

Prussia-to-Russia Inheritance Documents: 1836

Odessa, Ukraine, State Archives
Fond 6 Opis 1 Delo 4128

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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 inheritance documents which were written entirely in Russian.

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.

Many of these people are not obviously identifiable in the GRanDMA database. I [GP] have added a few numbers from the database.

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

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

Pages 1-2

Ministry of Internal Affairs.

From the overseer of the colonies of the 2nd district of Pelech. 31 December 1835. No 2174. As Appendix 4 files on the estates of Mennonites from abroad.

To the Welfare Committee for Foreign Settlers in Southern Russia.

Four files sent to me by the administration of the Mennonite circle Molochna concerning the inheritance of various Mennonites abroad, namely:

1. Authorization of the widow Agnetha **Braun**, née **Wiebe**, living in the Mennonite village of Chortitza, district of Chortitza, and her guardian: Johann **Mierau**, Mennonite from the district of Molotschna, village of Petershagen, of Jacob **Wiebe**,

Mennonite from the village of Ladekop, as well as the guardian of the minor Dirk **Wiebe**: Johann **Dyck** and Peter **Loewen**, Mennonites from the Ladekop village, together with the certificate of inheritance from abroad issued by the orphan commissioners Johannes **Martens** and Jacob **Thiessen** to the said Agnetha **Braun**, Jacob **Wiebe** and the young Dirk **Wiebe**, with the power of attorney of the said guardians Dick and Löwen this inheritance to Peter **Janzen**, inhabitant of the village of Heubuden, District of Marienburg, West Prussia.

2. Empowerment of Peter **Janzen**, Mennonite from Schönhorst, Chortitza village and Katharina **Klippenstein**, b. **Enz**, [#497572] and her husband Johann **Klippenstein**, Royal Prussian subjects, living in Sparrau, Chortitza village, who authorize Gerhard **Neufeld** in Klein-Lesewitzerfeld, district of Marienburg, and Peter **Wiens** in Rosenort, district of Elbing, West Prussia, to receive their inheritance from abroad.

3. Authorization of the Mennonites of the village of Neukirch Anna **Boldt**, née **Thimm**, [#101822] and her husband Dirk **Boldt**, regarding their inheritance from abroad, which they authorize the Isbrand Wiens from Zeyersvorderkampen, [#1232622] district of Elbing, to receive.

At the same time, I earnestly request the Welfare Committee for Foreign Settlers in Southern Russia to send the aforementioned authorizations to the addressees abroad after examination, whereby I report that the Mennonites mentioned would like the three inheritances mentioned to be given to them by one of the trustworthy Mennonites in Prussia, who is traveling from there to Russia, or by a Molotschna Mennonite who is currently in Prussia, be delivered.

Overseer of the colonies of the 2nd district, Pelech.

[On pages 3-5, the 3 above-mentioned files on the heritage of Mennonites are repeated to the Minister of the Interior. (WF)]

Pages 6-7

Ministry of Internal Affairs. No. 709.

From the overseer of the colonies of the 2nd district of Pelech. 25 January 1836. No 90th Village Molotschna. As Appendix 2 files on the estates of Mennonites from abroad.

To the Welfare Committee for Foreign Settlers in Southern Russia 2 files.

1. Authorization of Jacob **Penner**, Mennonite of the village of Sparrau, to the inheritance that falls to him from abroad, in which he authorizes Simon **Dyck** and Jacob **Gossen** in Zeyersvorderkampen, district of Elbing, West Prussia, to accept it.

2. Authorization of Margaretha **Martens**, née **Dyck**, [#63102] and her husband Jakob **Martens**, Mennonites of the village of Liebenau, to the inheritance that falls to them from abroad, in which they authorize Jakob **Isaak** in Ellerwalde, Elbing district, West Prussia, to accept this inheritance.

At the same time, I earnestly request the Welfare Committee for Foreign Settlers in Southern Russia to send the aforementioned authorizations to the addressees abroad after examination, whereby I report that the Mennonites mentioned would like the two inheritances mentioned to be given to them by one of the trustworthy Mennonites in Prussia, who is traveling from there to Russia, or by a Molotschna Mennonite who is currently in Prussia, be delivered.

Overseer of the colonies of the 2nd district, Pelech.

Pages 8-9

Ministry of Internal Affairs.

From the overseer of the colonies of the 2nd district of Pelech. 8 February 1836. No 170th Village Molotschna. As an attachment files on the estates of Mennonites from abroad.

To the Welfare Committee for Foreign Settlers in Southern Russia 2 files.

Enclosed is a receipt from the Mennonite widow Anna **Reimer**, née **Wiebe**, [#46385] and her guardians Martin **Dirksen** and Abram **Fast** from Sparrau and Elisabeth **Schellenberg**, née **Hamm** [1267765] and her husband Jakob **Schellenberg** from Rosenort, about an inheritance that fell to the aforementioned widow Anna **Reimer** from abroad. In addition, there is a certificate from the orphan commissioners Stefan **Tjart**, Johann **Thiessen**, and Johann **Friesen** stating that Abram **Reimer**, who died in the Sparrau village, left no other heirs, except for his niece, Elisabeth **Schellenberg**, née **Hamm**, who has already been mentioned.

I sincerely request the Committee for the Welfare of Foreign Settlements in Southern Russia to send these documents to the addressees abroad.

Overseer of the colonies of the 2nd district, Pelech.

Pages 10-11

No. 1207, copy. Received on March 3, 1836.

Ministry of Internal Affairs, Department of Economic Affairs, Dept. 1.

February 18, 1836, No. 209.

Enclosed is the sum of money of 550 rub 69 kop, which goes to the Mennonites Kornelsen and Wiens.

To the Committee for the Welfare of Foreign Settlers in Southern Russia.

Hans **Reimer**, a Prussian citizen from Jankendorf, Mennonite, has received a bill of exchange from the bankers Stieglitz and Co. at the Consulate General in Danzig for 556 rubles and 20 kopecks in assignments, which correspond to 180 Prussian thalers and 23 silver groschen, which were to be paid to the following Mennonites of the colonies of Fuerstenwerder and Ladekop in the province of Tauria, Katharina **Kornelsen** and Helena **Wiens**, née **Steingart**, and **Peters**. The Vice-Chancellor

has handed over the 556 roubles and 20 kopecks in assignments to the Minister of the Interior for handing over to the Mennonites mentioned in return for receipt.

Accordingly, the Department of Economy will transfer the said money, which amounts to 550 rubles and 69 kopecks after calculating postal charges, to the Welfare Committee. I humbly request that the department be notified of the receipt of the money and that it be released to the Mennonites of Kornelsen and Wiens in exchange for a receipt, and then that it be sent to the department after it has been duly certified.

The original was signed by the director V. Korneev and the head of the department A. Borodin. Authenticity of the signature.

Pages 12-15

No 1332.

March 6, 1836. 1.

After the death of Susanna Klassen.

To the Acting Accountants of the Pelech Committee and the Municipality ... Co-op.

The money in the amount of 1370 rubles 90 kopecks, which was sent by the Economic Department to the Committee for the Welfare of Foreign Settlers in the decree of February 18 last year under No. 201 as a result of the inheritance for Elisabeth Martin, Margarita Friesen and Katherine **Penner**, née **Braun**, is to be prescribed to the former: the sum is to be entered in the account book as income and expense, and **Koop** is to send this money to the administrator Biller to give it to the said Mennonites in return for receipt.

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Pages 18-20

Ministry of Internal Affairs.

From the overseer of the colonies of the 2nd district of Pelech. 22 February 1836. No 170th village Molotschna. As an attachment the power of attorney of the Mennonite Kreker.

To the Committee for the Assistance of Foreign Settlers of Southern Russia

In the authorization of Heinrich **Kroeker**, Mennonite of the village of Franztal, to the inheritance from abroad, which he hopes to receive from the Russian representation in Danzig, he authorizes Abram **Reimer** from Zeienhof [Tiegenhof] and Johann **Bergen** from Sparrau in the district of Marienburg, West Prussia, to accept this inheritance in order to pass it on to him.

Overseer of the Pelech colonies.

No. 384 of 14 March 1836. To the Welfare Committee for Foreign Settlers.

From the overseer of the colonies of the 2nd district of Pelech.

Regarding the inheritance of the Mennonites Wiens.

In a letter dated February 24 of this year, the Molotschna district administration stated that the Mennonites Jakob and Peter **Wiens** from Rueckenau stated that they had inherited 66 Reichstaler and 20 silver groschen from their father, who had died in Ladekop/Prussia, in April 1834. Jakob Wiens and the guardians of his brother Peter, Abram Ens and Aaron Peters, who were not of age, gave the preachers from Zeiershof/Elbing[?] Franz **Wiens** and Paul **Martens** a power of attorney in which they instructed them to receive the said inheritance in order to deliver it to the heirs on their journey to Russia. However, the plenipotentiaries of Wiens and **Martens** have now declared that the inheritance was paid out to the Russian representation in Danzig a year ago. But Wiens's heirs still haven't seen any money. Due to a shortage of money, the Brothers of Wiens ask that the responsible authorities send them the inheritance to which they are entitled as soon as possible.

Overseer Pelech.

Pages 21-23

No. 2265 of 17 April 1836. To the Minister of the Interior.

From the Welfare Committee for Foreign Settlers of Southern Russia.

Regarding the inheritance of the brothers Wiens.

The Mennonites of the village of Rueckenau, the brothers Jacob and Peter **Wiens**, inherited after the death of their father Jacob **Wiens** from the village of Ladekop, district of Elbing, Kingdom of Prussia, a fortune of 66 Reichsthalers and 20 silver groschen with interest. In April 1834, Franz **Wiens** and Paul **Martens**, residents of the village of Zeyersvorderkampen, received the power of attorney to receive the estate and hand it over to the Wiens. They have now informed their proxies that the money was collected more than a year ago and delivered to the Russian Consulate General in Danzig. The Committee for the Care of the Foreign Colonists of the South of Russia asks you, Your Excellency most humbly, to facilitate the payment of the inheritance due to the Wiens's.

Authorized representative: Signature

Pages 24-25

No. 391 of 14 March 1836.

From the overseer Pelech. Kolonie Molotschna.

Attached are two documents on the inheritance of Mennonites.

To the Committee on the Welfare of Foreign Settlers of Southern Russia.

Enclosed are the powers of attorney of the Mennonites: 1. Widow Helena **Banmann**, née **Ewert**, [#285314] represented by her guardian Kornelius **Krause** from

Krosweide/Chortitza, 2. Agnetha **Janzen**, née **Ewert**, [#61133] represented by her husband Dirk **Janzen** from Friedrichsdorf/Molotschna, 3. Almost represented by her husband Peter **Kroeker** from Konteniusweide [probably Konteniusfeld]] and 4th siblings Paul, Katerina and Jakob **Wiebe**, represented by their guardians Kornelius and Peter **Harder** from Friedensdorf, together with 5th the testimony of the orphan commissioners Johann **Friesen**, Stefan **Tjart** and Johann **Thiessen**, to the inheritance that the said Mennonites were to receive from abroad. The aforementioned heirs instruct Heinrich **Schmidt** from Schweingrube and Heinrich **Holzrichter** from Rehhof, district of Stuhm/West Prussia, through the Welfare Committee, to receive the inheritance and to send it along on occasion by reliable Mennonites who travel from Prussia to Russia. I ask you to send the powers of attorney and the certificate to the relevant authorities abroad.

Overseer of the colonies of the 2nd district of Pelech.

Pages 26-28

No. 344 of March 11, 1836. To the Committee on the Welfare of Foreign Settlers of Southern Russia.

From the Department of Economic Affairs.

On the questioning under oath of the Mennonite **Dyck**.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor declares that, according to the letter of the Prussian envoy Liebermann, who is in Petersburg, in accordance with the decision of the Marienwerder Regional Court on the inheritance of Peter **Lepp** and the widow Anna **Klassen**, née **Wiens** from Klemmendorf/West Prussia, a declaration is to be taken under oath by the co-heir Peter **Dyck** from Elisabeththal, Molotschna. The Mennonite Dyck is to comment on the questions identified in Liebermann's letter. Dyck's statements are then to be sent to the Prussian ambassador with certification. Enclosed is also the above-mentioned decision of the Marienwerder Regional Court.

The Department of Economic Affairs earnestly requests the Welfare Committee to accept the corresponding statement for the Vice-Chancellor and to report to the Department on it.

Director: Signature

Pages 29 - 30

No. 328 of 8 July 1836.

To the Committee on the Welfare of Foreign Settlers of Southern Russia.

From the overseer of the colonies of the 1st district. Village Josephtal.

Concerns the inheritance of the Mennonites **Wieler** and **Kroeker**.

The Chortizer district administration has informed me that the inheritance that the now deceased Mennonite from Neuendorf, Katharina **Epp**, née **Kroeker**, was to

receive from the deceased in 1810 in Zeyersvorderkampen, West Prussia, Elbing district, father Jakob **Epp**, has still not been received by the orphan elders of the Chortitza district. These elders declared the following in their complaint to the district administration: The former heiress Katharina **Epp** came to Russia in 1818 together with her stepfather Cornelius **Wieler**. Because of their minority, the Mennonites Abram **Dyck** and Peter **Braun** were appointed as their guardians. In order to conclude the above-mentioned inheritance, a power of attorney was granted on 9 February 1831 in the name of the church elder Jakob **Kroeker** from Ellerwald and the church leader Peter **Wiebe** from Kirschwald, Elbing district, which was submitted in the report of the district administration of the 17th of the same month under number 53 for approval and forwarding to the responsible former Ekaterinoslav office for foreign settlers. At the request of these commissioners, on March 7, 1833, a certificate from the said orphan elders was sent to them, confirming the right granted to the said guardians to grant this authority, and this certificate, together with the report of the 11th of the same month, No. 71, was also handed over to the then committee in Ekaterinoslav for further transmission. On April 16, 1835, Mr. Justice Commissioner Zenger in Elbing, West Prussia, the executor of this estate, sent a request to our orphan elders to complete the aforementioned documents. On August 24 of the same year, the orphan elders gave their assurance, in which they declared that after the death of the aforementioned heiress Katharina **Epp**, formerly **Kroeker**, this inheritance would now pass to her husband Gerhard **Kroeker**, her brothers Bernd, Peter and Cornelius and her sister Agatha **Wieler**. The certificate of the church administration of the 27th of the same month of the actual death of the said heiress is also attached, and these documents have also been submitted to the committee with my petition of September 25, 1835, No. 411, for forwarding to the relevant authorities. But in spite of all these measures taken by the orphan elders and guardians of the deceased heiress Katerina Epp, née Kreker, this inheritance, which is now inherited by her husband and the Willer siblings, has not yet been sent from abroad. Mr. Justice Commissioner Zenger himself assures in his above-mentioned communication that after receipt of the above-mentioned will and the death certificate of the Mennonite Kreker, the entire inheritance matter will be settled and this inheritance, which is under his direct supervision, will be released without hindrance.

Setting out the circumstances of this case, I therefore humbly request the Committee for the Welfare of Foreign Colonists of Southern Russia to conclude the matter as soon as possible and to send me the above-mentioned inheritance, which may be due to some of the above-mentioned persons, in the appropriate amount, and to give me an instruction authorizing me to do so.

Superintendent of the Cornelius Wieler.

It was determined: According to the documents submitted by Overseer Wieler in this matter last year, 1835, we request that the said inheritance be handed over as soon as possible, of which we will inform Overseer Willer in order to conclude the proceedings.

November 20, 1836.

Pages 31-32

The original is a Russian translation from French.

The Royal District Court of Elbing holds 640 Prussian thalers, which belong to the inheritance of Jacob **Epp**, who died in 1810, to his daughter Katharina, who lived in Neuendorf/Chortitza, Novorossiysk region. On April 16, 1835, the former guardian of this heiress, the Elbingen Commissioner of Justice Zenger, who had learned that she had died a few years ago and who wanted to pay out the said capital to her legal heirs, turned to the orphan elders of the Mennonite village of Chortitza with the request to locate these heirs and to inform them of the balance of the inheritance. to instruct a court-approved lawyer to receive the inheritance, on presentation of a certificate stating that they are entitled to the balance of the inheritance.

This request has not been heard, and the undersigned, Extraordinary Envoy and Minister Plenipotentiary of His Majesty the King of Prussia, therefore has the honour to address His Holiness the Vice-Chancellor Count Nesseldorf with the most humble request for favorable assistance, to instruct the said trustees, consisting of Aron **Sudermann** and Franz **Dyck**, to fulfill Zenger's request as soon as possible, and to inform them in the prescribed manner that, according to the information originally given to them of the inheritance in question of 620 thalers, 433 thalers 10 groschen had been spent in the above-mentioned court as a guarantee from an earlier debt, and that it later turned out that the latter sum had long since been paid and served with the accrued interest to cover a large part of the 640 thalers, which were held in the Elblag courts and accounted for the whole amount of this inheritance. The undersigned address themselves to His Serene Highness with the most humble request to honour him by communication and further use of these and other things.

St. Petersburg, January 24, 1836.

Signed: Lieberman. Translation: Minister of Trade Volodin

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