

November 2022

Volume 40B

Schürch Family Association
of North America

2022 Reunion
Commemorative





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The Schürch Family Association of North America publishes a newsletter twice a year, in April and November. Back issues are available for \$10 US and \$10 CAD. Bound volumes are available upon request and availability. Digital copies of all newsletter issues is also available.

Subscription rates

<u>Term</u>	<u>U.S. and CANADA</u>
One year	\$12
Two years	\$22
Three years	\$30

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The President's Message

Dear cousins,

We enjoyed a wonderful August reunion in Ridgeway, Ontario. This 40th anniversary of the first gathering and establishment of the Schürch Family Association of North America was truly a time of celebration. For cousins who have attended reunions regularly, including the first 1982 gathering in Pennsylvania, to those who met for the first time at Crystal Ridge, this was an opportunity to learn more about our common history and explore the local area.

Particularly noteworthy was the ability of the organizing team lead by Laurine Mills to overcome the challenges and uncertainties of holding a reunion after its postponement in 2020 due to the pandemic. We had good weather and a very suitable facility in the Crystal Ridge Community Centre. We enjoyed reuniting with our Swiss cousins, Kurt and Judy Schürch, who travelled here to join us.

At the reunion, I had the honour of being elected President of the association, a role I also filled from 2004-2008. Thank you for showing confidence in me. New to the executive team are Kathy and Stephen Sherrick of Lititz, PA as new Vice Presidents and Reunion Planners and Carolyn Strecher of Jersey City, NJ, who will be On-Line Database Co-Chair along with Justin Houser. Betty Sherk will take over the secretary role from Janice Ulmer, who has ably kept the association minutes and records for several years. Laurine Mills continues as Canadian Treasurer and Jack Sherrick as US Treasurer. A hearty thank you for all executive members who extended their terms over the last two years due to the cancellation of the 2020 reunion.

In a future issue of the newsletter, we will tell you more about the entire executive team, including those not listed here. These cousins work tirelessly to collect and record our history, genealogical data, and family stories, to plan heritage tours, reunions, and symposia, maintain the website, and to publish our biannual newsletter.

Please submit your own stories to Cary Adams, our newsletter editor, who seeks not only family history but your current happenings - sports involvement, births, weddings, travels, or anything you wish to share.

Please mark November 12 on your calendars for our next Schürch Family Symposium featuring Jerry Sherk who will talk about his experience playing football for the Cleveland Browns, mentoring, and photography. Note that past symposia are now available to view on YouTube via the Schürch Website www.schurichfamilyassociation.net.

We welcome your questions and suggestions in advance of our next executive meeting on Saturday, October 22, 2022. Thank you for your participation in our family association.

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Welcome! New and renewing subscribers

Terry Vavrek and Dennis Freoland
Grande Prairie, Alberta, Canada

Linda Osborn
Fort Erie, Ontario

SCHURCH FAMILY REUNION 2022

Crystal Ridge Community Centre



This is the story of our 20th Reunion and you ask what does the 40 stand for well it has been 40 years since the North American Schurch Family Association started in 1982 so come along on our journey

Crystal Ridge Community Centre seemed a great fit and thankfully the weekend of August 5th & 6th was the only weekend still available and we were able to book our 2022 Reunion at this location. Eileen Sherk Fretz who is an amazing woman of many talents so dedicated she and I spent many months in preparation for this event. The day finally arrived. Friday started out with Sherks who had registered, now picking up their registration forms found in their bags and taking



their place in the auditorium. Likely having a coffee or tea, visiting with their cousins, and stopping by the memorabilia table manned by Liam and his mom Barbara Sherk Fitzsimmons or spent time at Margaret Sherk's book table.



At exactly 9:30 our Reunion opened with our President extraordinaire Tom Shirk ringing the large Swiss cow bell letting us know our 2022 Reunion had begun. Deb Sherk our MC did an excellent job through the whole Reunion introducing the Mayor of Fort Erie Wayne Redekop and the MP of Niagara Wayne Gates as they presented their welcoming speech

This was followed by Sharon Dell who presented the reenactment of the Conestoga Wagon Trek from Pennsylvania to Fort Erie in 1997. I can still hear the clip clop of the horses' hooves on the pavement as they pulled the wagon. Sharon's grandson Ylan was not only very helpful to his grandma but to us as well with his computer skills and especially for Mayor Redekop's greeting. Thank you, Ylan.



Next on our agenda were the engaging highlight of the 2019 Switzerland Heritage Tour which Janice Henry described in detail, as well as showing her fascinating slides which left us all asking when is the next Switzerland Heritage Tour?

Stephen Shirk and his able assistant Kathy were available to assist Sherks who were interested in finding out their Heritage or which Code they belonged to.

continued on page 3

A break for lunch and back again as we eagerly wait to hear from Bob Fretz, "Why Would An American Want to Come to Fort Erie"? Bob also had Post Cards and Historical pictures for us to inspect. Bob describes himself as a picker, Historian and coin collector for over 40 years. Way to go Bob E14871146

Bob Wilhelm code E15376313 as Captain R Wilhelm gave us a tour of his years as a flying instructor and his experiences as an airplane pilot in Africa and his trips from Japan to USA and around the world. Bob now volunteers at the Mount Hope War Museum in Hamilton. Great inspiring years spent travelling as an airplane pilot.

We have now completed Day 1 on our agenda and we were able to go on your own for a relaxing dinner and we would see everyone back again Saturday morning for another inspiring day.

Day 2 started out with Kurt Schurch showing us how the Swiss held their Schurch meetings in Switzerland with slides and explanation. Such beautiful scenery.

Stephen Shirk then spoke on the Historical Team, the people who make up the Team, the Symposium, website, Facebook and finished with the Heritage Tour.

This was followed by George Huber who gave an intriguing talk on the origin of the anabaptists and our anabaptist roots which kept everyone captivated. George's academic background include Honors BA in History McMaster University, Teachers College Certificate Type A, University of Toronto, Master of Education, Queens University, Master of History, University of Toronto. George had spent 30 years as a History High School Teacher.



The Buses are now waiting outside as we grab a lunch bag, and make our way to the assigned buses for code E and Code N. Our knowledgeable tour guides Bob Wilhelm, David Sherk and Ken Fretz explained the history of the area, sights during and along the bus tour, cemeteries and historic houses. We ended up at the Port Colborne Museum where we were given a booklet for self-guided tours. We were able to tour John & Sally Sherk's E1420 log house from Brookfield Rd in Port Colborne, and also Benton Neffs E14358 steam buggy housed there, and many more interesting finds

We had a break at Arabella's Tea Room where hot tea and biscuits were served on elegant chine

Back to the Crystal Ridge Community Centre where we found our photographer Laura Fretz E1148711463 waiting by the bleachers to take photos of each of the Codes in attendance.

Inside our delicious dinner of turkey, ham, dressing and all the trimmings awaited us.

"A meal is not a meal without dessert. We enjoyed a chocolate and a white slab cake commemorating the 40 years since the Schurch Family Association was formed

The program continues with our awesome leader Tom Shirk our president who has encouraged and supported us, and he thanked all those involved in making this reunion the success it was. Thank you Tom for taking the reins of leadership these last 6 years. Tom would now pass the Switzerland Bell to our new President Margaret Sherk who would assume the leadership role.

We are now prepared to begin the live Auction which everyone has been excitedly waiting for. Betty Sherk, Ann Barnsley and Isobel Fishley having prepared the tables ahead of time were ready for our auctioneer

Our talented auctioneer Dale Shaw effortlessly commanded the attention of the crowd and our 2 enthusiastic runners Leila Kramer and Colton Mills took the sold merchandise to the highest bidder. Fun was had by all.

Before we knew it all the items on the table had been auctioned off

The Reunion is over and it was a success thanks to the many volunteers who helped make it happen but I would especially like to thank Eileen Sherk Fretz who was there from beginning of preparations for the REUNION to the end who provided wisdom, words of encouragement and so much help. Reunion would not have happened without her support. Thank you so much Eileen.

The Lost Years Project:

Ulrich Schürch in the Netherlands 1711-1728?

Overview

August 3, 1711	Arrived in Amsterdam with his wife and four children
August 22, 1711	Arrived in Harlingen, Friesland
	Shortly afterwards brought over to Gorredijk, Friesland
May 11 or 12, 1712	Brought to Harlingen temporarily to await decision of Amsterdam Committee on re-settlement
After July 2, 1712	A farm purchased for the family on the Sonnenberg in Mastenbroek near Kampen (in the meantime have a fifth child)

The Anabaptists Ulrich Schürch of Sumiswald, Canton of Bern, and his wife Barbara Grundbacher, also from Sumiswald, and their children were part of a history of persecution by church and state authorities, but also of generosity on the part of the Dutch Mennonites (Doopsgezinden) in paying for their journey away from persecution to a land of religious freedom, and re-settling them there. This story is told in the three volumes of Documents of Brotherly Love, the third of which is in the process of publication. Ulrich Schürch only appears in person in Volume II, which includes documents describing the immigration of 337 Swiss Anabaptists to the Netherlands in 1711.

They lived in the Canton of Bern in a time when the Canton was determined to root out these people, no matter what measures were required to achieve this. The authorities questioned their loyalty for several reasons. They did not conform to the state Reformed Church. Their refusal to swear an oath of allegiance or to serve in the military. The Anabaptists were quite willing to promise their allegiance verbally and with a handshake, and sometimes this was enough, yet their loyalty to the state remained dubious in the eyes of the authorities. The refusal to serve in the military was perceived as a threat to the safety of the country. It was also an economic issue. The canton had an army made up of citizens; it did not hire mercenaries. If Anabaptists dominated a region, how could it be defended when they would not fight? But also, the well-trained and disciplined Swiss soldiers were hired out to rulers all over Europe. In the eighteenth century, mercenaries were one of the main exports of the Canton of Bern.^[1]

The effort to remove this perceived pernicious presence in their midst involved the Reformed Church. Its clergy was instructed by the authorities to teach the Anabaptists the tenets of this church. When these conversion campaigns appeared to be largely ineffective, the authorities applied stronger measures.

Anabaptists were banned or imprisoned; their property was confiscated; they were condemned to serve in French, Venetian, or Sicilian galleys. Ulrich Schürch is reported as being imprisoned in Bern on July 27, 1710, and specifically as being imprisoned in the Island or Island Hospital and the Old Island Cloister, the main prison for the Anabaptists in Bern, on September 29, 1710.^[2]

The Dutch Mennonites (Doopsgezinden) had been involved in aid to Swiss Anabaptists already in the seventeenth century, even involving the States General (Dutch parliament) by means of an intercession for the Anabaptists to Swiss cantons.^[3] The persecution in the Canton of Bern had been a little less in the late seventeenth century, but in the early 1700s, a new wave of persecution began. When the church council of the Amsterdam congregation of the Zon (sun) first heard about the renewed persecution, they consulted with the council of the other large congregation, the Lam (lamb) and Toren (tower). On June 22, 1709 a letter came from Swiss Anabaptist leaders in Mannheim, who had fled from Switzerland as a result of an earlier persecution in 1672 and were materially helped by the Dutch Mennonites, with a detailed report about the persecution in the Canton of Bern and the new tactics of the government. Other letters follow, including one from the German freelance diplomat Johann Ludwig Runckel to Jan Beets at Hoorn (northern tip of the province of North Holland) on January 22, 1710. Runckel was to become a major force in the assistance to the persecuted Swiss Anabaptists.^[4]

At this point the Dutch Mennonites began to organize common action for their brothers and sisters in Bern. The ministers of the Zon and the Lam and Toren called together representatives from Holland and Zeeland, and it was decided that they would ask their representatives in the States of Holland to intercede with the Canton of Bern for the Swiss Anabaptists. This intercession was written on March 15, 1710. (DBL

continued on page 8

2:88-95) It made no impression on the Lords of Bern. Johann Runckel was appointed by the States General as ambassador for Mennonite affairs. When all intercessions failed to change Bern's policy on the Anabaptists, Runckel and the Dutch Mennonites came to the conclusion that it was best for the Bernese Swiss to leave Switzerland. An invitation had come from Frederick I, King in Prussia (r. 1701-1713) for the settlement of the Swiss in his country on very reasonable conditions. Bern approved this plan. However, the Swiss Anabaptists were dubious about going there, because of the plague that had recently raged there, the devastations brought about by the armies of the Great Northern War, the marshy nature of the country, the fear of serfdom, and other issues. Runckel and the Dutch negotiated for settlement in the Netherlands, at least temporarily, until the Swiss could make up their minds where they would go. The Dutch government approved their settlement in the Republic, though with the expectation that the costs would be borne by the Mennonites themselves. In the end, the Swiss decided against settlement in Prussia, in spite of positive reports from the Swiss representatives who checked it out.^[5]

On November 5, 1710, a general meeting of representatives from nineteen Dutch Mennonite congregations was held in Amsterdam to organize the aid to the Swiss brothers and sisters more efficiently. The Amsterdam congregations were affirmed as the representatives for looking after ongoing affairs. This committee came to be referred to as the Commissie voor Buitenlandsche Nooden, the Committee for Foreign Needs (CBN).

Runckel, in consultation with this committee, negotiated release of the Swiss Anabaptist prisoners, the return of the property seized by Bern's Anabaptist Commission, an amnesty to give them time to sell their property, and the journey to the Netherlands. In February 1711, the prisoners were released, and on July 23, 1711, four ships left Bern with Swiss Anabaptists, mostly prisoners, but also some who emigrated voluntarily, and some Reformed spouses. Some of these passengers left ship at Breisach or Mannheim; 377 arrived in the Netherlands on August 3, 1711. They were first housed in the salt factory of a Mennonite entrepreneur, then distributed to various places for settlement, the main ones being Deventer and Kampen in the province of Overijssel, and Groningen, the northernmost province of the Netherlands. A small group was left at Harlingen, a harbor city in northwest Friesland.

The Swiss Anabaptists consisted of two groups, the Amish, named after Jacob Amman, and the

Reistians, named after Hans Reist. The Reistians did not want to leave Switzerland on principle, believing that the government had no right to prevent them from evangelizing and telling them where to live ("The earth is the Lord's"), while the Amish adhered to the Dordrecht Confession of Faith, Article XIV, which promotes fleeing from one city or country to another.^[6] Therefore, most of the immigrants were Amish. Among the few Reistians were Ulrich Schürch and his wife Barbara Grundbacher.

Ulrich and Barbara and their four children, three sons and a daughter, from Sumiswald were among the 21 men, women, and children who were left behind in Harlingen when the boat to Groningen sailed east via that city's harbor.^[7] They were there because, at a meeting of the general Society of the Doopsgezinden, the ministers of Harlingen had requested that a few of the Swiss immigrants be sent there.^[8] Others in the group were: Lucia Weinmann, from Höchstettin; Fijt Smit (Veith Sägissemann)^[9] and son, from Bolligen; Christen Gäuman (the Younger) and his wife Anna Brentzikofer with two sons and two daughters, from Höchstettin; Rudolf Stettler and his wife Elisa Witmer and two sons, from Höchstettin; and Margret Schürch, a widow, with her daughter age 20, from Lützelflüh.^[10]

However, they very soon left Harlingen for Gorredijk, a village about 30 miles southeast of Harlingen. The minister there, Foocke Eyles, had suggested that the Swiss could settle there on the as yet uncultivated Gorreveen, an area south of the village.^[11] The Frisian friends Hans Douwes and Gerrit Jantjes affirmed in September 1711 that 20 families could settle there.^[12] How and where the Swiss from Harlingen lived during the winter is not known. However, in spring they let the congregation in Harlingen know that – although they were grateful for all that was done for them – they could not live there in good health. The air was bad, the ground was marshy, and the water was no good. These were no doubt legitimate complaints: Gorredijk was an area of peat mining. When this began in the seventeenth century, a ditch was dug through the High Dike, with the result that sour water seeped into the agricultural lands.^[13]

Gorredijk and surroundings around 1700. The area with a circle sketched in is the one considered for the Swiss settlers.

Another complaint they expressed, was that they were deprived of all consolation in preaching, as they could not understand the ministers. The united Gorredijk-Lippenhuizen congregation had a meeting place, a "hidden church," at the back part of a house on the Langewal in Gorredijk.^[14] The services were no doubt held in Dutch and Frisian, the language of

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Map from: S. J. van der Molen, Opsterlân (Leeuwarden: Van Seijen, 1977), 168.

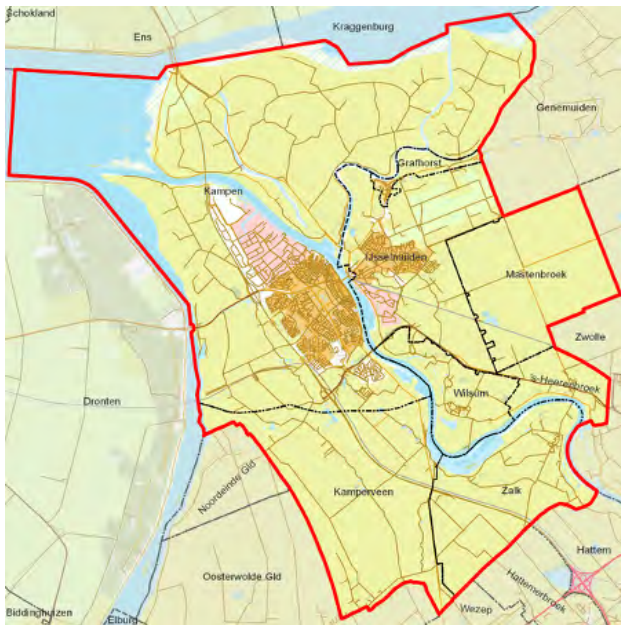
Egbert Harings, deacon (or minister) in Harlingen, wrote about this to the Committee on April 19, 1712. The Committee wrote to the Reistian leader Bendicht Brechtbühl in Mannheim for advice. His letter, which was hard to read, being a mixture of poor Dutch and Swiss dialect, advised them not to come to the Palatinate. It was too full there already. [\[15\]](#)

Steven Abrahams Cramer of Deventer, greatly involved in the settlement of the Swiss immigrants, went to Kampen to arrange places for

Cramer thinks it something of a shame that Ulrich Schürch would not wait for a farm in Kampen,

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as he could have got a better one there for less money, and he could eventually have got citizenship with its rights and privileges when his financial situation improved (you had to pay 100 guilders for it).



Map of the Kampen area from the Internet

Ulrich's sister Margret Schürch, a widow with a daughter age 20, was on the Emmental ship with his family. She, too, was imprisoned in Bern, and released with other prisoners on February 19, 1711. She was a Reistian from Lützelflüh.^[26] In his letter of July 2, 1712, Cramer mentions that she is lame and has no means, and her daughter is also quite weak. They have been placed with Magdalena Gijselaar (Gysler) in Brumpe (Brunnepe), a hamlet northwest of Kampen dating from the fourteenth century, now part of the city.^[27] She sailed on the Emmental ship with the Schürchs, although as a voluntary emigrant.^[28] She is listed in Kampen's Burgerboek (book of citizens) as a country citizen on April 29, 1712, having two sons, Hans and Ulrich Snyder. Cramer reports that Margret and her daughter are wholly satisfied there. The farmstead and land are partially cultivated. Christen Gäuman is already in Brunnepe, having obtained a farm with a large farmstead, three cows, and land; he is also wholly satisfied.

This is the last that is heard of Ulrich Schürch in the Netherlands. Whether he remained there until 1728, when he left for America, is unknown. However, considering that he was a poor man, it is unlikely that he could have left without support.

There is very little information on the Swiss in the Netherlands in general outside of the correspondence in the archives of the Amsterdam congregation. It was not common to register the birth of children with the Reformed Church, as was done in Bern. In Kampen, there was no census until 1743. The first nation-wide census was in 1795. Foreigners could be registered with the government, but there is no record that the Swiss of the 1711 migration did this. Their care was left solely to their Dutch Mennonite friends.

In the City Archives of Kampen, there is a record of Swiss Mennonite children from 1798, but I could not find any names relating to the subject of this study. The Dutch Mennonite congregation in Kampen did not start keeping a record of children until the late eighteenth century.

The Swiss immigrants had their own congregation in Kampen from the very first. Of this congregation, there are no records at all in the archives of the Mennonite church. The first mention of this congregation in the records is in 1822, when it united with the Dutch congregation. Since this was an Amish congregation, no records were kept on principle. It can therefore not be ascertained whether Ulrich Schürch and his wife, and the other Reistians, joined it. There would not be the language barrier of the Dutch congregations, but the Reistians might have had difficulty adjusting to the Amish regulations.

There are some records of marriages. In the City Archives of Kampen, there is a record of civil marriages in Kampen from 1667. In that year, Mennonites were no longer required either to have the banns read in the Reformed Church or to have the marriage solemnized there; this could be done by the local mayors. Some Swiss born in the Canton of Bern are listed, but no one from the group in this study.

Lydia Penner
July 2022

^[1] Documents of Brotherly Love 2:170-171; André Holenstein, et al, eds. The Republican Alternative. The Netherlands and Switzerland compared, 240, 243, 247.

^[2] DBL 2:170-171, 366-367.

^[3] See DBL 1, "Introduction," 1-16; 188-193.

^[4] The story of this persecution and the assistance of the Dutch Mennonites comes to light in DBL 2.

^[5] SAA 565 A1905.

^[6] Thomas J. Meyers, "The Amish Division: A Review Of The Literature," in The/Les Amish. Origin and Characteristics/origine et particularismes 1693-1993, 72-94; DBL 2:14-15.

^[7] SAA 565 A1872

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[8] SAA 565 A1392, 222.

[9] His wife Barbara Rohrer died en route or in Amsterdam. SAA 565 A1392, 222.

[10] SAA 565 A1216 (DBL 2:1260-1261); SAA 565 A1392, 213, 222, 275; SAA 565 A1916. Lists providing information on the passengers from Bern: DBL 2:1052-1075, 1076-1101, 1186-1195, 1256-1263.

[11] J. W. Zondervan, "Het kleine kuddeke. Schetsen uit de geschiedenis van de Doopsgezinde Gemeente van Gorredijk," in *De Flecke Gorredyck*, 121.

[12] SAA 565 A1903.

[13] SAA 565 A1885; Luuk van der Veen, ed., *Gorredijk van 1900 tot nu. De ontwikkeling van een voormalige veenkolonie in woord en beeld*, 13.

[14] Zondervan, 108-109.

[15] SAA 565 A1882; SAA 565 A1392, 263.

[16] SAA A 1882.

[17] SAA A 1884.

[18] SAA 565 A1915.

[19] SAA 565 A1917.

[20] SAA 565 A1916.

[21] SAA 565 A1883.

[22] SAA 565 A1917.

[23] SAA 565 A1915.

[24] SAA 565 A1392, 275.

[25] "Arend van Holtzende in 't Karthuizer klooster op den Sonnenberg. 1576-1579"; Theo van Mierlo, "De 'Kartuizer kluis' op de Sonnenberg," 2006.

[26] DBL 2:264-365, 744-745, 766-767, 1054-1055, 1092-1093.

[27] C. N. Fehrman, *Een bijdrage tot de Topografie en de Geschiedenis van Brunnepe en de Hagen*.

[28] DBL 2: 1018-1019, 1056-1057, 1086-1087, 1094-1095; SAA 565 A1392, 213.

SFANA Symposium Event:

Jerry Sherk Talks Football, Photography & Mentoring



The next SFANA Symposium Zoom event kicks off on Saturday, November 12, 2022, at 5 p.m. ET, 4 p.m. CT and 2 p.m. PT and features a presentation and Q&A with Jerry Martin Sherk.

To say Jerry is a Schurch notable is a vast understatement. An All-American wrestler at Oklahoma State University, he was drafted in the second round of the 1970 NFL draft and was named to the League's Pro Bowl four consecutive years. After his 12-season career, Jerry took up sports photography and his work appeared in numerous newspapers as well as *Sports Illustrated* and *Pro! Magazine*. In the early 1990s, Jerry earned a master's degree in counseling psychology and formed Mentoring Management Systems. For 25 years, MMS has been a leader in supporting youth and adult mentoring programs across California and the U.S.

During our conversation with Jerry, he'll share a few memories from the gridiron and wrestling mat, show us some of his photography, and provide his perspectives on mentoring vulnerable populations today. At the end of his conversation, Jerry will take questions from the audience, so be sure to join us for this special edition of SFANA Symposiums.

For further information and registration, contact schurchsymposium@gmail.com. "See" you on November 12!



Schürch



Center



On Family Stories

By Candace Sherk Savage
E142B1211, E153A321

My Grandpa, Gordon Grant Sherk, was a familiar but slightly mysterious presence in my childhood. In my mind's eye, I see him rolling up in his green Fargo pickup, stepping down off the running board into a cluster of grandkids, and digging into his pockets for caramels to hand around. It was a bit of a letdown for me when, in later years, he was diagnosed with diabetes and the sweets were replaced by peanuts. I remember, too, the family gathering that marked his death, aged 83, in the summer of 1968, the year I turned eighteen. Yet in all the years I was privileged to know him, I don't recall ever hearing him reminisce about his life. He was a kind but practical man, not a cuddly, sit-on-my-knee-and-I'll-tell-you-a-story kind of grandparent.

So it was his son, my late father, Harry Gordon Sherk, who made sure I learned about our ancestors' epic adventures. The story began, of course, with the Sherks' migration as religious refugees across the dark Atlantic back in the 1750s and continued, a few decades later, with the long trek north from Pennsylvania to the forests of Canada, as loyalists to the British crown. But the journey that filled my mind with admiration and wonder was more recent than either of those. It was an adventure in which my own Grandpa had taken part.

Early in the spring of 1909, Gord Sherk, then a young man in his 20s, had joined his family on a heroic excursion of their own, from the comfortable community of Sherkston, Ontario, to a raw homestead somewhere in Alberta. The party of travellers included Gord's parents, Amos and my namesake, Candace Sherk, both then in their 50s; Gord's younger siblings Marley, Lulu and Maud; and members of several other families, numbering 31 people in all. Inspired by a charismatic Methodist sect called the Christian Association to which many of the participants belonged, the expedition was guided by rather hazy directions that came directly from God.

Once they stepped off the train in Edmonton, the new arrivals asked around and picked up rumours of a frontier called the Peace River Country, reputed to be "a wonderful country," as Gord later explained, "but very hard to get to." And so it proved. Outfitted with 18 teams of oxen (most of which had never been harnessed before), 14 wagons and an awkward bus-like contraption called "the Car" that the Sherks had brought from Ontario and that was eventually sold along the way, the party set out through muskeg and forest for their promised land. The journey would take them two and a half months to complete.

And yet, they made it to their goal. Somehow, despite their alarming lack of preparation and planning, they found their way to the banks of the Beaverlodge River. By working tirelessly together over succeeding decades, Amos Sherk and Sons assembled farmland and made a success of everything they turned their hands to. According to an account in the marvellous local history *From Beaverlodge to the Rockies*, "work [on the Sherk farm] began at 5 a.m. every day, except during harvesting when it started earlier. Neighbors recall Amos never crossing the road without two pails in his hands and one on his arm." No wonder I don't remember my Grandpa ever sitting around.

These stories of larger-than-life accomplishments have always fired my imagination and inspired me to take on challenges, like writing books, that I might not otherwise have dared to attempt. But this heroic narrative of prairie settlement has also raised troubling questions that I may never be able entirely to resolve. For our own reasons and with honourable intentions, we Sherks have claimed land and made lives for ourselves in Pennsylvania and in Ontario and then on the prairies, in places that had been occupied by other people for hundreds of generations before we turned up. Our story, as irresistible as we may find it, is not the only story that we need to hear or to tell.

Candace Savage is the daughter of Edna E. Humphrey and Harry Gordon Sherk. She is the author of numerous books, including *A Geography of Blood: Unearthing Memory from a Prairie Landscape* and *Strangers in the House: A Prairie Story of Bigotry and Belonging*, both of which attempt to "unsettle" the heroic narrative of western settlement. She lives with her partner, Keith Bell, in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.



Photo caption: L to r: Edna Sherk, with daughter Marilyn; Harry Sherk with Candace; Gord Sherk, Dawson Creek, B. C., Canada. July, 1954

Reunion family banquet, business meeting, and family auction (Sat. Aug. 6)

Business Meeting

president, conducted the biennial business meeting. He reviewed the accomplishments of the association over the past 4 years and highlighted the reactivation of the Lost Years Research Project. The association engaged a researcher in the Netherlands this summer to search the archives for missing links to our ancestors in their movement from Switzerland via the Netherlands to the USA in the 1700's. Our search for family connections and our history continues. Tom also announced Susan D. Shirk as the recipient of the John S. Shirk Memorial Heritage Award for her accomplishments in supporting the Schürch Family Association of North America.

Nominations for association officers for 2022-2044 were presented by the nominating committee and accepted: President – Margaret Sherk, Vice President/ Reunion planners – Kathy and Stephen Sherrick, Secretary – Betty Sherk, Canadian Treasurer – Laurine Mills, US Treasurer – Jack Sherrick. Finally, Tom handed over the Schurch bell to Margaret Sherk for her two- year term.



After the family photo session outside the Crystal Ridge Community Centre, the family gathered for a 40th anniversary celebration. Our MC for the reunion, Deb Sherk, Code N1368362, reports that the Ridgeway Lions catered the Saturday night banquet in addition to providing the box lunches for the bus trips. On a personal note, Deb's cousin Ruth (on her mom's side – so not the Sherks) and her husband Bruce Schinkel were servers at the banquet and Bruce, a Lion, was the person who Laurine and Eileen contacted to arrange the use of the Lions Hall and the catering. The tasty roast turkey and beef meal was festive fare and served efficiently. Special 40th anniversary cakes topped off the celebratory banquet.

Tom Shirk,
our outgoing



The family auction that traditionally ends the reunion is always a fun way to raise funds for family activities such as research projects. This year, our auctioneer, Dale Shaw, was assisted by sisters Ann Sherrick Barnsley and Isobel Sherrick Fishley of Saskatchewan, Betty Sherk, Jane Sherk, and several young Schürch cousins who acted as "runners." Items donated included antique crocks, a moustache cup, a souvenir trinket box from Sherkston, maple syrup, and an antique wooden maple tree tapping spile. From Ron Sherk's collection, Mary Lou donated 2 traditional Swiss farmer shirts, a silk scarf created by Liselotte Schürch with the Schürch family crest, and several books, including a copy of Tom Sherk's *The Sherk Family*, which went for a high price. Much friendly bantering and bidding between auctioneer and the cousins made a relaxing and cheerful end to a full day.

The next reunion will be held in 2024 in Lancaster area of Pennsylvania.



Different Flags



SGNS Sommertreff vom 3. September 2022 in Basel

Eröffnung auto-mobil basel? Eröffnung Roche Tower? Eröffnung Baselbieter Genusswoche? NEIN, NEIN, NEIN! Es war der SGNS Sommertreff, der uns nach Basel einlud. 30 gutgelaunte Teilnehmer warteten gespannt am Bahnhof auf die Anfahrt der Dante Schuggi, ein Tram-Oldtimer aus dem Jahre 1934. Pünktlich um 10:30 holperte sie daher. Schnell einsteigen, bevor das nächste Tram ankommt! Da zu diesem Zeitpunkt Petrus die Schleuse öffnete, war jeder bedacht rasch ins Innere zu gelangen. Nun trat die „Küchenmannschaft“ in Aktion. Speckzopf schneiden, 3 Sorten Gipfeli auspacken, Becher verteilen, den gekühlten Weissen öffnen, Orangensaft und Mineral bereitstellen und ja, verteilen. Es herrschte eine gute Stimmung trotz nun heftigem Regenfall, und das Dargebotene fand reichlich Absatz. Sepp versuchte trotz Lärm, Rosmarie und mir Auskunft über die Strecke zu geben. Wieder pünktlich, scheint bei der BVB (Balser Verkehrs Betriebe) ein Qualitätszeichen zu sein, hielt das Tram an der gewünschten Haltestelle an, von wo wir uns dann zum Restaurant Papiermühle bewegten. Leider war es aus bekannten Gründen nicht möglich im Gartenrestaurant Platz zu nehmen. Im Lokal waren aber 3 Tische für uns reserviert und auch schon gedeckt. Zuerst verteilte Rosmarie wieder den obligaten Wettbewerbszettel mit Fragen um Basel bevor dann das Personal das Essen auftrug. Danach war noch ein kleiner Einsatz meinerseits vorgesehen, der leider (noch?) nicht zum Ziel führte. Ich erwähnte unsere kritische Situation im Vorstand und hätte gerne noch 2 – 3 Zusagen zum Mitmachen bei der SGNS entgegengenommen. Nach dem Hauptgang hatte Rosmarie die Auswertung des Wettbewerbs abgeschlossen und konnte den glücklichen Gewinnern einen Preis überreichen. Inzwischen zeigte sich die Sonne, was die Heimkehr mit dem Spaziergang zum Bahnhof erleichterte.

English version

Opening of **Auto-mobile Basel?** Opening of the **Roche Tower?** Opening of Basel's Enjoyment Week? (These were special events in Basel on this weekend). NO, NO, NO! It was the SGNS Summer Gathering that brought us to Basel. 30 good-humored participants waited excitedly at the train station for the arrival of the auntie "Schuggi", an old-timer tram built in 1934. Punctually, at 10:30 a.m., she jolted into sight. Quick boarding was required so we wouldn't be in the way of the next arriving tram. Just at this moment St. Peter opened the rain valves so everybody was intent on entering rapidly. Now the kitchen crew came into action. Cut the Speckzopf (special bread with bacon pits) unpack 3 kinds of croissants, distribute cups, open the chilled white wine and get the orange juice and the water ready to distribute. It was a merrymaking atmosphere, despite the heavy rainfall, and the offered goodies were well received. Sepp tried, despite the loud noise, to explain to Rosmarie and myself the route we were driving along. The tram arrived punctually (that seems to be a quality mark of the BVB - public transportation company of Basel), at the stop from where we walked to the nearby restaurant Papiermühle. Unfortunately, for obvious reasons, it was not possible to sit in the garden area. Inside 3 tables were reserved for us and already prepared. At first, and as usual, Rosmarie distributed a quiz paper for a contest with questions regarding Basel and surrounding area. The staff then began to serve the food. Afterwards a short input from myself followed which did not yet hit the target. I mentioned the critical situation of our board and would have liked to get promises of 2 – 3 persons to join the SGNS board. After the main course, Rosmarie finished the evaluation of the contest, and handed over the awards to the happy winners. In the meantime, the sun showed itself again, which made the promenade to the nearby train station a pleasant one.



Susan Shirk Receives the John S. Shirk Memorial Heritage

Susan Shirk our Association past President, and Heritage Tour leader is the 2022 recipient of The John S. Shirk Memorial Heritage Award. The announcement was made at our August Reunion in Crystal Beach, Ontario, by Association

- Reunion committee 1998, 2002
- Reunion Chair 2006
- Secretary SFANA 2010
- Heritage Tour Leader 2013
- Reunion Chair 2014
- President SFANA 2014-2016
- Mini-Heritage Tour Leader 201
- Reunion Chair 2018
- Heritage Tour Leader 2019

president, Tom Shirk

Sue received the award because of her devotion and leadership to the advancement of the Schürch family heritage over a period of many years. Sue's many contributions include:

The John S. Shirk Memorial Heritage Award has three purposes. The first is to recognize the significant, multifaceted contributions that John S. Shirk has made to the Schürch Family Association and to honor his memory in a visible and lasting way. The second is to recognize an outstanding accomplishment on the part of any Schürch descendant that contributes to, encourages, or advances our understanding of Schürch heritage and the third is 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.

Recipients

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

Schurch Symposium

Jerry Sherk Talks Football, Photography & Mentoring

Presented by Jerry Sherk

November 12 at 5 p.m. EST, 4 p.m. CST, 3 p.m. PST

Free registration: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwpf-qhrjIpEtaWRJhJwbjzZ5WDauHyP5Sg>

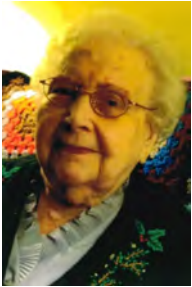
Website: <https://www.schurchfamilyassociation.net/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Schurch.Family.Association>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLiS3CNfUIAeITjo09Y0aJ2DeNtLgCCbG>

Gone, but Never Forgotten

**Caroline Wilhemine Hoffman
Chambers
1914-2022
N1612111**



Caroline (Carrie) Wilhemine Chambers died on September 8, 2022 in her 108th year. Carrie was born in South Cayuga, ON, on December 17, 1914 to Nellie (Sherk) and George William Hoffman. For 68 years she was married to Stanley Hewish Chambers, until his death in 2007. She is survived by their two children George Douglas (Fran) Chambers of Fort Mill, SC, and Jade Patricia (Robin) Chambers of Campbell River, BC, and by her sister-in-law Jan (Bill) Hoffman (Dunnville, ON).

Carrie was predeceased by her sisters Eva (Widerick), Pearl (Juhlke), Kay (McIntosh), and Hazel (Puhl), by her brothers Walt, Claude, and Bill, and her brother-in-law Don (Joyce) Chambers. Carrie was a member of the Valleyfield United Church and the Grace United Church, Dunnville.

She was active in the Red Cross, the United Church Women's Association, the Montreal Cottons (MOCO) Club hospitality team, an enthusiastic curler, and an avid bridge player. Upon Stan's retirement in 1980 from Dominion Textile Ltd., P.Q., they moved back to Dunnville, ON. Carrie and her family thank the staff at Season's First Ave., Welland, ON, (2008-2019), and at Emerald Residence, Niagara Falls, ON, (2019-2022), for their care. Carrie claimed the visits, notes and telephone calls with friends kept her involved in life. For those who asked, Carrie attributed her longevity to the love and attention she was given by her nieces and nephews.

Family and friends gathered for visitation September 17th at the BALLARD MINOR FUNERAL HOME. Interment followed at the Maple Lawn Cemetery. In lieu of floral arrangements, the family asks that you please consider a donation to a Grace United Church, Dunnville or [Charity of Your Choice](#) in her memory. Friends are invited to send condolences and sign the Book of Memories at www.ballardminorfh.ca
Published by St. Catharines Standard on Sep. 14, 2022.



**Helen Elizabeth Sherk Young
1917-2022
N16A63m**

Helen Young Sherk of Tonawanda, NY, (formerly of Haldimand County), passed away peacefully surrounded by family on Saturday, April 16, 2022 in her 105th year. Daughter of the late Grace Stark (nee Murray) and Lloyd Arthur Young. Beloved wife of the late Richard E. Sherk (1992); devoted mother of Robert D. (Diane), David A., Richard F. (Edie) Sherk, and the late Norma E. Ryan. Loving grandmother of 13 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren. Also survived by many nieces, nephews, and dear friends.



Helen had a long career in the Buffalo school system teaching 5th grade. She was also a Sunday School teacher for over 50 years. She enjoyed crossword puzzles, reciting poetry, reading non-fiction books, and sharing stories of her travels and early life growing up on a farm. The family celebrated Helen's life with a funeral service at COOPER FUNERAL HOME, on Wednesday, August 17, 2022 at 11:30. Following the chapel service, a procession to Waterford Greenwood Cemetery where her cremated remains were interred with her late husband. Both the chapel and graveside services were livestreamed for those who were unable to attend in person.

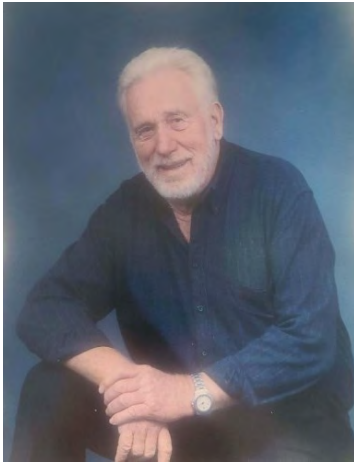
Friends were invited to send condolences and sign the Book of Memories at www.cooperfuneralhome.ca. To plant a tree in memory of Helen Elizabeth Sherk, please visit our [Tribute Store](#).



continued on page 23



Robert Winger
1934-2022
N1368311



Robert Winger passed away on Thursday, May 26, 2022 at 88 years of age. He was beloved husband of Lillian for 42 years. Robert was the loving father of Tina (Les), cherished grandfather of Karissa (Duran) and Cruise. He was the adored great-grandfather of Wynter and Nyxen. Robert was predeceased by son Teddy. He will be loved

and missed by all family and friends.

Cremation has taken place. Donations in Robert's memory may be made to the [Canadian Diabetes Association](https://www.diabetes.ca/). Online condolences available at www.cudneyfuneralhome.com.

Published by St. Catharines Standard on May 28, 2022.



Ruth Elaine Thaler Sherk
1927-2022
H46113312m



Ruth Elaine Thaler Sherk passed away on July 15, 2022 at Cambridge Memorial Hospital at the age of 95. She was the beloved wife of the late J. Harold Sherk Jr., loving mother of Mary Anne (Tim) Giese and John (Shirley) Sherk and sadly missed by grandchildren Kimberly and Geoffrey. Ruth was predeceased by her parents Albert and Ethel Thaler, her sister Vera Johnson, and her niece Cheryl Boegers



Ruth attended Emmanuel Bible College as a young woman and had various clerical jobs over the years, rising to supervisor of the X-ray office at KW Hospital. She enjoyed knitting, baking, and her garden.

She was very proud of her family and often said that she could only sing when she had a baby in her arms. Ruth supported her husband's role as pastor. Her faith and the church were important in her life.

Ruth's family held a memorial service to celebrate her life on Saturday, September 10, 2022 at Henry Walser Funeral Home. A time of refreshment and reception took place immediately following.

As expressions of sympathy, donations to the Mennonite Central Committee would be appreciated by the family (cards available at the funeral home).

What Schürchs are doing:

Schürch Shindigs



Sue Shirk, E1673274, Lititz, Pennsylvania, is thrilled and grateful to share that she completed cancer treatment October 6. With only a few weeks between the end of chemo in July and radiation beginning mid-August, recovery will likely take most of this calendar year. She's anticipating that a CT scan in mid-November will provide a good report! **Kurt and Judy Schürch** returned their home in Switzerland from Santorini, an island off the coast of Greece after 10 days of blue sky, sunshine and marvelous food. **Doug Sherk, E14202231** and **Michael Gomes** return to Palm Springs, California for the winter after spending the summer in Provincetown, Massachusetts. **Shirley John, E14206215**, and **Bob Therrien** live in Oshawa, Ontario

Graeme (Code E14202315) and Heather Ott (Code E14222A22) have the distinction of attending first Schürch gathering in 1982 and most recent in 2022

On August 31, 2022, I met with Heather and Graeme Ott in their Port Colborne, Ontario home to ask them about their experiences of attending Schürch family gatherings for 40 years. They attended the first gathering of the SFANA, at the time of its inception, on July 3, 1982 in Fredericksburg, Pennsylvania, and this year's at Crystal Ridge, Ridgeway, Ont. They may be the only Schürch cousins with this particular distinction (of being present at the first and most recent). Heather states that over the 40 years, they may have missed only 2 of these biennial events.

The Otts learned of the first reunion through a tiny ad in their local paper. They ventured to Pennsylvania with their tent-trailer, one of their three young boys - Jeffrey, and a nephew, Chris Sherk. Asked about her memories of the 1982 gathering, Heather remembers noticing striking familial physical resemblances between cousins there and her relatives at home in the Port Colborne region. They also noted similar or equivalent names such as Weaver Road in both locations.



The den of the Ott home is filled with memories, historical material, including binders of calling cards, reunion photos and records, and newspaper clippings about local history. Graeme easily found their notes from the 1982 reunion, the welcome package including the program, a letter from Ron Sherk, one of the key organizers along with Tom Sherk, and a list of places of interest. Highlights of this one-day first reunion included the first Sherk "gift auction," a tour of Lebanon County Sherk landmarks, two lectures, and some "Pennsylvania Dutch Humor" by Sterling Light, a descendant of John Light, who owned Light's Fort, where the Sherks first worshipped.

Also displayed in the den are collections of hand-crafted art from reunion auctions and a collection of carved and painted wooden animals by Menno Z. Sherk of Narvon PA, 1993. These Menno Sherk folk-art items are hot items today on e-bay. A wooden reunion souvenir of the Casper Shirk house at Schoeneck, PA and a folksy set of replica buildings from near Zurich, Switzerland from the heritage tour also decorate the shelves. At the 2022 reunion, Heather bid on a tiny souvenir keepsake box, picturing the Sherkston post office, donated by Loma Sherk Doan, whose mother worked at that post office, to add to her collection of local souvenir china.

Heather and Graeme became involved with the Port Colborne Historical and Marine Museum at its inception in 1974. They were not engaged in sports or politics but they both clearly loved and still enjoy history. While the boys were still young, Heather soon headed the museum as it's curator and Graeme assisted in many projects at the site. This museum was a featured stop again at the 2022 reunion with tea at the Arabella's tea room and visits to the Sherk-Troup Loghouse and the Neff Steam Buggy.

A true historian and accurate note-taker, Heather shared a humorous anecdote from her travel notes of the 1982 reunion trip. The curious nephew who accompanied the Otts had many questions. At the end of the trip, after Graeme took a series of wrong turns, the nephew asked "Where did we go wrong?" Graeme replied, "We left home!"

Heather and Graeme continue to enjoy reunions in order to explore their roots and make connections. They encourage relatives to attend and explore their family connections, too.

From the Schurch Holiday Kitchen “French Mocha Pie”



Instructions

Preheat oven to 300 degrees Fahrenheit. Mix sugar with coffee and cocoa powders. Beat egg whites with cream of tartar until soft peaks form. Gradually add sugar mixture, beating until stiff. Fold in crushed crackers and ground walnuts. Turn into lightly buttered and floured 9-inch pie plate. Bake at 300 degrees for 30 minutes. Cool.

Mix sugar with powders; whip cream; gradually add sugar mixture and beat until stiff. A half hour before serving spread evenly with topping and garnish with shaved chocolate.

Ingredients

- 1 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon instant coffee powder
- 2 teaspoons cocoa
- 4 egg whites
- ½ teaspoon cream of tartar
- ½ cup crushed Ritz crackers
- 2/3 cup ground walnuts

Topping

- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1/3 teaspoon coffee powder
- 2/3 teaspoon cocoa
- 1 cup whipping cream



Mary Ann Shirk,
Lititz, Pennsylvania
Recipes from Grandma Sherk's Kitchen
Collected by Mary Lou Sherk

Lost Years: Dutch Connections Research Donations Accepted - payable to

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