

Mennonite Immigration from Jeziorka, West Prussia to Volhynia, Russia in 1803 and 1804

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Several years ago Adalbert Goertz posted “From Jeziorka, Prussia to Russia in 1804”(1). However, none of the families listed by Goertz can be found in the various immigration lists available in the books by Peter Rempel (2) or B. H. Unruh (3). It turns out that these families did not immigrate to the Molotschna or Chortitza colonies in South Russia, as one might assume. Rather, they moved to the Mennonite settlement in the Russian province of Volhynia. Since that time I have found two further lists of Jeziorka Mennonites applying for permission to immigrate to “Russland”, who I have identified as Volhynian immigrants.

A comparison of the families listed below with the 1789 list of Mennonite landowners in Jeziorka (1) indicate that at least 12 of the 20 Mennonite landowners in Jeziorka left for Volhynia in a space of less than 2 years. During the period 1816 to 1822 essentially the entire Mennonite population of Jeziorka moved to either the Molotschna colony (the majority) or Volhynia. Of the 23 landowners listed in 1823 only one (Peter Janz) appears to be Mennonite (4). The three groups took with them a total of 109 souls. This was well over one half of the total population of the village of Jeziorka. For more information on Jeziorka see GAMEO (5).

All of the families listed below can be found in the Przechowka Old-Flemish Mennonite church records (6). In all cases the church record entries for these families stop before 1804. These families are easily found in the GRANDMA database (7) and their numbers in that database are not provided below. The GM database does show that some of these people were recorded as living in Volhynia. Unfortunately very few records from the Volhynian Mennonites are available (8). The majority of the Volhynian Mennonites immigrated to Kansas and Nebraska in the 1870s and 1880s. See the article in GAMEO for more information on this group (9).

The lists below only roughly follow the format of the original documents. It is important to note here that additional information on each family (such as how much land they owned) can be found in the originals. The “original” documents were actually hand-written copies sent to Berlin. The whereabouts of the true originals, which would include the signatures of those who knew how to sign, is unknown.

First group of 1 August 1803:

1. Peter Richert	43
Eva Retzlaff	30
Children:	
Anna	15
Benjamin	9
2. Peter Schmidt	39
Anna Koehn	36
Children:	
Maria	11
Helena	9
Sara	6 weeks
3. Jacob Koehn	33
Eva Richert	19
Son:	
Andreas	1 ½
4. Peter Janz	54
Eva Richert	--
Children:	
Peter	15
Johann	10
Tobias	4

[total number: 18]

Source: Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin, Germany. II. Hauptabteilung: General-Direktorium, Abt. 9 Westpreussen und Netzedistrikt, Materien. Tit. 109 ad Nr.1,vol.2 and Nr.17 (p.55-57,126:Jeziorka emigrants,LDS Film #1056559,item 3).

Second group of 15 Sep 1803:

1. Peter Ratzlaff	39
Anna Schmidt	41
Children:	
Anna	15
Andreas	12
Maria	9

2. Andreas Koehn*	39
Anna Ratzlaff	41
Children:	
David	17
Jacob	15
Berend	11
Anna	23
Sara	21
Maria	13
Ewa	8

Parents:	
Andreas Koehn*	60
Anna Buller	70

3. Jacob Schmidt	33
Maria Schmidt	37
Children:	
Anna	9
Peter	6
Jacob	2

4. Andreas Schmidt	26
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5. Samuel Schmidt	24
Engaged to be married to:	
Maria Koehn	24

6. Peter Buller	31
Anna Ratzlaff	30
Children:	
Ewa	6
Anna	5
Peter	4
Maria	1

7. George Buller	49
Maria Koehn	49
Children:	

Jacob	18
David	15
Maria	12
Anna	10

8. Jacob Foth	44
Maria Nachtigal	42
Children:	
Johann	15
Ewa	9

[total number 40]

Source: Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin, Germany. II. Hauptabteilung: General-Directorium, Abt. 7B, file 4176.

Third group of 18 February 1804:

1. Heinrich Ratzlaff	36
Brother:	
Andreas Ratzlaff	29

Father [of Heinrich and Andreas]:	
Behrendt Ratzlaff	87**
Mother:	
Anna Buller	68

Sister:	
Elisabeth Ratzlaff	24

Niece "Schwestertochter":	
Anna Schmidt	16

Aunt "Vaterschwester":	
Catharina widow Becker	72
her daughter:	
Sara	32
surviving child of her daughter "verstorbenen Tochter kind":	
Anna Wedel	17

2. Heinrich Schmidt	28
Eva Nachtigal	37
Children:	
Sara	2
Andreas	$\frac{3}{4}$
Mother-in-law:	
Sara widow Nachtigal	
born Schmidt	64
her son	
Johann Nachtigal	24
3. Jacob Becker***	35
Anna Nachtigal	36
Children:	
Jacob	10
Peter	8 $\frac{1}{2}$
Johann	7
Behrend	5
Maria	4
Anna	2
Andreas	$\frac{1}{4}$
4. Peter Becker***	52
Sara Nachtigal	55
Children:	
Anna	21
Sara	18
Behrend	14
Peter	11
Cousin "Vaters Brudersohn":	
Peter Becker	32
5. Tobias Janz	32
Catharina	26
Father:	
Johann Janz	60
Mother:	
Maria b. Voth	62

Sister:	
Anna Janz	28
6. Peter Ratzlaff	34
Anna Schmidt	34
Children:	
Peter	7
Heinrich	1
7. Cornelius Janz	36
Step-mother:	
Catharina b. Ratzlaff	54
Her children [Janz]:	
Anna	26
Maria	23
Heinrich	21
Tobias	21
Andreas	17
Eva	13
Sara	11
David	9

[total number: 51]

The document states that this group was planning to travel to Volhynia.

Source: Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin, Germany. II. Hauptabteilung: General-Directorium, Abt. 7B, file 4176.

* The original incorrectly gives the surname as Krahn.

** The original incorrectly gives his age as 57.

*** The original spelling is Baecker.

References:

- (1) <http://www.mennonitegenealogy.com/russia/jez.htm>
- (2) Peter Rempel, *Mennonite Migrations to Russia, 1788–1828* (Winnipeg, 2000).
- (3) Benjamin H. Unruh, *Die niederländisch-niederdeutschen Hintergründe der Mennonitischen Ostwanderung im 16. 18. und 19. Jahrhundert* (Karlsruhe, 1955).
- (4) Some property records going back to the 1790s exist for Jeziorka in the Bydgoszcz archives in Poland. These files are found in Fond1881.
- (5) See GAMEO article: [http://gameo.org/index.php?title=Jeziorka_\(Kuyavian-Pomeranian_Voivodeship,_Poland\)](http://gameo.org/index.php?title=Jeziorka_(Kuyavian-Pomeranian_Voivodeship,_Poland))
- (6) For scans of the original church records see: http://mla.bethelks.edu/metadata/cong_15.php
- (7) The GRANDMA database (Genealogical Registry and Database of Mennonite Ancestry) California Mennonite Historical Society (CMHS) <http://www.grandmaonline.org>.
- (8) See: <http://www.mennonitegenealogy.com/russia/>
- (9) See GAMEO articles on Volhynia [http://gameo.org/index.php?title=Volhynia_\(Ukraine\)](http://gameo.org/index.php?title=Volhynia_(Ukraine)) and Karolswalde [http://gameo.org/index.php?title=Karolswalde_\(Rivne_Oblast,_Ukraine\)](http://gameo.org/index.php?title=Karolswalde_(Rivne_Oblast,_Ukraine))