

*Addendum to the Pinter Family History Book*

# *Translations of Swiss-German Documents*

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**T**his addendum contains a number of documents translated from Swiss-German into English. The first document was written by an unknown author and translated to English by a student in Stäfa, Switzerland. The remaining documents are articles found in various books and manually typed into the Google Translate application.

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## **The Pünters of Stäfa**

A multipage typed research paper

Author unknown

Translated by Lucy Cryer, Stäfa, Switzerland, 2009

Our Swiss family name originated during the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. Popular surnames were often altered verbally, over the years with the result that they no longer have the same meaning they used to have. The only families which were mentioned in Stäfa around the 13<sup>th</sup> century were the Ryffel and the Guyer families. The name Ryffel derived from an old christian name. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century the Guyers were known as Gutjahr (Goodyear). In most villages, where a lot of people had the same family name, they used derivations or nicknames to distinguish people. So some times it was possible that certain people were only called by their nicknames or derivations and so lost their family names because of this.

In stark contrast to the above, the Pünters or Bünters have kept the same family name since it was first mentioned in the year 1331. This is very understandable, because the meaning of the name doesn't present a puzzle. There were Pünters in every village, not just around the lake of Zürich and the name was known everywhere in the German speaking part of Switzerland, although its pronunciation changed and underwent regional change. In parts of Switzerland and Germany you can find family names like *Bünd* or *Bind* and, further northward, *Beund* which is a High-German or written form then, finally, in Bayern there are family names like *Paint* or *Point*.

The "Pünt" used to be a „vegetable patch“, a plot of land on which the farmers used to plant hemp, flax, turnips or vegetables. It had a fence around it to protect it from animals and was usually were part of the common land and belonged to the whole community. In course of time it became the private property of certain villagers because they looked after it so well. These "vegetable patches" were usually found just outside the village, so a farmer living next to a Pünt was named after it and his surname became Pünt. This interpretation is confirmed by records from outside of Stäfa are connected to „Pünter“. There are examples of "zer Bünden" or "at the Bünde" ( 1280 in Elsass) or even "in the Bünde" (Konstanz 1289). Today this name

can only be found in a remote corner of the German-speaking part of Wallis. There, in Zermatt, you still find the family name „In der Binden“.

There are Pünters in Stäfa and in Bubikon, Bündler in Nidwalden and Escholzmatt. You will also find the Urner name „Püntener“ an offshoot of Pünt. The name Pünter could have originated in different parts of Switzerland; but we cannot conclude that all Pünters or Bündlers were originally related. Around the same time as the first documented Pünter in Stäfa (1333/4 and after) you also find Pünters in Zürich. In the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century in Elgg, in the neighbouring of village Oberschlatt, and finally in Embrach you also find records of the Pünter name.

Now let us return to the Pünters in Stäfa. The first Pünter in Stäfa was Ulrich Bünter. He is documented in the inventory of the monastery of Einsiedeln in 1331. Here he is recorded as owner of a Hube ( a plot of land) in Ülikon and for which he charged a yearly tithe of two portions of grain. In the same inventory there is an Ulrich Bünter, who owned the fourth part of a Hube as hereditary fief from the monastery of Einsiedeln. For this he received an annual tithe of a quarter portion of grain and one portion of oats. It is not clear whether these two Ulrich Bünters were one and the same person.

The next mention of the Bündlers can be found in the fiscal (tax) records of the city of Zürich between 1467 and 1469. In 1467 there were two family heads living in Stäfa: Cuni and Hans Bünter. With Hans and his family, there also lived his brother Rudi, who moved out after a while, got married, and started a family of his own. The fiscal records of 1468 and 1469 list Rudi now living with a woman - presumably his wife. What we already read in the inventory of Einsiedeln is confirmed by the tax records of Zürich.

Judging from the amount of taxes they paid, the Pünters of the medieval times belonged to the middle class, but were not large-scale farmers. To the large-scale farmers of that time belonged a family called Hoffmann from Oberhausen and the family Suter from Oetikon. Uli Hoffmann from Oberhausen paid twice as much taxes as the richest people (Rudi Gerhart, Heini Pfenninger) in the village of Stäfa.

Although the recording of marriages and births began towards the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century in Stäfa and they contain numerous entries of marriage and birth, they are of little genealogical value. This is because registers of death were only begun in 1624 and property records were only introduced from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards.

Information obtained from church records - not mentioned in the following genealogical list or family tree – will be listed separately in the appendix. It may well be possible to make a better genealogical listing when further documents, to be found in the archives of the monastery of Einsiedeln, can be added to the above records.

It is also important to recall that Switzerland had to grapple with the plague in 1529, 1564/65, 1611 and 1629. Stäfa mourned over great losses in which whole families probably died. The people who died because of the plague are not registered anywhere except in 1529. In 1529 apparently 165 people died of the plague in Stäfa. In that year altogether 360 people were buried, which was a large number of people. Usually there were around 30 to 40 deaths a year. Around 1000 people lived in Stäfa in 1529. We know for sure that there were 818 habitants living in Stäfa in 1634. Just five years after the plague of 1629, the population had not yet fully recovered.

Now let us return to the 16<sup>th</sup> century and mention the Pünters documented in the varying registers. These entries however are but fragments, small parts of a larger jigsaw puzzle and are not enough to create an entire family history. The number of not-named-Pünters probably far outweighs the number of the named-Pünters.

Quite a few men of Stäfa took part in different federal wars, for example, the federal war in Milano. In the so-called battle of 1512, the Swiss reconquered Milano from the French. During the attack 24 Stäfa men, one named Burkhard Pünter fought to regain the city. An even bigger contingent with 31 men from Stäfa took part in the advance on Burgundy the following year. Two of these men were Rudi Pünter of Stäfa and Klaus Pünter of Männedorf. Finally in the famous defeat of Marignano in 1515, which completed the federal pursuit of power, two Pünters were involved along with 9 other Stäfa men. Their names were Jakob and (again) Burkhard Pünter of Stäfa.

In 1517 an Andreas Pünter is mentioned, who owed 20 Swiss francs taxes in relation to his sister's leaving the village (?). He is recorded as using his land as collateral to cover the debt caused by her marrying a Klaus Ziegler from Zug. A letter from Martini (1542) records several pieces of Land in „Ghei“ – 18 acres, 5 haystacks, 3 amounts of wood and a barn – being impounded by Ludi Pfenninger the debt collector from Andres and Rudolf Bünter and Hensli Hübsch to cover a debt of 300 francs. Among the town councillors of the period who had to judge the debtor's creditworthiness, there is record of a Rudolf Bänder. He is also mentioned in a letter of 1552, which cites a Hans Pünter owing a debt to a Hans Rüssy of Rapperswil.

In 1555 a Hans Pünter received some money (at his own request) from Zürich town council. The amount was 3 francs, allocated for a treatment in a thermal bath somewhere in Switzerland. Apparently the treatment did not work, because in 1559 he is again mentioned in the council records as having been in hospital for a while and that the doctors were looking after him and both he and his wife wanted to move to the countryside. The couple didn't move to the countryside, but stayed in Zürich. On the 11<sup>th</sup> of January 1560, Hans Pünter and his wife are again mentioned in the city records.

After the pretty fragmentary entries above, the real Pünter family history starts in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The first Zürich census of 1634 provides us with reliable facts with which to begin. This census and later household entries show families in their relation to one another and give a complete listing of all family members. These can also be found, in part, in church and parish registers but these records are less reliable due to clergymen's forgetfulness or more often to the loss of records - eg there are no entries of christenings in Stäfa between 1610 and 1624.

In 1634 we find the following three Pünters living in Stäfa:

- 1.) Rudolf Pünter, widower, who lived with his son and daughter.
- 2.) Adelheid Boller, widow of Burkhard Pünter, with a son and a daughter.
- 3.) Hans Pünter, a judge, married with Verena Oetiker with a son and two daughters.

End of Article

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# Pünter

## Introduction to the Articles

The following **two articles** were extracted from photocopies of pages 414 and 415 of a Stäfa history book of unknown title. The copies were provided by August Pünter in 2009. In this section of the book, various Stäfa family names are listed and described. The translated pages were under the heading of Pünter.

Note: While it is clear, after comparing this write up to family tree diagrams provide by August Pünter, that the names discussed below are from the other tree branch and not ours, it is nevertheless interesting to read about the people and their occupations and other issues of that time.

Title and publish date of the original book is unknown.  
Translation by Ken Pinter using Google Translate.

Note on accuracy of translation:

Google Translate is an online translator service. German and Swiss-German are somewhat different languages. Google Translate translates only German to English. Therefore, sometimes the translator could not translate a specific Swiss-German word. In addition, the translator tended to produce a literal translation of the original text. I found it necessary to read and interpret the translators output based on context. I took care to not alter the meaning as I understood it.

Clarification points provided by me when it seemed appropriate and necessary are found in (parenthesis).

## Article 1 - Translation of Paragraphs about the Pünter Family – translated from the above-mentioned history book

The Pünter family is an old established family name. Ulrich Bunter is mentioned in 1331. The name also appears in tax books dated 1469. Specifically the names Hans, Rudi, and Kueni and their families are mentioned. The name is present throughout the centuries in the Oberwacht (Oberwacht is an area of Stäfa)

The spelling of the name was changed by the people who settled the Punt. The Punt is an area where vegetables and other foodstuffs were grown. (People who worked these gardens became known as Pünters)

In earlier times, the name was found spelled as Bunter.

The spelling of Bintter also can be found.

The form of the name is related to the (Uri Puntin) (I can't determine what this means) .

Hans Buntter was given a feudal estate by the town of Zurich in 1436. (It is not clear what this sentence really means.)

In 1634, four families appear in the records, one in the village of Ulikon and the others in the village of Dorf, near Stäfa.

At the beginning of the 17th century, Hans Jakob left the main root of the family and went out to Dorf and Zehntentrotte and Kreuz. (these last three names are or were villages in the time. They are visible on a 1783 map.)

There, Hans Rudolf (\* 1702) (probably means born in 1702) operated the tannery. Of his sons, Hans Rudoff (1740-1797), who was a land judge, continued the tannery line.

A division took place (not sure what division means in this context – possibly a disagreement) with or between Hans Rudolf's sons Jacob (1766-1830) and Hans Jacob (1780-1861). The latter received the authorization to set up a tannery in Urikon. It was operated by his descendants until it had to close down. Many other tanneries also had to close in this time frame.

Of the other sons of Hans Rudolf, the elder Hans Heinrich branch in Dorf, where the brothers August and Edwin had the position of municipal court and district court presidents. (This translation was not a simple one and the result is suspect).

A third brother of Hans Heinrich, Hans Kasper (1747-1783) was a surgeon. He settled in the village of Rain (slightly to the northwest of Stäfa) and married Verena. Verena was the daughter of Hans Jakob Huber who was an Ammann (bailiff or official?) of the monastery Einsiedeln. His son Henry (\* 1772) followed his maternal grandfather as an official until 1799.

Because they participated in Stäfa trade, Judge Johannes, and jurors Johannes and Jakob Pünter were given criminal convictions. (Or, maybe Judge Johannes handed down convictions to John and Jakob Pünter). One was fined 1000 Guilden, the other 500 Guilden (Guilden was a unit of money).

At times only four families were living in Stäfa. By 1800 it was 23 families. By the end of 1965, twelve families were registered, only four of which were living in Stäfa.

## **Article 2- Translations of Other Miscellaneous Information – translated from the above-mentioned history book**

Per a 1469 Tax Book, in the year 1331, there were three Pünter families in Oberwacht.

In a Population List dated 1634, the Pünter name was listed with data that suggests that in 1469 there were 4 Pünter families, 3 in Oberwacht, and one in Unterwacht and that in these families there were a total of 11 people in Oberwacht and 2 in Unterwacht.

In another population list dated 1707, there were 8 Pünter families and 31 people in Oberwacht.

Finally, in another list giving numbers of households and which is somewhat confusing, in 1793 or 1805 (or perhaps between those two dates) there were 21 Pünter families in Oberwacht and 2 in Unterwacht.

Note on Oberwacht (OW) and Unterwacht (UW): OB and UW are or at least were geographic areas in or around Stäfa. These areas can be found on a 1783 map of Stäfa. The Oberwacht is an area of land located just below the Reformed Evangelical Church of Stäfa, generally between the Church and the Lake. The Unterwacht is land just to the West of the OW.

In German, the word Wacht means watch or guard. Perhaps this area was strategic in that perhaps it was an area of protection for Stäfa.

Stäfa Church records photographed by the Mormons do in fact show that when family data was recorded, it was categorized by the territories of OW and UW.

End of Articles