

## CHRISTIAN Z GERIG WAS A SPINNER OF TEXTILE THREAD

Christian Z Gerig, was a "spinner of textile thread", not a weaver. He may have spun cotton, imported from Louisiana, as well as wool into thread for use on textile machines made by the André Koechlin Company. Christian's younger brother, Benjamin (remember that both Benjamin and his brother Sebastian ordained C R Gerig at Fairview Church - he was their nephew), and his uncle John Jacob Meyer, both worked for the André Koechlin Company in the City of Mulhouse. Benjamin likely began working for the company at the age of 13 or 14. The machine shop employed around 3000 persons and manufactured several kinds of machinery, such as textile machinery, in addition to steam engines and locomotives. Christian Z Gerig's brother-in-law, John Jacob Meyer, worked as a stationary engineer in the shop.

John Jacob Meyer is the husband of Elizabeth Gerig, Christian's oldest sister. John Jacob Meyer is listed as a witness on all three of the birth records for Christian Z Gerig's children in France. Elizabeth raised her brother's Benjamin and Sebastian, and became their "mother" after their parents died when the children were still at a young age. Benjamin was six when his mother (Elizabeth Zimmerman) died and only eight when his father (Jacob Gerig) died. Elizabeth was 24 years older than her brother Benjamin. Elizabeth's husband was a member of the German Reformed Stephanus Church (*I assume this is a Calvinist Church?*), Place de la Reunion, and that is where his wife and children attended. In spite of this difference though, Elizabeth still had her two youngest brothers attend the Mennonite Church at Pulversheim, where they were both baptized. There was no Mennonite meeting place at Pfastatt at that time.

(I acquired most of this information from Roy E Wenger's genealogy book, "Benjamin Gerig and Lydia Schrock - Their Lives and Times" published in 1976).

A few days ago, I posted a question on a genealogical message board that deals with French to English translations and asked for someone to translate the French word "Fileur". I wanted to know the word Fileur's translation as it relates to an occupation of the mid 1800s in France. Here is my reply.

*"It is to do with textiles but I think it is a spinner, not a weaver, alternatively it can be a silk-thrower, throwster."*

I looked the word "Thowster" up in the dictionary, and it is defined as 'One that twists fibers into thread' and 'One who throws textile filaments'.

The development of the City of Mulhouse was stimulated initially by the expansion of the textile industry and tanning, beginning in the mid 18th century. Mulhouse was at the forefront of the textile industry since the beginning of the industrial revolution. The city imported cotton from Louisiana for its textile industry. Mulhouse currently has a textile museum that records this history. Here is the web site for the museum - <http://www.musee-impression.com/gb/musee/default.html>.

### **What I posted below, I pulled off of Wikipedia and other sources on the Internet:**

The town's development was stimulated first by the expansion of the [textile industry](#) and [tanning](#), and subsequently by [chemical](#) and [engineering industries](#) from the mid 18th century. Mulhouse was for a

long time called the French [Manchester](#). In consequence, the town has enduring links with [Louisiana](#), from which it imported cotton, and also with the [Levant](#).

Starting in the middle of the eighteenth century, the [Koechlin family](#) pioneered cotton cloth manufacturing; Mulhouse became one of France's leading textile centers in the nineteenth century. André Koechlin (1789–1875) built machinery and started making railroad equipment in 1842. The firm in 1839 already employed 1,800 people. It was one of the six large French locomotive constructors until the merger with [Elsässische Maschinenbau-Gesellschaft Grafenstaden](#) in 1872, when the company became [Société Alsacienne de Constructions Mécaniques](#).

1832: Grounding of André Koechlin Company by André Koechlin, Mathias Thierry and Henri Bock in Mulhouse for textile machinery manufacturing.

- Till the 19th century, André Koechlin Company develops and builds wool spinning products and expands his activities to rails, steam and gas engines.

Mulhouse has since the Industrial Revolution began been at the forefront of the textile industry in France. The local area has produced a huge amount of the domestic textiles and those made for export around the world. This museum mainly focuses on telling the story of the industrial side of the community from the early 1800s through its peak to the relative decline in recent times. Using many thousands of examples and exhibits this is a fascinating experience.