherlands where our ancestors were assisted by Dutch Mennonites as they fled Switzerland and the Palatinate. Visits will include key Anabaptist sites, the Sonnenberg area where Code E Ulrich lived, the Amsterdam flower market and canal boat ride, the Zaanse Schans and Damshuis outdoor museum. Travel by motorcoach to Germany, then on to Switzerland. Visit the Cologne (Köln) Cathedral and Roman ruins, enjoy a relaxing Rhine River cruise from Boppard to St. Goar, and Sunday worship in Weierhof before continuing to Switzerland. Highlights include visiting several family Swiss immigrant homesteads, a horse-drawn Rösli wagon ride, the Hinterhütten Anabaptist hiding place and Trachelswald Castle. Explore Bern, and Luzern after a day in the Alps. Conclude by hiking thru the woods for a worship time in the Anabaptist cave near Bäretswil.

This tour is designated as “active,” requiring daily walking of 2-3 miles (3-5km) on varying terrain, standing 15+ minutes and stairs. While some individual

modifications can be made, please consider your physical wellness. Itinerary details and registration information will be online at tourmagination.com about November 27, 2024. Registration will be on a “first come, first serve” basis and a waitlist will begin when the tour is sold out.

A **pre-tour day arrival in Amsterdam is required as airline arrival times in Amsterdam on September 10 would significantly hamper the itinerary. Tour participants will need to depart North America no later than Monday September 8, arriving AMSTERDAM on Tuesday, September 9. While this adds an extra in-country overnight cost, there are many benefits: there's leeway for any flight delays/cancellations, gives participants time to acclimate - and most importantly, have a good night's rest. Awake refreshed for a 7:30am tour start on Wednesday from the hotel! The return date of Saturday, September 20 from ZURICH remains unchanged. TourMagination will assist all participants with tour details.

 **YouTube** - Introducing the Netherlands

<https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=Introducing+the+Netherlands+Video&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:38da0a1a,vid:X3n41cfMrE4,st:0>

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Mark K. Shirk (shirkmark@gmail.com) has been in touch requesting to be connected with anyone actively researching **Code E8151**. He is writing a book on this line and in particular is pinpointing migration and homesteading experience in Osborne, Mitchell and Lincoln Counties, Kansas, 1870s. He needs to connect with Carolyn to verify his coding against ours. Mark has offered to join the Historian Team for **Code E8**.

Research on **Code E147 Joseph Sherk** and wives, **Elizabeth Hershey** and **Margaret ?** is currently underway. What has prompted this is confirming that **Mary Sherk** (1819-1874) who married **Charles Mortimer Gorham** is, in fact, the daughter of Joseph and Elizabeth. There is also a suggestion that another of their daughters married a Baker, however, evidence of this is yet to be found. Anyone with a Bible record belonging to **E147 Joseph** is encouraged to contact Vanessa.

N 1 3 1 A 7 1 2 1 Greg Richards (gregrichards29@yahoo.com.au) of Australia has contacted us to confirm his Code. His area of interest is where **N Ulrich Scherch** and **Maria Grundbach** were living prior to emigrating to Philadelphia aboard the St. Andrew in 1752. Updates to his lineage will be obtained and he has submitted photos for the *Schürch Photo Gallery* on Flickr, which are awaiting identification and verification of coding.

Our Association Historical Committee is always looking for new Historians and those interested in working on our Database, DNA and other genealogical research Committees. If interested, please contact our Historical Chair or any member of our various



Different Flags SGNS-Sommertreff in Jegenstorf

By Kurt Schürch



Messieurs, Dames, bonjour et bienvenu a Château Jegenstorf. So wurden wir vom Aristokraten Reichsgraf Albrecht Friedrich von Erlach beim Eingang des prachtvollen Barock Schlosses empfangen. Im Park erzählte er auf humoristische Weise wie er zu diesem Schloss schon mit 32 Jahren gekommen war. Dabei war das Gebäude damals eher eine Burg oder Festung, die er nach und nach in den jetzigen prachtvollen Zustand umbauen liess. Er war etwas enttäuscht, dass sich unter den Anwesenden keine adlige Person befand. Danach durften wir ins Innere des Hauses eintreten und die verschiedenen Räume besuchen oder besser bestaunen. Fast jeder Raum war mit einem prachtvollen Kachelofen bestückt. Wichtig war ihm auch, uns sein Portrait zu zeigen, zuerst als junger Mann, dann als stolzer Schultheiss von Bern. Leider konnte wiederum niemand unter uns SGNSlern ein Amt von gleicher Wichtigkeit erwähnen. Etwas geniert erzählte er auch von den Eskapaden seines Vaters Hireonymus.

Zum Schluss munterte er uns auf zum Kartenspiel, ähnlich Jass/ teilzunehmen, betonte aber, dass das Schloss nicht als Gewinn gesetzt sei. Nach so vielen Erzählungen und Anekdoten verlagerten wir uns in den Keller wo der Apero kredenzt wurde. Anschliessend tauchte der Koch mit dem Mittagsmenü als Buffet auf. Die Hamme mit dem Kartoffelgratin schmeckte vorzüglich. Wieder ging ein interessanter Anlass der SGNS mit leider zu wenig Anwesenden vorüber.

Nachträglich noch vielen Dank der «Lätti» Familie, Susanne, Heiner, Marco und Diana für das Organisieren und die Mithilfe beim Buffet.

English version

Messieurs, dames bonjour et Bienvenu (ladies and gentlemen, good day

and welcome. Thats how we were welcomed by the Count from aristocrat Count Albrecht, Friedrich from Erlach at the entrance to the gorgeous baroque castle. In the park he narrated, in a most humorous way, how he obtained possession of this castle, at the early age of 32 years. At this time the building was more of a fortress which, in the following years, he built into the magnificent “castle” we see today. He was a bit disappointed that none of us had a noble background. Afterwards, we could step inside of the house and view the different rooms and admire the luxurious furniture. Almost every room was equipped with a tiled stove. It was important to him that we see his Portrait showing him as a young man and as the mayor of the city of Bern. Again, none of us could claim that he/she had ever occupied a similar position. With some embarrassment he related some of the escapades of his father, Hieronymus.

At the end of the tour, he encouraged us to play cards with him (similar to Jassen, a Swiss card game). He emphasized that the castle would not be part of the winning prize.

After so many interesting stories, we moved down to the cellar where an aperitive was served, followed by a delicious meal buffet-style. The ham and the potato gratin were excellent. Again, a very interesting SGNS event with rather few attendees came to an end.

Thanks to the organizer, family Schürch Lätti: Susanne, Heiner, Marco and Diana who helped to make this summer event successful.





Different Flags

G'Day from Schürchs "down under"

By Greg Richards



I am part of the N group. I started this search 22 years ago, just before my Mum died and was in contact with Thomas (Tom). Things were a lot different then. The Internet was new and there wasn't a webpage up and running. Most of the research was done by letter, which was flowing over to email. That was making things happen a lot quicker. Especially when you are on the other side of the World to you guys. The death of my Mother really affected me and I stopped my research.

I'm Greg – N131A7121. I reckon my leg is the most ADVENTUROUS!!!!!! Hahahahahaha. And possibly lives the furthest away? In 300 years, we have gone from Europe to USA, up to Ontario, Canada. Then moved across Canada through Manitoba, Alberta - where my Sister was born, British Columbia, then we came to Australia where I was born and I lived in Papua New Guinea for 6 years, where I married my ex and one of my sons was born there in 1993. We nearly have done the loop. 25,546 kilometres or 15,874 miles so far.

I only found out 3.5 years ago, that I have Asperger's. One of my superpowers is that we have great Pattern Recognition and this explains why I was able to put what I did in place at the time, without a lot help from the internet. I was corresponding with experts. We have great detective skills. Our second superpower is that we can deep dive into data. Very handy when you are looking into Genealogy or Archaeology!!!! :-). Which are two of my passions. I have just completed an Archaeology project, that kinda tied into Switzerland and the Mennonites, which has brought me back around into the Family History side of things again. On finding out that the mysteries that I was working on 22 years ago regarding the Alsace, still hadn't been solved, I'm determined to do that this time. With my boys grown up, the threat of viruses

closing the travel industry down again, gone for the moment and most of my projects under control, 2025 & 26 will give me the chance to get back out on the road to delve.

I feel very much at home in the Schurch family, as our forefathers were seen as "different or weird". We didn't fit in. We didn't let that get us down. In times where there was war, disease, discrimination and a mini Ice Age, they were wondering whether the World was coming to an end. Sound familiar? But they chose to go looking for a better place. They were resilient. They were adventurous. They chose to believe in better things. And look where that took them!!!! It wasn't easy – far from it!!!! I live in the same spirit. I don't fit in and I don't want to. If not for my resilience, I wouldn't be here today, but my life has been such an adventure. I wouldn't trade it for ANYTHING!!! I have been soooo privileged to see as much of the World as I have, but there is sooooo much more I have yet to see.



Searching for Schürchs - - -
**Paul Schürch Woodworking
 Classes**

Any information about this Schürch?



Paul Schurch Woodworking
 Classes

[https://www.youtube.com/
 watch?v=IMkZ0rY04Jw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMkZ0rY04Jw)