

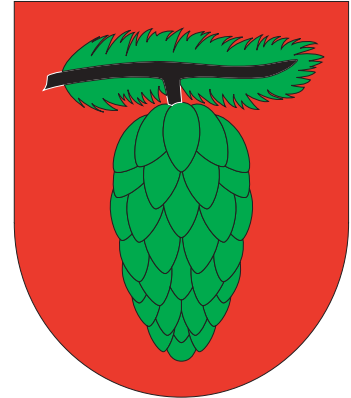
Kiener from Beinwil and Zetzwil

by Peter Steiner

The Kiener are old family lines, who have spread through the counties of Bern and Luzern very early on. Whether all families are of the same descent should be difficult to establish. In Willisau the name is supposed to have been used as early as the 14th century. From the 16th century onwards it can be found in the Michelsamt region. The «Untervogt» (leader of a big community or a borough of many smaller communities) Jacob Kiener was a member of the court in Gunzwil in 1654; Wilhelm Kiener was an innkeeper in Neudorf in 1629.

Still in the 16th century, the Kieners expanded into the Aargau region: to Zofingen, where Cuonrat Kiener was a court member from 1528-1533. Into the Ruedertal, where Jacob Kiener lived in Walde in 1546; mainly into Beinwil, where the Kieners settled for any length of time. In the cases of Walde and Beinwil it is believed the immigration started in the Luzern area. In the village of Hallwilersee in 1512 Jost Kiener was a personal guarantor for his fellow citizen Johannes Hintermann, who was collecting the Beinwiler hay tax for the monastery in Beromünster. Before his death Jost left the church Pfeffikon - in charge of Beinwil before the reformation - 1 pound yearly allowance in his will. In the 1550's already 3 Kiener families were living in Beinwil, the families of Hans, Ulrich and Grosshans Kiener. They were also using the name Heltschi, in addition to the actual family name. As office bearers the Kiener families in Beinwil belonged to the upper classes, like the Kieners in Gunzwil and in Zofingen. 1576 Hans Kiener was an «Untervogt» in Beinwil.

At the turn of the 17th century the foundations were laid for the Kiener family branch in Wynental. Fridli Kiener from Beinwil married Verena Peter from Gontenschwil in 1598. Their first child was born in 1599 in Gontenschwil, and two further children were born in 1601 and 1603 in Beinwil. The couple settled in Zetzwil and acquired a farm. In 1626 Fridli interestingly enough, exchanged his house with a fellow citizen from Zetzwil and from then on lived «on the road to Äsch», which was the road in the Wandfluh-Leutwil-Dürrenäsch direction. He also led the Zetzwil community as a «Geschworener» (member of the local authority) together with a fellow citizen in 1627/28 and therefore belonged to the leading citizens in the village, like many of his ancestors before him.



Coat of arms of the Kiener from Zetzwil

The Kiener line managed to keep this position in Zetzwil for some time. One of Fridlis descendants was a «Geschworener» again from 1684 to 1687 and another even «Untervogt» of the great court (district) of Trostburg from 1718 to 1737.

In addition, the Kiener families were also settled in Wilhof near Birrwil in the 17th century. In the 18th century they spread out from there into the Bodenrüti in the Ruedertal (Rued valley). Today the branches in Beinwil, in Wilhof and Rued are long extinct. However in Zetzwil the Kieners are still present today.