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Newly Produced French Documentary Film of Hang Valley (our Gerig's lived here) & The Amish-Mennonites

This post is long as I have a lot to unpack:

I just found this excellent French documentary about the Amish Mennonites of Alsace-Lorraine that focuses on the Mennonite community in the valley of Hang where our Gerig's lived. The video was produced by France's public TV channel, "France 2". It was broadcast only last year on Oct 17, 2021. The public channel is currently producing films about the history of Protestantism in France.

To my delight the producers interviewed Wilfred and Nadine Kreis throughout the 30 minute video. Wilfred and Nadine own the Ferme du Nouveau Chenim Bed and Breakfast in Hang. Their farm is one of the original 12 farms of this valley, and so its remotely possible that this is the actual farm our ancestor, Christian Gerig (C R Gerig's Great-Great-Grandfather) or his brother Jean (John) Gerig, lived on when they lived here. C R Gerig's grandfather, Jacob Gerig, was born here in Hang. I am unsure if the Kreis' home, barn and outbuildings are original structures that date from the 1700s. Because the film is in the French language, I will try and relay below what little I could ascertain from watching the video.

The opening scene is of Wilfred and Nadine's son, Nicholoas Kreis, working on their farm. All of the farm scenes and settings in the outdoors throughout the film appear to be taken in the small valley of Hang. Many scenes are taken from a drone.

When Claude Baecher is speaking, the large home to his right is an original Alsatian house structure that sits on another of the Hang's original 12 farms. I believe it was owned by a Baecher family in the 1780 census (Christian and his brother Jean/John are listed in this census), Three of the sons of this Baecher man are listed as having married Gerig wives. So if I am right, this house has a connection to the Gerig family via marriage.

There is a scene at the "**Eglise Evangélique Mennonite de la Prairie Church**" of Montebelliard, France, which is about 2 hours south of Hang. This is the largest Mennonite Church in France. It was newly renovated and built to include a Mennonite History archive - similar to the archive in Hubbard, Oregon. I believe it was just dedicated last year. The archives are slated to contain a file on the Gerig surname. I would very much like to see that file!

Robert Baecher is interviewed at Hang. He is the president of the French Association of Mennonite Anabaptist History, whose archives are at the Montebelliard Church I just mentioned above. He is an independent scholar that has been writing about the Amish-Mennonite History of this area since at least the early 1980s. He is certainly the leading expert on this subject. Robert walks into a second original farmhouse in Hang, and examines an old beam. On the beam he notes inscribed writing. It says, NB 1699. He explains the initials are what he believes are the name Niclus Blanck from the year 1699. Nicholas was a companion of Jacob Amman. Robert mentions the name of Jacob Ammann, so I assume it is in that context. What is of interest to us, is that our ancestor Christian Gerig, a widower, moved here to Hang in 1774. He had been married to an Anne Blanck, who had died years prior to his arrival. She was the mother of his children and so our ancestor as well. It has always seemed logical to me that she is the granddaughter or great-granddaughter of this same Niclus Blanck, whom Robert Baecher is

implying the initials on the wooden beam belong to. I had read elsewhere that some had surmised the initials last letter may have been for "Baecher" not "Blanck", so I would really like to know what is being said here in French (language barrier makes this all difficult). Perhaps Robert has learned more about this house and has good reason to say what he does (you can hear him say "Niclaus Blanck" in the video and then a sentence or so later states the name "Jacob Amman", so I surmise I have ascertained the context somewhat correctly)

Wilfred and Nadine are further interviewed at the end outside their home. A painting is on the side of their home of a tree, whose roots reach into a flowing stream. One side of the tree is dead with broken branches and a crow flies in the sky. It is dead, but in the hill behind in the middle of the tree is a cross. The right side of the tree is alive and bearing fruit. In its branches sits what I believe is a dove. I know from their own website, that they became Christians and joined the Mennonite Church. They had been living in Paris, but moved to join the small Mennonite community in the area desiring to live a more simple life that reflected their newfound faith. The church they attend is the "**Église Évangélique Mennonite de Bourg-Bruche Church**" in the town of Bourg-Bruche only 1 1/2 miles from where they live in Hang. A scene is taken of them worshiping in this small church. The original congregants had been meeting in people's homes for decades, I assume back to the time our Gerig's lived in this area. It was not until 1951 that they built this current Church building, helped in part by donations from the Mennonite Church in the United States.

<https://vimeo.com/624581292?embedded=true...>