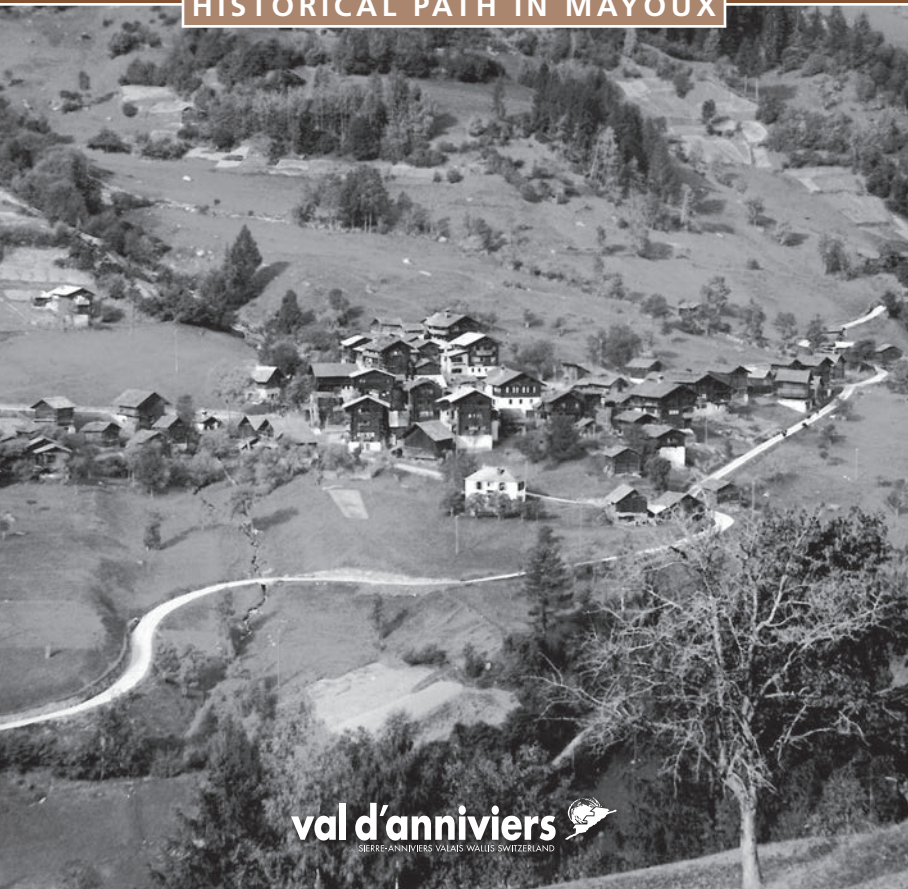


MAYOUX

HISTORICAL PATH IN MAYOUX



Map of Mayoux



- 1 Old House of the Bourgeoisie of Frasses
- 2 Barn-Stable
- 3 Private Stable
- 4 Raccard/Barn
- 5 Mule Stable
- 6 Chapel of Notre-Dame-des-Neiges
- 7 Village Wine Cellar
- 8 Grenier/Granary
- 9 Old School and Communal House
- 10 Farmhouse
- 11 House with painted decor
- 12 Café-restaurant
- 13 Old Bread Room
- ★ Oratory of the Puchotaz and Grand Bisse of Saint-Jean

Introduction to Mayoux



Mayoux in the past



Mayoux, circa 1965

The village has a beautiful location on an intermediate terrace on the southwest side of the valley. Located at a crossroads, Mayoux has a centre around the chapel and two linear areas along the route of the old road.

In the eighteenth century the village developed at the expense of the locality called Frasses today.

Mayoux made the news in an unhappy way on March 10, 1817. That day, a large avalanche from the northside of the Roc d'Orzival, destroyed many buildings and houses, causing deaths and injuries.

"Today Mayoux has about a hundred inhabitants and thirty tourist beds."

Before, life in Mayoux was harsh. Looking through the accounts of the village from 1887, one realizes how every penny was important, for example for the construction of a new basin. In 1915, the accounts for the bread oven and the allocation of money to the school were discussed at the meetings.

Today Mayoux has about a hundred inhabitants and thirty tourist beds.

The Frasses community



Village women around 1935

Formerly, the name of Mayoux was little known, since this area was part of the Frasses community. The locality of Fras (now Frasses), called Les Pras, les Phras, "the meadows" in dialect. It appears to have been the first community in the valley to adopt regulations in 1554, subsequent to an order from the Canton dated 1549. It had, besides the town of Fras, houses in

"Its territory went from the stream of Pinsec to south of the Trutzau path".

Prarion, Pischieux, Tсахèla and Cretta. Its territory went as far as the stream of Pinsec, to the south of the path of Trutzau (exit on the Mayoux-Plandissoz-Fariné road). The habitations were likely more dispersed than today and consisted of smaller units.



Work in the vineyards of the Bourgeoisie of Saint-Jean, in Sierre in 1961

The archives of the "Société du village" dating from the seventeenth century list Mayeur and not Mayoux.

1. Old House of the Bourgeoisie of Frasses



Old house today

➤ To reach the first location on the tour, you can park just outside Mayoux towards Pinsec. The old House of the Bourgeoisie at Frasses is at a five minutes' walk from Mayoux.

In 1643, the Frasses community acquired this building and in 1798 expanded it. At that time, almost all the villages of Anniviers built or bought a room, a wine cellar and vineyards.

In the premises of the House of the Bourgeoisie, meetings were organised, whereas in its beautiful cellar, the wine was stored and wonderful moments were spent with fellow members of the Bourgeoisie.



House of the Bourgeoisie of Frasses, right, old chapel, left, in the 1960s

The Bourgeoisies of Anniviers still function, including that of Saint-Jean which holds its annual meeting on the last Saturday of January. In March, in Sierre, the work in the vineyards is done to the sound of fifes and drums. If traditions are indeed maintained, it is thanks to the Bourgeoisies of the valley.

Formerly, above the House of the Bourgeoisie, there was a chapel dating from 1627. Converted into a private wine cellar in 1898, it was demolished in 1964, following the widening of the road from Mayoux to Pinsec.

➤ Return to the car park and follow the first farm road, left, up to the barn-stable (grange-écurie) at the foot of the parking lot.

2. Barn-Stable

This « grange-écurie » was once used for cows or goats. The upper part was used to store hay needed to feed the animals.

Observe the assembly system of beams that were axe-hewn, and the hole through which manure was taken out.



Grange-écurie today

Formerly, there were numerous *granges-écuries* scattered throughout the valley. The stables, the largest of which had an area of 25 m², allowed the farmers of the valley (80% of the population) to keep a maximum of six cows, a heifer, a female calf, a calf and two or three goats. The barns could contain about 50-80 m³ of hay. A barn-stable could have up to four owners, who were

therefore obliged, in winter, to move cattle every week. It was useless to build bigger barns-stables, because of the partition of properties.

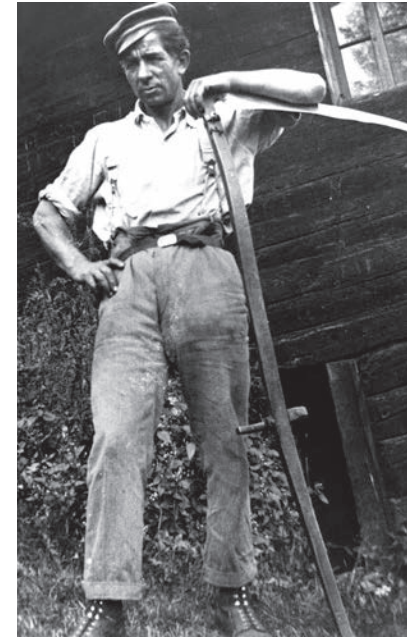
Today, the law on the protection of animals no longer allows their use. Larger stables were built, which could contain between fifteen and forty cows.

In the 1950s, the heavier cows weighed 500 kg, while today they weigh 800 kg. These could not even get into the little old barns of the past.

Formerly, cows were milked most of the year. The cow was used to feed families, while today it is man who feeds the cows. Cows play an ecological role, as well as in tourism. By grazing in the *mayens* and in the mountain pastures, they help to maintain these areas. The cow fights organised throughout the Canton and in the villages attract many spectators.

A press article on the Hérens breed explained the reasons to own cows : 70% for the beauty of the race, 65% for maintenance of the land and patrimony; 48% for family tradition, 25% for the beauty of cow fights; 24% for the pride of owning a potential *reine*, 9% for economic reasons and 8% for the life of local associations.

➤ Continue along this road for about 300 m to the private stable.



Reaper in the 1940's

3. Private Stable



Private stable, today

The private stable of Mayoux, located north of the village, can house roughly fifteen animals (cows, heifers and female calves). About 600 m³ of hay and second-growth hay are needed to feed them. It is by uniting several plots that this barn was completed in 1991.

Independently of community stables in Anniviers, a number of such private stables were built.

It is interesting to compare the old traditional stable to a private stable such as this one. The old system was replaced by an electrical one that is used for milking and to put out the manure. Windows, required by the law for the protection of animals are another new feature. Manual feeding has been replaced by a system which makes the hay fall directly to the cattle. Milking machines have taken the place of hand milking. Even the height



Marc Zufferey stable

of nurseries in relation to bedding for the animals is regulated. Gone are the days when, after feeding, farmers had backaches, sore hands and arms. The current equipment, milking machines, conduits, churns and milk storage require a high degree of cleanliness. Formerly, only the container used for milking and the *brante* (milk can) needed washing.

In the past, hay was tied with rope and a *catelle* or *betsons* (fag-gots with burlap), and transported on the backs of men and women. Today it is the self-loading machine that does the job.

> Return to the main road, cross it and continue along the lane that enters the village.

4. Raccard / Barn



Small street and barns around 1970

The raccard, the second building on the left of the lane, is built on pilotis to avoid allowing mice to get to the wheat. The raccard stood a little apart from the houses, unlike the granary.

The *greniers* sometimes belonged to eight different owners, whereas the *raccards* were less divided, because more space was needed to store the rye, barley and wheat. The *raccard* beams were not too closely placed so that air could penetrate the structure and prevent moulding of the grains.

In winter the farmers threshed the grain and the noise from the scourge could be heard far and wide.

➤ Continue about 10 metres.

5. Mule Stable

This small building was once used to house a mule, who had its very own stable. The mule stable is different from cow stables in terms of size, mainly those of the doors.

The mule was the only means of transportation at the time. Harnessed to a cart, mules followed the nomadic families of the valley to Sierre, several times a year. On the mountain pastures, there were often two mules used to transport timber and cheese. In summer, when an employee of the pasture came back after a visit to the village, he could get a good rest on the back of the animal that brought him up without going the wrong way, right up to the *tsigière* (pasture chalet). Since the 1970s, mules have virtually disappeared, replaced by the tractor.

➤ Continue to the chapel to the right of the lane.



Two young people of the village at the pasture of Moiry, in the 1950s



Mule stable today

6. Chapel of Notre-Dame-des neiges



Notre-Dame-des-Neiges
Chapel today



Inside the chapel

This chapel, dedicated to the patron saint of the village, Notre Dame des Neiges, was built in four years, from 1755 to 1759.

The village of Mayoux had significantly expanded, and its inhabitants decided to build a chapel. The bishop granted them this favour *“for the greater glory of God and his saints, under the following conditions: 1. That it would function for three permanent masses 2. That each permanent mass should have 25 books 3. That the town be committed to the maintenance of its funding 4. That the priest be the one to celebrate mass 5. That the mass not be given during the services of the parish. ”*

In 1786, the priest Pierre-Etienne Mabillard offered the chapel Stations of the Cross crafted by the Capuchins of Sion. In the archives of the “Société du village” from 1806 to 1832, many scrolls mention the chapel and its patron saint. A document describes the rules set in 1837, to celebrate Notre-Dame-des-Neiges (see annex).

On the Baroque altar there are statues of Saint-Paul, Saint-Pierre, Saint-Anne, Saint-Antoine, a bishop and of Notre Dame des Neiges. On the façade, at the top of the front door, to the left of the cross with Christ, one sees the dates 1759-1936-1973.

In the 1950s, the chapel was often too small to accommodate all the villagers. After the services, the villagers found themselves in the square outside the chapel to discuss family, vineyards, cattle, the pasture, their joys and sorrows. On Saturday night, after the rosary, the young people of Mayoux went to see their counterparts from Pinsec to dance on the Crettaz bridge, to the sound of music, until dawn.

“The inhabitants of the village gathered in the square in front of the chapel to discuss family, vineyards, cattle, the pasture, their joys and sorrows.”

For over two centuries, the chapel remained in its original state. In 1949, the walls were plastered and in 1960, light was installed. Major repairs were undertaken in 1973, in 1979 and in the years 1997-2000. The statues in the choir were restored and a wrought iron gate was put in place in order to prevent theft.

➤ Take the path that goes down in front of the chapel to reach the next location, the village wine cellar, at the foot of the large three-story house.

7. Village Wine Cellar



House and wine cellar today

Bypassing this building, on the first level of the east side, one can see two cellar doors. The right cellar belongs to the "Société du village" which has owned a vineyard near Noës / Sierre since 1880. The wine cellar was bought in 1941 and enlarged in 1990.

The work in the vineyard was performed as a chore by members of the "Société du village", who were summoned in turn. Similarly for the various maintenance jobs of the premises of the

"Société", which were carried out under the responsibility of the committee members.

The members of the "Société" met in a friendly atmosphere after a day at work or during a party. The wine came from the good old wooden barrel, which was filled every year in March, after fermentation in Sierre. Formerly, each family had a wine cellar and almost all had a barrel from which the wine was drawn to be tasted with old cheese. It is here that the social life of the village was organized and the evenings of yesteryear began.

➤ Go back to the chapel and follow the lane to the left, to the granary.

8. Grenier / Granary



Granary on pilotis today



Plandissoz granary today

The granary is in principle located close to the houses. It was considered the pantry of the time. All food supplies were stored there, namely meat, flour, corn, sugar and sixty to eighty rye breads that were placed on racks.

A cousin of the *raccard* it was raised and laid on large round stones, so that the mice could not gain access. The beams were tightly laid and interlocked to prevent flies, attracted by the meat, from getting inside.

The buildings that we admire today date from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Note the *grenier* on the right of the Plandissoz path.

➤ Return to the main street. The next location is the first building on the right.

9. Old school and Communal House



Old school and Communal house, today

Formerly, this building in the heart of the village was home to the school. On the façade, we read : "School House 1898" (Maison d'école 1898). After welcoming the students of Pinsec in 1965, the Mayoux school closed in 1970.

Children from Mayoux and Pinsec were schooled for three years in the old school of Vissoie before entering the Anniviers School Centre in 1973.

The school in Mayoux was then transformed into the communal house of the old town of Saint-Jean. In 1927, the Bourgeoisie had sold the building to the town for about CHF 700.-. It is here

that local elections, votes and meetings of councillors and citizens took place. Today this building is used by employees of the "Commune d'Anniviers", in particular, by the person in charge of the cadastre.

In the 1950s, school began on November 2 and ended on May 3. School holidays did not exist, so the number of school days was almost the same as today.

As of the first year, students got grades, the best being 1. The grade book contained grades for moral standing, effort or behaviour (accuracy, order and cleanliness, courtesy, discipline, application) and intellectual effort as well as for, for the main subjects (grammar and spelling, writing and calculations). At the age of 15, an exam called "emancipation", imposed four areas of study : reading and reporting; writing and spelling; oral and written calculation; history and geography. The best score was 4 and a grade of 8.5 was not necessary in order to be "emancipated".

"In 1927, the bourgeoisie had sold the building to the town for about CHF 700.-. "

In Mayoux, there were between 20 and 30 students aged 7 to 15. During the summer, the teacher worked as a clerk for construction sites, while the children helped their parents with the agricultural work.

➤ Continue and turn to the right at the house. Go to the centre of the square, where you can observe the house located above.

10. Farmhouse



Farmhouse today

The old farmhouse, located above the square consists of three floors where a family lived on each floor.

The square was created by the former municipality of Saint-Jean to host festivals and plays.

Parents and children slept in the same room in two big beds, with berths that were pulled out for the night. Sometimes more than ten people would sleep in the same room. Some apartments had a small extra room, but this was rare.

Clothes were stored in trunks. Crucifixes outnumbered cabinets. The kitchen was heated by a fireplace where a pot hung from a rack. A dresser, a table and two benches were the handcrafted furniture in the room. The toilets were outdoors.

The families lived off the land. Breakfast consisted of bread, cheese and milk. At dinner, people often ate corn or potatoes, sometimes pasta or *bouilli*. (boiled food) In the evening vegetable or barley soup was the usual fare. When the mother made a fruit tart, it was a day of celebration. The few stores that existed at the time were rarely frequented because of a lack of money.



Place de fête, today

At the foot of the house, to the left is an old stable once used to keep a pig. Each family had one, kept close to the dwelling. Its meat was very valuable basic family food.

➤ Return to the main street to the house opposite, on the left.

11. House with painted decor

This house has several points of interest : an inscription and painted decorations.

On the west side of the house, a stone slab has an inscription signifying "Jesus Saviour of men, Mary. The single, honest and virtuous Charles Massy had this building made, May 16, 1662 ". This slab could have belonged to an older building and have been placed on this wall during the construction of the house.



Cellar door with painted decorations and inscriptions

Go around the building to admire the north, east and south facades, with their interesting painted decorations : chains in the angles and door frames. The decorations were painted by Luc Crettaz in 1964, probably after an old existing model.

Under the ridge beam of the house the date 1863, is inscribed.

➤ Continue on to the main road.



Façade with painted decorations, today

12. Café-restaurant



Mayoux café-restaurant today

For a small village like Mayoux, a cafe-restaurant is a very important place, directly linked to the memory of its inhabitants.

It was in the 1960s when the first radio and television stations became accessible, that a couple from the village decided to build the café La Puchotaz, named after the waterfall, situated above the village. The building also included two apartments and a small grocery store that had to be closed, following the arrival of supermarkets.

The café has survived thanks to courageous people who bought and renovated the building, about ten years ago, creating La Puchotaz SA with shareholders from the valley and beyond. Above the café, in addition to an apartment for the tenants, twenty-nine tourist beds have been created.



Mayoux and the café, left

This public place has brought together not only villagers, but also tourists and Anniviards who go to the town office for land registration and other services.

A few meters from this building to the south, to the right of the stream, one can see a large stone that was brought down this far by the avalanche in 1817.

> To reach the next location, continue on your right until the road turns right. The first building on the left is the bread room.

13. Old Bread Room

The bread room was situated on the upper level of this building. On the ground floor, there was a slaughterhouse. Like each village in Anniviers, Mayoux had its own bread room.

In 1924 the villagers, gathered in assembly, took the decision to build a house for bread, a slaughterhouse, which also served as a dairy, and a communal bread oven. The land was bought in 1925, but it was only in 1935 that the building could be built.



Current building of the former house of bread

The oven that was demolished in 1955 during the expansion of the Vissoie-Grimentz road, was about fifty meters from the building. Since then, bread has not been made in Mayoux. The area of the slaughterhouse was transformed into collective freezers, which operated for about fifteen years.

In 1976, the "Société du village" sold the building to the "Société de la chapelle" of the chapel. In 1978, the roof was redone and in 1981, the squares around it were paved. In 1985, a small shelter for a boiler used to manufacture cheese was built nearby. In 2010, the old house of bread was transformed into the village hall after extensive transformation.



Old oven, demolished in about 1940

"The oven was destroyed in 1955 during the expansion of the Vissoie-Grimentz road".

Suggested Visits

Oratory of Puchotaz

➤ The oratory of Puchotaz is located above the village, at the foot of the waterfall of the same name, on the left of the trail that leads to the mayens of Mayoux, Pinsec and the Orzival mountain pastures.

The oratory was built in 1842, twenty-five years after the avalanche that destroyed part of the village. In 1943 it was renovated. A wrought iron gate was added to protect the statues of the Holy Family, two crucifixes, "Notre Dame de Fatima", a dove and two angels. In 1981, the "Société" completed a new renovation.

Grand Bisse de Saint-Jean

➤ About 80 meters below the oratory of Puchotaz, the Grand Bisse de Saint-Jean flows into the stream of Mayoux.

The Grand Bisse, that takes its source in the Marais rapids, beneath Grimentz, runs along the left bank of the valley for a distance of about 4 km.

Until the 1950s, the Bisse was used to irrigate the fields. A document of the *consortage* of the Bisse, which dates from 1821, lays down very precise rules for the use of water for irrigation. Since the summer 2013, the Grand Bisse has become a magnificent hiking destination, thanks to the work of the "Société de développement" of Grimentz-St-Jean, the former municipalities of Grimentz and Saint-Jean, and the town of Anniviers.

Prarion Mill

➤ The mill is located to the right of the path of Les Frasses/Saint-Jean, near the covered structure owned by the « Société de développement de Grimentz-Saint-Jean ».

The mill was bought by the Bourgeoisie of Saint-Jean in 1780. Previously, the mill was located along the main road from Mayoux to Vissoie, close to the present power plant. It was moved to Prarion in 1991 and inaugurated in 1992.

The mill was used to grind grain. The millstone ground the rye. The flour thus obtained was used to make rye bread, a basic food for local families.

An area devoted to agrotourism will be located in this region. It will be dedicated to the presentation and preservation of native Alpine species that are threatened with extinction.

Annex

Location 6 Chapel of Notre-Dame-des-Neiges

"In the year one thousand eight hundred thirty-seven, June 15, before me as undersigned notary, and in the presence of witnesses named below, M Chrétien Rion, Vice-President of the noble town of Saint-Jean and Patron of the Chapel of Maïeur, Baptiste Melly from Grimetz, prosecutor, and all the members of the said chapel are gathered for the purpose of solemnly celebrating the day, the great day especially devoted to their kind and charitable Patron Saint, Notre-Dame-des-Neiges, so that she will, by her powerful intercession with God, keep away from the village of Mayeur all misfortunes and calamities, divert the disastrous avalanches that have engulfed the village in recent years, preserve it from any fire and other punishments reserved to the inscrutable decrees of the great God of Kindness and mercy.

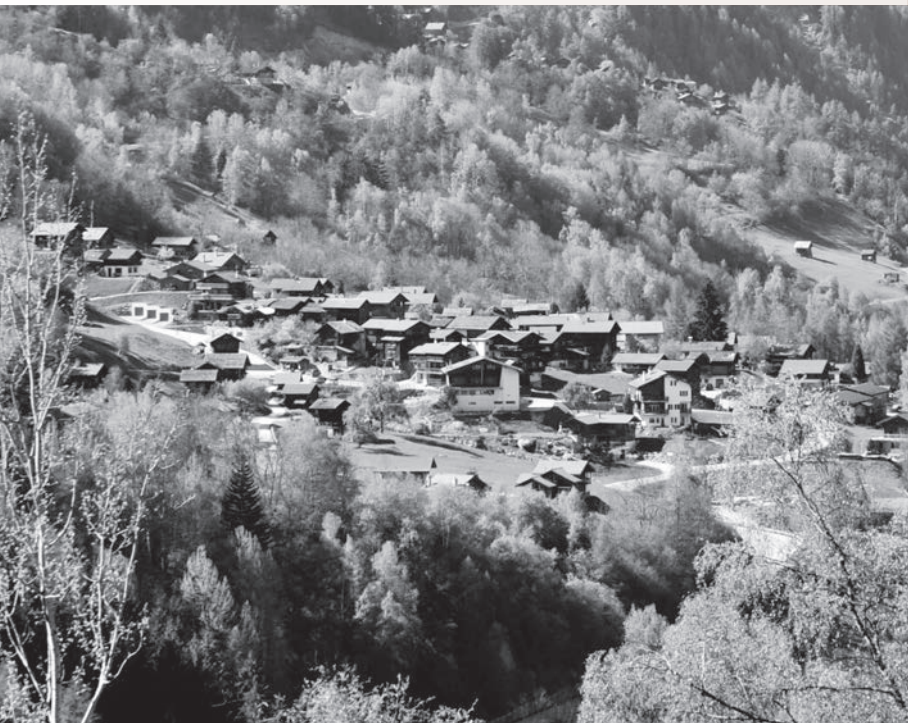
Stipulated : On the day of the patron, no one shall carry out menial works on the territory of Mayeur, which runs from the stream of Pinsec to that of Le Tronc; it is however allowed to water as it is during working days, and to collect cut hay, when due to bad weather three days have passed without being able to remove it. 2. Every villager is required to attend that day the Divine Office and also spend the day in the most holy way possible.. 3. Those who are associated and not villagers, one per household must abstain from servile works, mainly the head of family. 4. Any infraction is liable to a fine of a pound of candles in favour of the chapel. The prosecutor is obliged to continue in September. The associates ardently wish for these rules to be regularly observed by their descendants and continued in the most distant posterity.

Done and approved in Mayeur in the room of Michel Solioz former prosecutor of the church and read to the parties in the presence of Messrs Augustin and François Solioz, and the cited witnesses. In faith of which, I sign myself with my own hand. Jos. Rouaz, public Notary. "

Rules of the chapel of Mayeur, in 1837.



Agnes Revey, first communion in 1944



Present view of Mayoux

Cover photo : Mayoux, old postcard

Back cover photo: Crézence and Ida Zufferey in front of the Mayoux Chapel towards 1950-1956

Texts

Charly Abbé.

Bibliography

René Zufferey « Des communiens aux bourgeois », Mayoux, 2000.
www.notrehistoire.ch/article/view/145/; Gaëtan Cassina. *Chapelle Notre-Dame-des-Neiges*. Paroisses vivantes, Sierre-Anniviers, 1995.

Images and photos

Albums of Vital Monnet and Charly Abbé ; Collections of old postcards of Jean-Marc Caloz, Marco Epiney ; album family of Dominique Epiney Regolatti ; old postcard on back cover Editions Perrochet SA ; www.notrehistoire.ch – Patrick Zufferey ; ISOS (Inventaire des sites construits à protéger en Suisse) ; archives E. Crettaz-Stürzel, Zinal, reproductions of the Maison Rurale Valaisanne, Brigue/Sion ; recent photos by Adriana Tenda Claude.

Religious Heritage

Elisabeth Crettaz-Stürzel, art historian.

Built Heritage

Norbert Jungsten, former director of MHV (Historical Monuments of Valais).

Translation

Alexandra and Philip Jodidio.

Concept and coordination

Anniviers Tourism/Adriana Tenda Claude and Simon Wiget.

The Historical Paths are based on written and oral information. We welcome any comments or suggestions.

Contact

Anniviers Tourisme +41 (0)27 476 16 00 – info@anniviers.ch – www.anniviers.ch

The 14 Historical Paths are available at the Tourist Offices and Editions Monographic. They are grouped together in a book titled « Parcours historiques d'Anniviers »

Sponsors:



