

April 2025

Volume 43A

*Schürch Family
Association
of North America*



Biannual Newsletter

Schürch Newsletter, Volume 43A April 2025



Table of Contents

April 2025



President's Message.....	1	Reunion Service Project.....	7
New Subscribers	1	Heritage Tour	8
Executive 2024-2026.....	2 & 3	Obituaries.....	9-12
"The Sherk Family" Reprint.....	3	Schürch Symposium.....	13-15
The Adams Family.....	4	Historical Committee.....	16-19
Swiss Schürch Annual Meeting.....	5	Montreal River Alternative Camp	20-22
Photo Gallery Report.....	6		

Please Note - - -

Your subscription renewal date is printed on the mailing label.

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 are also available.

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April 2025 Association President's Message:

Firstly, a big welcome to all of you for the beginning of a new year. We have seen many different changes in the weather and politics here in Ontario and across Canada. It seems like the world doesn't know what it wants to do. We were hoping to send all of our winter and rainy weather to our cousins south of us, but now it seems that the winds have changed and that they are now throwing it back at us.

Our Historical Committee Chair Vanessa Warner has been very busy answering research queries and especially with her work with our Flickr site. We now have a way to fix faded and scratched photos to bring them back to life thanks to her efforts.

Our Newsletter Editor Cary Adams has been through a tough time with his heart surgery. Hopefully he is on the rebound and can join us on our Amsterdam and Switzerland Heritage tour this September.

Speaking of the Heritage Tour, we do have a few available spaces. All plans have been finalized for a great visit to Switzerland. This time we are starting in Amsterdam to experience the city where our Anabaptist ancestors briefly stayed before departing for the new world in the late 1600's and during the 1700's. This will be my first trip to Amsterdam and my fourth trip on a Tour to Switzerland. Fortunately, my daughter Tammy Shirk will be with me this time to keep watch over me. As you know, age is catching up to all of us.

Now that we are into 2025, our 2026 Reunion Committee headed up by Betty Sherk and Rick Evans is shifting into full gear to create an enjoyable experience for all who hope to come to Canada for our next reunion in Markham, Ontario. All the best to this magnificent duo for their planning. Let's hope that everything will return to normal by next year.

Stephen D. Shirk, SFANA President

Welcome! New Subscribers:

Sarah H Shirk of Oak Park Illinois

Kenneth Shirk of Fredericksburg Pennsylvania

Schürch Family Association of North America Executive 2024-2026

For those new to their position, a photo is included.

President: Stephen D. Shirk Code H44112562

Born in Orillia, ON. Served in the Canadian Armed Forces for 23 years as Administration/ Human Resources retiring as a Warrant Officer. Worked as a Supervisor with Casino Rama near his hometown for five years. Was an Insurance Agent with Clarica/Sunlife Insurance for two years. Retired from the Ontario provincial Corrections system after fifteen years. Stephen owned Canadian Shield Home Security for about ten years. He has been with the Masonic Order since 1980 serving these past 13 years as their Lodge Secretary. He has been the President of two Shrine Clubs and a past Commander of the Rameses Shriners Legion of Honour. Once retired he pursued his genealogical research that he had done since the age of 13. Stephen joined the SFANA in 1984 as a Historian. He served as the 1996 Markham Reunion Vice President/Chairman and then as President of the Association. Stephen continued to serve as the Historical Committee Chairman for a total of about 20 years and became the SFANA President in 2024. He could not have done this without the support of his wife Kathleen and his three children, Tammy, Shelley and Stephen Jr.

Vice-president/Reunion Planners: Rick Evans (H44).

Rick Evans is married with three adult daughters and two and half granddaughters (3rd is due in September of 2025).

He grew up in the west end of Toronto and now lives in Stouffville, Ontario and discovered after moving there that he is the great great great great grandson of Casper Shirk (H44) who happens to be buried in the Heise Hill Cemetery. Rick began searching his ancestry and was delighted to learn of the Schürch Association after meeting Stephen Shirk about 15 years ago.

Rick loves making things and in his semi-retirement has gone back to cabinetmaking. He spent 40 plus years as a funeral director and supplier of high end cremation urns. He plays hockey two to three times a week as a goalie. He loves the Lord and his local church community, and in the last year and a half became the superintendent of the Heise Hill Cemetery in Gormley where many Shirk ancestors are buried.



Secretary: Betty Sherk: (H4613363) Betty has been a part of the executive for a few years serving as secretary, newsletter editor, web master and reunion planner.

American Treasurer: Jack Sherick

Jack has served our association for a number of years as treasurer and as part of reunion planning committees.

Newsletter Editor: Cary Adams

Cary has served as newsletter editor for a number of years. He is also a dedicated historian.

Publications Committee Chair: Margaret Sherk

Margaret has served the association in a number of roles - president, reunion planner and Symposium chair.

Canadian Treasurer: Janice Henry (N13D113)
Janice is retired after 25 years in the insurance industry. She resides with her husband Ross Henry in Whitby, Ontario, where they raised three children and have added eight grandchildren to the mix.

While embracing retirement, her time is spent staying active in her community, enjoying her favourite pastimes of golf and travel as well as spending quality time with her grandkids. The role of Canadian Treasurer came as a natural progression for Janice as her late father George Sherk (N13D111) was the original Canadian Treasurer.

She was raised with an appreciation for the rich heritage of the Sherk name and its ancestral journey.

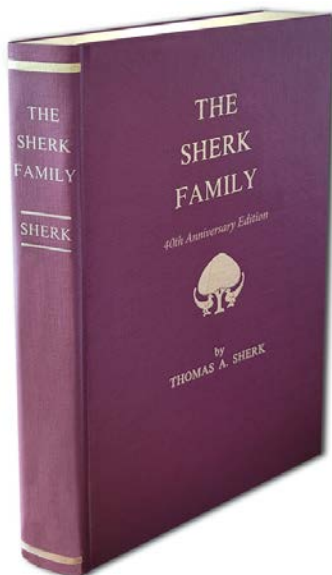


Historical Committee Chair: Vanessa Warner Code N13E261

Vanessa resides in Union, Ontario, Canada. Her passion for the past fifty years has been researching and teaching genealogy. Besides her work with SFANA, she has been actively involved as Branch and Dominion Genealogist for the United Empire Loyalist Association, with Ontario Genealogical Society and has actively identified and marked over sixty graves for Upper Canada Militiamen from the War of 1812.



REPRINT AVAILABLE



For forty years, "**The Sherk Family**" by Thomas A. Sherk has been the go-to resource for Schürch family history. Now, through a one-time collaboration with Tom Sherk, the Schürch Family Association of North America is able to offer copies of a limited reprint edition of "**The Sherk Family**".

The book was reprinted in November 2023 and can be purchased for **\$169 USD**. Please send your check/cheque or money order as well as the number of desired copies, your contact information including name, mailing address, phone number, and e-mail address, to our US treasurer at the following address:

Jack Sherick, 18 North Pine Street, Lancaster, PA 17603. Direct inquiries may be sent to Jack at sci5teach322@yahoo.com. Payments to **Schürch Family Association of North America** in US\$. Canadians, please use a US bank draft or a money order.

The Adams Family Celebrates: Remembering Californio

On February 23, 2025, Cary Adams attended and supported the 178th annual re-enactment of the signing of the Treaty of Cahuenga. The Treaty re-enactment was one of three re-enactments that lead to Californios joining the United States on January 13, 1847. The Treaty was signed by General Andreas Pico for the Californios and Colonel John C. Fremont for the United States.

The re-enactment sponsor was the Campo de Cahuenga Historical Memorial Association of which Cary Adams, E14206342, is President.

Participating in costume were Arabella Victoria, E1420634131 and Matthew Charles Adams, E1420634132, witnessed by proud parents Shaun Christopher, E142063413 and Nancy Franco Adams. Also attending were cousins Tamara Nicole Hynes, E1420634111, and Kyle Dwayne Mixon, E1420634112, grand-children of the late Charles Francis Adams, E14206341.

The first of the three Treaty re-enactments was a recreation of the Battle of Adobe Dominique in October 2024, a Californio victory. It was followed by a re-enactment of the Battle of Mission San Gabriel in January 2025. Due to recent tragic fires in Altadena and Los Angeles, the third Treaty re-enactment was postponed to February 23, 2025.

The day was highlighted by Spanish and early California dance by the Carolina Russek Dance Company with the ever-favourite canon firing! The day concluded with a groundbreaking for a \$3 million camp renovation for the Campo.

Below: Twins Arabella Adams, E1420634131 and Matthew Adams, E1420634132 being interviewed by local TV celebrity Fritz Coleman



Above: Campo Board Member Tim Hawkins, Campo President Cary Adams, E14206342, CD#2 Board Member Paul Krekorian, Campo Board Member Marc Wanamaker, Campo Vice-President Barbara Seergym, Treasurer Diane McCreary breaking ground for \$3,000,000 renovation





Schweizer Gesellschaft der Namensträger Schürch (SGNS) Main Assembly Meeting March 2025 in Willisau

By Kurt Schürch

It was sunny and the temperature was pleasant as we drove to the restaurant Post in the city of Willisau. Despite short notice cancellations, a total of 21 members attended, almost double as many as the previous year in Freiburg.

At 10 o'clock the meeting was opened, and the current agenda was dealt with. Since the agenda contained no critical items, the closing of the meeting could be announced at 11:10h. A hard nut to crack will be the function of the treasury: Andreas will resign at the next main assembly so this vacancy must be filled. The SGNS cannot exist without a treasurer. It has been possible to survive without a president but without a treasurer it's a no go.

The aperitif, a glass of white wine, mineral water or orange juice, offered by SGNS, was announced and gladly accepted.

Afterwards lunch was served with the remark that, as an exception, the cost of it would be borne by the SGNS.

At 14:00h Esther Peter awaited us for the historical city tour. She explained that she would tell several legends from around Willisau and made it clear that in a saga there is always a bit of truth. It is up to us to decide which part we would select to be the truth. It was amusing to listen to her stories and they brought a smile to many faces. In a nice room in the castle Esther explained how "Willisauer-Ringli" (see explanation underneath) should be broken into 4 pieces and then sucked and not eaten. At the end of the tour, we were invited for a drink of punch or hot wine. We also each received a small lantern with a burning candle in it. With hearty applause, we bid farewell to Esther with my comment that I have some difficulties finding that little bit truth in the different sagas she told us. Willisauer Ringli: is a round biscuit with a hole in the centre. And it is very hard. Therefore, it's supposed to be sucked and not eaten.

Ueli Schürch (Sahib) February 22, 1944 - February 5, 2025

Ueli Schürch, our Swiss cousin and friend, passed away on February 5, 2025 at the age of 80. We remember Ueli for his devotion to the SGNS, our counterpart association in Switzerland, as president and representative in attending several of our reunions here in North America.

Ueli owned and operated a manufacturing company that specializes in cable assembly and electrical control cabinetry in Neuchâtel. His hospitality will long be remembered by those of us hosted by Ueli and Marie-Louise in Switzerland.

In response to the association's message of condolence, we received this note from Marie-Louise and family:

"We would like to express our sincere and heartfelt thanks to all those who expressed sympathy for us and gave us comfort with wonderful words, thoughts and deeds." "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." (Job 1:21)

We plan to post a more complete story in the November 2025 issue of this newsletter.

MAY 2025 SCHÜRCH PHOTO GALLERY UPDATE

By Project Coordinator Vanessa Warner N13E261

We have grown again!!! Last October I had reported our online gallery was at 1200. We now have 1740 photos with a major addition of Code B descendants. An album has been added for Code B and it now numbers at 195 photos!



Also, seven photos were found on Ancestry for Code O, and those stimulated the creation of a new album for that code.

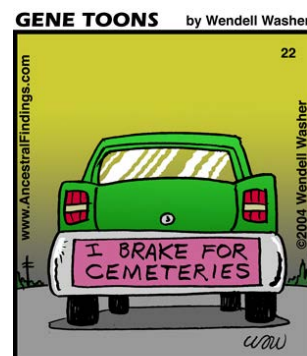
In my Historical Report, I had mentioned contact with Seth (Robinson) Stachlowski, who was descended from 1884 Immigrant Johannes Schürch. In the throes of assisting him with genealogy, thirty-four photos were located on Ancestry, captured and uploaded into our Gallery, including Johannes' 1866 wedding photo from Switzerland (posted at the left).

Sadly, we have had no further leads on the 1938 Shirk Reunion photo. I keep checking for messages, but no one has posted any identifications yet.

I want to thank the dynamic duo Shirk team of Stephen and Stephen Jr. who have been repairing some of the photos that are in terrible condition. They have worked miracles on the worst of the worst.

For those of you keeping track of our albums, the current stats are:

Code B: 240; Code C: 90; Code E: 535; Code H: 264; Code J: 7; Code L: 9; Code M: 24; Code N: 456; Code O: 7; Code S: 16; Code V: 20.



Genealogists on the road.

July 2024 Reunion Service Project Update

By Sue Shirk

At the July reunion, participants quickly packed 500 hygiene kits for Mennonite Central Committee. MCC is the relief, development and peace organization of Mennonites in Canada and the U.S. The service project was a representative thank you for assistance our ancestors received from Dutch Mennonites after they were expelled from their home countries. Each kit consisted of a toothbrush, bar of soap, comb, and fingernail clipper. The items were wrapped in a large hand towel and placed in a sturdy handmade drawstring bag. Before shipping, toothpaste was added into each bag. MCC sent us a letter including the following message:

“Bear one another’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.”
(Galatians 6:2 NRSV) **THANK YOU** so much for contributing to the work of Mennonite Central Committee through sharing material resources of 500 hygiene kits. The kits are a tangible way of sharing God’s love and compassion, reminding people their needs are not forgotten.

Also, thanks to reunion attendees who contributed cash toward the purchase of kit items.



2025 Schürch Heritage Tour

By Sue Shirk

TWO SPOTS LEFT

The Schürch Family Heritage Tour is scheduled for September 9-20, 2025. **TourMagination**, Winnipeg MB, is coordinating the tour details on behalf of our Schürch Family Association of North America.

As of May 1, 2025, there are two remaining spaces. Take this opportunity to trace your family and faith story through the Netherlands, Germany, and Switzerland.



Your tour begins in Amsterdam with visits to the famous Aalsmeer flower auction and Singel Mennonite Church. Your group will explore historic Dutch villages, hidden Mennonite churches, and an open-air museum.

In Germany, you'll cruise along the majestic Rhine River, browse Mennonite archives in the Weierhof, and worship with the local Mennonite congregation.

As you immerse yourself in the captivating landscapes of the **Swiss Emmental**, visit homesteads directly related to your family's history and enjoy the company of distant relatives. Also, ascend Schilthorn Mountain for breathtaking views. On a walking tour in Zürich, uncover the origins of the Anabaptist movement. End your tour with a meaningful time of worship and reflection in the Anabaptist Cave at Bäretswil, where Anabaptists once worshipped in secret.

Experienced TourMagination storyteller, Ayold Fanoy and Justin Houser, Schürch Family Association historian, will share insights as you travel in these beautiful countries that were so important to your Anabaptist ancestors.

This tour has an activity level rating of ACTIVE, so please expect 2–3 hours of walking each day, with regular breaks.

Please register with a \$1000/person deposit to secure your spot.
All payments are made by credit card online.

If you have any questions, please email us at info@tourmagination.com.
Diane Bergmann, TourMagination

519-885-2522 Toll free: 1-877-668-2732 www.tourmagination.com

Remembering:



Lois Grace Benn
1931-2025
N13E124

It is with deep sorrow that we announce the death of Lois Grace Benn (Port Colborne, Ontario), who passed away on February 16, 2025, at the age of 94, leaving to mourn family and friends. She was predeceased by: her parents, Milton Benn and Mary Benn; her siblings, Norma Brown (Ed), Marg Haggerty (Chuck), Bill Benn (Val), Don Benn (Diane) and Allen Benn; her nephews, Larry, Danny, David, Brian and Allen; and her niece Sharon.

She is survived by: her sons, Michael Benn of Port Colborne and Noah Benn of Toronto; her grandsons, David Granter and Robert Ben (Natalie Marie); her great grandchildren, Charlotte Benn, Violet Benn and Alfie Benn; her nieces and nephews, Amy, Russel Haggerty, Will, Karen, Frank Kenny, Mark Haggerty, Kevin Haggerty, Milton Benn, Beth Ann Benn, Randy Benn and Chuck Benn (Sally); her sister-in-law Dorothy Benn; and her cousin Dorothy Upfold.



Cyril "Joe" Joseph Foley
1943-2025
H44112571

It is with loving gratitude for a life well-lived, we share that Cyril "Joe" Joseph Foley passed away peacefully at home surrounded by his loving family on Sunday, May 11, 2025, at the age of 82. He is survived by his devoted wife of 48 years, Gerry (nee Shirk). Proud Father of Bill (Stacy) and Michael (Anne). Adoring Grandfather to his six grandchildren, Emma, Joey, Milsy, Lily, Maisy, and Lauren. He is survived by his siblings Karen Vieira (Robert), Peggy Petrie (Bruce) and Matt Foley (Louise). Brother-in law to Carole, Linda, Martha, Bonnie (Dan), Garry, and Sandra (Leo). Predeceased by his proud parents Cyril and Loretta Foley, his sister Joanne Murray (Jack), and brothers Les, Peter, and Tom. Loving Uncle Joe to his many nieces and nephews.

Joe was born and raised in Orillia and was known to many on his mail routes throughout his 33 years of service as Letter Carrier with Canada Post. Joe was an avid outdoorsman, with a love of fishing and hunting, where he developed many lifelong friendships along the way. A staunch supporter of his Toronto Maple Leafs and Toronto Blue Jays where he could often be found in lengthy conversation about all things sports. A Funeral Mass was held at Guardian Angels Parish on May 16 in Orillia.



Darren Norman Sherk
Aug 5, 1962 - Feb 3, 2025
E142B1632, E15303632

It is with great heartache that the family of Darren Sherk announce his passing on February 3, 2025, in Edmonton, Alberta, at the age of 62.

Darren was born on August 5, 1962, in Thunder Bay, Ontario, to parents Norman and Rose Sherk. Darren, along with his parents, brother and sisters, lived and contributed time, energy and resources to their Valleyview, Alberta community. The Sherk family was always ready to support and work for the betterment of the people of their Northern Alberta town. Darren volunteered for the Valleyview Fire Department and as an Auxiliary of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. He was President of the Handicapped Society and offered his dedication and effort to make life easier for others. He was always willing.

Darren found great strength in the words of the Bible and eagerly shared his knowledge and faith with others.

Darren owned and operated a heavy duty mechanic shop, DNA Truck Analysis, in Valleyview, Alberta. He had a remarkable talent for fixing just about anything mechanical.

Darren enjoyed the outdoors happily hunting, fishing, riding his motorbike, quadding, hiking, camping, snowmobiling, swimming, playing hockey. His competitive spirit and zest for life (and pranks) were entertaining and admired by all. Darren's adventures were always made better by the accompaniment of his precious family. Gardening was also a passion and he enthusiastically shared the fruits of his labour with neighbours and friends. Woodworking was another of Darren's interests and he created many beautiful projects over the years.

Darren proudly supported the Calgary Flames and never missed an opportunity to engage in good-natured banter over the Flames and Edmonton Oilers NHL rivalry. His laugh and smile were contagious as was his positive attitude!



Lois Elizabeth (Cressman) Lowe
C383A541 and H4657311
1927 - 2025



Lois Elizabeth (Cressman) Lowe passed away on Saturday, May 3 at Winston Park three days after her 98th birthday. A stroke in August 2024 robbed her of much of her cherished independence and she frequently said, "I want to go home (Heaven). I'm done." Her life-long, deep Christian faith guided and sustained her, especially through her later years.

Lois, born on a New Hamburg farm, spent many years farther afield. After college in Virginia she taught high school briefly then served with

Mennonite Central Committee in Vietnam, India and Pennsylvania, worked in food services in New York City, lived in Delaware and returned to Kitchener-Waterloo in 1978 to food-related work. She volunteered for Habitat for Humanity and organized meal service for senior neighbours.

She was an active participant at Benton Street Baptist Church.

Lois is fondly remembered by her step-daughter Mavis Linda Brewster, step-sons Ivor (Sharon) and Colin (Virginia) Lowe, grandchildren Ryan (Allison) Leis, Kurt Lehmann, Megan (Steven) DeWitt, Kyle Lowe, Andrew (Emily) Lowe and four great-grandchildren; a brother Vernon (Doris) Cressman, sister Ferne (Cressman) Burkhardt, sister-in-law Rhoda Cressman; and many nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her parents, Joseph (1987) and Ida (Gingrich) Cressman (1993), a brother Arnold Cressman (1998), husbands Norman F. Ford (1976) and J. Stanley Lowe (2000). A service of celebration was held at Benton Street Baptist Church, 90 Benton St, Kitchener on Saturday, May 10, 2025 at 12:00 p.m.

The family appreciated the support of many friends, the excellent care of Winston Park and its staff, especially in the Egerton and Eby communities.





Percy John Rosenberger

H46113353

1943 - 2025

Percy John Rosenberger, a resident of Sarnia, Ontario, passed away suddenly on Dec 13, 2024 at the age of 81 at Nanaimo Regional General Hospital, BC. Born in Breslau, son of the late Victor and Grace (Sherk) Rosenberger.

Loving father of John (Christine) Roseborough of Denfield, James (Rose) Rosenberger of Chatham, and Heather (Heiko) Stum of Duncan, BC. Proud grandfather of Owen (Ghusoon), Liam (Stephanie), Aidan, Callum, Lingyu, Daniel (Laura), Candice (Danny), Ethan, and Carson. Great grandpa to Daelyn, Elijah, Benjamin, and Liliana. Dear brother of Elverne (Louise), Cecil (Elsie), and Wayne (Marilyn). Brother-in-law to David and the late Millie, Thelma and the late Kingsley, and Ron (Doreen). Also survived by his nieces and nephews. Predeceased by his beloved wife Donna.

Dad had fond memories of attending the one room school house with his three brothers, down the road from Grandpa and Grandma's house. Dad drove tractors, and milked cows on their dairy farm. Dad's first job was driving the local dairy farmers milk to the town dairy. Mom always said that Dad got his love for cream by taste testing the milk.

Dad married his "pretty girl" our sweet Mom, Donna Archer on October 30, 1965 in Sarnia, Ontario. Dad often reminisced about playing Chinese checkers with Mom every night before bed. Shortly after their marriage, Mom and Dad moved to the Sarnia area and started attending the Missionary church in Petrolia. Dad's job as a farm hand allowed Mom and Dad to live in the country. They both enjoyed gardening, tending to their little flock of chickens and starting to raise my two brothers and me.

When our family moved to Sarnia, we started attending the Missionary church in town. Dad started driving the fuel truck for Anderson's Fuel Company. While working at Anderson's Dad earned his ticket to fix furnaces and his class "A" license to drive 18 wheelers. He drove a Honda 125 from Sarnia to Toronto during his College training, as I said "determined".

Packing was an art to our Dad, just ask anyone who saw our trailer as we drove to our much cherished campsite at camp Mishewah. He enjoyed eating ice cream every night and playing in the lake in the day. Dad loved to ride his bike. One day he rode his bike to London from Sarnia to see his second grandson Liam, after he had worked all day. Dad was a determined man which allowed him to climb his first mountain at 75 while visiting us on Vancouver Island.

Dad was part of the First Missions team from their church that went to El Salvador, the Community Garden group, the church maintenance team. He played the organ before each Sunday service. Dad enjoyed driving through the country on his way to James' and John's, always commenting on the fields. As he once said to me "you can take the boy out of the country but you can't take the country out of the boy."

Schürch Symposium Series *UPDATED* – April 2025

This video series on YouTube is developed and produced by SFANA (Schürch Family Association of North America). The focus of the series is the emigration of the Schürch family from Switzerland to North America and their movement across the North American continent. Follow the genealogical story of the Schürch family, its origin in Switzerland, and the long and sometimes arduous journey to and in America as well as their later movements within the United States and Canada. If your family includes any of the many spellings of Schürch, you may gain some insight into your own history. Learn about Anabaptist history and how the persecution of Anabaptists effected the emigration of the Schürch from their Swiss homeland.

Symposium #1 - “Schürchs to California”

“Schürchs to California” highlights Schürch families who left the east and their reasons for traveling to an unknown territory.

Symposium #2 - “Schürch Symposium 101 - Coming to America”

“Schürch 101” outlines some Mennonite history and how it compelled many of its followers to leave their Swiss homeland. The video shows some of the hazards faced by the early Schürchs. There is also a brief explanation of the Schürch Family Code system and how it is used to track the Schürch lineage based on the date of arrival of an individual to America.

Symposium #3 - “Schürch Symposium 102 - Crossing and Building America” - Establishing New Roots

While “Schürch 101” details the “why” and “how” many of our ancestors left their homelands and immigrated to America, “Schürch 102” starts with the initial Schürch settlements and follows where the next two generations of the American-born Schürchs traveled. “Schürch 102” continues to use and expand on the family coding system. Interspersed within this video is a new concept which highlights by name and code some of the more recent and notable family members. This marks the introduction to a new branch of the Symposium Series fittingly named “Notable Schürchs”.

Symposium #4 - “Schürch Symposium - Notable Schürch Series”

Dr. Lisa Schirch

The fourth in the Schürch Symposium series is an exciting introduction to a new sub-category of the Schürch Symposium called “Notable Schürchs”. Our introductory Notable Schürch, Dr. Lisa Schirch, is the Starmann Chair in Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame’s Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies. Dr Schirch explains how social media platforms can influence opinions about and even change the direction of critical world situations.

(Continued on page 14)

Symposium #5 - “Schürch Symposium - Notable Schürch Series”

Jerry Sherk

The fifth in the series is an exciting continuation of the new subcategory of the Schürch Symposium called “Notable Schürchs”. Our second Notable Schürch, Jerry Sherk was 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. 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. Jerry shares memories from the gridiron, show us some of his photography, and provides his perspectives on mentoring vulnerable populations today.

Symposium #6 – Not currently available on-line

Symposium #7 – “With Tenacity and Fortitude, WE ARE HOME”

The story of Amos and Candace Sherk

Symposium #7 describes the story of the Amos and Candace Sherk family and their arduous journey from Sherkston, Ontario to the Peace River valley in Alberta. In 1909, the trip took six days by rail to Edmonton and another 83 days by bull team drawn wagon. Watch their group as they travel west and then north to settle in what is now known as Beaverlodge, Alberta, Canada.

Attend our next Symposium (#8) on November 1, 2025 –

“Schürch Migration from Switzerland to Northwestern USA”

Donna (Schuerch) Love will present the story of her great-grandparents, Johannes and Magdalene Schürch, who immigrated with their family of 12 children to the United States from Wasen, Switzerland in 1884. She shares her family history in both Wasen and South Dakota and how her grandfather, John Albert Schuerch came to settle in Valley Junction, Oregon and build many Swiss style buildings in the area. Donna is a children's nature book author from Missoula, MT. To see Donna's books visit her website at donnalove.co.

Please mark your calendars now: **Saturday, November 1, 2025**

5 pm ET, 4 pm CT, 3 pm MT and 2 pm PT

These videos and future releases are placed into one or more play lists on YouTube. In an attempt to create a chronological pattern, the order the videos appear in the playlist is changed. This creates a feeling of advancing in time with the Schürchs as you watch each video. In the future, the Notable Schürch may have a separate play list.

To view the entire Symposium series, the recommended order of viewing is:

Symposium #1 - “Symposium 101 - Coming to America”

Symposium #2 - “Schürch Symposium 102 – Crossing and Building America” -
Establishing New Roots

(Continued on page 15)

Symposium #3 - "Schürchs to California"

Symposium #7 - "With Tenacity and Fortitude, WE ARE HOME - The story of Amos and Candace Sherk" - Crossing and Building Canada

Symposium #4 - "Schürch Symposium - Notable Schurch Series" –
Dr. Lisa Schirch

Symposium #5 - "Schürch Symposium - Notable Schurch Series" - Jerry Sherk

Symposium #6 – Not currently available on-line

The Symposium Committee invites you to send us your comments and suggestions to our email address: SchurchSymposium@gmail.com

Access the "Schürch Symposium Series" on the following sites:

The Schürch website: <https://www.schurchfamilyassociation.net/>

Simply scroll down on the home page and look for Schürch Symposium below the banner.

Click on the link provided there (the underlined word "**here**" in the descriptive wording.

The Schürch Facebook site:

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

You need to be a Facebook member to fully use this link

On YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLiS3CNfUIAeITjo09Y0aJ2DeNtILgCCbG>

This is a playlist of all videos. You can view all or select one from the right column.

Schürch Symposium Series – Invitation to "How to" ZOOM Meet

Have you recorded your family history? If not, this is the time to write your story, researching the missing links, and saving the knowledge for others. If you don't record it, who will? Don't be shy about sharing it in a Schürch symposium!

Our symposium team will hold a coffee and conversation time on ZOOM with anyone interested in learning the "where to start," "how to" and "why?" We will discuss the nuts and bolts of research, collecting, and documenting information behind the scenes to get you started on preparing your story for sharing in a Schürch Symposium.

Please indicate your interest in meeting for coffee and conversation on ZOOM by e-mailing SchurchSymposium@gmail.com

Let's get started!

May 2025 Historical Committee Report

Vanessa A Warner N13E261
Chairman Historical Committee

Our Association Historian, Website and Flickr Committees have again been very busy responding to queries since our October 2024 report. We had the help of other family cousins who provided us with newer information to update our database.

Our summary report from each of those submitting queries (as underlined) is as follows: **Leslie Woodbury** (lawcode7@comcast.net) has been in touch regarding her ancestor, Josiah Sharick who was born 1817 near Effingham, Illinois and died 1922 in Springfield, Greene, Missouri. She recently discovered his father as Moses Sharoc b. c. 1800 Pennsylvania, buried in Effingham. Seeking parents for Moses and how he fits into the family.

Seth (Robinson) Stachlowski (stachlowski@gmail.com) is descended from **John Schürch** (b 1841) and **Magdalline Leuenberger** (b 1843), who emigrated from Switzerland in 1884, settling in Plato, South Dakota, through their daughter **Anna Elizabeth Schürch** (b. 1871), who married **Robert J. Robinson**. Seth is interested in learning more about his Schürch heritage in Switzerland.

Carolyn Strecker (carolyn.strecker@gmail.com) had been assisting **Todd Bielefeld** (tbielefeld@sbcglobal.net) with updating his descent from **H4713 Jacob G. Shirk**. He has also shared numerous photos which have been uploaded on Flickr.

Carolyn has also been obtaining updates from **N3062156 Robert Scherich** (rdscherich@gmail.com) regarding his line. He is interested in the entire Code N line.

Carolyn is also working with **E815121A31 Mark K. Shirk** (shirkmark@gmail.com), updating our records with information being provided by him and providing him with information contained in our database.

Photos submitted by **Diane Keppler** (dianekeppler@yahoo.com) of her ancestor **S5147 Elmer Elias Sherrick** meant further genealogy was required in order to code these photos. Carolyn has updated the database accordingly as our records ended with Elmer Elias Sherrick.

Dell Sherk (ds429@frontier.com) – Dell is in possession of an old Shirk tree on a large roll of paper that he trying to copy so Carolyn can determine where the information belongs in our database. His intent is to share it with the Association.

Margaret Sherk (margaretsherk1@outlook.com) – Margaret has been seeking information on **E1423 Daniel Sherk**'s 35 acre property in Sherkston, Ontario, since this property has more recently become a retreat/wedding venue. More to come on this.

Justin Houser (jkhouser84@gmail.com) - Justin Houser has been corresponding with Ray Lantz (lantzrc.imperial@gmail.com) for clarification on the correct lineage on the

(Continued on Page 17)

ancestral and descendant lines from Caspar Schürch **SGNS Code A71** to our Casper Schürch **Code H** as some timelines needed to be verified.

Stephen Shirk (steve.shirk@yahoo.ca) – A query was received from **Alan Hruza** (awhurza@comcast.net) regarding his mother, Marie Noel Schurck, whose father, Pierre Schurck was born in Provencheressur-Fave, France. We had nothing in our database and Stephen Shirk contacted Christian Emig, a researcher/historian. He replied as follows:

“Bonjour à tous,

Several comments :

First of all, European genealogy is based on region and country laws, rules, traditions and history. And in this way, European genealogy is largely different from the US one.

If my understanding of the various messages, the search is based on :
My mothers maiden name was Marie Noel Schurck with my grandfather Pierre Schurck was born in Provencheressur-Fave France. I have been looking into my Ancestry and was wondering if there is any information on Schurck's name in the Schurch family ancestry.

Provenchères-sur-Fave (88409) in the dept. Vosges, is a small village now named Provenchères-et-Colroy. I checked the « tables décennales » from 1873-1892 and could not find any Schurck, only a bit similar Surmely.
See the following web site:

https://recherche-archives.vosges.fr/archive/resultats/etatscivil/n:2?RECH_commune_Index=13796%7C&RECH_commune_Lib=Provench%C3%A8res-sur-Fave+%28Provench%C3%A8res-et-Colroy%2C+Vosges%2C+France+%3B+avant+fusion%29%7C&rech_typo%5B0%5D=table+d%C3%A9cennale&type=etatcivil&RECH_Field=RECH_commune&RECH_Letter=P

The so-called maiden name is only of popular use. The birth record alone get the identity of any European Union member. In France the correct name is Schurck Marie Noël. If married he name is for ex : Frescaline Andrée spouse Schurk. And for all official relationships her name is just Frescaline Andrée. More about the initial of another given name this is an US custom. In France the use is with the usual given name (a legal name) or all names quoted, always in genealogy.
Schurck is French surname and no relation with another may be possible (surname are fixed since 1792 !) and any change need a legality decision. Any comparison with other surnames just may carry out a wrong genealogy.

In the case of Schürch from Switzerland there is a large melting pot in many genealogies of families without relationships. There was an old legend about a

(Continued on Page 18)

possible common ancestor of all Schürch! Just a myth, largely contradicted by genealogy... in Europe, including the distribution of the surname.

For any search in French registers the best is to inform on original surname, given name birth date, father and mother surname and dates when available. For the mother born in France, she should have a copy of her birth record, containing the requested data. And her parents had a so-called "livret de famille" an official booklet, given to all married couple since 1870.

About the Shirck in Muttersholtz the genealogy is available in my geneanet site:

[https://gw.geneanet.org/emig_w?
lang=fr&pz=christian+charles+theodore&nz=emig&p=johann+georg&n=schirck](https://gw.geneanet.org/emig_w?lang=fr&pz=christian+charles+theodore&nz=emig&p=johann+georg&n=schirck)

- no relationships. I look forward to hearing from you. Christian Emig"

Carolyn, Stephen and Justin have been assisting **Nicholas Sherck** (ntsherck@gmail.com) with identifying his descent from **H222 Martin Sherck**. Nicholas has supplied us with updated information on his line.

Vanessa Warner (vanessa.warner@rogers.com) – An inquiry into the state and progress in the clean-up of the **Sherk Cemetery**, Lot 12, Con. 2, Humberstone Twp. revealed that the Niagara Branch, OGS is still attempting to interface with the City of Port Colborne and the property owner, Pam Rosario, to clean this cemetery up, record and probe for fallen stones. The cemetery, situate in the middle of a farm field and has been untouched for many years. It should fall under the Bereavement Authority of Ontario (BAO). There seems to be a dispute over who owns this cemetery and would involve expropriation of land to provide a laneway through the field for access for eventual grounds maintenance by the City of Port Colborne. This cemetery was originally planned for the descendants of **E152 David Sherk** with the last burial, it is thought, in 1902. The cemetery was maintained lovingly until 1932, when the property passed out of the Sherk family. If you are a descendant of the **E152** line, please contact Vanessa for updates on this endeavour.

**** Latest update:** The farm has been sold and there is now a subdivision agreement in the works. This could be a good thing for the cemetery as there are strict regulations in place for burial grounds around fencing and set backs so as not to interfere with unmarked graves. With modern housing being built, they would hardly leave the cemetery overgrown and there would be access and some sort of care (grass cutting, trimming, etc) would be performed by the City of Port Colborne. Fingers crossed.

***** Further update:** OGS and a family member will be visiting the cemetery in April 2025 to discuss with the current owner a plan to clean it up so OGS can properly examine, probe and transcribe stones. No further information at the time of this report .

(Continued on Page 19)

A family photo for the family of **E14521 Abraham Storm and Mary Barnhardt** found online meant research of this line was necessary to code the family members. This information has been added to the database.

A photo posted on the Ridgeway, Ontario, History Facebook page around November 11th of **E1537521 John Charles Wilhelm**, who was killed in action at Normandy, France on August 20, 1944, generated a need to partially update the **E153 Jacob Sherk** and **Sarah Zavitz** line with more photos being located. Additions to the database and coding of photos in Flickr has occurred.

While assisting **Jodi McGuffin** (mcguffin@bell.net) with her United Empire Loyalist pedigree, the name Zavitz came up on a collateral line. Looking the Zavitz line, it was quickly evident that Jodi was a double Sherk, with codes **E144631353/E153941353**.

Welcome to the family, Jodi! This prompted an update on genealogy for Abraham Morningstar and **E1539 Mary Sherk** in our database.

While searching the internet, photos for **Code B David Scherkes/Scherges/Yerkes** were found. Research is currently underway on this line and a brief history of David and three of his children's lives in Germantown, PA will appear in an upcoming newsletter. We will attempt to contact a male Yerkes descendant to see if they will perform a Y-DNA test.

A query was received from **Mikenna Richardson** (mikennar@outlook.com) regarding her Sherk lineage. A search of our database revealed that Mikenna is descended from two lines, her code being **E14255131122/E15353131122**. Welcome, Mikenna!

While assisting **Kathryn Chamberlain Kummer** (kummer.kw@gmail.com) with her United Empire Loyalist pedigree, the name Carver came up on a collateral line. Looking at this line, it was quickly evident that Kathryn is a double Sherk, descending from **N1369 Adeline Sherk** and **E15401 Benjamin Alfred Carver**. It was necessary to update this line in order to give Kathryn and her mother, Judith Lighthouse Chamberlain appropriate codes.

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.

REUNION 2026

Markham, Ontario

"Routes to Roots"

In 1804 Casper Sherick H44, an older brother of Joseph Schorg H46, settled in the Markham area. The land was fertile and good for farming. Markham lies north of Toronto.

SAVE THE DATES: July 23-25, 2026

My Trip to Conscientious Objector Work Camp at Montreal River

By Betty Sherk H46113363

Have you ever been to Montreal River, Ontario? I have driven through it many times travelling west from Toronto, but never stopping. It was not a place that meant anything to me until a bus trip I took from September 26 to 27, 2024. Now, it means a lot. The “Montreal River Alternative Service Work Camp” was located where the Montreal River meets Lake Superior, north of Sault Ste. Marie.

The weekend’s events celebrated the culmination of an eight-year project to install a historical plaque at Montreal River to commemorate the Montreal River Alternative Service Work Camp. The trip started with the dedication of the plaque at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo on September 25, 2024. It was created by the Ontario Heritage Trust, an agency of the government of Ontario whose purpose is to preserve our cultural heritage. The content came from the Mennonite Historical Society. Sam Steiner delineated the history of exemptions sought by conscientious objectors starting in 1792 and a few dignitaries spoke. A four-member band entertained us before and after the ceremony as music was a big part of the culture of these objectors.



From January 2016 to April 2017 an exhibit, “Conchies Speak” was on display at Mennonite Archives of Ontario, which is housed at Conrad Grebel University College. Below find the history behind the exhibit with permission granted for reprinting:

"Conchie" is slang for conscientious objector, an individual who refuses to participate in military service on the grounds of faith or conscience. Although the term is sometimes used derisively, conscientious objectors in Canada during the Second World War embraced it and used it to describe themselves.

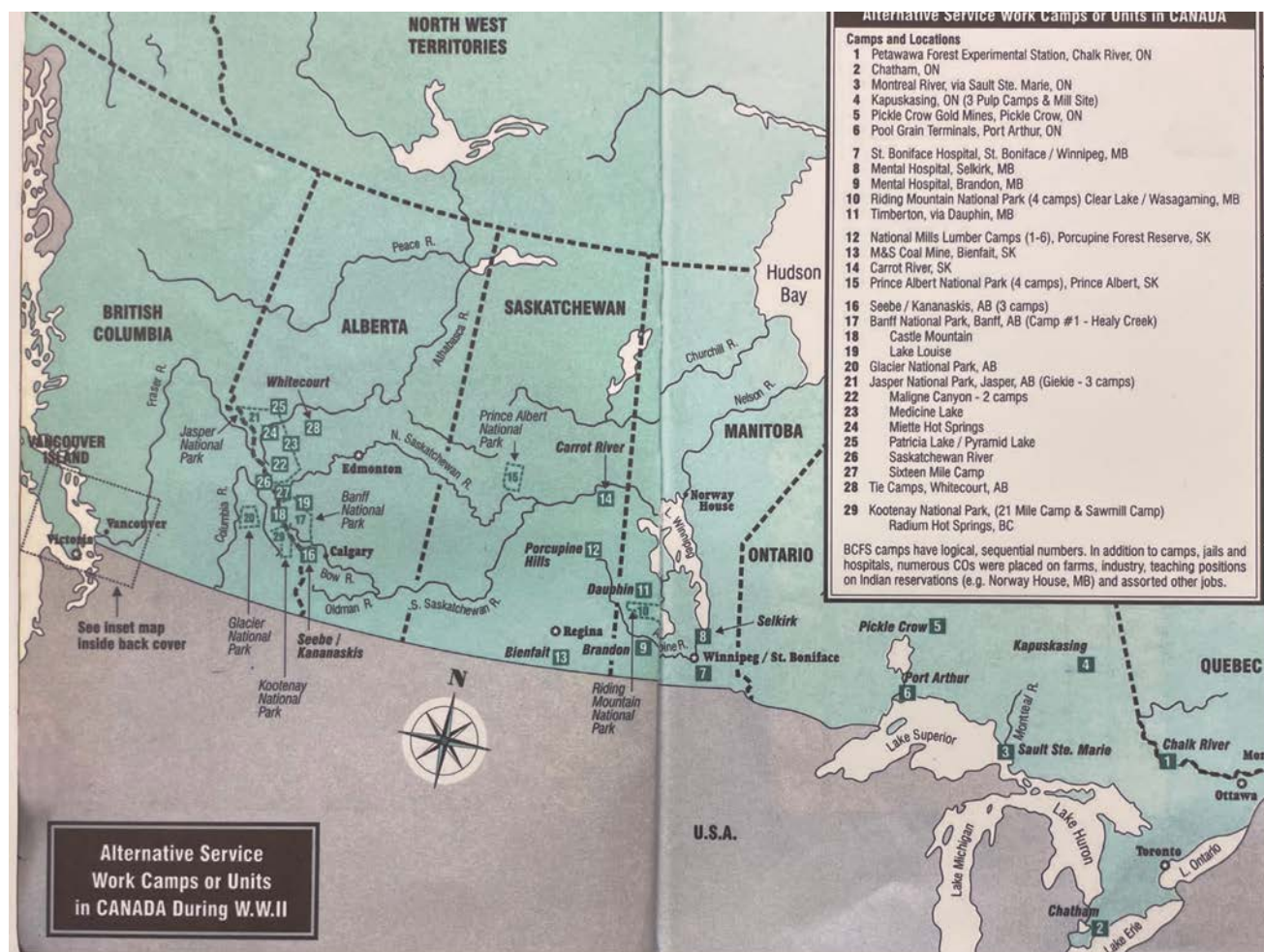
In 1940, when the German invasion of Great Britain seemed a real possibility, the government of Canada ordered the conscription of men for compulsory service within Canada. Since 1793, Canadian Mennonites had immigrated to Canada on various assurances that their long-standing religious conviction of non-participation in military service would be honoured. In 1940, Mennonite leaders from across Canada went to Ottawa to negotiate a non-military (“alternative”) form of service. From 1941-1946, the Alternative Service program directed the

(Continued on Page 21)

labour of over 10,000 men in agriculture, road building, fire-fighting, hospitals and industrial work across the country.

Over 2,600 of these men were from Ontario; most were Mennonites between the ages of 21 and 24. For many, this was the first time they left rural farming communities, directly encountered others of differing viewpoints, and thought about their pacifist convictions. The Conchies' challenges and frustrations as well as their joys and reflections are echoed in the letters, diaries, photographs and recorded interviews they left behind.

Conscientious objectors, COs, had to prove their membership in a pacifist church and apply to be exempted from military service. Once accepted they were assigned to camps as



the World War II progressed. The camp at Montreal River was the template after which others were modelled. There were fifty such camps across the country by 1946. When this camp was closed in 1943 it became Twilight Resort with cabins and places to park campers.

In January of 1942 a newsletter was started by a couple of COs. My uncle Harold J. Sherk, Code H4611331 was the first spiritual director at the camp and wrote the first article in

(Continued on Page 22)



the first volume. Copies of the newsletters have been digitized and can be found at the web site mentioned at the end of this article.

On Friday, September 27, 2024, about 46 Conchie relatives, including my cousin Margaret and myself, boarded two buses and left Kitchener by 8 a.m., arriving in Sault Ste. Marie by 6:30 p.m. The next morning the buses left by 8:30 a.m. for another hour and a half ride to the site of Montreal River. There, the historical plaque was installed on a post. Darrell Frey introduced us to the book he wrote in 2014 "Called to be A Soldier". The content is based on the many letters that were written and mailed home during their stays at Montreal



River. Marie Burkholder read one of the letters that her father, a Conchie, wrote to his family from here. It was a very moving experience for me. Afterwards, we had time to wander the grounds and down to the river and lake before boarding the buses again for the long trip back to Kitchener. We arrived back at Wallenstein, where our cars were parked, around 11:30 that evening.

Many thanks to Laureen Harder-Gissing and her team for organizing this event. It was very memorable. For more information click on these links:

<http://www.mhso.org/> - From the side menu choose Montreal River Historic Plaque.

[Mennonite Archives of Ontario](#) - Choose the **Exhibit** side bar and scroll down to Exhibit **Themes**. Choose **Speaking Through Newsletters** to see the newsletters.