

Prussia to Russia Inheritance Documents: 1821

**Odessa, Ukraine, State Archives
Fond 6 Opis 1 Delo 1453**

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One of the biggest hurdles in tracing Low-German Mennonite ancestry back through Russia is making a connection to Prussian Mennonites. Emigration and immigration records are very helpful in that the age and place of origin are often given. The Odessa state archives in Ukraine has a large collection of records of the Guardianship Committee for Foreign Settlers (referred to below as the Welfare Committee). This collection has several significant files on Russian settlers who inherited funds from deceased relatives in German territories. Many Mennonite inheritance documents are buried in these files. The following is an example of an inheritance document which was written entirely in Russian. The translation of these records was funded by Mennonite Genealogy Inc. [MGI: Mennonite Genealogy, Inc.](#) .

The proper names have been altered so that they conform to standard names recognized by most Mennonite genealogists. Surnames are shown in bold. Our comments are in square brackets.

Numbers in square brackets are from the GRanDMA database.

West Prussian inheritance records can be found here: [West Prussian Property Records from Polish Archives](#)

A guide to most of the Prussia-to-Russia inheritance documents can be found here: [Prussia to Russia Mennonite Inheritance Documents.pdf](#) .

October 29th, 1821

#83

Case File

Regarding Ekaterinoslav Office on Behalf of Foreign Settlers' Report on Inheritance that
Belongs to Underage Children of Mennonite [Franz] **Cornelius**

14 pages

October 29th, 1821

#1684

Ministry of Internal Affairs

Ekaterinoslav Office of Foreign Settlers

Desk 2

[illegible] October 1821

#4018

Regarding the Inheritance that Belongs to the Children of Mennonite [Franz] **Cornelius**

to the Committee on Behalf of Foreign Settlers in the South of Russia

Molochansk Mennonite District Branch is reporting to the Office that in 18[1]9 Rosenort Colony Mennonites Jacob **Wiens** and Jacob **Friesen**, wardens of Franz **Cornelius's** [#52565] underage children, sent to Martin **Klassen** and Jacob **Hamm**, settlers living beyond the border of Elbing area, in Neustaedterwald, an authorization to receive the inheritance that was left to said children by their mother Maria **Cornelius**, née **Sawatzky** [#44140] However, thus authorized Martin **Klassen** has notified these wardens that a complication occurred when receiving this inheritance as the Royal Court in Elbing demands from him proof that the appointment of the aforementioned wardens was confirmed by a court, and furthermore the wardens must provide a document expressing the Office's assent to the reception of this inheritance. Therefore, the branch asks the Office to issue appropriate orders.

As the wardens of Mennonite Kornelius's children, **Wiens** and **Friesen**, are chosen by the local Mennonite District Branch based on the Instructions on the Internal Governance of the Colonies, Article 111 Section 29, and the authorization they sent regarding the inheritance of the orphans in their care, according to the note [presented with] the case, was indeed presented through the aforementioned branch to this Office, and it was properly confirmed, which demonstrates, similarly to the aforementioned section, the Office's assent to the request made by Mennonites Wiens and Friesen, Ekaterinoslav Office of Foreign Settlers humbly requests that the Committee on Behalf of Colonists in the South of Russia insists that the Prussian Government without fail remedies the orphans. Furthermore, if the Government wishes to have further confidence that this money will be delivered to those who are lawfully entitled to it, the money can be sent directly to the Office. The Office [asks the Committee] for appropriate orders regarding this.

Junior Member [signature]

Junior Member [signature]

Junior Member [signature]

Decision: Present the report sent by the Ekaterinoslav Office to His Excellency Director of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and ask Him to contact appropriate persons regarding sending to the Committee the inheritance that belongs to the underage children of colonist Franz **Cornelius**, which inheritance remains abroad, so it can be delivered where it belongs, to the wardens of said underage heirs. Inform the Ekaterinoslav Office of this decision by the Committee.

November 16th, 1821

Duke Dolgoruk[ov]

#1342

November 23rd, 1821

2nd Division

Kishinev

On the inheritance of Colonist Kornelius's underage children

to His Excellency Director of the Ministry of Internal Affairs

Ekaterinoslav Office of Foreign Settlers has notified this Committee that in 1819 Rozenort colony Mennonites Jacob **Wiens** and Jacob **Friesen**, wardens of Frantz **Cornelius's** underage children, sent settlers Martin **Klassen** and Jacob **Hamm**, who live in Neustaedterwald, beyond the border of Elbing area, an authorization to receive the inheritance owed to said children, left to them after the death of their mother, Mariya Kornelius, née Savatskaya, and that thus authorized Martin **Klassen** notified these wardens that a complication occurred when trying to receive this inheritance, as the Royal Court in Elbing demands from him proof that the appointment of the aforementioned wardens is confirmed by a court, and demands from them documents proving both their right to receive the aforementioned property and the assent of the office in whose jurisdiction they reside to their appointment as wardens. In regards to this, the Office explains that the wardens of these underage children were chosen by the Mennonite District Branch Office based on the Instructions on the Internal Governance of the Colonies, Article 111 Section 29, and the authorization [papers] that they sent abroad were indeed presented through the aforementioned Branch to the Office, which properly approved it, and requests that the Prussian Government be contacted regarding satisfying the orphans' right to their inheritance.

The Committee on Behalf of Col. in the S. of Russia presents these circumstances to Your Excellency's consideration and has the honour to humbly ask that You submit an appropriate request regarding the inheritance belonging to the underage children of Colonist Frants Kornelius, which now remains abroad, so that it is sent over, and should the Prussian Government desire further assurance that the inheritance will be delivered to those, who are legally entitled to it, it can directly send it to this Committee.

#1343

November 23rd, 1821

2nd Division

Kishinev

Response to #4018

to the Ekaterinoslav Office

Having considered your Office's relation concerning the inheritance that belongs to Colonist Franz **Cornelius**'s underage children, the Committee on Behalf [of Foreign Settlers] has presented the circumstances to His Excellency Director of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and asked His Excellency to contact an appropriate person regarding sending over the inheritance that belongs to the underage children of Colonist Franz **Cornelius** and is currently abroad, so that it can be delivered where it belongs, to the wardens of said heirs.

Of this [the Committee] notifies the Ekaterinoslav Office.

received[?] October 9th, 18[22]

Ministry of Internal Affairs

Department of State Property and Public Buildings

Division 1

Desk 2

St. Petersburg

September 29th, 1822

#252

On Delivering the Certificate for Receiving the Inheritance of Kornelius's Children

To the Committee on Behalf of the Colonists in the South of Russia

As presented by the Committee on Behalf [of the Colonists in the South of Russia] in the November 23rd, 1821 relation, #1342, regarding assistance in having the underage children of Colonist Franz **Cornelius** receive their inheritance that is left to them in Prussia after the death of their mother Maria **Cornelius**, née **Sawatzky**, the circumstances were related by His Excellency Director of the Ministry of Internal Affairs to His Excellency Director of the Ministry of External Affairs.

Now, Privy Councilor Divov has delivered to the Ministry a copy of a note that he has received in relation to this case from the Prussian Ministry, where it demands, in accordance with Prussian laws, that the wardens of those children present a special Certificate received from the Orphans' Court that has jurisdiction over them, which would state that they have the right to receive the aforementioned inheritance and sign a receipt proving that it had been handed over, or at least provide a proper certificate stating that in accordance with Russian laws wardens can accept inheritance owed to persons in their care without any special authorization by an Orphans' Court.

Relaying this to the Committee on Behalf [of the Colonists in the South of Russia], the Department of State Property and Public Buildings attaches a copy of the note received from the Prussian Ministry, so that the Committee could deliver to this Department the required certificate, which could then be sent to His Excellency Director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Director Stepan D[...?]

Head of Division K[...?] K[...?]

[the forwarded Note is written in French. This note provides no additional information]

regarding #1985

Decision: Contact the Department of State Property and Public Buildings, asking to notify Privy Councilor Divov for the assurance of the Prussian Ministry that as there are no Orphans' Courts in the colonies under the jurisdiction of the Committee, but the Offices of Foreign Settlers are established on His Imperial Majesty's orders, as per the Instruction royally confirmed on June 26th, 1800, to administrate all foreigner colonies entrusted to them, [including] also taking care of orphans' matters, and thus on the grounds of the aforementioned Instruction, Rosenort Colony Mennonites Jacob **Wiens** and Jacob **Friesen** are chosen as the wardens of Kornelius's underage children, and the authorization documents for the reception of the underage children's inheritance they sent to the Kingdom of Prussia, are confirmed by the Office, as explained in the Committee's report to His Excellency Director of the Ministry of Internal Affairs from November 22nd, 1821, #1342. Thus, we ask for the submission of an appropriate request for the inheritance of Kornelius's children to be found and sent to this Committee, so that it can be delivered to the aforementioned Office and handed over to the wardens of Kornelius's children, where it belongs.

[Oct] 11th, 182[2]

#1674

November 18th, 1822

2nd Division

Response to #252

A certificate from an Orphans' Court that the wardens of Colonist Kornelius's underage children have the right to accept the inheritance of the aforementioned orphans or a certificate [illegible] that according to Russian procedures they [can do this] without special authorization by an Orphans' Court [illegible]

To the Department of State Property and Public Buildings

In response to the September 29th report from the Department of State Property and Public Buildings regarding [the certificate] that the Prussian Ministry demands through Privy Councilor Divov, the Committee on Behalf [of the Colonists in the South of Russia] humbly asks the Department to notify Privy Councilor Divov for the satisfaction of the Prussian Ministry that as there are no Orphans' Courts in the colonies under the jurisdiction of the Committee, but the Offices of Foreign Settlers are established on His Imperial Majesty's orders, as per the Instruction royally confirmed on June 26th, 1800, to administrate all foreigner colonies entrusted to them, [including] also taking care of orphans' matters, and thus on the grounds of the aforementioned Instruction, Rosenort Colony Mennonites Jacob **Wiens** and Jacob **Friesen** are chosen as the wardens of Cornelius's underage children, and the authorization documents for the reception of the underage children's inheritance they sent to the Kingdom of Prussia, are confirmed by the Office, as explained in the Committee's report to His Excellency Director of the Ministry of Internal Affairs from November 22nd, 1821, #1342. Thus, we ask for the submission of an appropriate request for the inheritance of Kornelius's children to be found and sent to this Committee, so that it can be delivered to the aforementioned Office and handed over to the wardens of Kornelius's children, where it belongs.

Page created on 20 September 2026
Formatting by Richard D. Thiessen

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