

# **Mennonite Settlements in Central Poland**

by

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Editor of the  
“Mennonitische Rundschau”

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## Notes and Comments by the Translators and Editors.

This year marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of Erich Ratzlaff's "Im Weichselbogen"! We are pleased to present a translated version of his classic book on the Mennonite settlements in central Poland.

This "translation" was carried out by performing optical character recognition (OCR) of a digital scan of the original book. The result was run through a machine translator (Google translate and/or DeepL). This was followed by a considerable amount of editing and formatting.

All page numbers have retained the page numbering of the original book. This allows one to easily find any page number referenced in other publications. This also results in some awkward looking pages, where the page is not properly filled with text.

Our comments are inserted in square brackets. Text within parentheses are those of the author.

Ratzlaff was inconsistent in his spellings of location names. We have tried to use a single spelling for each unique location.

The photographs in the original book are of rather poor quality. These are newsprint quality, PMT images. Our attempts to locate the original photographs have, so far, been unsuccessful.

The tables on pages 145 to 158, which have been used by genealogists for the last 50 years, includes comments, in blue, by one of us (THF). Numbers from the GRANDMA database are also included for many of those mentioned in the tables.

There are frequent references to the Mennonitisches Lexikon. The Lexikon was the German language forerunner of the Mennonite Encyclopedia. GAMEO, the English language online encyclopedia, contains English versions of the articles referred to by Ratzlaff. GAMEO can be found here: [GAMEO](#)

We would like to thank John D. Richert and Rod Ratzlaff for helpful comments during the early stages of this translation work.

# **Im Weichselbogen**

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## FOREWORD

The migrations of the Mennonites (caused both by persecution and their search for better economic conditions) have brought these descendants of the radical reformation to many countries in Europe. Volatile conditions in Europe have revealed the plight of these vulnerable Mennonites, and perhaps rightly so: Menno Simons reminds us that he would rather see Christ's followers as refugees than watch them live, freed from God, in all luxury and in carnal lust (Complete Writings, p. 387).

One of the lesser-known migrations was the migration to Poland. This country, which was a buffer state between the territorial claims of Prussia and Russia from the twelfth century to the present, offered the Dutch Mennonites, who fled the Spanish Catholic persecution and the Dutch reformed harassment, an economic refuge on the banks of the Vistula. Poland also offered a certain degree of religious freedom: Polish internal disputes dissipated the energy of the religious crusades, and other groups (like the Polish Brethren who also practiced defenselessness) offered an environment in which the Mennonites were allowed to live their faith.

However, as dynasties changed, so did the measure of which privileges were conferred, and the history of the Mennonites in Poland is one that vacillated between the grant of privileges and the revocation of those privileges.

Very little literature about the Mennonite settlements in Central Poland exists, because most of the church books were destroyed during the wars [of the 20<sup>th</sup> century]. Some of the existing documents are in Polish, others are scattered in books and magazines, which are difficult to obtain. Erich Ratzlaff has collected existing data, priceless memories and personal information which are included in this volume which was not previously available. Of significant value are excerpts from letters he has received from Poland, in which the present state of the former Mennonite settlements is described.

Erich Ratzlaff's sketch of the Mennonite settlements in the coastal area of Central Poland, gives us a better understanding of this part of our community which after the Second World War was uprooted and once again forced to emigrate - this time across the Atlantic Ocean to North and South America.

Erich L. Ratzlaff, born in 1911 in Deutsch-Wymyschle, married there in 1935, emigrated from Europe during the upheaval of World War II to Canada and taught at the Mennonite Educational Institute, Clearbrook, British Columbia. Since 1967 he has been editor of the weekly magazine *Mennonitische Rundschau*, which was published in Winnipeg, Manitoba. He also has a family

register of his family tree which lists his ancestors going back to 1736.

When he wrote this book, he was deeply concerned that the history of God's leadership of the "stepchildren of the Reformation" would be kept alive for future generations. In writing this book his use of Polish sources and use of resources detailing the Mennonite settlements in Poland, have made a valuable contribution to Mennonite historiography.

The Italian philosopher Benedetto Croce notes that the purpose of a story is about portraying life and morality; in this volume Erich Ratzlaff was attached to life and religious beliefs, which formed the purpose of his history of the Mennonites in Poland.

Winnipeg, June, 1971.

Vernon Ratzlaff

# Mennonite Settlements in Central Poland

## Introduction

It is not easy to write about the history of Mennonite settlements in Central Poland without access to important historical documents in Poland itself. Repeated attempts to obtain documents from Poland have had no success so far. There are, however, other ways to obtain historical material. As an example, there are excellent articles on Mennonites in the "Mennonitisches Lexikon", as well as the "Mennonite Encyclopedia" published in English in North America.

The story of a small religious minority can only be described in the context of the surrounding majority. The history of Mennonite settlements in central Poland is closely related to the history of the Protestant-Augsburg (Lutheran) settlements. The "The History of the Protestant-Augsburg Church in Poland"<sup>1</sup> by Eduard Kneifeland and the "History of the Baptists in Poland"<sup>2</sup> edited by Eduard Kupschare have proven to be very valuable. I also found valuable information in other books, which I will list at the end of this book in the bibliography.

The biggest difficulty lies in the determination of the accuracy of data. The existing sources often contradict each other; in such instances I will have no choice but to list them all and try to draw logical conclusions. Also from a historical perspective, the facts contained in the source material can only be properly understood if they are viewed in connection with the history of the country.

The history of Mennonite settlements in central Poland has a prehistory, of course, which largely coincides with the history of Mennonites in the 18th century. Regarding this story, comprehensive works have been written that I mention very briefly in my outline of Mennonite history. It will be my job to discuss the reasons for settlements in central Poland, as well as to illustrate their development utilizing existing sources. I want to be as factual as possible and to not let myself be carried away by my own sentiments. However, allow me to use existing evidence illustrating the conclusions of others.

Winnipeg, September 1970

Erich L. Ratzlaff

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## I. The Kingdom of Poland

Due to the migration of peoples, the Germanic Goths withdrew from the area of the central Vistula and Warta. The Slavs from the Carpathians advanced into this empty area around the year 600<sup>1</sup>. Prince Mieszko I adopted Christianity in 966 through the Bohemian Bishop Adalbert (Wojciech) with his marriage to the Bohemian Princess Dombrowka<sup>2</sup>. The Bohemians, also a Slavic tribe, were related to the Poles. Along with Christianity, Mieszko I also took the suzerainty of the German Emperor. He was the founder of the house of Piast. The seat of the Prince and also the bishop Adalbert was at Gniezno. In 1966, Poland celebrated the 1000th anniversary of the adoption of Christianity.

The son of Mieszko, Boleslaw I Chrobry [the Brave] (992-1025), temporarily made larger conquests. His empire stretched from the Baltic to the Black Sea. After the division of 1138, Silesia fell to Bohemia in 1163, Pomerania to the German Reich in 1118, West Prussia in 1230 and Pomerania in 1343 to the Teutonic Order.

The last king of the Piast family, Casimir the Great (1333-1370), conquered Galicia, Volhynia, and Podolia. His daughter Jadwiga married the Lithuanian Vladislav Jagello, who until then had been heathen, but was baptized to win the hand of the princess and with her the rule over the united Poland and Lithuania. With him The Lithuanian House of Jagellons came to the throne. The territory of Great Lithuania also included Belarus and Ukraine.

In the fight with the Teutonic Knights (the Crusaders) the King of Poland won dominion over West Prussia (1466) and suzerainty over East Prussia. In 1561 his successors won Livonia and the suzerainty over Courland.

During the reign of the last two kings from the house of the Jagellons, Sigismund I (1506-1548) and Sigismund II August (1548-1572), our ancestors from Holland immigrated to the Vistula delta, which at that time belonged to Poland.<sup>3</sup>

The Polish nobility had won major concessions during this time. And, after the death of the last Jagellon, the kings were chosen by the nobility.<sup>4</sup> There was always fighting between the various aristocratic parties. In 1629 Livland came under Swedish control, and in 1667 the eastern Ukraine became part of Russia.<sup>5</sup>

1) *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Vol. 20, page 648 b

2) *Ibid.* Vol. 18, page 115 b

3) Horst Penner, *Weltweite Bruderschaft*, page 71

4) *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Vol. 18, page 120 b

5) *Ibid.*, Vol. 22, page 472 a

Once again, Polish bravery shone in the history of Europe. King Jan III<sup>a</sup> Sobieski (1647-1696) fought successfully against the Turks and liberated Vienna, which had been besieged by the Turks.<sup>6</sup>

Under the Saxon kings August II (1697-1733) and August III (1733-1763) Poland became the plaything of the great powers: Austria, France, Russia and later Prussia. The last king of Poland, Stanislaw II Poniatowski (1764-1795), became elected King with the help of Russia. During his reign the divisions of Poland occurred. Through these divisions in the years 1772, 1793 and 1795 the main part of Poland was given to Russia, Galicia and Lesser Poland to Austria, West Prussia, Greater Poland and Mazovia with Warsaw to Prussia. With these divisions the Kingdom of Poland ceased to exist.<sup>7</sup>

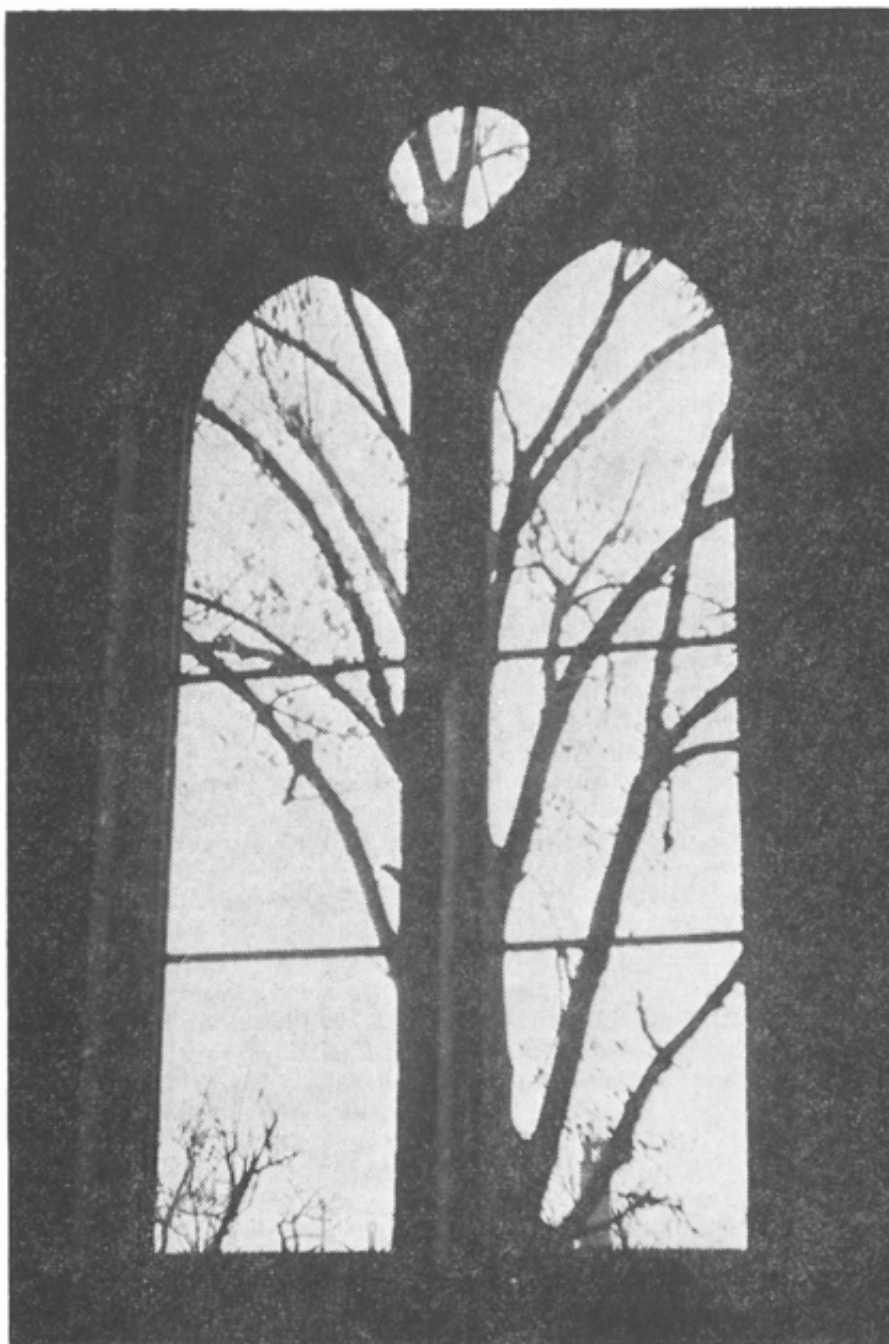
The emergence of the Mennonite settlements in central Poland also coincides with the events of the last three Polish kings. The data from different sources contradict each other with respect to the reasons for the settlement of the Mennonites in Central Poland, specifically the Mennonite communities of Kasun and Wymyschle. However, before we begin addressing these issues, we will need to briefly review the history of the settlement of the Mennonite communities of Kasun and Wymyschle.

## II. Mennonite settlements in the Vistula delta and in the river basins of northern Poland until the middle of the 18th century

The Catholic Church of Poland, although it never produced a reformer of its own, as we see at various times in almost every country in Europe, has always been highly receptive to the ideas of purging and purification of the Church that were raging in other countries. So already under the government of Vladislav II Jagello the reformatory ideas of John Hus and his like-minded friend Jerome of Prague from the neighboring Bohemia soon gained followers, friends and patrons in Poland and Lithuania. In a time of spiritual darkness his writings were passed secretly from hand to hand. This noble youth [Hus] visited Prague University and became familiar with the teachings of the Bohemian Reformer. Even the higher clergy gave him protection from the Bohemian clergy and the judges in Constance. In 1432 Hus was declared not a heretic by the Archbishop of Gniezno and the Polish

6) Ibid., Vol. 18, page 123 b

7) Ibid. Page 124



Fensteröffnung der ehemaligen mennonitischen Kirche in Marienburg, Westpreußen.

Window of the former Mennonite Church in Marienburg, West Prussia.

bishops.<sup>1</sup> A volunteer army led by the Lithuanian Prince Sigmund Korybut hurried to help the Hussites. The Pope, Emperor Sigismund and the Catholics of Bohemia protested to Jagello for support, but Jagello did nothing to intervene.

The freedom of the Polish nobility contributed to the fact that the inquisition by the Catholic Church in Poland was never successful. When the nobility believed their freedoms were threatened or they saw material advantage they ignored orders against the heretics. This benefited the Reformation of Luther and Zwingli but also created favorable conditions to make this country a haven of persecuted Anabaptists, as they brought great benefits to the landlords as settlers.

It has not been sufficiently emphasized that the Mennonites who settled in the Danzig Werder and in the other Lowlands were not the first settlers. There is a history of settlement in some of these areas going back to the 13th century. We rely on the information given by Zdzisław Ludkiewicz in his book "Osady Holenderskie na nizinie Sartawicko-Nowskiej".

The Dutch settlement activity in Poland developed independently of the so-called German colonization, which was carried out under the "German law". The latter took place beginning in the 13th century and reached its peak in the 14th century. It started with a huge number of Polish towns and villages, which arose mainly from clearing of the forests. The first colonists were Flemish,<sup>2</sup> later predominantly German, but in later times these settlements were mainly inhabited by Polish farmers from the local population. These Polish settlements were particularly distinguished by the fact that the mayor was a hereditary office, which replaced self-government to a large degree.

On the contrary, the Dutch colonization was characterized by self-government in which the rights of mayors were limited, as well as a significant difference in the distribution of land. The mayor was elected by the community every year or every 3-4 years.

We find the beginning of Dutch colonization in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century. In 1454 Casimir IV gave the city of Danzig the so-called Danziger Werder as a reward for their homage to him. This very fertile land area was flooded several times a year by the Vistula River.

Attempts to settle the local population in this area had failed. The Danzig Mayor Ferber had the idea to bring in settlers from Holland. As early as 1528, Dutch colonies existed in the Werder, which had seen colonization earlier.<sup>3</sup> The settlement of the Werder is also largely related to the immigration of Dutch Mennonites.

1) Koniecki, O. *Geschichte der Reformation in Polen*, pages 1-2

2) Ludkiewicz, Zdzisław. *Osady Holenderskie ...*, page 26

3) Baranowski, Ignacy. *Wsie Holenderskie na ziemiach polskich* (1915)



Mennonitischer Friedhof in Schönsee, Kulmer Niederung, Westpreußen, 1960.

Mennonite cemetery in Schoensee, Kulm lowland, West Prussia, 1960.

in the first half of the 16th century. The start of the Dutch settlements in Poland began at this time, although individual settlements were founded as early as the end of the 15th century or in the first half of the 16th century. The Dutch did not clear forests, but they mastered the drainage of swampy lowlands, which in some ways was similar to the environment in Holland.<sup>4</sup> The impetus for emigration was the cruel persecutions in Flanders and in Holland, but the choice of the place where they fled was influenced by economic considerations. It was not a random flight, as some put it, but an organized emigration supported by Danzig.<sup>5</sup>

The Dutch settlements gradually expanded until they included the lowland areas further south which lay on the banks of the Vistula. In West Prussia there were the communities of Tragheimerweide, Marienwerder, Montau, Gruppe, Schoensee, *Wintersdorf* (Przechowka) and near the town of Thorn the settlement Obernessau. From here they have spread all over the lowland. After 1750 there were daughter settlements in Poland, of which

4) Ludkiewicz, Zdislaw, *Osady Holenderskie ...*, page 27

5) *Mennonitisches Lexikon* Volume IV, page 505 b. See also Unruh, B.H., Pages 90 and 130



Mennonitensiedlungen im Weichselraum.

Map of the Mennonite settlements in the Vistula region.

we will deal in this essay about the communities of Kasun and Wymyschle.<sup>6</sup>

The settlers in the Dutch villages leased the land from the owners. So, the Dutch settlers were free peasants who usually contracted for a few decades during which the right of renewal was assured, although the rent might be increased. If the owner wished to replace a tenant, he had to reimburse him for the erected buildings. The settler could transfer his rights to another person. In some cases, he was obliged to find a replacement tenant if he wanted to leave the property.

The Dutch were free from obligation until a lease agreement was signed. The settler could leave the farm to another tenant at any time or not renew his contract as he wished. He was also allowed to let his children pursue any profession, according to his choice.

An important characteristic of the Dutch settlements was their management of their own schools and teachers. By closing themselves off from their surroundings and other creeds, they perpetuated and cultivated their traditions and their language. As a result, the Dutch were not tied to the breakdown of the Polish state. Later, however, they were completely absorbed by the German language and German culture.<sup>7</sup>

Most of the villages in the Vistula lowlands were built on land which belonged to the Polish crown. These lands were at the time the property of the Teutonic Order and came under the control of the King of Poland after the Peace of Thorn. The Polish kings appreciated the good income earned from the Mennonite tenants which is why they always gave them privileges that assured them freedom of religion and freedom of defense.<sup>8</sup>

Here, only briefly, are the most important privileges, which the Mennonites were awarded by the Polish kings:

Sigismund II (1548-1572) confirmed the lease Baron von Loysen made with the Mennonites.<sup>9</sup>

Sigismund III (1587-1632) confirmed the lease agreements with the Mennonites that were completed on October 20, 1623. He gave the *Bortenwirkern* in Schottland near Danzig, and these were mostly Mennonites, special privileges.<sup>10</sup>

Wladyslaw IV (1632-1648) at the urging of the Prussian estates granted the privilege of December 22, 1642, under which all of the Mennonites,

6) Unruh, B. H., *Die niederländisch-niederdeutschen Hintergründe der Mennonitischen Ostwanderungen im 16., 18. und 19. Jahrhundert*, page 152

7) Ludkiewicz, Z. *Osady Holenderskie*, page 29

8) Ibid., Page 31

9) *Mennonitisches Lexikon*, Volume IV, page 168

10) Loc. cit.



Mennonitische Kirche in Obernessau bei Thorn, 1960.

Mennonite Church in Obernessau near Thorn, 1960.

through Sigismund III, enjoyed conferred and confirmed rights, privileges, freedoms and justice.<sup>11</sup>

Johann III Sobieski protected the Mennonites with a special rescript from 1678 and assigned new lands to them. On August 22, 1694, the king confirmed all their rights with the express provision that all privileges given by the earlier kings should be extended to the entire Mennonite community.<sup>12</sup>

August II (1697-1733) on September 20, 1697, in Krakow, confirmed all the privileges previously granted to the Mennonites. On October 12, 1732, he had a new privilege drawn up in Warsaw that the Mennonites should be granted all rights, privileges and liberties, both in secular and spiritual matters.<sup>13</sup>

11) Penner, H., *Weltweite Bruderschaft*, pages 76-77

12) *Mennonitisches Lexikon*, Volume H, page 431 a

13) *Ibid.*, Volume I, page 96 a

August III (1733-1763) confirmed all previous privileges of the Mennonites on April 16, 1736. On September 19, 1750, he extended the privileges of the Mennonites of the Werder, to those living in the Graudenz, Kulm and Schwetz lowlands. They were guaranteed full freedom of defense against payment of high protection money.<sup>14</sup>

In most cases, all the privileges of the Mennonites were expensive, but they preferred to pay this money to the government to maintain their privileges, rather than being harassed and blackmailed by local fanatical clergymen and greedy officials.

There is great disagreement among historians about the motives behind these privileges. The latest research, especially from the Polish side, praises Polish tolerance, which it contrasts with the intolerance of other peoples, especially Lutheran and Reformed Germans. A strong proponent of this position is Kazimierz Mezynski in his book "*O Mennonitach w Polsce*" (1961, Gdansk). Here are some excerpts from the book in free translation: "It must be emphasized that until the eighteenth century, or until the time when religious issues ceased to heat the minds of the people that Mennonites could only enjoy religious freedom in Poland where Jan Laski ruled, without almost any of the restrictions Mennonites suffered in eastern Friesland. Thanks to his point of view, the Mennonites were excluded from the general wave of persecutions that occurred in the Netherlands during that time. Perhaps it was Laski's tolerant position that made it easy to believe the rumors (although they seemed very unlikely) that everyone in his country could freely confess his God. Perhaps it was easier to believe because these rumors came from emigrants who in Poland had been fleeing from religious persecution earlier, in 1525; the Mennonite Radical Reformation in Holland had not yet developed following the general wave of the Reformation. When there was news that there was a country where people could find protection from persecution because of their Protestant beliefs, a powerful wave of emigrants from the Netherlands flowed to Poland - farmers and artisans who wished to work in Danzig, Elbing and Marienburg."<sup>15</sup>

To this promised land where one did not run the risk of being punished for his beliefs, Mennonites and other persecuted people flowed in from all places, by water and by land.<sup>16</sup>

The Anabaptists also knew through Menno Simons about this wonderful land

14) Loc. cit.

15) Mezynski, K., *O Mennonitach w Polsce*, page 23

16) Brons, A., *Ursprung, Entwicklung und Schicksale der Taufgesinnten oder Mennoniten*, page 24

because, as we know, he visited Prussia in 1549. He must have met his fellow believers there at that time, since he sent a pastoral letter to them in 1549.

The tolerance of that 'Promised Land' was well expressed in the Warsaw Confederation, adopted on January 8, 1573. It should be noted that efforts were made in the 16th century, to exclude Arians from this agreement. The Mennonites were sometimes confused with them, which caused them some difficulties but never had a tragic effect in Poland. <sup>"17</sup>

A little further on Mezynski writes the following about the emergence of the Mennonite communities in the Polish area: "The Mennonites" come to Poland after the middle of the 16th century. At that time a number of settlements came into being: one in Danzig and surrounding areas, a second in Marienburg, a third in Elbing, a fourth between Schwetz, Kulm and Graudenz. There were some smaller centers such as Thorn, and some in central Poland - Kasun and Wymyschle Niemieckie. We will deal with Danzig in more detail because here is where there was the largest concentration. The problems that we will observe here repeat themselves in other communities - of course, *mutatis mutandis* (Latin: "having changed what needs to be changed" or "once the necessary changes have been made"), because we must not forget that these places have different political and economic structures. This work is not intended to give a precise history of these individual communities or groups. That history is supported by extensive literature." <sup>"18</sup>

In his further remarks Mezynski quotes extensively G. Lengnich, "*Ius publicum Civitatis Gedanensis*," of which a German translation must have been present, because his quotations are in German, writes about the economic role of the Mennonites in Danzig. Lengnich: "It has happened, however, that complaints from competitors, has caused the city to restrict the livelihood of the Mennonites, who can appeal to no greater justice than local village justice, which is not impartial. Such problems are mainly in the Schottland, the Hoppenbruch and the Stolzenberg which lies in the area between the city of Danzig and Schottland which belonged to the *Cujawischen Capitul*. On these grounds were brewers, distilleries, all sorts of craftsmen, general stores and packing houses, making them small towns without walls (...)." <sup>"19</sup>

Further, Mezynski explains: "Outside of their borders, the Danzig people harassed them in various ways. What are the reasons for this unfriendliness? Certainly, the attacks from city dwellers are for religious reasons and also a great deal of xenophobia comes to the fore here, but the main reason was the fear of the competition. Fortunately, the city council did

17) Mezynski, K. *O Mennonitach w Polsce*, page 23

18) Ibid., Page 24

19) Lengnich, G., *Ius publicum CivitatisGedanensis*, page 561

not fear this competition because it was clear to them the value that the Mennonites brought the city as a whole. The city council also protected the Mennonites from the outside - from the provincial diets. The city council also protects the Mennonites externally - from the state parliament. The city council often protected the Mennonites through the pressure exerted by the king, but sometimes - to play them off against the king; so their motives are not always honest. The third category looks only after its own benefits in the short term, and in the Mennonite Dutch, they envision dangerous competitors, and so the Polish do not allow the Mennonites citizenship. In the 19th century, even though they were Germanized at that time, the Mennonites showed their cultural superiority over the Germans of that time. From emigration in Germany, speaking of the Principality of Prussia, writes Brons, that the German newcomers joined the Mennonites, since they had better clergy.<sup>20</sup> In addition, the Dutch refugees had both through greater numbers, intelligence, knowledge, education and means had a decided advantage (...) The Dutch came from a land, which in wealth, in culture, in business activity was highest in the whole of Europe."<sup>21</sup> Then Mezynski continues: "The city attacked the Mennonites in a variety of ways. It taxed them at a double rate and introduced an annual tribute of 'patronage money'".

At the parliament in Thorn in 1571 the merchants of Danzig complained that people of different nationalities – sectarians who live in the estates of the bishop, "pulls the bread out of their mouths", so they demand their expulsion. The most serious attacks are directed against the Mennonites in Schottland.

In 1572 and again next year, a decree is published by the city council, which orders the relocation of the Mennonites. As we said, the reasons are economic. But they also added in the religious issues. Thus, they were ordered to join Lutheran churches in 1582."<sup>22</sup>

The Lutheran Germans of the third estate were in the cities but not the only ones who plagued the Mennonites because of business competition. Mennonites had settled in Poland earlier, even if only temporarily. In the "Mennonite Lexikon" we read of a "temporary Mennonite settlement in Neudorf near Brest (Brzesc Kujawski?) (1563) and on the *Sachsenkämpe* at Warsaw (1629)."<sup>23</sup> Since Mennonite merchants were finding it difficult to ship their wares up the Vistula by boat, they used the

20) Mezynski, K., *O Mennonitach w Polsce*, page 26

21) Brons, A., opus cit., Page 248

22) Mezynski, K., *O Mennonitach w Polsce*, page 27

23) *Mennonitisches Lexikon*, Volume IV, page 515

military road along the Vistula, which lay on the left bank of the Vistula. Mennonite farmers earned a few dollars during the winter season hauling freight in their wagons to Warsaw. My great-grandfather Heinrich Ratzlaff, who came from Dorposch near Kulm, drove some cargo of salt herring from Danzig to Warsaw. The above-mentioned Sachsenkämpe was actually a part of Warsaw. Here the freight haulers and the merchants rested from the journey before returning to Danzig.

The military road was still known as the "Great Road" in our times. It led along the edge of the Vistula lowland. The road to Warsaw was still being driven on and has been converted to handle modern vehicles. It led via Ilow and Sochatschew to Warsaw. From Gdansk between Leslau (Wlodawek) and Brest, is where you would find Neudorf.

To understand the reasons for emigration from West Prussia we have to return to consideration of the history of that time. In Poland the Counter-Reformation became stronger and stronger, until almost the whole Polish people were once again firmly in the bosom of the Roman Catholic Church. In the past, economic reasons had given the Poles a tolerant attitude toward the Mennonites, but attitudes toward them became more and more fanatical. The Jesuits became a dominant influence in Poland.

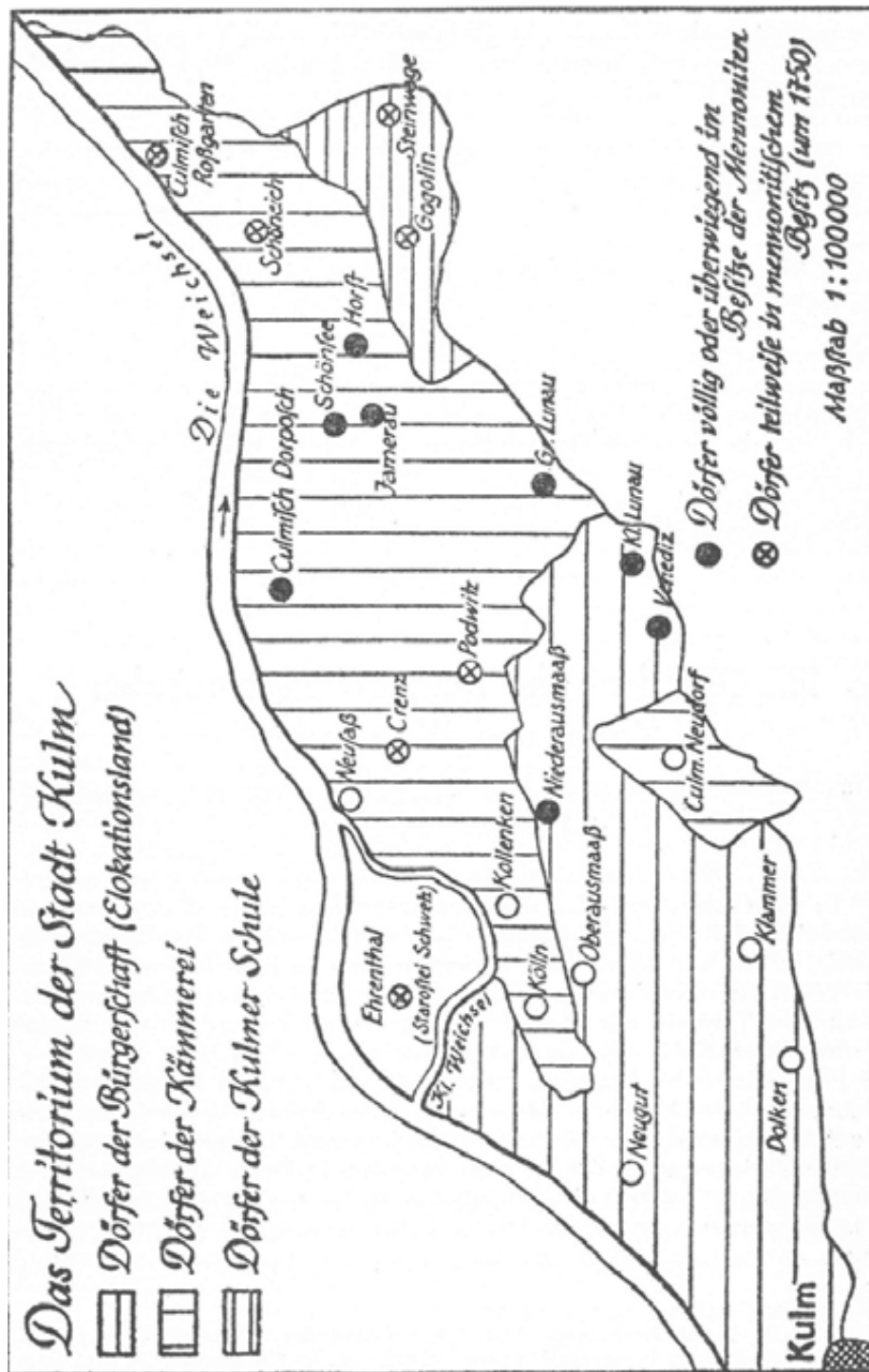
Here again I quote the "Mennonitisches Lexikon": "First, the available land in the Vistula lowlands between Graudenz and Thorn become too limited for the Mennonites. There were few possibilities for expansion here. Therefore, the Mennonites from the Kulm and Graudenz lowlands, a small part of the Werder, seized the opportunity which was offered to them in 1713 to settle in the Tilsit depression depopulated by presence of the plague. Invited by the intolerant Frederick William I, and then in 1758 under his more tolerant son they began a permanent settlement in Memel lowlands in Prussian- Lithuania. In 1776 Mennonite families from the municipalities of Montau, Schoensee, Przechowka and Obernassau moved up the Vistula and formed the community of Deutsch-Kasun near Modlin. In 1813 Mennonite immigrants from the Vistula valley created the community Deutsch-Wymyschle near Plock."<sup>24</sup>

On the migration to the Neumark we read in the Mennonite Lexicon the following: Frederick the Great and his Domain Council von Brenkenhoff encouraged settlement in the Netzebruch whose dikes had been broken by war. In 1765, 35 Mennonite families, expelled from the Culm lowlands by Polish nobles were settled there. 16 families with 95 people were settled in Brenkenhoffswalde and 19 families with 97 people were settled in the neighboring Franztal. From then on they formed the Mennonite community Brenkenhoffswalde, which existed until 1834."<sup>25</sup>

The emigrants to the Neumark were members of the "Old Flemish

24) *Mennonitisches Lexikon*, Volume IV, page 515

25) *Ibid.*, Vol. I, page 263



Karte der Kulmer Niederung, Westpreußen.

21

Map of the Kulm lowland, West Prussia.

Mennonite parish Przechowka (Wintersdorf)", located west of Schwetz. The parish also had members in the villages Deutsch-Konopath, Dworzisko (*Wilhelmsmark*), Glugowko, Kossowo and Christkowo, southwest of Schwetz, together with Ostrower Kaempe (*Erenthal*), up the valley. The later belonged to the noble village Jeziorka at Tuchel, and northeast, on the right bank of the Vistula, Schoensee, Posterwolde [it is believed that this is Dorposch] and to the village of Horst. Since 1743 the Mennonites in Jeziorka had their own church, as well as in Przechowka and Schoensee.<sup>26</sup>

As early as 1764, three emissaries from Jeziorka moved to Prussia to visit the Netzebruch exploring new settlement opportunities. Their noble patron had offered them the lease. Thirty families moved in the next year, as we saw above. These were not the only ones who were expelled. Many moved to the Vistula lowlands at Plock and settled there. They hadn't yet founded the church at Deutsch-Wymyschle, because the village did not yet exist. However, almost the entire lowland was populated by Mennonites. The first ones arrived here already in 1762 and also have one community founded.<sup>27C</sup>

### III. Formation of the Mennonite Communities Kasun and Wymyschle as part of the colonization of Central Poland by Dutch and German immigrants

It would be obvious that the first Mennonite settlements in central Poland should be recognized as being started by the Mennonite merchants in Danzig, Elbing and Marienburg. It is striking that these communities, like pearls on a string, are strung on the "Great Road", one day's journey with a team of horses away from each other. Marienwerder, Kulm, Obernessau at Thorn, Neudorf at Brest, Wymyschle at Plock, Kasun near Warsaw and the Sachsenkempe in Warsaw itself could have started as rest stops. Then as the need arose to find new settlement options, of course you would first consider the lowlands on the Vistula.

The political developments in this area certainly played a very important role. The division of Poland between Prussia, Austria and Russia brought a wave of German immigrants to Poland,

26) Ibid., Vol. II !, pp. 404-405

27) Foth, R., *Aufzeichnungen über das Leben der Mennoniten- und MB- Gemeinden zu Wymyschle, Polen*, Mennonitische Rundschau, May 29, 1968

especially in the areas occupied by Prussia. Although there is evidence that Mennonites settled in greater numbers in the area of Warsaw and Plock before the partition of Poland, the founding of the village of Wymyschle was, according to most sources, postponed until after the first partition of Poland. B. H. Unruh mentions in his book a letter from Dr. Fritz Kliewer, in which he specifies the year 1792 as the founding year of the village Deutsch-Wymyschle. He has seen the location deed and found that Deutsch-Wymyschle was created by non-Mennonites, i.e. by Augsburg Evangelical (Lutheran) settlers.<sup>1</sup> Then it may be true that in 1813 "the Mennonite immigrants to the Vistula"<sup>2</sup> founded the community of Deutsch-Wymyschle since the first settlers lived in the Vistula valley north of Deutsch-Wymyschle. In the book "*Von der Weichsel an der Rhein*", compiled in 1966 by Peter Nasarski, Richard Breyer writes in an article entitled "*Vom Deutschtum Gostyniner Land und in the Weichselniederung*" the following about the settlement of the Vistula lowlands: "All the German Vistula villages in the district of Gostynin are located on the flat gentle slope of the Vistula valley, from the submerged Karolewo via Wolka Brwilenska, where there is a pass on the Tokary ridge southeast of Plock until Piotrkowek on the Sochaczew border. "...

"The founding dates of these Vistula villages are all after 1605, the date of the first lowland village in Central Poland, Slonsk near Ciechocinek." However, the settlement of the Saxon Kämpe in front of the steep banks of Warsaw was an earlier event, skipping over the Vistula runs near Gostynin, because around the middle of the 17th century the turmoil of the wars in Sweden, the Kosa uprising, and briefly the 'Flood', brought a stagnation of German settlements. It was only after 1730 that renewed Vistula upward penetration began, from which also the Plock-Gombin-Ilower lowland was seized and settled. In 1749, a brother of Bolimov's Krongkova, Count Dombiski, occupied the Antoniner Kämpe with some 'Dutchmen' and their families, and the authorized commissioner of the Bishop of Kuyavia, Probst Wolicki, ten years later settled the district of Tokary near Plock with German peasants."

"The Starost in Troszyn, Cichocki, in 1759 also allowed the formation of the German lowland villages of Deutsch-Troszyn and Borki. The landlord Szymanowski settled some Dutch in Deutsch Wionczemin at the same time. Sady originated as a German village in 1769 by the Polish landowner Zablocki. Thus, even before the first partition of Poland, a vigorous German settlement is underway, and it must be emphasized that it owes its success to the initiative of Polish noblemen. As already indicated, the Niederungen are the first

1) Unruh, B. H., *Die niederländisch-niederdeutschen Hintergründe der Mennonitischen Ostwanderungen im 16., 18. und 19. Jahrhundert*, page 172

2) *Mennonitisches Lexikon*, Volume IV, page 515

settlement period from 1600 to 1650 for the most part from the Vistula down, founded lowland villages around Thorn, Kulm, Graudenz down to the Danzig Gross and Klein Werder in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The settlers of the second period came for the most part from the old settlements north of Thorn and Wlodawek. "3

The Dutch who are mentioned several times in the article are obviously Mennonite, although the author did not specify this. However, the majority of them seem to have migrated to either Volhynia or Southern Russia. In the lowlands there was an area known as the "Russian Meadows" (*Russlandsche Wiesen*). The owners of the same had migrated to Russia. At all times the settlers of this area were in flux. Again, and again new settlers came, while others were looking for new areas to settle.

These migrations can be partially reconstructed from lists that Robert Foth has created as excerpts from old church books. He has kindly provided me with exact copies of these lists, for which I am very grateful. In a latter section we will detail these lists. (See Appendix.)

Among the Mennonite settlements in Central Poland, Kasun is the most important. Unfortunately, there is no printed monograph of this settlement, although the last ordained preacher of this congregation, Leo Ewert, has made an attempt to write one. He died before he could complete his work. I have been allowed to see the manuscript left behind by him, and I have made notes in personal contacts with Ewert, which I intend to use here. However, before I continue to discuss the data from Ewert, I would like to cite other sources relating to the settlement beginnings of Kasun and Wymyschle.

Quoting B. H. Unruh, who again mentions Herbert Wiebe's references to numerous Mennonite families from the area of Graudenz, Schwetz and Kulm around the middle of the 18th century up the Vistula to Central Poland (Deutsch-Kasun near Modlin and Deutsch-Wymyschle, Wojewodschaft Warschau, Kreis Gostynin ).<sup>4</sup>

In the "Mennonitisches Lexikon" we find confirmation that Mennonites traveled up the Vistula beyond the Schwetz-Kulm lowland and settled in Deutsch-Wymyschle and Deutsch-Kasun around 1750.<sup>5</sup> W. Kerber also mentions the date of formation around 1750.<sup>6</sup> In 1776, Mennonite families from the villages of Montau, Schoensee, Przechowka and Obernessau moved up the Vistula and formed the community of Deutsch-Kasun at Modlin.<sup>7</sup>

3) Nasarski, P., *Von der Weichsel an den Rhein*, page 17

4) Unruh, B. H., *Die niederländisch-niederdeutschen Hintergründe der Mennonitischen Ostwanderungen im 16., 18. und 19. Jahrhundert*, page 152

5) *Mennonitisches Lexikon*, Volume III, page 382

6) *Ibid.*, Vol. I, page 419

7) *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, page 515

The latter date of incorporation finds its confirmation in a completely different source. In his *History of the Evangelical-Augsburg Church in Poland* writes Eduard Kneifel: "After 1725, the Germans continued Colonization to a greater extent again. The old villages in the Vistula lowlands created new daughter colonies to the right and left of the river ... The Mennonite settlement Kasun was established by the brothers Hilsen in 1776. A decade later, near Kasun, the colony of Dembina-Holland followed."<sup>8</sup>

From the same source, we find a note that is relevant for our research. Kneifel writes: "From the early history of our colonies, it was reported that the early pioneers lived in earthen huts, suffered from hunger and were physically exhausted or had severe health problems." Among the pioneers were few descendants of Dutchmen who moved upwards from the Danzig region. They had the reputation of being skilled reclamation workers who asked that some basic rights be honored. The name 'Dutchman' was later given to every free German colonist who, when immigrating for the purpose of cultivating groves and reclaiming deserted villages, was guaranteed certain fundamental rights. The name "Dutchman" was thus not a designation of ethnicity, but rather an expression of a legal status and activity."<sup>9</sup>

It is essential for us that the settlers from the Danzig Werder region are described by one German researcher as descendants of Dutch. As such, they have always spent and held, and this had the consequence that a whole settlement system was named after them "Holländerei". Such "Holendry" or "Olendry" were scattered across central Poland. The land on which the Mennonites settled in the Vistula slope near Plock belonged to Czermno estate, which in and of itself was bought up by Polish peasants. On the marshes that no one else wanted was the three-kilometer-wide Vistula lowlands where the Dutch settled, so it was commonly called "Holendry Czerminskie". When the Poles went there, they said, "Idziemyna Olendry."

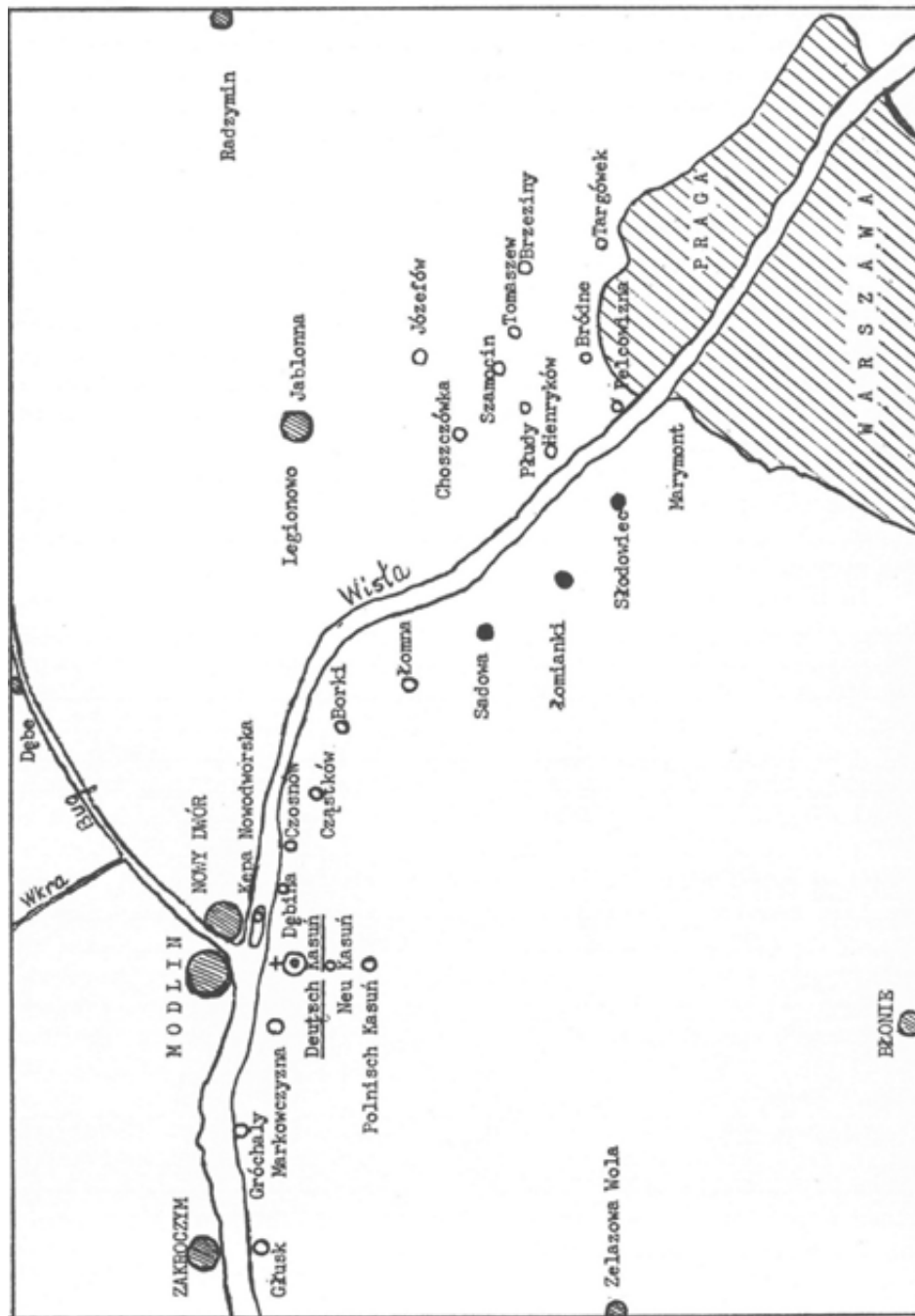
As early as 1798, Kneifel lists the following German Protestant schools: "Borki with 38 students, Troszyn with 37, Sady 22, Kasun 20 and Secymin 24,"<sup>10</sup> Two further notes of Kneifel are likely of interest to us. He writes: "To the right of the Vistula, Kicin, Wola-Wodzynska, Lipowiec, Grabowiec, Rzeszotko, Halinin and Trzpialy were founded around 1820."<sup>11</sup> Wola-Wodzynska was a predominant

8) Kneifel, E. *Geschichte der Evangelisch-Augsburgischen Kirche in Polen*, Page 40

9) Ibid., Page 41

10) Ibid., Page 93

11) Ibid., Page 101



Siedlungsgebiet der Gemeinde Deutsch Kasun, Kreis Warschau.

Map of central Poland with Mennonite settlements.

Mennonite village and formed a branch of the municipality Kasun. Mennonites were also scattered in the other villages.

Another note refers to the school system. "After 1830 the Government endeavored to convert the Kantorat schools, if possible, into elementary schools. It wanted to improve their quality, because in many places they were in a deplorable state. After 1840, in addition to numerous Kantorat schools, the following elementary schools were in the Vistula lowlands: Bogpomoz, Osieker Lengden, Vitoszyn, Rybitwy, Wolfswinkel, Lentzen, Modzerovo, Gross-Domb, Troszyn, Borki, Sady, Wymyschle, Wionczemin, Sladow."<sup>12</sup>

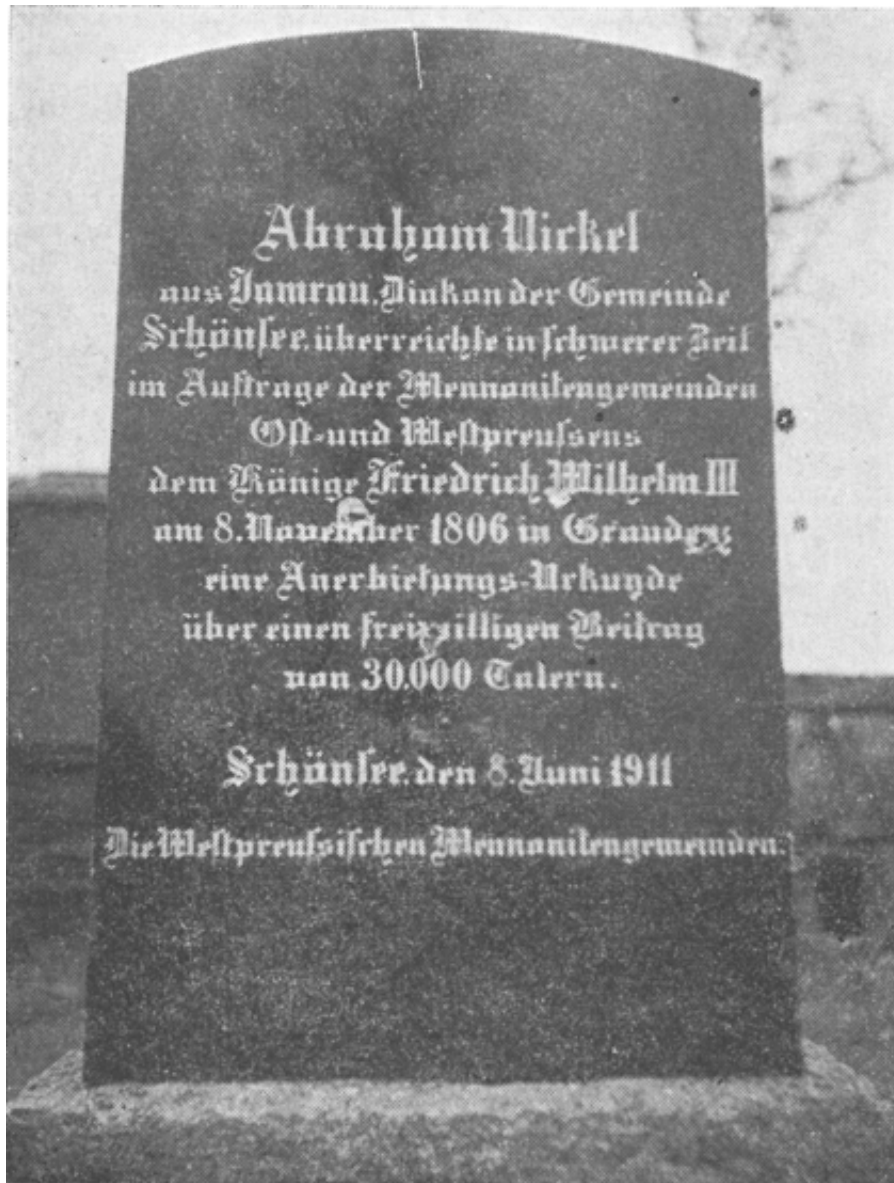
Before we deal with the individual settlements, I want to refer to P. M. Friesen, who has aptly described the reasons for the emigration.<sup>13</sup> I have found his statements on the Polish literature fully confirmed. Under Polish rule, the Mennonites sometimes suffered because of their faith, but were always defended by the nobles and the cities, as well as by the kings. The foundation of the letters of protection and privileges was always ... "that the Mennonites must be protected because they were useful people, the ancestors of the kings had invited them from the Netherlands and used them to build the Werder." This situation changed drastically when the Prussian Mennonites came under the rule of the German Hohenzollerns. They often suffered from forceful conscription into the military, which brought them a great deal of anxiety of conscience, leading to bloody maltreatment. They were given a heavy toll tax and limitations on their freedom to purchase new land. The consequence was the varying degrees of emigration to America, Russian Poland and especially to Russia.

The previously mentioned Polish researcher Kazimierz Mezynski describes the relationship of the German authorities to the Mennonites very thoroughly. He documents his statements with quotes from German and Mennonite sources. Religious freedom was finally granted them by Friedrich II. He solemnly guaranteed their freedom of conscience and exemption from military service. But there were consequences as well. Since the beginning "they have wanted to stop them from spreading, which was considered harmful .... "Mezynski Nottarp (*Die Mennoniten in der Marienburger Werdern*) states." And again the Mennonites have to look for another country."<sup>14</sup>

12) Kneifel, E., *Geschichte der Evangelisch-Augsburgischen Kirche in Polen*, Page 112.

13) Friesen, P.M., *Alt-Evangelische Mennonitische Bruderschaft in Russland*, pages 41-43  
[German version]

14) Mezynski, K., *O Mennonitach w Polsce*, page 49



Denkmal in Schönsse, Kulmer Niederung, Westpreußen, errichtet von den Mennonitengemeinden Westpreußens im Jahre 1911.

Monument in Schoensee, Kulm lowland, West Prussia, built by the Mennonite communities of West Prussia in 1911.

#### IV. The Mennonite Community Deutsch-Kasun

Early Mennonites had settled as lessees in the surroundings of Warsaw. Such tenants had also leased the estate Marymont (now a suburb of Warsaw). Leo Ewert told about these tenants in a story that has been passed on as tradition. It is not easy, however, to reconcile tradition with historical facts. It is reported that a Polish king had to flee from Warsaw during the political upheavals. He came to Marymont where the Mennonite tenant Bartel hid him until the danger was over. Then he and his entourage moved down the Vistula to Wyszogrod. Before he left the Mennonites, he gave them a precious ring out of gratitude. It is said that the proceeds from this ring were used to buy the land on which the village Deutsch-Kasun later stood.

According to Ewert, this land had belonged to the Catholic Church, but was then leased to the Mennonites by the king for four years, from 1758 to 1762, after which they had bought 1,600 Polish Morgens of land. Ewert had seen the deed of purchase in the "*Ratslade*" (*Schulteload*) in Kasun. It was sealed with a big seal in lacquer. Other documents were kept at the "Sad Grodzki" on Krakowskie Przedmiescie in Warsaw. Among the first settlers were the names of Bartel, Schroeder, Guhr, Ewert, Jantz, Stobbe, Klaus, Koppert, Kohnert and Plennert.

August III from Saxony reigned as King of Poland at the time of the events mentioned by Ewert. However, August III was in Saxony during this time and had not yet shown up in Poland. His minister Brühl and influential Polish noble families ruled at that time. It may be that the king was Stanislaw I Leszczyński, who was elected king in 1733, but expelled by the Russians, fled Warsaw and was besieged in Danzig. However, there is a period of 25 years between these dates. Then it could have been Stanislaw II Poniatowski, but he was elected king in 1764 with the help of Russia. From 1755 to 1759, however, he was the ambassador of Poland at the court of Catherine the Great in Petersburg.<sup>1</sup>

According to records from a conversation with Leo Ewert the community of Deutsch-Kasun was founded in 1762. But this congregation did not have a church for many years. It was only in 1823 that they received permission to build a house of prayer. The first Elder to be found in the church book was Peter Schroeder, who died in 1833. So, he still officiated ten years in the new building.

1) *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Vol. 18, page 124

The emergence of the settlement Deutsch-Kasun must therefore have been an ongoing process. Therefore, it is quite possible that the first settlers arrived in this area before 1733 as lessees and that the king from the above story was Stanislaw Lesczynskil, who in 1733 had to flee from Warsaw. Then, 25 years later, the first purchase of land could have taken place in the lowlands near Modlin, as reported by Ewert. From his manuscript, which was kindly left for my inspection, it appears that the purchase price was 13,730 guilders. The deed of sale had been signed by five men in front of him, Bartel, Kohnert, Schroeder, Klaus and Dauter. The land was divided among 23 families, according to the number of people in each family.

Soon the purchased land area proved to be too small. More families from Prussia moved to and leased land in the area and were waiting for an opportunity to buy land for themselves. Such opportunities arose after the uprising of Kosciuszko, when this part of Poland fell into Russian hands.<sup>2</sup> The property of the Polish nobles who fought against Russia was expropriated. Their assets were given to Russian generals who had earned them in battle. However, they were not interested in working the land and sold it when it was convenient.

The first purchase of a property fell during this time period. At the third Partition of Poland in 1795, Warsaw and the surrounding area came under Prussian rule. A small estate, northwest of Kasun belonged to the Russian General Markow. He found it advantageous to sell this estate to the Mennonites. In 1798, three years after the third partition of Poland, the Mennonites Franz Bartel, Heinrich Schroeder, Salomon Konnert, Cornelius Foth, Jakob Ewert, Heinrich Bartel, Jakob Matis and a certain Guhr bought this estate, called Markowczynsna.

Soon after, at the beginning of the 19th century, the Czosnow estate, 3 kilometers southeast of Kasun became available. The land was higher, therefore protected from floods and consisted of soil suitable for wheat. General Czosnow sold the land to Franz Bartel, Johann Jantz, Gerhard Nickel, David Schroeder, Heinrich Ewert and Jakob Foth. Later, David Buller, Georg Nickel, Heinrich Kliewer, Cornelius Kasper, Wilhelm Lehrmann, Cornelius Baltzer, Gerhard Koppert and Albert Vogel lived in this village. In 1803, the neighboring Czastkow was sold. Half of the estate was bought by the Mennonites who established the village Deutsch-Czastkow. It was good, flat country and it wasn't located in the flood plain of the Vistula. The buyers were Heinrich Guhr, Jakob Bartel, Peter Frantz, Kornelius Goertz, Heinrich Nickel, Peter Körber. Later, Peter Wohlgemuth, David Nachtigall, Peter Bartel, Cornelius Baltzer, Heinrich Bartel, Peter Schroeder, Kornelius Plennert and Peter Ewert lived there.

2) *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Vol. 13, page 478

3) Peter Wohlgemuth was the author's great-grandfather.



At the same time, the Mennonites also acquired the village of Borki. Georg Bartel, Franz Bartel and Heinrich Wohlgemuth lived here. Gut Sendykowczysna was also purchased by a Russian general.

Scattered in neighboring villages were small groups of Mennonites who purchased property among the Protestant-Lutheran settlers. The municipality Deutsch-Kasun had members in Grochaly, Malowies, NeuhoferKämpe, CzosnowerKämpe, Neuhoof, Montau, Szamocin, Ozarow, Januszew, Elsenbruch (Olszynek), Targowek, Tomaszew, Josefow, Marcelin and Glusk.

The following names were found in the Mennonite community of Deutsch-Kasun: Adrian, Albrecht, Baltzer, Bartel, Block, Buller, Dirks, Ediger, Eckert, Ewert, Flaming, Foth, Frantz, Funk, Gedert, Goede, Goertz, Guhr, Harn, Harm, Jantz, Kasper, Kerber, Ketler, Klaus, Kliewer, Knels, Koehn, Kolmert, Koppert, Lehrmann, Matis, Nachtigall, Neumann, Nickel, Pauls, Penner, Peters, Petker, Plennert, Ratzlaff, Regier, Rosenfeld, Schmidt, Schroeder, Siebert, Stubbe, Tjahrt, Unruh, Vogel, Vogt, Willms, Wohlgemuth, Zimmermann.

The largest expansion of the community of Deutsch-Kasun occurred in the time after the third Polish partition, when these areas came under Prussian control. It is safe to assume that this favored the development.

At the time of the initial settlement of Deutsch-Kasun, the community had no ordained Elders. Elders from West Prussia officiated baptism and communion celebrations. The first Elder elected in Deutsch-Kasun was said to have been Salomon Kohnert, whose wife was Anna, née Bartel. His successor was the previously mentioned Elder Peter Schroeder. Both Elders lived in Markowczysna. Exact data about these two first Elders of Deutsch-Kasun is missing. In 1832 Johann Bartel, 35 years old, was elected teacher and one year later he was elected and ordained as elder. He had served the community for 30 years as teacher and elder and died on 18 February 1862.

During the term of the Elder Johann Bartel the following were chosen as Preachers: Gerhard Nickel (elected 1828) from Malowies, Heinrich Nickel (elected 1832) from Deutsch Czastkow, Peter Goertz from Malowies, Peter Schroeder from Borki, Zacharias Bartel from Deutsch-Kasun and Heinrich Bartel from Deutsch Czastkow. The latter was elected teacher at the age of 31 in 1861. We will report on him later. (See also appendix.)

Deacons in this time were Peter Bartel (elected 1833) from Markowczysna and Peter Bartel (elected 1828) from Deutsch-Kasun. In 1852, 24 people were baptized in the village of Deutsch-Kasun, of which 10 were boys and 14 were young women. The Holy Communion was attended by 244 persons, 104 male and 140 female members.

## v. The Mennonite Community Deutsch-Wymyschle

In his notes on the life and history of the Mennonite community Deutsch-Wymyschle, Robert Foth has equated the founding of the community Deutsch-Wymyschle with that of Deutsch-Kasun. He indicates 1762 as the founding year. It is easy to imagine that the settlers were familiar with the Vistula lowlands at Plock because those who wanted to get to Warsaw had to travel through there and this encouraged some of them to settle here.<sup>1</sup> First of all, it was not so far away from their former homeland, where they had left relatives and friends. A much more important factor was probably that the Mennonites were divided at that time into two camps and would not like to be in a common settlement. Earlier it was pointed out that the community Przechowka in the Kulm lowlands belonged to the "old Flemish" group.<sup>2</sup> The settlers of Kasun belonged to the Frisian or "*groben*" group. It was therefore obvious that the "fine" Old Flemish would settle separately from them. There are no name directories of the first settlers, because they belonged to the "rough" Mennonites, but later groups and emigration were recorded by Robert Foth in the



Familie Robert Foth, Alfonsow, jetzt Uruguay, Südamerika. Robert Foth hat viel Material zur Geschichte von Wymyschle gesammelt.

Family Robert Foth, Alfonsow, now [1971] in Uruguay, South America. Robert Foth has collected a lot of material on the history of Wymyschle.

1) Nasarski, P., *Von der Weichsel an den Rhein*, page 17

2) *Mennonitisches Lexikon*, Volume III, page 404

old church books, which were unfortunately lost in the Second World War, and here it is clear that all immigrants of the time, covered by Foth, came from old Flemish settlements.

The old church book kept by Elder Leonhard Ratzlaff, which I also have in my father's house, doesn't go back to the beginning of the community. The first book was destroyed by fire, so a new one had to be created. Foth has already pointed out in his records that the parish Przechowka partially moved to the Vistula delta and founded the villages of Brenkenhofswalde and Franzthal there. Shortly before this resettlement of a part of the Gemeinde of Przechowka, a group of them had moved up the Vistula and established a settlement known as Tscherminoberg. It included the whole Vistula lowland near Plock, northeast of the town of Gombin. The land had belonged to the good Czermno, who had sold these marshy meadows to the Mennonites. There was a regular traffic between the three settlements Przechowka, Brenkenhoffswalde-Franztal and Tscherminoberg.

An article from the *Mennonitisches Lexikon* talks about how close this connection remained. Stobbe reported here about a woman named Kuchenbecker, née Schmidt, who was of Mennonite descent, and concluded as follows: "Her maternal grandparents, along with many others, immigrated from Neumark near Driesen to these 'villages' in 1823 and 1824, at least to the sites that were abandoned by the Mennonites in the years 1818 to 1820, but then in the 1930s, they relocated once again to the Black Sea, including some who came from Plock in Poland." All this data can be found in Robert Foth's lists. Each time a major resettlement was made in the other two groups, some moved to the lowlands near Plock. In his "Aufzeichnungen" Foth writes: "In addition to the 32 families who left Przechowka for the Netzebruch in 1764, a smaller group from Przechowka came to Poland in the same year, who joined the Mennonites in Wymyschle here. In the years 1818 to 1820, 1823 and 1824, the municipalities in Poland received further growth from West Prussia and the Netzebruch, both families and single people who already had relatives here."

In this connection, the description in the *Mennonitisches Lexikon* of the emigration of the community Brenkenhoffswalde to Russia is interesting: "Lange and his family were informed on 10 January 1834 by the Russian Consulate General in Danzig that the Emperor of Russia had approved the immigration under the following conditions: 1.) presentation of emigration permission from the Prussian government, 2.) May only immigrate families that have at least 5 members, 3.) a

3) *Mennonitisches Lexikon*, volume III, page 406

4) *Mennonitische Rundschau*, May 29, 1968, page 14

total of 800 rubles per family to be deposited with the consulate, which will be refunded to them after arrival in Russia. In the same year 1834, 40 families moved to Russia and first found lodging in Alexanderwohl, but then founded the village of Gnadenfeld. As a consequence, the Mennonite community at Brenkenhoffswalde was dissolved."<sup>5</sup>

What happened to those who could not meet these three conditions? We find them in the lists of Robert Foth again. Just in time small families and individuals have arrived. Many of them later migrated to Gnadenfeld when they were able to, but some stayed in Deutsch-Wymyschle.

How busy this time actually was for the community of Deutsch-Wymyschle can be seen from a comparison of the lists of immigrants with those of the emigrants. \*) The list of Mennonites immigrated to West Deutsch-Wymyschle from West Prussia and Neumark contains 234 names, of which approximately 25% came from Brenkenhoffswalde and Franztal in the Neumark, 70% from West Prussia, and about 5% could not be identified. The birth places are arranged alphabetically as follows: Alt Bielitz 1, Brenkenhoffswalde 22, Deutsch-Konopath 10, Dorposch 9, Dulinowa 4, Franztal 15, Gluchowka 1, Gogolin 1, Grentze 3, Gross-Lublin 2, Gross-Lunau 2, Gross-Nessau 1, Gross-Sanskau 1, Hohenwalde1, Jamerau 2, Jamerauerhorst 1, Jurke 1, Klein-Lubin 2, Klein-Lunau 2, Klein Nessau 5, Kleinsee 3, Kompany 3, Lunau 1, Montau 1, Neubuden 4, Neudessau 1, Neusatz 2, Niederausmass 4, Nieder-Gruppe 3, Nischewka 29, Ober-Gruppe 1, Ostrower Kempe 17, Podwitz 2, Przechowka 17, Rehhof 1, Sanskau 6, Schöneich 2, Schönsee 1, Schweinegrube 1, Steinwage 1, Strijowka 3, Treuel 5, Venedia 3, Vinodigen 1, Wilhelmsbruch 2, Zieglerhuben 1, Unknown 33.

The year of immigration could not always be determined. Only when families, with children who were born in the old homeland and then another child were born in the new homeland, could an approximate date of immigration date be determined. Before 1800 only one birth was recorded in Poland, then the following compilation could be made (the numbers refer to whole families):

Time of Immigration	Neumark	West Prussia	Totals
1801 – 1810	-	2	2
1811 – 1820	4	5	9
1821 – 1830	3	5	8
1831 – 1840	7	15	22
1841 – 1850	3	11	14
1851 – 1860	-	7	7
	17-27.5%	45-72.5%	62-100%

By 1900, 130 persons had emigrated from Deutsch-Wymyschle and the neighboring villages, 60 of them to Russia, 6 to Volhynia,

5) *Mennonitisches Lexikon*, Volume I, page 263

\*) See Appendix

34 to the US and 30 to unknown places. It can be safely assumed that these too have been distributed evenly among the above three groups.

In the directory we find the majority of the names we have already mentioned in connection with Kasun. But some are different, and that's why I put these names in alphabetical order here: Adrian, Balzer, Bartel, Block, Buller, Dirks, Dreher, Fischer, Foth, Frey, Funk, Geddert, Gerbrandt, Gertz, Görtz, Heier, Jahn, Jantz, Janzen, Kasper, Kerber, Kessler, Kliwer, Konke, Konrad, Kraft, Kühn, Kurzweg, Dyck, Ediger, Ekkert, Ewert, Luther, Lyhrmann, Nachtigal, Nehring, Nickel, Pankratz, Pauls, Penner, Ratzlaff, Rosenfeld, Rossol, Schmidt, Schroeder, Thessmann, Unruh, Wedel, Wilms, Wohlgemuth.

In all likelihood, the lists of Robert Foth only cover the members of the "*Alten Flaminger*" [Old Flemish], because they are taken from the church book of this community. Some of the former settlers were part of the Frisian group and were later looked after by the community of Deutsch-Kasun, but gradually the difference between the Flemish and Frisian, as they were generally called, the fine and the course: Mennonites, became blurred. We will later discuss the relationship of these settlements to each other.

The connections of blood relatives in West Prussia, Russia and America were never completely broken. A cousin of my grandfather, Uncle Jakob Wichert, who was in the Montau group community and most recently retired in Graudenz, regularly communicated with grandfather. After his death, my uncle and father inherited his estate because he had no children. Also, I can vividly remember the visits of various Ohms [church leaders] from Prussia. Teacher W. Kerber,<sup>6</sup> who wrote the articles about Deutsch-Kasun and Deutsch-Wymyschle in Volume I of the *Mennonitisches Lexikon*, was the guest of my parents when he was in Wymyschle. Father later visited him once more in Thorn. Those in Russia were still connected with those in central Polish Mennonite communities because they were both in the same empire. The issues of defenselessness were resolved together. Our young men served in various forests in southern Russia. Also, preachers from Russia visited us,<sup>7</sup> and some families emigrated to Russia after 1900 to find new opportunities. Some have also disappeared in Russia.

In summary, I would like to mention here what the "*Mennonitisches Lexikon*" has to say about the early history of Deutsch-Wymyschle: "Wymyschle, a Mennonite colony in Poland, was established near Plock in the second decade of the 19th century their first preacher was Jacob Pankratz, followed by three other preachers in 1817. The immigrants came from West Prussia and from the villages of Brenkenhoffswalde and Franztal in the Neumark. The following West Prussian places of origin

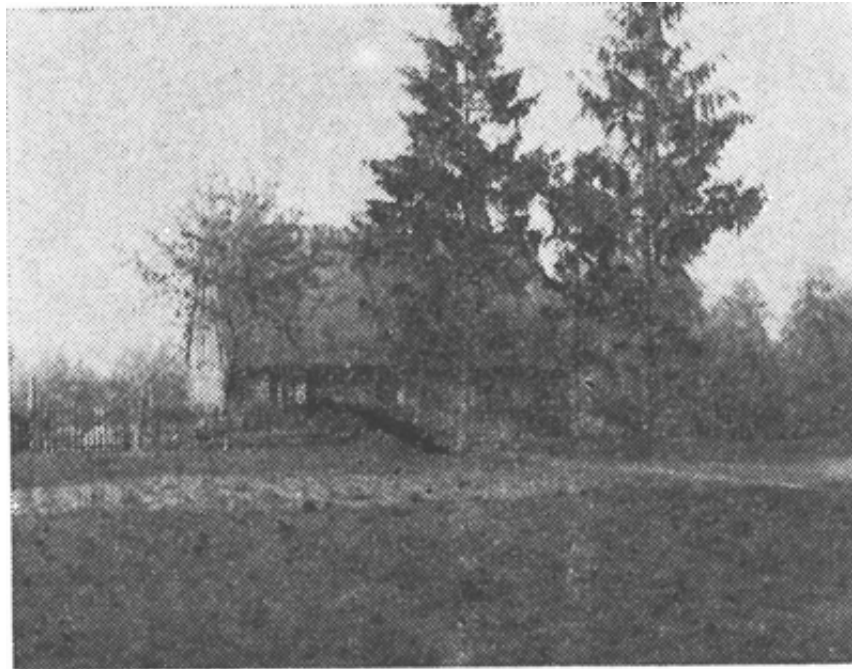
6) *Mennonitisches Lexikon*, Volume I, pages 419-420

7) Friesen, P.M., Op. cit., page 479

are mentioned in the church register of the municipality: Treul and Sanskau in the Sartowitzer-Neuenburger lowlands, *Wintersdorf* (Przechowka), Deutsch Konopath, Glugorken in the small Schwetzer lowlands, *Ehrental* (Ostrower Kempe), Dorposch and Lunau in the *Schönsee-Kulm* lowlands and finally *Kleinsee* (Jezioro). The relations with the Mennonite communities Montau and Schoensee were initially lively and were maintained by frequent pastoral visits. Because of the border difficulties, this connection was later severed, so that the pastoral care of the parish was cared for by the Mennonite congregations in southern Russia. Peter Buller, Czerneberg, was elected preacher in 1836, and Elder in 1838. This church book goes back to 1815."<sup>8</sup>

How can the contradictory founding data be explained? There is no doubt that the "Old Flamingen" or "Fine" Mennonites came to Deutsch-Wymyschle in the second decade of the nineteenth century. They bought the properties of the Protestant-Lutheran founders and founded the community Deutsch-Wymyschle. The church book was then created in 1815. However, there had already been a "Frisian" community in the Vistula lowland, which more and more withdrew and those who remained then joined the community of Deutsch-Kasun. I was told by my grandfather, Elder Peter Ratzlaff that the Frisian "rough" of Deutsch-Kasun were included when the Lord's Supper was celebrated.

It is mentioned in Robert Foth and also in the "Mennonitisches Lexikon" that the wooden church had been built together with the school on the school property. This was the case in all Protestant settlements. The teacher was also the cantor of the village church. This school burned down in 1854<sup>9</sup>



Ehemalige Dorfschule in Wymyschle (1971).

Former village school in Wymyschle (1971).

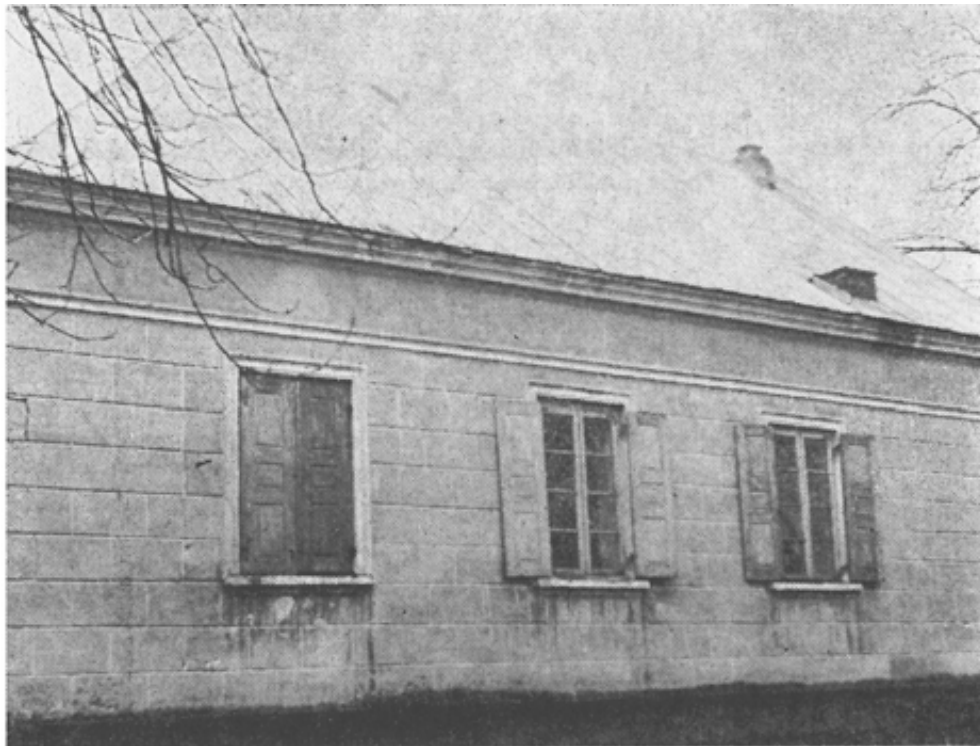
8) *Mennonitisches Lexikon*, Volume IV, page 576

9) Loc. cit.

from (according to R. F. 1860-1864). The school was now built on the school land without a prayer house, while in 1863 the church was built on a different site and was made of bricks and had a tin roof.

The above can also be seen in the report by W. Kerber, who writes: "The founding year is unknown, but the community appears to be more recent than the neighboring municipality of Deutsch-Kasun, the one on the Vistula which lies about 8 (German) miles upstream. It consists of two autonomous communities, each with its own Elders and teaching services. Both congregations have a church they share, a beautiful massive brick building, which was built in 1864 and was donated to the congregation by the Luther family, who once lived there and were a prominent family".<sup>10</sup>

In the writings of Robert Foth, we read: "Around the years 1860-1864 the house of prayer burned down. The construction of a new house of prayer began immediately, to which the present owner of the Wymyschle estate, Mr. Michael Luther, donated all the materials including bricks, lumber and sheet metal for the roof. Then, according to the Mennonite style, a beautiful house of prayer was built, which could hold about 300 to 400 people."<sup>11</sup>



Kirche der Mennonitengemeinde Deutsch-Wymyschle, im Jahre 1864 erbaut.

Church of the Mennonite congregation Deutsch-Wymyschle, built in 1864.

10) *Mennonitisches Lexikon*, Volume I, page 420

11) *Mennonitische Rundschau*, May 29, 1968, page 14

The preacher and Elder Peter Buller who is mentioned in the "Mennonitisches Lexikon" can be found in the lists of R. Foth again. After this entry, Peter Buller was born on August 21, 1789, in Brenkenhoffswalde. His wife was Helene, née Buller, also born in Brenkenhoffswalde on August 22, 1790. There they were married on November 5, 1812. Her children were Tobias, born August 31, 1813; Peter, born 2 December 1814; Heinrich, born March 14, 1817, all in Brenkenhoffswalde. However, a daughter Friederike was born in Deutsch-Wymyschle (Czerneberg) on January 17, 1824. Elder Peter Buller died on 24 October 1860 and was buried in the cemetery in Deutsch-Wymyschle. His son Heinrich moved to Gnadenfeld, Russia, but returned to Deutsch-Wymyschle.<sup>12</sup>

Robert Foth mentions as Elders and teacher Wedel, Frey, B. Unruh and J. Foth. The first three can be found in the list of Mennonite immigrants. Peter Wedel was born on January 8, 1793, in Deutsch-Konopath, West Prussia, and married his wife Maria in Przechowka on November 11, 1818, but their children were born in Franztal. Peter Wedel died on September 1, 1855, in Deutsch-Wymyschle. His son Franz rode with the insurgents in the Polish uprisings in 1863 and had to flee to the United States in North America.

Peter Frey was born on November 11, 1796, in Gluchowka, West Prussia, his wife Anna, née Janzen, came from Brenkenhoffswalde and was born there on November 29, 1806. They were married on October 13, 1822, but the place is not specified. Since they had no children, the date of immigration cannot be determined. Frey died in Deutsch-Wymyschle on January 21, 1865, and his wife died on February 25, 1874.

Benjamin Unruh was born on December 16, 1824, in Deutsch-Wymyschle, the son of David and Elisabeth, née Penner, married Maria, née Wedel, who was born in Deutsch-Wymyschle on 17 January 1826. They first lived in Deutsch-Wymyschle, but then moved to Leonow, a neighboring village, from where they emigrated in the 1860s as a whole family with seven children to the United States. His brother, Heinrich, was the grandfather of the wife of Robert Foth, Uruguay.

On my visit to Newton, Kansas, I found an important booklet, in the history library of Bethel College that Dr. Cornelius Krahn has kindly lent me along with other books. It has the rather long title: "Name Directory of the Mennonite Churches in Germany, Galicia, Poland and Russia, as well as their elders, preachers and song leaders", published in 1881 in Danzig and printed by Edwin Groening. The name directory was published by J. Mannhardt on behalf of the Elders and teachers of the West Prussian Mennonite communities. On page 67 of this booklet, we find the following table:

12) *Mennonitisches Lexikon*, Volume IV, page 576

## L. Churches in Poland

Churches of Deutsch Wymyschle at Gombin and Soda, Gostiner Kreis.

Names of Elders, teachers and deacons	Place of Residence	Elected in the year	Remarks
Elders: Gerhard Bartel	Czarnynowy	1855	Assumed office on June 20, 1869 (?)
Jakob Foth	Deutsch-Wymyschle	1874	ditto April 4, 1875
Teacher: Jakob Schröder	--	1866	
Peter Kliewer	Polnisch Winczemin	1875	
Deacon: Heinrich Ratzoff	Deutsch Wimisle	1862	The Deutsch-Wymyschle church has 150 members.

The typographical errors made in this entry are probably due to the unclear handwriting of the secretary. The headline should read: "Churches in Deutsch-Wymyschle at Gombin and Sady, Gostyniner Kreis."

The residence of the Elder Gerhard Bartel should be called "Czermno Nowe", although this name was not used in my time. Today the Poles call the place "Wymyschle Nowe". The place of residence of the teacher Peter Kliewer is Polish Wionczemin, and the deacon was Heinrich Ratzlaff. Elder Gerhard Bartel has no further data. Neither in the lists of Robert Foth, or other sources is anything mentioned about him. Only in the records of preacher Johann Kliewer is it mentioned that he was baptized by Elder Gerhard Bartel. In contrast, the origin and fate of Elder Jakob Foth are well known. His grandfather, also a Jakob Foth, was born on April 24, 1787, in Dorposch, West Prussia. Helene Nachtigal, who was born on 2 December 1787 on the Ostrower Kaempe, married him there on 4 August 1810, and three children were born to them, namely Elisabeth on 3 August 1816, Anna on 16 December 1817 and Peter on June 6, 1819. Anna was my great-grandmother, the mother of Elder Peter Ratzlaff, my grandfather. Peter Foth had seven children from three marriages. The first marriage with Maria, née Frey, born on October 10, 1820, in Deutsch-Wymyschle, produced the aforementioned Elder Jakob Foth, born on the 13th. December 1839. From the second marriage with Eva, née Wedel, born March 31, 1821, in Niederausmass, Prussia, married on July 21, 1840, produced

two children, Peter, born on February 22, 1843, who lived on Strzemeszno, and Wilhelmine, born 16 November 1844. From third marriage with Wilhelmine, née Wedel, born January 17, 1825, in Deutsch-Wymyschle, four children were produced, of which the second, Julianne, born May 4, 1850 was my maternal grandmother.



Großmutter Julianne Bartel (Wohlgemuth), geb. Foth, mit ihren Kindern Vorne, v.l.n.r.: Tochter Anna Ratzlaff, geb. Wohlgemuth, Großmutter Julianne Bartel, Tochter Wilhelmine Bonkowski, geb. Wohlgemuth; hinten: Schwiegersohn Leonhard P. Ratzlaff, Schwiegertochter Mathilda Bartel, geb. Kliewer, Sohn David Bartel, Tochter Hulda Bartel, Schwiegersohn Johann Bonkowski.

Grandmother Julianne Bartel (Wohlgemuth), née Foth, with her children in front, from left to right: daughter Anna Ratzlaff, née Wohlgemuth, grandmother Julianne Bartel, daughter Wilhelmine Bonkowski, née Wohlgemuth; Back: son-in-law Leonhard P. Ratzlaff, daughter-in-law Mathilda Bartel, née Kliewer, son David Bartel, daughter Hulda Bartel, son-in-law Johann Bonkowski.

Jakob Foth was a tall, fat man, which is why he also called "de deck, groot Juob Foth. "My grandfather Peter Ratzlaff told me a lot about his cousin, and once they both had to visit the Protestant-Augsburg pastor Bando in Gombin in church matters. When he saw the fat man, he said: "If that is a 'fine' Mennist, now I want to see a 'rough'!" He was married to Wilhelmine, née Schmidt, born on 11. May 1839. They were married on May 16, 1859. They had six children, and he died of intestinal obstruction in terrible pain on January 5, 1885.

The teacher named Jacob Schroeder, born on August 20, 1840 in Oijin, son of David Schroeder from Gross Nessau, and his second wife Anna, née Gerbrandt, who was born in Wilhelmsbruch,

lived in Deutsch-Wymyschle from 1866, when he was elected teacher. His wife was Wilhelmine, née Ratzlaff, born on August 28, 1839, in Deutsch-Wymyschle, daughter of Deacon Heinrich Ratzlaff. They were married on May 13, 1860 and died on July 20, 1910. This marriage produced 14 children.

Teacher Peter Kliewer was born the son of Peter and Maria, née Schroeder, born March 27, 1848, in Polish Wionczemin, married Aganetha, née Foth, who was born on October 20, 1848, in Markowczysna, community Deutsch-Kasun. They were married on November 2, 1871. He died on March 14, 1930. Two of his sons went to the USA; Heinrich, born 1882, died on May 25, 1962, in Balko, Oklahoma. Paul, born 1894, last lived in California. Son Franz Kliewer came to Canada after the Second World War, lived for a long time in Arnold, B.C., then in Clearbrook, where he died on July 29, 1968.

The deacon Heinrich Ratzlaff is the great-grandfather of my wife. Born on May 5, 1814, he was the son of Jacob and Katharina, née Pankratz, in Deutsch-Wymyschle. His wife was Wilhelmine, née Unruh, born on February 17, 1817, in Deutsch-Wymyschle. They married on November 24, 1836, and their eldest daughter, Helene, who was born on August 17, 1837, was the mother of Franz Ratzlaff, my wife's father. Helene's husband was August Ratzlaff, who was born on 12 April 1838 on Ostrower Kaempe, West Prussia. Deacon Heinrich Ratzlaff died in Deutsch-Wymyschle on December 22, 1887. \*)

Finally, I would like to quote what R. Foth says in his notes on the time of the first settlement: "All the Mennonites, wherever they settled, cultivated the soil in their new and, in some cases, very inhospitable homelands. They did this work courageously and the Lord blessed their efforts. But the Mennonites in the low-lying areas had to fight the floods of the Vistula many times to finally see their efforts yield fruit. The consequences of this were that many Mennonites emigrated from the low lying villages to America or Russia."<sup>13</sup>

## VI. The Mennonite community Wola-Wodzinska

(First beginnings of MB community)

As the third Mennonite congregation in Central Poland, we have to look at the Wola-Wodzinska community in the district of Ciechanow. Kneifel says that this settlement was begun in 1820. The "Mennonitisches Lexikon" has only a short note about this church:

\*) The family trees, current to the present day, are in the "Family Register" published by me.  
13) *Mennonitische Rundschau*, May 29, 1968, page 14

"Wola Wodnicka (Wola-Wodzinska), Polish village near Plock (Plock). Around 1900, on the right bank of the Vistula near Plock, there was a small Mennonite congregation Wola-Wodnicka, which had its own house of prayer, but many of its church members emigrated to America. The church dissolved and the Mennonite families living in that area by 1945 had moved to either Deutsch-Kasun or to Deutsch-Wymyschle."<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, this brief report contains many factual mistakes. Wola-Wodzinska was not a Polish village. It was founded as a Mennonite settlement. It was about 90 kilometers from Plock and almost as far from Warsaw. The three communities formed a triangle, whose baseline is the Vistula River. The small town near Wola-Wodzinska was called Plonsk, hence the change to Plock. (See map, page 26) The "Mennonite Encyclopedia" has a detailed article by Dr. Cornelius Krahn, who also agrees factually. I translate freely what is written there about Wola-Wodzinska: "Wola-Wodzinska, Mennonite church, near Plonsk, located northwest of Warsaw, Poland, was a branch of the Mennonite church of Deutsch-Kasun. The name list of the Prussian Mennonites mentions this community for the first time in 1843, (p. 34) when the following preachers were listed: Franz Ewert (1818), Benjamin Foth (1837), Jacob Köthler (1842) and Heinrich Kliwer (1842) , Heinrich Kerber and Heinrich Kliwer were both elected in 1842 as deacons. The fact that 1842 is given four times as the year of the election of community workers, could indicate that in this year the community was organized."

"In 1857, in addition to Jacob Köthler and Heinrich Kliwer, a Peter Froms is mentioned as a preacher." The deacons were the same."<sup>2</sup>

Again, the sources do not agree as to the year of foundation. Kneifel gives 1820 as a year of foundation of the village, as well as the neighboring village Kicin.<sup>3</sup>

However, Eduard Kupsch writes in his "History of the Baptists in Poland ": "Around the year 1842, this area was covered by a dense, gloomy forest. Germans, Mennonites and Lutherans, founded the place ... Under a lot of hardship and misery, the forests were cleared, creating the fields that flourished later. Many families spent years of misery in earthen huts, because the fields did not yield well in the first few years and people could barely pay their dues, much less satisfy their own needs, or think of building a house. But as prosperity increased over the years, the result was drunkenness. By the year 1858 we find

1) *Mennonite Lexicon*, Volume IV, page 554

2) *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, Vol. IV, page 842

3) Kneifel, E., *Geschichte der Evangelisch-Augsburgischen Kirche in Polen*, page 101

a drunkard in almost every house in Kicin. On the Lord's Day, for the most part young and old spent their time amidst hustle and bustle of the tavern. Although many honorable people deplored such abominations, the negligent went to the school at Wola-Wodzinska and Dombrowa, where a Sunday morning sermon was read by the village school teacher and the poor people continued to be in spiritual darkness."

What Kupsch writes about the neglect of the settlers in this area, applies to some extent also to other settlements of this time. The spiritual life of these people had reached a low point, which made a change absolutely necessary. And change did come.

It is very important to me that I can describe these events quoting Eduard Kneifel, who is definitely not a friend of the Baptists: "After the Polish uprising in 1830/31, the provinces of Kalisch and Petrikau experienced a revival during which many of the Protestant villagers expressed their spiritual awakening in hours of prayer and attention to edifying teaching. The secular clergy not only did not understand the revival of religious life, but inhibited and hindered it, even with inappropriate means and measures. The consistory believed that it could abolish the private prayer and edifying lessons with a command. Of course, they did not succeed. There was a sincere desire for religious fellowship, even outside the established church.

The village teacher was Friedrich Alf (born 1831 in Ossow near Pultusk; died 1898 in Mogilnica). He was dismissed as Cantor by the [Lutheran] Consistory for his edifying lessons and, despite his efforts at rehabilitation, was not reinstated. "As the most dangerous man in the land, whose sin was not forgiven, outlawed, he was shown the door and gate of the holy consistory." Not understood and dropped by the consistory, Alf became a Baptist and over the years became its soul and spokesman.

The Baptists brought a man named Asmann from East Prussia to the Vistula lowlands. Through Asmann, Alf came into contact with the Baptist preacher Weist from Stolzenberg, East Prussia and his associate preacher Gnass. The Baptists first assigned Weist to the village Adamov in the area of the Lutheran community of Pultusk. On November 28, 1858, preacher Weist baptized the first nine and the next day at the same place another 17 people.

In 1859 Alf went to the Onckenian School of Mission Hamburg, where he was ordained a Baptist preacher. After returning home, he established a Sunday school in Adamov and undertook 'three major missionary journeys'. Alf's close associates were Reschke, Tober and Schulz. The court in Pultusk had jurisdiction over their teaching, organization and missionary efforts and issued an edict that only Baptists were allowed to gather for their services.

4) Kupsch, E., *Geschichte der Baptisten in Polen*, page 59



Prediger Friedrich Alf, Begründer des Baptismus in Polen.

Preacher Friedrich Alf, founder of the Baptist [Church] in Poland.

All non-Baptists were expressly excluded from their meetings so that the new privilege would not be extended to them. Violations of the edict could be punishable. Alf and his cohorts did not honor edict, and continued to work as before. ..

From Adamov the Baptist sponsored evangelization in other places and districts such as Kicin. As late as the 1840s, the Kicin area covered thick, impenetrable forest, which Count Kicinski sold to German settlers, Lutherans and Mennonites to be cleared and settled. After years of hardship and privation, the colony Kicin prospered. In 1860 the Baptists flourished here and in the surrounding area. After a decade, a Baptist chapel was built in Podole.

The further development of Baptists was characterized by internal strife,

external hostilities and the onset of the emigration movement. The intra-Baptist dispute concerned the question of compulsory military service. The Mennonites who joined the Baptists forfeited their former military freedom, while the Baptists from the Protestant-Augsburg church were subject to conscription. All this led to disagreements and segregation among the Baptists. Later the controversy included the question of foot washing at the Lord's Supper."<sup>5</sup>

E. Kupsch said the following about the relations of the Baptists to the Mennonites:<sup>6</sup> "In 1858, a man named Shill moved from Adamov to Kicin, not yet a Baptist, but loving the Lord and giving testimony of Christ by word and walk. In the same year, a Baptist, Johann Penner, from the Mennonite community, visited his relatives in Wola-Wodzynska from Adamov. The purpose of his visit was to lead his friends to Jesus. He spoke openly of the experience of his soul and asked all to come to the savior of their souls. This testimony caused a great stir among the population, because nobody wanted to be lost. But other listeners resented what Penner was saying and sued him, so he was arrested and sent home in chains. After 10 days of exhausting and painful transport and time in prison, he regained his freedom, with instructions to never visit Wola-Wodzynska again. Because of what Penner had suffered great things happened. The good seed bore rich fruits. The only unusual news of that time was that the Mennonites quarreled about the proper biblical mode of baptism; but it must also be said that they, inspired by Penner, turned to the Holy Scriptures and diligently studied them. "

"On July 20, 1860, Alf came to Kicin. The Mennonite Peter Ewert, later a Baptist missionary, welcomed Alf and his travel companions and opened his home for the meetings. "...

The internal quarrel began in Kicin between the two groups coming from the Mennonites and those who came from the Lutheran Church. The subject of the dispute was first of all, should military service be provided, and if so, with or without a weapon? The 'Mennonite' Baptists wanted to maintain their principle and said, 'The Christian should not lift a sword against his enemies and must also stay out of the country's military service,' and decided to remain Mennonites in name, but otherwise fellowship with the Baptists. The others resisted that.

In addition to the question of compulsory military service, there was a dispute over the view of

5) Kneifel, E., *Geschichte der Evangelisch-Augsburgischen Kirche in Polen*, pages 140-142

6) Kupsch, E., *Geschichte der Baptisten in Polen*, excerpts from pages 59-65

Mennonite-minded Baptists about the foot washing and the Lord's Supper. This controversy was more detrimental to the development of their work, and the fact that more damage did not occur was attributable to various influential personalities at home and abroad, who made every effort to settle the dispute and restrain separatist ideas. Different perspectives of the Passion story contributed to this dispute. The community of Kicin followed Johann Penner, who as a former Mennonite had brought certain ideas from the Baptist church. He influenced his followers and began criticizing the Baptist doctrine and calling it not quite sufficient; he wanted to see the refusal of the arms service and to see foot washing introduced following the Lord's Supper.

In his capacity as preacher and Elder of the church, Penner arbitrarily ordained two of his members as preachers, for which he was excommunicated from the Baptist church in Adamov on August 4, 1861. For Penner, his actions had further ramifications. Peter Ewert, whom he had ordained as a preacher, was more gifted, and more beloved among the devout Mennonites, so that Penner soon was replaced. But Ewert did not last long either. His nonconformity included using his own baptismal rite as opposed to the usual practice in which he had the candidate kneel in the water and baptized them forward into the water. This arbitrary process of changing the Baptist baptismal practice became a distraction to many, so that the good impressions of his sermons were often blurred by his actions. Ewert soon realized his mistake, regretted it, and returned to the Baptists, where he later served as a missionary. Penner also returned to the Baptists in 1863.

Thus, the New Mennonite Church existed only for a short time; most of its members joined the Baptists and gave up the privileges they had enjoyed as Mennonites. During the brief period of their existence, the small group of believing Mennonites had to endure severe persecution.

Not far from Kicin, in Wola-Wodzynska, the faithful, about 20 in number, had left the Mennonites and gathered on the last day of Easter in 1862 in a private home for a worship service. In the evening hour, a mob from the nearby inn broke into the house unexpectedly. Then the Lutheran teacher of the village and an evangelical missionary - a former Jew – entered the meeting to disturb the Mennonite Baptists. These men did not come, as one might expect, for debate and discussion, but to intimidate with thick sticks, with ropes and to take prisoners. The confession of the Mennonites which avers: "they should not fight against any enemy," was put to the test. When they entered they made use of their weapons. The defenseless assembly was treated terribly. The mob bound the men's hands, dragged them out, and drove them all to

the village school, where there was a Mennonite preacher, but probably with an unconverted heart. The leaders of these riots against the defenseless crowd, the teacher and the missionary, had the pleasure of mistreating those who were restrained, including old, weak women, by reciting the Lutheran catechism to them. Those who were mistreated still bore signs of it several months later. The Mennonite preacher and Schulze were immediately ready to deliver the prisoners to the Wojt, a Catholic, who interrogated them and gave them freedom the next day, except for two strangers who were sent home.

These persecutions were not the only ones that the New Mennonite Church had to endure, but also the disagreements with the Baptists continued. The persecution of the faithful lasted until the year 1865." End of the excerpts from the book by Kupsch.

It is strange that this development in the Mennonite Church in Wola-Wodzinska took place almost parallel with the formation of the Mennonite Brethren Church in southern Russia. However, the two groups did not enter into a correspondence until after the founding of the Mennonite Brethren, as P. M. Friesen describes in his Mennonite story. After describing the baptism of the first brothers, who had baptized each other in the river, he begins to correspond: "In the winter of 1860/61, there was an exchange of letters with the Baptist preacher Alf in Poland and at the same time with Mennonite brother Peter Ewert, who the latter baptized each other along with a third Mennonite in 1861, after receiving a letter describing their baptismal practice from the Molotschna brothers. This letter was read to a large congregation of Mennonites, Lutherans, and Baptists, who then chose a teacher and began to baptize. They didn't want to do anything before we wrote, (Jakob Becker's letter to Claassen, December 3, 1861), even though they had the example of Alf's community nearby, which was organized on the basis of the German Hamburg Confession. -- From this correspondence it emerges that the question of military service and foot washing prevented complete unity between the Mennonite Brethren and the Baptists. We share some of this correspondence: 1) Jacob Becker to Johann Claassen, Petersburg from Rudnerweide, April 16, 1861, ..., From Poland (letter), ... that some have been baptized by the Baptist teacher Alf (before Ewert) and still remain Mennonites. Reimer and I have sent letters out on Christmas Eve (1860). .. The Baptist teacher Alf writes that we should write to him what we think about military service and.. . foot washing. The Mennonites write that they do not quite agree with the Baptists and Alf writes the same; they agree that they will only celebrate baptisms and the Lord's Supper with each other.' - 2) Alf to the brothers: Adamov, June 21, 1861 ... I think it's appropriate for me to send you one of our creeds so that you can understand our position on salvation.

Check scripture. My desire would be that we all had the same understanding of the teaching of Christ. We can't always agree with the Mennonite brothers on some points. I see many things against them, which does not seem right to me. First, what displeases me most, is that they have adopted a special form of baptism. We lay the baptized on his back, and so he gets into the water and is buried in the water; which is common practice in all churches in Germany, England, and America. The Mennonite brothers, according to their own interpretation, let the baptismal candidate kneel in the water and let him sit there for a long time; then placed him face down in the water. . . It also seems to me that it is incorrect for brothers to start baptizing, since there are proper clergy who could have baptized them ... (A small number of Mennonites had already been baptized by Alf, but most of them by Ewert, the first time 22, but later this good brother Ewert and a number of other already baptized Mennonites were rebaptized "Baptistically!". For a long time, the Mennonite Brethren Church of re-born Mennonites in Russia-Poland exists alongside the Baptists.) , , , The Mennonite brothers are also very sharply opposed to our practice: some say that if we do not accept everything as they do, we will be anti-Christians and will be lost. No one should go to military service, should rather take his own life, but go under no rifle ... The third piece is the foot washing (whereas he argues sharply) ... Your brother G. F. Alf " - 3) Peter Ewert to the Brothers: "Kicin, Sept. 5, 1861 ... We are now ridiculed and hated by everyone here, judged by some Baptist brethren to be an heretical people ... because we do not recognize the sword of revenge, and celebrate the foot washing after the Lord's Supper... and our baptism is not right ... Your fellow pilgrim Peter Ewert."<sup>7</sup>

To explain the discussion about the baptismal form, P. M. Friesen has the following very revealing footnote in his book: "The millions of Strict Baptists, however, come from England, where the Baptists in the individual communities are very independent (where baptism of children is permitted, if the parents want it), exceptions, as we eyewitnesses know the community of 'Brothers' or 'Dunker' in America (German Baptist Brethren Church), numbering more than 100,000 souls, baptizes the kneeling baptismal (candidate) thrice forward. So do the Eastern Churches when they baptize adults." It goes without saying that the practice happening in Wola-Wodzinska also penetrated to the other two communities, Deutsch-Kasun and Deutsch-Wymyschle, because there were close ties of kinship between their residents. But nothing is reported in Mennonite sources. Kneifel and Kupsch mention, however,

7) Friesen, P.M., *Alt-Evangelische Mennonitische Brüderschaft in Russland*, page 244

that the revival movement also spread to the area of the Mennonite congregation Deutsch-Wymyschle, or rather, to the surrounding area. Eduard Kupsch reports: "Yet the persecutions were unable to stop the spread of the kingdom of God. The church of God grew and grew steadily. Although the numbers were also greatly thinned by the repeated emigration, revivals took place in other places through which the gaps were filled. Kicin also started daughter churches in the most difficult time. In the town of Gombin, as well as in the neighboring factory Sanniki, located in the Wojewodschaft of Warsaw, much needed revivals emerged in 1864/65. God used a young carpenter named Aschendorf as a tool for a revival in Gombin. As a result of the turmoil during that time, Aschendorf had fallen into dire straits, which led him to turn to God for help. As a result, however, he fell into a second, even greater need of soul emergency. Now he also pleaded for forgiveness of his sins out of earthly misery. Then some people with whom Aschendorf came into contact with soon recognized their own depraved state of heart, whereupon they sought help with God and salvation from their sins. These distressed people gathered for communal prayer. With Freuder, Alf and Ewert who preached the crucified Christ to them and soon the fruit followed. After a short time several persons found peace in the blood of the Lamb."<sup>8</sup>

Kneifel describes the persecution, and the spread of Baptism as follows: "But grievous and more serious for them was the hostility of the Warsaw Augsburg [Lutheran] Consistory, its preachers, the subordinate authorities and the population. This is bitterly complained about in the Baptist publications, they bitterly complained about the Consistory and in particular, the preachers of Pultusk (Otto Hevelke), Przasnysz (Kasimil Lembke), Gombin (Wilhelm Bando) and others, who are referred to as enemies of the Baptists. . . They are charged with the massive reproach that they fought with carnal means and the misuse of the secular authorities. That the Baptist preachers and missionaries had (Alf, Wolf, Ewert Bese and Aschendorf) incarcerated, prosecuted, fined and hindered in their activity cannot be denied. These men deserve our respect for their commitment to their beliefs! However, individual pastors did not use God's word as the only defense and tactic in the confrontation with the Baptists but were often carried away by carelessness and bitterness to commit reckless acts. That the Baptists in their aggressive position against church and pastors often did not have a unified plan, was asserted vigorously and indignantly by congregations and pastors. In any case, after the baptism controversy, life was so appallingly bitter that those among them, who could, decided to emigrate to Volhynia and central Russia.

8) Kupsch, E., *Geschichte der Baptisten in Polen*, Page 82

Individual families had already left Poland in 1859; and numerous Baptists moved away from Adamov and other towns. The uprising of 1863-64 accelerated the pace of emigration even more, so that Baptists in Poland fused their small remnants. Since 1864, Adamov, instead of Kicin, became the center of the Baptist movement.

After a few years of stagnation, the Baptist ministry got a fresh start. In the regions of Mława, Sierpc, in the Gostynin and Gómbin area, in Dąbie, Effingshausen (Starowa Góra), Kurowek with Lask, Zdunska - Wola, Kamocin, Placiszewo, Żyrardów with Warsaw (Kapellenbau 1871) and elsewhere they were busy evangelizing.<sup>9</sup>

Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Cornelius Krahn for the following statement found in the *Mennonite Encyclopedia*: "In 1862 the Baptists in Wola-Wodzinska had about 20 followers who were Mennonites. The Baptist missionary Alf was quite active among them. He and Ewert also corresponded with the Mennonite brothers of Ukraine. The Mennonites of Poland, who were awakened and testified to their new Baptist faith, also shared the persecutions that broke out over this movement. They were pioneers of revival that spread throughout Poland and launched the Baptist movement, and at the same time they accelerated the decline of the smaller, struggling Mennonite groups and communities."<sup>10</sup>

I believe that this statement has grasped the essence of the case. I would also like to add what Adalbert Goertz says in the "*Mennonite Lexicon*" about the fate of the Wola-Wodzinska community: "As many of their church members emigrated to America, the community dissolved and the Mennonite families scattered in that area until 1945 to either Deutsch-Kasun or Deutsch-Wymysche."<sup>11</sup> We will see from the next chapter why this division took place, in which we will deal with the spiritual development in the area of the Deutsch-Wymysche community.

## VII. The Birth of the Mennonite Brethren in Poland

On the emergence of the Mennonite Brethren in southern Russia there are enough descriptions available, so that we can spare ourselves a repetition. A very thorough work was done by P. M. Friesen in the book written by him. We also pointed out in the previous

9) Kneifei, E., *Geschichte der Evangelisch-Augsburgischen Kirche in Polen*, page 142

10) *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, Vol. IV, page 842

11) *Mennonitisches Lexikon*, Volume IV, page 554

chapter that the Mennonites from the Wola-Wodzinska parish, especially preacher Peter Ewert, corresponded with the brothers in Southern Russia. In fact, for a while there was even a Mennonite Brotherhood in Wola-Wodzinska, which was too small to be viable. Therefore, their members joined the Baptist church in Kicin in the aftermath.

The effects of emigration from the Mennonite communities, however, were felt for a long time by the Mennonites in central Poland. Although they were now formally Baptists, kinship ties continued with the Mennonites in Wola-Wodzinska, as well as in Deutsch-Kasun and Deutsch-Wymyschle. Although there was no break in relationships between these two communities, some of their members have been influenced by the Gospel message that was circulated by the Baptists. Conversions took place; and if these new converts did not leave the church, they had an invigorating influence on the whole church. As an example, I would like to let the old uncle Johann Kliwer, who was already a preacher in the Mennonite church, but then later converted to the brethren, speak for himself. His records were written mainly for his son Wilhelm Kliwer, who lived in Hillsboro, Kansas. His children have made them available to me.

The Mennonite Encyclopedia brings the following brief note about him: "Kliwer, Johann, was one of the last Elders of the Mennonite community Deutsch-Wymyschle, Poland, he was ordained an Elder in 1885, and on 17 July 1893 he joined the newly established local Mennonite Brethren Church, where he continued to serve as a preacher. He was ordained a Co-Elder of the congregation on November 4, 1895. The Mennonite congregation Deutsch-Wymyschle chose Johann Schmidt as his successor, and he also joined the Mennonite Brethren Church."<sup>1</sup>

We find in the records of Johann Kliwer, preacher of the Mennonite Brotherhood Deutsch-Wymyschle, the following: "I, Johann Kliwer, was born on 1 August 1852 in the village of Polnisch Wionczemin, Czermno township, Gostynin district, province of Warsaw, Poland. My parents were Peter and Maria Kliwer, my father was born in Nischewka, West Prussia on June 22, 1803, and came here to Poland in about 1833. My mother is from the Deutsch-Kasun area and was born in Markowczyzna on March 30, 1817. Our family consisted of 12 brothers and sisters, of which 2 brothers and 1 sister died when very young, 7 brothers and 2 sisters grew up.

When I was 8 years old, our dear mother died and when I was 17 years old, my father died too. I received my schooling in the Village school at Deutsch Wionczemin, while my father was still alive. At the age of sixteen I was baptized on June 7, 1868, after a memorization of faith and I was accepted by

1) *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, Vol. III, page 204

Elder Gerhard Bartel into the Mennonite church in Deutsch-Wymyschle.<sup>2</sup>

I was brought up modestly in my parents' home, but I did not come to a renewal of my heart. After my father's death, I lost my parental home and found myself among strangers, where I soon lost the few good habits I had from my baptismal teaching, and so I lived my adolescence without God and prayer until I started to think of a life partner. Yes, I spent my teenage years there in the world, yet I did not do anything with the world, and I can only owe that to the grace of God, which gave me such character that I did not give myself up to the gross vices that befell those around me.

As I had the opportunity during my youth to observe the married life in different families, the desire rose up in me, could I make the choice that would allow me to lead a peaceful married life, since I saw that some of the marriages I observed were quite sad. That this could only happen through the grace of God, I knew, so in prayer I turned to God with my concern, and he heard me, and then found me a very dear young woman as a companion. This was, as far as I can remember, the first work that the Spirit of God did in my heart.

My bride's name was Emilie Wohlgemuth. She was also an orphan; her mother died when she was 13 years old and her father when she was 18 years old. Her parents were Heinrich Wohlgemuth and Anna, née Foth, both lived and died in Deutsch-Wymyschle, on land, which we later took over and on which we live now. At our betrothal, my lover told me that she had converted to the Lord and wanted to serve him, and that she entered into our marriage only on the condition that I would not disturb her in following Jesus, a commitment that I admired. I realized that it was also necessary for me to lead a renewed life. So it came about that we became engaged to marry. We were married on May 26, 1876, and from that day on we no longer allowed ourselves to regard ourselves as orphans, but rather a married couple. In the first year after our wedding I continued my usual employment while my dear wife's foster mother lived with us. When both of my wife's parents had died we took over their holdings, initially only on lease, but later we were able to buy out the other heirs. We had to be very careful with our finances in order to accomplish this but this was not difficult for us because we were thrifty by nature.

So that I should not sink into sin, and that the saving Lord could free me from my frivolous life, and win my heart for himself, and hear the favor of my dear wife,

2) *Namens-Verzeichnis der ... Mennoniten-Gemeinden* (1881), page 67.

I had to surrender to the power of his word and the work of his Holy Spirit had to use other means.

Not long after our marriage, I developed a bad ulcer on my left cheek, which caused me great pain and anxiety. Significant money was spent over two years on what was diagnosed to be a cancer. Finally the medical treatment brought about an unexpected cure. As soon as this was over, with the help of the Lord, other afflictions came. The Lord gave us children in our married life. The eldest four did not live long and had a very painful death. Since we as parents had to witness such things, our hearts were broken. I believe that this had to happen for my sake, and that the Lord came very close to my heart on this occasion. Often, I intended to change my life, but I was unable to do it until then. I did not submit to the solemn admonition of Psalm 32: 9. Consequently, the Lord had to avail himself of such means. These things that came upon us inspired me to listen to the spirit of the almighty God and his saving Word and succeeded in getting me to surrender to the Lord. I was now able to experience personally what the Lord's apostle had, what Jesus calls the imperishable seed according to 1 Peter 1, 23, and that the Word of God has the living power of grace to bring us to life from death, John 5, 24. From then on it became my life purpose,



**Familienbild des Predigers Johann Kliewer, 1912.**  
Family portrait of the preacher Johann Kliewer, 1912.

to seek and to research the words of God, which now more and more became a lamp to my feet and a light on my way.

Through various events that happened at the time, the Lord succeeded in sparking a revival in Deutsch-Wymyschle and environs, where several souls had longed to be saved, and the dear Savior also found these sincere seekers. Through continued search and inquiry in the Word of God, many came to a deeper understanding of God's counsel for the souls of salvation and the lives of the faithful, namely that they lived in obedience to the Word of God.

It was also the question of baptism, that is, who needed to be baptized and which mode of baptism was appropriate? Some came to the conclusion in their hearts that they had not properly understood their former baptism and that the baptismal practice was not biblical. Thus it happened that some decided to be rebaptized according to a better understanding of biblical baptism. At the same time, foreign preachers often came to visit us, who clearly proclaimed the word of God to us, as well as several brothers of the Mennonite Brotherhood from southern Russia, through whom also these souls, found clarity in the proper practice of baptism and the need to be rebaptized

This happened on the first in 1884. The baptized then joined the MB church and thus a small branch of the Friedensfeld MBC in southern Russia was created here in Deutsch-Wymyschle, because Elder Jacob Jantz from Friedensfeld baptized many. Deutsch-Wymyschle was only organized as an independent MB community on November 4, 1895.<sup>3</sup> A board of directors was ordained by the preacher brothers from Russia, Brother Peter Ratzlaff as the Elder, I, Johann Kliewer as preacher, and Brother Heinrich Wohlgemuth as deacon.

My dear wife and I were reborn on July 17, 1893 after 1 Peter 3, 21, were baptized and added to the Mennonite Brethren Church. Since I was already involved in the proclamation of the word in the old Mennonite congregation, it was immediately made my task to participate in the ministries within the MBC, and as much as the Lord gives strength to continue doing so. We had our meetings in the house of brother and sister Peter Ratzlaff in Deutsch-Wymyschle, who then became our Elder.

When the terrible world war broke out in 1914, Poland was soon occupied by the victorious German army, and soldiers were quartered in our village during the time when the battles were still in our area. Our assembly room was also seized, and so we could not gather there, and we then visited the services of the old Mennonite congregation, which until then they were able to hold unhindered in their prayer house. The church services were headed by Elder Rudolf Bartel and some preachers of the Deutsch-Kasun Mennonite congregation, with several Mennonite

3) Friesen, P.M., *Alt-Evangelische Mennonitische Brüderschaft in Russland*, p. 479

families from the Modliner and Neuhöfer surroundings lived here in Deutsch-Wymyschle. Just after the outbreak of the war, all the Germans living near the fortress of Modlin were driven out of their homes by the Russians, and they were only allowed to stay at a certain distance. As a result, quite a few Mennonites came from Deutsch-Kasun. Soon, the preachers and the Elders of the Kasun church asked us to help with the proclamation of the word. We gladly accepted this offer. So we preached with them alternately the whole time they stayed here, until July 1915 when their area was overtaken by the Germans Troops and they were allowed to return to their homes.

Now the Mennonite community here in Deutsch-Wymyschle remained without Elders and preachers, and we preachers of the MBC were left to lead the services in their homes. The Mennonite congregation was served here by Elders Rudolf Bartel from the Kasun congregation for baptism and communion services.

We have been able to stand together peacefully and together to build in the word of God. The good Lord carries us poor people with His merciful kindness to win each one to himself. Because he can achieve this through his blessed Word, there is opportunity everywhere. It is our sincerest prayer that the opportunity to preach his word will continue."

This concludes the notes of the preacher Johann Kliewer. What he told us about his bride will probably be said by many others. They had accepted the Lord as their personal Savior, but the time for an open confession had not yet come. At the same time, they positively influenced the spiritual life of their community. In the further development we will now follow the notes of Robert Foth, since other sources are partly very superficial. Some follow here. There is again especially P. M. Friesen, who writes the following:

### **The MBC Deutsch-Wymyschle in Russian Poland from 1884 to 1910.**

"We already saw the beginning of an MBC in Russian Poland (# 131c). But these first 'Mennonite Brethren' had almost all formally joined the Baptists. But then, about two decades later, a small number of people of Mennonite descent and legal status began again, to resume their Mennonite practices and equal 'like-mindedness' to seek connections with MBC in Southern Russia. The first baptisms took place here in 1884. After many visits by preachers, often made by the Elder Jakob Jantz, Friedensfeld, and preacher Wilhelm Dyck (now at Millerowo), Elder Jantz, (according to his own report), ordained Brother Peter Ratzlaff as Elder, Brother Johann Kliewer as co-Elder and Brother Heinrich Wohlgemut as deacon on January 4, 1895. Brother P. Ratzlaff often visited the MB communities in the south and east

of Russia as a guest preacher and conference participant. We have a short report of him from 1902 (in addition to that of Elder Jantz) ... The number of members at the end of 1908 was 90, that of all members was 139."<sup>4</sup>



Ältester Peter Ratzlaff mit Frau Wilhelmine, geb. Prochnau, vor der Tür seines Hauses, in dem bis 1914 die Versammlungen der MB-Gemeinde stattfanden.

Elder Peter Ratzlaff with wife Wilhelmine, née Prochnau, in front of the door of his house, in which the meetings of the MB Church took place until 1914.

P. M. Friesen's own report of Elder Jantz on the ordination of the church leadership in Deutsch-Wymyschle on November 4, 1895, was published by him in the *Zionsbote*, and we are able to quote from it directly:

### **Travel report from October 9 to November 13, 1895.**

At the annual meeting it was decided that I and Brother Wilhelm Dyck should go on a visit to Poland to order and organize church affairs among our Mennonite brothers and at the same time to confirm an Elder, a teacher and a deacon. For this purpose, I, myself and my house commanded by the grace of God, traveled October 9 from home to Milleradowka. The 10th I boarded the train and the 12th arrived safely to Warsaw, the capital of Poland. Here I visited Pufahl's siblings and looked forward to seeing them again. In the evening we had a meeting in Warsaw. On the 13th I traveled to a Mennonite family in the country, and from there to my biological sister, who had long been ill.

4) Friesen, P.M., *Alt-Evangelische Mennonitische Brüderschaft in Russland*, page 479

She was so happy about the reunion that she got better. For three days I was allowed to stay with her and the children and to preach the gospel twice before an attentive gathering. May the dear Savior give his blessing.

Then I drove to Wymyschle and then with Brother Ratzlaff to Warsaw. On the 19th I also met Brother Wilhelm Dyck here. On the 20th we petitioned the Governor for freedom to preach among the Mennonites living there, who had taken us there two years ago. The Lord helped us and we were given complete freedom to organize everything and to hold meetings, which also greatly pleased the brothers and sisters there. God bless our authorities for giving us protection and freedom to live our faith.

We were allowed to spend two Sundays in Deutsch-Wymyschle under rich, almost visible blessing. From far and wide, in spite of dark evenings, the people gathered, so that the houses could not contain the many guests. Twelve times we had meetings. But the meeting in which the brothers were ordained was especially large. The Lord Jesus blessed His word. We all had a great blessing.

Brother Ratzlaff was introduced as an Elder, brother Johann Kliewer as co-Elder, and Brother Wohlgemuth as deacon. The Lord bless them and give to all the dear brothers all the grace and humility to do the work of his kingdom and faithfully guide the ministry, as the Lord Jesus requires according in 2 Corinthians chapter 6.

We had a double funeral with Sister Kliewer. A daughter of about 6 1/2 years had died. Along with this, a child whose mother had died during delivery was buried. It was a solemn funeral. The Lord gave brother Dyck and me the grace to share the precious word of God. I spoke using the words in Matthew 21:16. In the churchyard I spoke using 1 Cor. 15 as a text to talk about death and life.

We spent three days in Kicin, and we had a blessed Sunday and four services. We also visited the brothers and sisters in Christ in their houses and we shared joy and suffering with each other. Wherever and whenever possible, we still visited friends. Much grace and blessings we have enjoyed in the short time in Poland among the family and friends. Everywhere we found a warm reception. The Lord rewarded them with all sorts of bodily and spiritual blessings.

We left Warsaw on the 2nd of November and arrived on the 11th to my children Johann Isaac on Nowo Chatki, in the past Adamovka. I came home on the 13th. The Lord has kept me safe and healthy on the journey and back to my own home. Praise him for everything.

I still report that the dear Lord has given us much grace in the conversion of many poor sinners. We were allowed to bring 55 precious souls onto the church through baptism. We rejoice in the abundant blessings of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory forever.

Recommending the intercession of the children of God as your fellow pilgrim draws closer to Zion along with Jakob Jantz.<sup>4a</sup>

Noteworthy is the fact that nowhere is it reported that as the nascent Mennonite Brethren congregated, a ban on assembly was put in place that put an end to two years of work. One can only guess who was behind this ban.

W. Kerber has the following short story to report about this development: "In 1895, there was the development of an outreach ministry to the community that has continued to this day and has become a great blessing for the whole church, insofar as the religious life of the community has picked up and there is a regular Sunday School. This new movement was strongly supported by the relationship the church, of about 200, maintained with the Mennonite Brethren in southern Russia, and practices the baptism of the adults and the foot washing after the Lord's Supper."<sup>5</sup>

The other sources that describe this story are more or less based on information from Robert Foth. This is true of both the "Mennonite Encyclopedia" and "The History of the Mennonite Brethren" by A. H. Unruh. So we'll have to stick to the information from these sources. Robert Foth writes: "The first conversion of Mennonites of the Deutsch-Wymyschle church to the MB Church took place in 1883, when the brothers Benjamin Schmidt, Arciechow, and his brother-in-law Heinrich Kliewer, Wymyschle, were baptized in Friedensfeld, South Russia, and accepted by the MBC there."<sup>6</sup>

We have previously pointed to the links between the MB Church in southern Russia and the Mennonite believers in Wola-Wodzinska, who were captive to the Baptists. Heinrich Kliewer came from Wola-Wodzinska, where most of his children were born. It was not until 1874 that he moved to Deutsch-Wymyschle. Jakob Jantz, Elder of the MB Church in Friedensfeld, had a sister in the area of Warsaw, whom he had mentioned in an 1895 report. He probably also communicated with other Mennonites in Poland. After all, Heinrich Kliewer and Benjamin Schmidt, who had been converted, were not willing to join the Baptists. So they made the long and arduous journey to Friedensfeld in Southern Russia, where they were baptized by Elder Jakob Jantz and admitted to the MBC. At their invitation, Elder Jakob Jantz came to Poland. He officiated, in 1884,

4a) *Der Zionsbote*, No. 2, January 8, 1896

5) *Mennonitisches Lexikon*, Volume I, page 420

6) *Mennonitische Rundschau*, June 5, 1968, page 14

at the first baptisms in the MB Church in Poland at the Vistula near Arciechow which included the spouse of Wilhelm Foth, the parents of Robert Foth, and 4 other candidates who were not of Mennonite origin. One of these, with Wilhelm Foth by Jakob Jantz, was accepted into the MBC at Friedensfeld as a member, while the other three baptized joined the Baptists. The Mennonites were guaranteed their privileged position in matters of defenselessness only if they did not include members of other churches in their ranks. This fact is often overlooked when one accuses the Mennonites of not pursuing evangelism.

But we let Robert Foth speak to the development of that time "In the following years, there were more baptisms of Mennonites and non-Mennonites in Swiniary in the Vistula by Elder Jantz, preacher Nickel, preacher H. Peters, and preacher William Dyck." Except for the two sisters, the baptized non-Mennonites joined the Baptists while the baptized Mennonites and the two sisters remained with the MBC. Almost every year a number of new converts were baptized by MBC preachers from Russia and added to the MBC. In Wymyschle, a branch of the Friedensfelder MBC was founded, headed by the preacher Heinrich Kliewer.

While some non-Mennonites were baptized here by the Russian pastors who then joined the Baptists, Mennonites were often baptized by Baptist pastors in Wola-Wodzinska, the branch of the Kasun Mennonite Church, where the nearby Baptist congregations already existed at Kicin and Kondmjec, and then they joined the MBC... "7

To what extent does this claim refer to events that are similar to those described by Foth, or events that occurred 20 to 25 years earlier in the area of Wola-Wodzinska, we can't prove. We have seen earlier that the Mennonite believers were only forced to join the Baptists because there was no alternative available at the time. But when a Mennonite Brethren Church was established nearby, it was very attractive to the Mennonites who had become members of the adjacent Baptist churches. This problem still existed in our day. Formally, many families in Kicin and Wola-Wodzinska belonged to the MBC at Deutsch-Wymyschle, but they attended the Baptist gatherings and participated there in every way. There were always disagreements, and often our preachers had to go there to mediate and to settle disputes. But the relationship between the Mennonite Brethren at Deutsch-Wymyschle and the Baptists was a very warm one. Their preachers were warmly welcomed, participating in song festivals and youth conferences, which were held together regularly with the neighboring Baptist churches. We will talk about it in greater detail.

7) Ibid., June 5, 1968, page 14

Opinions differ about the founding date of the MBC Deutsch-Wymyschle as an independent church. I will first mention what Robert Foth writes about it: "On December 6, 1891, Peter Ratzlaff, leader of the Mennonite congregation Wymyschle, was baptized by preacher H. Peters and admitted to the MBC. Brother P. Ratzlaff was an intelligent man and a talented speaker. He soon became a preacher for the young MBC, and in 1893 he became the Elder of the now independent MBC Wymyschle and has officiated since then at baptisms and the Lord's Supper. The first baptism was carried out by Elder P. Ratzlaff who baptized brother Johann Kliewer, the Elder of the old congregation, and brother Heinrich Wohlgemuth I, and others on July 17, 1893, who were also included in the MBC.

Brother Johann Kliewer will soon be elected preacher at MBC, and Brother Heinrich Wohlgemuth I will be deacon of the congregation."<sup>8</sup>

As we saw from P. M. Friesen, the congregation did not become independent until November 4, 1895, and on that day Peter Ratzlaff was ordained as the first Elder. Johann Kliewer cites this date, only that he describes himself as a preacher ordained, and not as a fellow Elder, as Friesen tells.<sup>9</sup>



Familienbild des Diakons Heinrich Wohlgemuth.

Family portrait of the deacon Heinrich Wohlgemuth.

8) *Mennonitische Rundschau*, June 5, 1968, page 14

9) Friesen, P.M., *Alt-Evangelische Mennonitische Brüderschaft in Russland*, page 479

I can't help but mention the relationship of the three brothers Ratzlaff, Kliewer and Wohlgemuth. Peter Ratzlaff was born on August 24, 1854, to Heinrich Ratzlaff and Anna, née Foth born in Deutsch-Wymyschle. His father died on February 22, 1856. His mother married on 14 May 1857 Heinrich Wohlgemuth, son of Peter Wohlgemuth and Anna, née Nickel from Czastkow, Deutsch-Kasun. This marriage produced two children, Emilie, born on April 14, 1858, in Deutsch-Wymyschle, and Heinrich, born on June 6, 1861. Peter Ratzlaff and Heinrich Wohlgemuth were thus half-brothers, and her sister Emilie was the wife of Johann Kliewer, consequently, he was the brother-in-law of the two half-brothers. The relationship to the former Elder Jakob Foth was discussed earlier. I believe that this was of great importance to the young MB Church, that the leading families of the church were joining them. (I was recently able to do a historically interesting observation.) In the Christian Press I worked with the grandson of the preacher H. Peters, Brother Jacob Peters, and the editor of MB-Herald, Brother Harold Jantz, who is the great-grandson of the Elder Jakob Jantz, and ordained my grandfather as Elder and is regarded as the founder of the MB Church in Deutsch-Wymyschle.)

After the emigration of the Elder Johann Kliewer the Mennonite Church at Deutsch-Wymyschle chose the preacher Johann Schmidt as Elder. But he was also converted and joined the MBC in 1907. Here I quote A. H. Unruh: "In 1907 the last Elder of the Mennonite Church, Brother Johann Schmidt, also joined the Mennonite Brethren Church at Deutsch-Wymyschle and was also soon elected to the position of preacher. Preacher Johann Schmidt had been keeping the church books for all Mennonites in Deutsch-Wymyschle and surroundings since 1906."<sup>10</sup>

The last remark concerning the civil records books is significant. Until then, the Mennonites had to have all their civil records made by the Roman Catholic pastor in whose district they lived. Thus, the [Catholic] pastor of the village Czermno was responsible for Deutsch-Wymyschle. All births, deaths and deaths had to be recorded. If you wanted a certificate, you had to go to the Catholic pastor and ask him for the same, which he then issued for a fee. Part of the Vistula lowlands belonged to the parish of Polish Zyck and the Mennonites had to register all civil activities there.

Leo Ewert had been keeping his own civil papers in the church at Deutsch-Kasun since 1812, copies of which were kept in the *Hypothek* in Warsaw. The fact that Deutsch-Wymyschle received this right only in 1906 was probably due to the great influence of the Catholic pastors, who did not want to miss the additional income they received from the registry office.

10) Unruh, A.H., *Die Geschichte der Mennoniten-Brüdergemeinde*, p. 220

About the further development in the Mennonite Church of the place Robert Foth writes: "With the Elders Johann Kliwer and Johann Schmidt, more life came back to the church, and the church felt quite abandoned and orphaned after their transfer to the MB. The now quite small church chose three more brothers as Preachers, Peter Kliwer, Zyck, Peter Foth, Strzemeszno and Jakob Foth, Wymyschle, who led the congregation until 1915. However, there were no more elections for Elders after this and the church was served by the Elders of the Kasun community at baptism and communion celebrations."<sup>11</sup>

As we mentioned, Peter Kliwer, who was still in Wionczemin, had been elected preacher in 1875, but did not live until Johann Schmidt's departure.<sup>12</sup> There are no documents available on the date of the election of Peter Foth, who was a half-brother of the Elder Jakob Foth, but he could as well been elected preacher earlier. Jacob Foth II, who was mentioned as a preacher, was actually just a deacon and community cashier. He continued the municipal economic treasury for all Mennonites after 1915, until his son Benjamin Foth, now Marquette, Manitoba, was elected, who was also a member of the Mennonite congregation. He faithfully managed the municipal economic treasury until its dissolution in 1945.

Of course, the genesis of the MBC in Deutsch-Wymyschle did not work as smoothly as the reports seem to indicate. Again, there was no lack of attempts to suppress the young church. But there have never been riots, as reported from Wola-Wodzinska. In the context of individual families and relatives real tragedies have taken place, and one could report on those silent sufferers who had to pursue their faith while dealing with domestic strife. Here, too, the Lord Jesus told his disciples,

<sup>34</sup> "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.

<sup>35</sup> For I have come to turn "a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—

<sup>36</sup> a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.'

<sup>37</sup> "Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

<sup>38</sup> "Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me." (Matthew 10, 34-38)

The Mennonite community Deutsch-Kasun was not spared this effect of the word of Jesus.

Already in the branch Wola-Wodzinska she was hit hard. But members of the congregation themselves became converted, and in 1923 a branch of the MBC of Deutsch-Wymyschle, whose preachers were the brothers Edmund Jantz and Rudolf Kliwer, was established there.

11) *Mennonitische Rundschau*, June 5, 1968, page 14

12) *Namens-Verzeichnis der ... Mennoniten-Gemeinden* (1881), page 67

D. M. Hofer casually reports on the emergence of this branch of the MBC Deutsch-Wymyschle in his book "The Famine in Russia and our Journey Around the World". Before that, he tells of his visit to Wymyschle, where he evangelized and fostered fellowship. Danu describes his visit to Kasun: "The following Sunday, we accepted a warm invitation to the baptismal celebration in the Mennonite settlement at 'Kasun', near Warsaw, where we, along with the preacher brothers and the church choir of Wymyschle, sailed the Vistula by ship. Here, too, blessings waited, and we were allowed to speak twice in the church of the Mennonite [Brethren], and to hold a baptismal service on the bank of the Vistula in front of hundreds of people, whereupon three precious souls were baptized in the river, specifically, Brother Janz and his wife and Brother Kliwer. After the reception, which took place in a very large barn, the Lord's Supper was celebrated and in the evening there was a foot washing service where we were very, very happy. Although we were allowed to serve no less than 5 times that day, we did not feel tired and the Lord gave us joy and grace to proclaim His Word. Several souls also became willing to follow the Lord, and publicly with tears in their eyes pray in prayer for God to forgive their sins. In this village, too, we enjoyed a lot of love through the hospitality of Elder Rudolph Bartel and the Janz family. We give heartfelt thanks to all brothers and sisters in Wymyschle and Kasun. If you once come to America, then visit us in Chicago, so that we have the opportunity to repay your love."<sup>13</sup>

Sister Agnes Jantz, who was baptized at the time, lives as a widow in Aldergrove, British Columbia, with her daughter Anna, who married Brother Rudolf Kliwer, but also widowed since the war. At my request, Mrs. Agnes Jantz described to me the development of MBC in the Kasun area. She also refers to the just mentioned book by D. M. Hofer, which unfortunately she does not own. Mrs. Jantz is the mother of the missionary Gerhard Jantz, who worked for many years in Linz, Austria, and built a church there.

Sister Jantz wrote down her memoirs of that time and events as follows: "Brother Hofer held the baptismal speech at our baptismal celebration, which was so uplifting to us, and we believed, even a prayerful hearing, as if the Lord had sent a prophet to us. For the first time we had such a baptismal celebration, we were a little worried whether everything would remain calm.

Brother Hofer understood how to draw the attention of his listeners who listened in great silence. Everyone noticed and listened to the Good News that Brother Hofer

13) Hofer, D.M., *Die Hungersnot in Russland und unsere Reise um die Welt*, page 364

shared. Everyone behaved so calmly, until the solemn act of baptism was accomplished. I think everyone was blessed, because the atmosphere and the good mood showed it. There were also Wymyschle singers present who framed the celebration with their songs.

This was the beginning and origin of our MB church in Markowczyzna. We held various events and invited preachers and singers from Wymyschle and Warsaw. From time to time our church members also went to other churches for baptismal services, song festivals, and harvest festivals. We always enjoyed those very much, and we were blessed and intimately connected.

Our festivals were always hosted at our home and also in the barn when needed. We have experienced many hours of blessing in the past years. There were no ordained Elders among us, but Brother Rudolf Kliwer and my dear husband Edmund Jantz felt called to take up this work in order to serve and lead the community. We also had a choir, and Brother Paul Harm was our conductor. The first church members were almost all singers. But, thank God, we always had listeners, if not a lot, but we ourselves as singers received great blessing in the singing of the scripturally-rich songs.

I would like to add that my husband and Leo Ewert were chosen as the preachers of the Mennonite congregation on June 13, 1920. But my husband did not preach there long, because when we were baptized on July 22, 1923, into the MBC, we were banned by the Mennonite Church. My husband did not preach but we attended church every Sunday morning to pray. I think we stayed there until the war started. Every Sunday afternoon we had a service at our place, every Sunday without interruption. We had our largest extra room equipped with a pulpit and benches.

When the government heard that we were worshiping in our house, a couple of senior officials came to us and said that we absolutely had to have a permit for it, so we as a church immediately submitted a request for permission. Then the gentlemen came again and looked and evaluated everything. They also set some rules about what we should do, and we promised them to obey everything, because it was not difficult for us. Then we also received permission to freely preach the gospel, which we were happy about. Also, we were offered protection at any time that we needed it, but we did not need it, because it was always quiet. Thanks also to the Lord for the friendly support of the Government."

Sister Jantz then adds a list of names of the MBC members in

Markowczyzna, whom she still remembers. There are a total of 32 names, of which 12 are male and 20 are female. They shared the experience of the big church in Kasun. No one stayed behind in the old homeland. They are now scattered in all parts of the world. Everyone still likes to remember the lively spiritual life that they were allowed to enjoy there. Sister Jantz mentions that they were baptized by preacher Johann Schmidt from Deutsch-Wymyschle, but that most of the baptisms in the following years were done by preacher Leonhard Ratzlaff, Elder of the MBC at Deutsch-Wymyschle. I still have memories of some trips to Deutsch-Kasun and Markowczyzna. It was always an event to sail up the Vistula on the steamer and stop by to visit the brothers and sisters in Kasun. The small choir of the branch at Markowczyzna had achieved a high level of performance that was almost as good as the choir from the mother church. In 1930, preacher Johann Schmidt moved to Deutsch-Kasun and worked there in the young MB Church. However the Mennonite church and also the MB church would soon come to an abrupt end.

### **VIII. Largest expansion of the Mennonite Church in Deutsch-Kasun**

We have occasionally mentioned that, in the aftermath of the creation of the Mennonite settlements in central Poland, some of the settlers migrated to Volhynia. Since this area is outside Central Poland, I do not want to deal in detail with the settlements that were created at that time and for the most part later dissolved. Since the remnants were organizationally joined with the church of Deutsch-Kasun, we will have to mention them in passing. However, before we turn our attention to this area, I would like to point to what teacher W. Kerber from Deutsch-Kasun is talking about when he writes: "Deutsch-Kasun, the Mennonite congregation in Poland below Warsaw on the left bank of the Vistula opposite the mouth of the Narew River, was supposedly begun around 1750. Judging by the many surnames still occurring today in the community, the formation of the community appears to have formed due to immigration from the communities near Kulm and Graudenz. The old house of prayer, built in 1823, had to be demolished in 1891,

Author's note: Unfortunately, Kerber does not indicate the year to which these statements now refer, because after the First World War several of the branches listed here were located in the territory of the USSR, so that these must be numbers from before 1914, the spelling of the villages is faulty in K., because he could not reproduce the Russian place names properly in German. I corrected them where possible.

because it was in danger of being inundated by the waters of the Vistula. The new house of God, like all of the farmsteads of the village, is within the flood-preventing dyke and was inaugurated on 30 October 1892. The congregation counted 135 in the last year before the war, families with 548 souls, namely 375 baptized and 191 children; of these, the actual village of Deutsch-Kasun with its surrounding area comprised 75 families with 318 souls.

From the church book, begun in 1834, continued in the year 1902 by P. Schroeder of Czosnower Kämpe, it follows that in former times the community must have been much stronger, because there are e.g., in the year 1846 28 baptisms were listed, in 1851 even 38, and 20-25 are mentioned repeatedly. Only since the 1860s is a decrease in the number gradually noticeable. The age of the baptized varies between 13 and 17 years. Most of the guests of the Lord's Supper were numbered 200 and above during those individual years. The church community of Deutsch-Kasun still had several branches:

Wola-Wodzynska at Plonsk .....	8 families with 35 souls
Lindenthal at Pulin .....	15 families with 80 souls
Ostrog, Volhynia .....	2 families with 6 souls
Mohilev .....	2 families with 11 souls
Minsk region .....	5 families with 21 souls
Luck, Volhynia .....	8 families with 18 souls
Podole and Mentnow, 12 miles above Warsaw .....	2 families with 3 souls
Tomaszew and Szamocin .....	20 families with 56 souls
Kasun and the surrounding area .....	75 families with 318 souls

Waldheim, moved to Russia and America.

All of these groups, like the main community itself, have suffered in many different ways."<sup>1</sup>

About Deutsch-Kasun and Wola-Wodzynska we find information in the already mentioned "name directory".<sup>2</sup> Again, the spelling is distorted, but I will copy it unchanged, since it is an original document.

1) *Mennonitisches Lexikon*, Volume I, page 419

2) *Namens-Verzeichnis der ... Mennoniten-Gemeinden* (1881), page 68

## Congregations of Deutsch-Kazan near Warsaw. [1881]

Names of Elders, Teachers and Deacons	Residence	Elected in Year	Remarks
Elder: Heinr. Bartel	Dt.-Czaskow b. Neuhof	1864	Elected Elder, 1864
Teacher: Gerhard Janz	Dt.-Kazan	1876	
Deacon: Peter Bartel	Mackowschisna b. Neuhof	1867	
David Bartel	Dt.-Kazan <sup>a</sup>	1873	The meeting house is in Deutsch-Kazan.
Branch municipality to Wollawodczinsky near Cizechanowo.			
Teacher Cornelius Balzer	Wollawodczinsky	1880	
Julius Balzer	Wollawodczinsky	1880	The meeting house is in Wollawodczinsky
Peter Pauls	Wollawodczinsky	1880	
Deacons Heinr. Bartel	Spiolla	1880	Both communities together have 597 members

In the "Mennonite Lexicon" Adalbert Goertz writes a well-documented article on the Mennonites in Volhynia. Since we are only interested in settlers coming from the Vistula lowlands, we can focus on them. He writes the following: "Through the first partition of Poland (1772), the majority of Mennonites in West Prussia became part of the Kingdom of Prussia, and when the freedom of the defense and the potential for rural expansion appeared to be threatened by the state regulation, a large part of the Mennonites considered emigration to the east. Those wishing to emigrate were encouraged by the manifestos of the Russian Czarina Catherine II, and from the Polish magnate in the Polish part of Volhynia in the time of Stanislaus II. So the nobleman Potocki in the vicinity of Machnowka, south Berdichev tried rebuilding of the villages that were deserted after the battles of the 17th century and the improving agriculture. To promote it, from 1787 to 1791, he settled a group of Vistula Mennonites on the steppe north of the village of Michalin on favorable terms... These groups formed the Mennonite community Deutsch Michalin ... As a place of origin may be assumed by the name that the settlers mainly from the Frisian Mennonite municipalities Montau-Group

and Obernessau. , , part of the Michaliner ... settled south of Ostrog in the colony Karolswalde in 1802. Here in the damp Wilja lowlands beyond the boundary line, they were able to return to the familiar practices of breeding Dutch cattle, producing butter and cheese. They also did weaving.

In the years 1806 to 1818, a second wave of Prussian Mennonites came to Volhynia, especially from the old Flemish communities of Brenkenhoffswalde and Franztal in Netzebruch, to a lesser extent from the community of Przechowka in the Kleine Schwetzer Niederung and Jeziorka.

This immigration seems to have come in four groups. – The first was settled in 1811 by the nobleman Wacław Borejko in Sofjowka north of the small town Wysock on the Horyn, in the middle of the Polish swamps and comprised 21 families ... The second group went to Waldheim ... From here they went to the Molotschna 1836/37. The third group was the settlement Dosidorf near Korez. The fourth group founded Karolswalde in the district of Ostrog."<sup>3</sup>

A. Goertz then describes the emigration of most Mennonites from Volhynia to America. He writes about the Mennonites left in Volhynia: "There were not more than seven Swiss Mennonite families left in Volhynia, and a few later went to America as well: of the Prussian Mennonites, there were 15 families before the First World War Lindenthal near Zhytomir, about which we are somewhat informed from the baptismal register of the community of Deutsch-Kasun. After that, 61 people were counted at the Lord's Supper in Lindenthal in 1909, 13 in Ollicka, and 62 in 1913. Baptisms took place in 1881 (4 baptisms), 1882 (6), 1885 (8), 1888 (15), 1891 (15), 1894 (8), 1909 (18) and 1913. The names listed were: Bartel, Baltzer, Ediger, Eberts, Ewert, Foth, Franz, Gertz, Goertz, Goretzki, Janz, Jantzen, Koehn, Kliewer, Nickel, Rosenfeld, Schmidt, Schroeder and Voth. Their places of residence were: Alexandrovsk, Barakufka, Czernefutter, Graberovka, Grabuca, Heinrichsdorf, Josefin, Juljanka, Lindenthal, Micharovka, Ludwikowka, Pullin, Nowesawuth, Marjanovka, Korist, Salbara, Stribisch, Scheremoschnie, Tartaczek and Warendorf, most of these locations are in the vicinity of Pullin. The church book of Deutsch-Kasun (since 1834) was taken to Aldergrove, British Columbia, Canada in 1945 with the last Kasuner Elder Leo Ewert. For 1905-1910, Friesen, Bruderschaft (p. 719) mentions another church at Lilewa in Volhynia as a branch of Alexanderwohl at the Molochna."<sup>4</sup>

I made only rough excerpts of the article by A. Goertz, since I was mainly concerned with places where the Prussian Mennonites had settled. However, I literally reproduced the last section. Of all the groups mentioned here, in 1934 only a small group had survived at Luck and Ollycka. Since I spent a year in

3) *Mennonitisches Lexikon*, Volume IV, page 556

4) *Ibid.*, Page 560

this area employed as a tutor at the home of Mr. Karl Krützfeld, whose wife was Margarete, née Dirks, I know the conditions there from my own experience. Mrs. Krützfeld's father was the landowner Peter Dirks and owned a larger estate. Also Mr. Karl Krützfeld was landowner. I taught his two children, Georg and Sophie. Mrs. Krützfeld's brother, Mr. Peter Dirks, who was managing his father's estate, was the son-in-law of a Mr. Tjahrt, who used to have a large estate in Ukraine but had to flee from the communists. Mr. Tjahrt (Tgahrt) was the son of the Elder Tgahrt of Deutsch-Kasun.

Mrs. Edmund Jantz, Markowczyzna, whose husband joined the MB church Deutsch-Kasun, was born a Schroeder, whose father also leased an estate in the area of Ollycka. We now move to the section mentioned by A. Goertz "Brotherhood" quoted by P. M. Friesen, who also provided information about Deutsch-Kasun and Deutsch-Wymyschle:

### C. Mennonite churches, immigrated independently of the Chortitza and Molotschna churches.

#### I. Mennonite Churches in Russian Poland and Volhynia.

A. Historical. - In the "Name list of the ... Mennonite communities Danzig 1857" - we find the following news: - In the Kingdom of Poland:

- a) Church at Deutsch-Wymyschle near Gombin by Soda, Gostnin district. - Elder Peter Buller, Preacher. 1836, Elder 1838; Teacher (Preacher.) Peter Schmidt 1836, Peter Frey, Cornelius Schroeder; Deacon Bernhard Foth; Ewert.
- b) at Kazan near Warsaw. - Elder Johann. Bartel, Preacher. 1832, Elder 1833; Teacher Gerhard Nickel 1828; Heinrich Nickel 1832; Franz Bartel 1833; Cornelius Schröder 1841.
- c) Resettled Geman Wola-Orscynska at Plonsk in the Plotzk "Regierungsbezirk" (Administrative District)(!). - Elder Teacher Jacob Koethler 1842; Heinrich Kliwer 1842; Peter From 1852. - Deacon Heinrich Kerber 1842; Heinrich Kliwer 1842.
- d) At Maknowka in Kiev province, Gem. To Deutsch Michalin. - Elder Johann Schröder Preacher at 1848, Elder at 1852; Teacher Heinrich Harms 1848; Heinrich Nickel 1852; Joh. Schmidt 1852.
- e) In Volhynia near Ostrog to Karolswalde, Karolsberg U. Jadwoninne, which also includes Antonofka U. Dosidorf. - Elder Tobias Unger, Preacher and Elder 1853; Teacher Peter Unger 1820; Heinrich Dirk's 1832; Peter Unger 1851; "Johann Schartner-Karolswalde 1851, d. 21 Apr." - d. The present Elder of "Alexanderwohl"? - Deacon Andreas Unruh, 1827; Peter Unger 1852. - To Antonofka U. Dosidorf. - Teacher Samuel Kohn 1852; Heinrich Bold 1852. -<sup>5</sup>

Along with P. M. Friesen comes the information from the "Namens-Verzeichnis" of 1881, which we have already shown. Then Friesen brings further information from 1888: In the "Jahrbuch der Altevangel. Taufgesinnten oder M.-Gemeinden.", H. G. Mannhardt, Preacher of the Danziger Mennonite Church, 1888: a) Church Deutsch-Kasun near Warsaw. Founding year not determined, but the church book extends back to 1762. The number of members is about 300, has in the last

5) Friesen, P.M., *Alt-Evangelische Mennonitische Brüderschaft in Russland*, p. 718

years decreased through emigration. The members live scattered in the Warsaw District., , also in province "Zhitomir" (-Volhynia) near the town of Pulin. - Elder Heinrich Bartel 1864; Preacher Gerhard Janz, 1874; Peter Vogt 1874; Deacons Peter Bartel 1867; David Bartel 1875. - b) Church at Deutsch-Wymyschle, Warsaw province, Gostyn district, Post Gombin; year of foundation unknown. It has 125 members and 84 children. It consists of two parts, one of which is a congregation practicing the washing of feet as a sacrament; the church which belongs to both was built in 1864; each part of the church has its own Elders: Jacob Foth, Elder in the foot washing-church 1875 and Elder Johann Kliwer 1885. - Teachers for the both church families. – Jacob Schröder 1866; Peter Kliwer 1875; Peter Ratzlaff (now Elder of MBC.?) 1884.

#### B. Existing Polish-Volhynian churches to the present: 1905-10.

a) The municipality Deutsch-Kasun, Warsaw district and province. - Post: Nowy Dvor, Warsaw province. Elder Peter Tgahrt; Preacher Peter Vogt, Gerhard Nickel, Peter Schröder -? - Deacon Peter Bartel.

b) Municipality Lilewa (branch of the church at Alexanderwohl, Molotschna) Kr. Ostrog, Volynia province - Post: - Ostrog-Wolynsky. Preacher Johann Jantz, Johann Nachtigal, Deacon Johann. Deckert.

c) The municipality Deutsch-Wymyschle, Kr. Gostyn, Govt. Warsaw. - Post: Gombin, G. Warsaw. Elder Johann Schmidt, Preacher 1894, Elder 1896. - Preacher Peter Kliwer 1875 -? -. Deacon Heinrich Unruh 1894 \_? \_<sup>6</sup> That is the information we have from P.M. Friesen.

Of interest to me here was Mannhardt's statement that the Municipality Deutsch-Wymyschle consisted of two parishes, which held joint services, but each had their own Elders. Incidentally, I have found confirmation of this information in the book: "Brief History of the Old Evangelical Baptist or Mennonite" by Carl H. A. van der Smitten, published in 1895. It is said: "In Russian Poland formerly existed several Mennonite churches, now the yearbook gives only two, the date of formation is unknown. A church book in Deutsch-Kasun reaches back to the year 1762. The Polish churches have lost many through emigration to America. In one community, Deutsch-Wymyschle, one part practices foot washing, the other does not. Each part has its own Elders."<sup>7</sup> This does not apply to the emerging MBC, which also practiced foot-washing, but to the "Old Flemish" or "fine" Mennonites, whose Elder was Jakob Foth. Johann Kliwer was the Elder of the Frisian or "rough" Mennonites.

This dichotomy must also have existed in Wola-Wodzinska, hence the adherence of the "Baptist Mennonites" to the foot washing. It may not be quite justified to generalize here, but the

6) Friesen, P.M., *Alt-Evangelische Mennonitische Brüderschaft in Russland*, p. 719

7) van der Smitten, Carl H. A., *Short History of the ... Mennonites*, page 130

formation of the MBC in Russia was also associated with churches of the "Old Flamingers". Since they still practiced strict church discipline, they were more inclined to the new movement, as this also advocated a strong emphasis on a pure way of life. The liberal-minded Frisian trend was against these new teachings. Thus, the church at Deutsch-Kasun resisted the renewal of its spiritual life until the twentieth century. Indirectly, it too was influenced by it, because as a defense measure more had to be done in the way of youth work.

But this community was not lacking in disputes. One of them seems very topical today. Around 1880, a dispute arose over the wearing of a beard. We are usually inclined to assume that the Mennonites all wore beards in the old days. This was not the case. They wore no beards. Now it became fashionable to bear a beard, and some members of the congregation considered wearing of a beard to be too worldly, insisting that those with beards should not be allowed to take communion. There were serious disagreements and a split threatened. Then they turned to the brothers in Prussia and asked them to come to settle the dispute. On July 28, 1881, three Elders and a preacher came from Prussia: Claas Friesen, Elder from Rosenort, Heinrich Wiehler, Elder from Markushof, David Dirks, Elder from Nessau and teacher Johann Dueck from Heubuden. They preached on July 29 at the church, and on July 30, a dispute over wearing a beard was decided on during a church meeting. It was decided to admit the brothers with beards to the sacrament and peace was restored.

Leo Ewert shared with me some information from the church book about the election of the then acting Elder Heinrich Bartel. His predecessor, Elder Johann Bartel, died in 1862. The following year, no baptismal celebration was held in the community of Deutsch-Kasun because the congregation had no Elders. The fact that the Elder Peter Frey from Deutsch-Wymyschle was not invited to baptize is probably due to the fact that the "Old Flemish" practiced a different form of baptism than was customary in the Frisian communities.

In 1864 the Elders from Prussia were invited to celebrate baptisms and the Lord's Supper. These were the Elders Johann Penner from the Prussian Königsdorf in the Werder and Peter Bartel from the community group from the Schwetz-Neuenburger lowland, and the preachers Jakob Gerbrandt and Wilhelm Ewert from the municipality of Nessau near Thorn. Elder Penner baptized 32 candidates and Bartel distributed the Holy Communion. Then on June 16, 1864, the election of an Elder took place. Heinrich Bartel from Deutsch Czastkow was elected to be teacher preacher in 1861. The attending guest preachers also ordained him as an Elder of the community Deutsch-Kasun. The church numbered 666 souls of which 396 were baptized members. This was the largest number of members ever registered in this community. Soon after, emigration to Russia and America began.

Adalbert Goertz kindly made available to me the microfilm from the archive of mechanical documentation in Warsaw which reveals the following information for the period around 1860. I refer to the section of the report from the acts of the State Council of the Kingdom of Poland for the year 1861, Vol. 15b, Section I, in free translation: "The sect of the Mennonites, which numbered 1,399 members, had a house of prayer in the village of Kasun , District of Warsaw, 82 children were born in the sect, deceased 54 people. (Page 167)

In the 1862 report, which otherwise has almost the same wording, are the numbers are as follows: members 1328; born 101; died 66. The decrease is probably due to the onset of emigration to Volhynia and Russia. The prayer house in Wymyschle was burned down at that time and was only rebuilt in 1864. (Page 174)

For the year 1863, the following account of the Mennonites and Mennonites and Moravians: The population of these evangelical confessions, resident only in some places of the kingdom, counted in relation to the first 1,354 heads, in relation to the second 2,005 heads. The changes that took place during the year are included in the numbers of Table I, while other details are included in the report of the year 1862. The report quoted above also mentions the Baptists or Great Anabaptists, whom the Government has not yet recognized and who have not renewed their efforts in this regard in the past year. "(Pages 168 and 172) on the question of defense, according to court records, the following excerpt is in the microfilm, "The fifth judgment exempts Mennonite residents in the Kingdom of Poland and their children from personal military service for a cash payment of zp 6 per year per person of legal age." (The date of the judgment is not given.) Zp. = Guilders. (Pages 168 and 175)

Then in 1862 the following remark concerning the defenselessness: "As for the two mentioned sects, that is the Mennonites and the Moravian or Moravian Brothers, the administrative department of the Treasury considers that, according to the earlier decisions, which are still in force today, conscripts from the sects mentioned are exempt from military service, which they cannot perform due to their confession, and to pay one Zlp 6 fee per annum that this tax represents an extremely small number in the budget and does not correspond to today's views on freedom of confession and has therefore prepared a reasoned submission, which is attached to this report." (Truly a liberal and tolerant attitude!) (page 174)

Although Elder Heinrich Bartel had no theological education, through his pious life he acquired the love and trust of the church. He has faithfully served her for 36 years as an Elder and teacher in a turbulent time. He died on February 27, 1898. The inhabitants of the Vistula lowlands had repeatedly fought against the

flood and the changing path of the river. Ewert tells of the tragic ice drift of the year 1889, which destroyed the village Borki and cost the lives of many. The changing current undermined the shore, alongside the church and cemetery of the community and due to the danger of imminent collapse, the prayer house was abandoned in 1891. The new house of prayer was built behind the dike and inaugurated on October 30, 1892. The preachers Nicolai Ediger and Gerhard Harder from South Russia had been invited to preside.



Mennonitenkirche in Deutsch-Kasun, 1960.

Mennonite Church in Deutsch-Kasun, 1960.

After the death of the Elder Heinrich Bartel the Mennonite Church in Deutsch-Kasun had no Elders from 1898 to 1902. Baptism and the Lord's Supper were performed in 1898 by Elder Johann Schartner from Southern Russia. In the years 1899, 1900, 1901 and 1902 the parish was served by the Elder Johann Schmidt from Deutsch-Wymyschle. In 1901, Peter Tgahrt became a preacher, and the next year, Elder Johann Schmidt, Deutsch-Wymyschle, ordained him an Elder on June 8, 1902. He served the church until 1912, when he moved to Germany. Prior to leaving he ordained preacher Rudolf Bartel as the Elder.

What we have written so far about the origin and development of the Mennonite churches in central Poland comes mainly from historical sources and books. For the most part, we personally experienced the development in the 20th century and the catastrophic end itself. There are some detailed reports from that time that I want to put into words. I have already cited many, for Deutsch-Kasun the manuscript of a church history of the deceased preacher Leo

Ewert, and also articles from other Mennonite sources of the time. There are several versions of the history of the development of the Deutsch-Wymyschle community, but almost all of them are more or less based on the writings of Robert Foth, according to the article in "Die Geschichte der Mennoniten-Brüdergemeinde" by A .H. Unruh, as well as the article about Deutsch-Wymyschle in the "Mennonite Encyclopedia". The complete records by his pen were published in the "Mennonitische Rundschau" in the issues from May 29 to September 11, 1968. For practical reasons it will be necessary to continue to treat the congregations separately, although in their development there was overlap, as we will mention later.

The disadvantage of describing events that you personally have experienced is that one does not have the necessary historical perspective, and so objectivity suffers. However, the information given below is entirely credible and can be attested by many members of these communities who are still alive. That just makes writing more difficult, because everyone has seen and experienced these events from their own particular point of view, and it is well known that everyone is different.

We are actually at a point in time in describing some of the events in the Churches where we have moved into the twentieth century. So we must pick up where we left off. In both cases, this will be the period shortly before World War I, as well as during this war itself. Then comes the time when an independent Polish state was formed, which existed until World War II, and the associated dissolution of both Churches. We would also like to accompany the members of these congregations abroad, where, scattered all over the world, they have tried to find a new place under the sun.

## **IX. The community of Deutsch-Kasun in the First World War and under Polish rule**

Shortly before the First World War, the church at Deutsch-Kasun ordained its last Elder, preacher Rudolf Bartel. He was the son of the deacon Peter Bartel and his wife Elisabeth, née Vogt, who were baptized on April 18, 1875. On October 9, 1912, Elder Peter Tgahrt ordained him to the office of Elder. His being was characterized by a simple, robust piety.

It was soon going to be a trying time for both him and the whole church. Ten days after the outbreak of the First World War, the residents of Deutsch-Kasun were ordered to evacuate the belt around Warsaw, especially the fort zone around Modlin Fortress (Novo Georgewsk). You could go anywhere, just not in the

direction of the German border. Most went to their relatives in Brzeziny, Josefow and Tomaszew near Warsaw to look for accommodations. Some had even looked for and found accommodation in Warsaw. In the winter, however, they were forced to look for other accommodations, because the villages mentioned were overcrowded with refugees. The majority of the Mennonites from Deutsch-Kasun, Czosnow and from the Neuhofer Kämpe moved on September 25, 1914 from Brzeziny via Warsaw, Blonie, Sochaezew and Sanniki to Swiniary in the Vistula lowlands near Deutsch-Wymyschle. In two days they drove 102 Werst (km). The weather was favorable, but it was getting cold at night. This trek was a foreshadowing of what was to come to the entire Mennonite community thirty years later.

The refugees were transferred from Swiniary to Deutsch-Wymyschle, where they were warmly received and quartered in the various farmsteads. Here they experienced a great horror on November 20, 1914. The whole village became a battle field between the attacking Germans and the defending Russians. Everyone sought cover in basements and ditches, and the bullets whistled over them. Thank God that no one was hit among the civilian population. The house of Deacon Heinrich Wohlgemuth, however, received a direct hit and burned down. The German army won and the Russians withdrew. The refugees received hospitality from their fellow believers for eleven months.

On August 5, 1915 Warsaw was conquered by the Germans and two weeks later the Novo Georgewsk fortress, which the Germans called Modlin. The way was now clear for the refugees to return to their homeland. They returned late on August 31st. On the way they saw sad vistas. The Russians had burned everything down when they retreated and chopped up the gardens. In the villages of Czastkow, Czosnow, Borki and the surrounding area there was no house or tree standing. Many houses were burned down in Deutsch-Kasun, but the gardens were only partially damaged. The situation was similar on Markowczyzna, Grochaly and the Kämpe. The Russians had blown up the beautiful Vistula Bridge and the railway bridge over the Narew. In November 1915, Deutsch-Kasun was flooded by an ice block at the blown-up bridge, and the same thing was repeated in the spring of 1916 by an ice drift. The sown crops had been totally destroyed.

The church of the Deutsch-Kasun parish had been very heavily damaged during the war. The Russian military had used it as a catering facility. The pews and the fence had been chopped up and burned to heat it. The church could not be used for church services. The services were held in a neighboring house. It was not until 1924, when all the deportees had returned from Russia that the church was renovated. It was rebuilt, painted and a new fence was built around it. Two-thirds of the cost was covered by donations from Mennonites from the United States,

and the church paid a third itself. Already in 1909, the community had bought a foot harmonium to accompany the community singing. This harmonium has now been renovated and put into use. Wind instruments were bought in 1927, but they rarely played during church services. They were mostly played at youth festivals and funerals.

In 1920 there was war between Poland and the Bolsheviks, during which the Mennonite congregation Deutsch-Kasun also suffered badly. The Elder Rudolf Bartel was hit particularly hard. This year he lost his wife and daughter within a week. However, he did not lose his trust in God and did his utmost to support the community. In addition to the services and other official acts, he strove for the well-being of his community and looked after them in this difficult time.

Quieter times came after these storms. On June 13, 1920, the congregation elected the brothers Leonhard Ewert and Edmund Jantz as preachers and the brothers Eduard Schroeder and Siegmund Schroeder as deacons.

Leonhard Ewert was born on June 21, 1898, in Deutsch-Kasun. He was only 22 when the church chose him to preach. However, he only took office on October 21, 1928. He was the only preacher in the church who survived the collapse of the church. We owe a lot to him about the history of the church of Deutsch-Kasun. Unfortunately, he died before he was able to finish his history of the Deutsch-Kasun church.

Edmund Jantz was 36 when he was elected preacher. He took office on July 4, 1920. As we reported earlier, he became the founder and head of the first branch of MBC Deutsch-Wymyschle. The "Mennonite Encyclopedia" reports: "In 1923 a Mennonite Brethren Church was organized in Kasun, a branch of the MB Church in Deutsch-Wymyschle."<sup>1</sup>

Two years later, widowed Elder Rudolf Bartel made the marriage agreement with Lydia, née Bartel. In 1937, the Deutsch-Kasun church celebrated the 25th anniversary of the service of its Elder. The choir of the Deutsch-Wymyschle congregation under the direction of the preacher Gustav P. Ratzlaff had appeared to add to the celebration. The West Prussian Mennonite Conference, to which the church of Deutsch-Kasun belonged, was represented by preacher E. Goettner, who delivered the sermon.

In the period between the two world wars the developing Deutsch-Kasun municipality prospered in economic terms. The proximity to the city of Warsaw offered a good market for its agricultural products. Good prices were found at the Warsaw market, especially for high-quality fruit. That is why the village of Deutsch-Kasun was also surrounded by large orchards. Milk, cheese and butter also sold well.

1) *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, Vol.II, page 41

Anti-German feelings in Poland after the First World War, caused partly by the strong nationalism of the Poles and intensified by the German nationalism of the Hitler period, made the situation of German settlements such as Deutsch-Kasun increasingly difficult.

## x. The Second World War and the dissolution of the Deutsch-Kasun church

The year 1939 brought increasing difficulties for the Germans in Poland. A difficult time for the Deutsch-Kasun church began on September 1st. Polish military were quartered in the courtyards. Polish soldiers and civilians looted the villages. All cattle were requisitioned, and all men aged 17 to 60 were sent to the Bereza Kartuska concentration camp.

In "Mennonitische Märtyrer" A.A. Toews documents some eyewitness accounts of what happened: Natalie Bartel says the following: "On September 1, when the war with Germany began, many of our parishioners were arrested on the same day, including our Elder Rudolf Bartel. Every day ill-treatment and arrests followed until the last men were imprisoned, and residents were strictly forbidden to leave, especially where there were telephone lines, and women were often employed to guard the telephone lines.

Elder Bartel was imprisoned and guarded on a farm outside the village. He was released after two days because there was nothing punishable about him. To reach his farm, he chose the shortest route across the fields, where there were telephone lines; but he knew nothing of the ban. He was immediately arrested by the Polish guard on charges that he intended to destroy the telephone lines, and he was charged with sabotage. The same day he was sentenced to death. All women and children were rounded up with guns and bayonets by the Polish soldiers to witness the shooting. They wanted the population to be intimidated. So our beloved Elder died as a martyr."<sup>1</sup>

Elder Rudolf Bartels was executed on September 7, 1939. Some members of the Deutsch-Kasun church were also brutally murdered by agitated Polish civilians. Among them was Mrs. Stobbe with three growing children and her brother Edward Jantz, as well as two Schroeder women, wife and mother of the deacon Siegmund

1) Toews. A. A., *Mennonitische Märtyrer*, Volume 2, page 348.

Schröder. Beatings and ill-treatment were commonplace. During a bomb attack on Modlin Fortress on September 22, some houses in Deutsch-Kasun also burned down. A bomb fell between the buildings of Elder Rudolf Bartel's courtyard, and the house burned down. Mrs. Bartel and her [step] daughter Gertrud were buried in the collapsing summer kitchen, along with his mother-in-law and long-time housekeeper Anna Bartel. Only his son Rudolf remained alive. He later fell on Bjelgorod on the eastern front.

After the Polish campaign, those who were still alive came back as refugees to the village. The poorly buried dead soldiers were reburied in mass graves and the fields were cleared of the destroyed war material. Seed cereals and food were brought in. The West Prussian fellow believers helped with money through Gustav Reimer, Heubuden. The deep wounds healed slowly.

A report by Ernst Crous also refers to this period when it appeared in the *Christlichen Gemeindekalender* and I would like to take a few excerpts from it: "As soon as a pass was available, the connection travel plans were made. On December 7th, Elder Penner, Prangenaus, together with the Protestant pastor from Neuhof, escorted the victims of the Bartel family in Deutsch-Kasun to their final resting place. At the teaching service meeting of the East and West Prussian conference in Kalthof, on May 23, 1940, the Elder Leonhard Ratzlaff from Deutsch-Wymyschle was able to attend. In July Pastor Händiges and Teacher Paul's visited both congregations. Deutsch-Wymyschle, 'the church unparalleled', had also experienced that in the first days of the war leading members were arrested by the Poles and beaten, the orchards were looted and all food supplies were used up. Deutsch-Kasun was hit particularly hard at the same time. Now both are under German administration; in the meantime, both have found connections to the East and West Prussian Association of Churches and thus to the Association of German Mennonite Churches.

In 1924 the American Mennonites had already contributed to rebuilding the church at Deutsch-Kasun, it was providential that Professor M. C. Lehman, who visited Warsaw in June as a representative of the Mennonite Central Committee, could also visit the nearby Deutsch-Kasun. The Warsaw newspaper, whose reporter took part in the trip, wrote the following: The individual farmsteads are well placed in the fertile lowlands and surrounded by well-built barns. In addition to cattle breeding, the proximity of the cities of Warsaw and Modlin made the cultivation of fruit orchards very attractive. The settlement consists of around 40 farms, which are inhabited by the Mennonites with a total of 400 souls. We talked for a long time with the elected Elder Leonhard Ewert, who has exemplary church records, thus far the war

has not destroyed the history of his ancestors and that of other members of the church, some of whom have lived on their farms for four generations. Despite the hardship of the times, we found each of his six children to be fairer and healthier than the next.

The report describes these events and the characteristics of the Mennonites and then deals again with the horrors of September 1939 with murder and death, kidnapping and robbery, concludes with the sentences: 'And yet, although we came unannounced, we were served delicious milk, strawberries and bread today. Despite all the hardships, these settlers will not leave their place of refuge. Thankful and joyful, they recognize what the German administration has already done by handing over cattle and horses to help with rebuilding. From these faces shines the joyful certainty that from now on they will be under German protection and shield.'"<sup>2</sup>

So much for the excerpts from the report by Dr. Crous. But this was only the lull before the storm, which was to devastate the Mennonites on the Vistula. As long as the German Wehrmacht won, there was hope for better times. But soon the disadvantages were also seen. The men were called up for military service and had to fight with weapons at the front. The Mennonites in Germany had long since dropped the principle of defenselessness. A refusal would have meant concentration camps and certain death. Besides, we knew what was going to happen if the Germans lost the war. September 1939 was only a weak prelude to what would follow! Reports of the fallen soon came from the front. Among the many young Mennonites who gave their lives there, as already mentioned, was the son of the Elder Rudolf Bartel, who bore his father's name.

When the German Wehrmacht began to retreat in 1943 and the many refugees passed through Kasun, the Kasuner knew very well that they too would soon have to leave Deutsch-Kasun. Kasun was evacuated in July 1944. The majority fled to Germany by train, others set out with cars, horse-drawn vehicles or on foot. The worst stories of the years of war and flight speak vividly when heard from eyewitnesses. Heinrich A. Schroeder, Box 65, Drake, Saskatchewan, Canada, sent a letter from his brother David P. Schroeder to the Mennonitische Rundschau for publication in April 1946. We quote the letter entirely: "From David Schröder, Fessin village, Stolp district in Pomerania, Poland, on the 14th of January 1946.

After years of interruption, I want to send you a message from the Deutsch-Kasun Church. Before that, however, I wish to send greetings to H.A. Schröder and all the dear relatives and acquaintances who emigrated from here to Canada several years ago!

2) *Warschauer Zeitung*, No. 150, June 27, 1940

My letter is supposed to be a short report about all of our affairs since the outbreak of war on September 1, 1939. In the fall of 1939 I was employed by our fruit merchant Mr. Bolejko in Warsaw on a seasonal basis as an accounting officer. During the siege and bombing of Warsaw I stayed with Alexander Schröder, son of Ohm Wilhelm Schröder in Deutsch Czonstkw. After the fighting in Poland ended, I went home and was subsequently employed in the Czonstkw municipal office. Among our relatives and acquaintances, the following died during the Polish campaign, Elder Rudolf Bartel together with his wife and daughter Gertrude, their long-time cook Miss Anna Bartel, his mother-in-law, Mrs. Juliana Schmidt, Mrs. Jakobine Schröder, her daughter-in-law Beda Schröder (daughter of Johann Schröder) and Peter D. Bartel. Also, Mrs. Olga Stobbe and her three children, the old bachelor Edward Jantz (Olga's brother), and also a daughter of my siblings Albert Busse (his mother-in-law is Eva Schröder, David P's sister), died on the Neuhöfer Kämpe. Natural deaths that occurred during the war: In Deutsch-Kasun, aunt Sara Schröder, Reinhold P. Bartel, Mrs. Xenia Stobbe, (wife of Leonhard) in Czosnow, my sister Elisabeth, (wife of Zacharias Bartel in Markowczyzna) Mathilda Schröder, wife of my cousin David K. Schröder, Neuhöfer Kämpe, and my dear father Peter Schröder on Czosnower Kämpe on June 4, 1943 at the age of almost 88.

The following fell on the battlefield: Peter Nickel, son-in-law of Peter Guhr, Sendykowszczysna, Michael Mandau, husband of your niece Wanda Schröder, Rudi Bartel, son of the Elder Rudolf Bartel, Deutsch-Kasun, a couple of the sons of Franz Bartel, Sendykowszczysna, and also my cousin David K. Schröder's son Dietrich on the Neuhöfer Kämpe. Missing are: on the eastern front Alexander Schröder, son of Wilhelm Schröder from Deutsch Czonstkw and on the western front Oscar Bartel, stepson of Erich Nickel of Polish Kasun.

In September 1939 the following buildings burned down or were otherwise destroyed: Leonhard Stobbe's house and barn in Czosnow, Peter D. Bartel's house, Deutsch-Kasun, all buildings except the barn of Elder Rudolf Bartel, all buildings of Zacharias Bartel (later Schmidt) Inn; the house of my aunt Sara Schröder, house and barn of Valentin Nickel, house, stable and barn of your sister, Mrs. Agneta Schröder, house and barn of my cousin David K. Schröder, Neuhöfer Kämpe. In the summer of 1944, all the buildings of the lame Bernhard Nickel in Deutsch-Kasun burned down for reasons unknown.

I also have to report that in the summer of 1944, as a result of the Russian advance on Warsaw, all Germans from the communities of Czonstkw, Glusk, Tulowice, Gura and Neuhof were evacuated on July 30th. Whatever was possible was loaded onto trolleys and off we went into the unknown. The front seemed to stabilize, however, and so we stayed in the Plonnen district (formerly Plonsk), about 60 kilometers

northwest of Czonstkow, for some time. Some of them had also traveled west to Leslau (Wloclawek), but came back later. Some also returned to their holdings but after only a few weeks they had to leave again. I had come with my few belongings with Ohm Wilhelm Schröder and stayed with him until the beginning of October 1944. Then I went with the Peter Guhr family, their daughter Albertine (widowed Nickel), the Erich Nickel family and my brother-in-law Zacharias Bartel and daughter Agneta drove to the Mennonite congregation of Heubuden, Kreis Grosses Werder, near Marienburg (then Free State of Danzig). Most of the Kasuners stayed there in the Plonsk district, some went to Deutsch-Wymyschle; if I remember correctly, your sister Agnete Schröder with daughter Wanda (widowed Mandau) and her children also went from Plonsk to Deutsch-Wymyschle. I don't have any further news from her. My sister, widow Eva Görtz with her son-in-law Albert Busse, his mother Anna Busse, my cousins David and Heinrich Schröder von Neuhöfer Kämpe drove from Plonsk to Kulm on the Vistula; some of her relatives had gone there before. We, who had gone to the Heubuden church, were very kindly received by the dear brothers and sisters. Leonhard Ewert from Deutsch-Kasun sent his wife and children away while he himself remained in Plonsk as a postal official. Shortly after the large-scale offensive of the Russians in January 1945, however, those from the Plonsk district had to act quickly to take flight and have been scattered in all winds. We in the district of Grosser Werder had to flee on January 24, 1945, but stayed in the district of Danzig for three weeks. Ohm Wilhelm Schröder and Leonhard Ewert also found us here. They knew nothing about the whereabouts of the other Kasuner. In the great confusion of fleeing, it was only too easy to get separated from family and relatives and to have a hard time getting back together. For example, Leo Ewert has not yet found his wife and children. I went with Elfrieda Nickel from Heubuden. Her husband Erich and my brother-in-law Zacharias Bartel were called up to the Wehrmacht in Heubuden in December 1944. After three weeks we had to flee from Danzig. We plan to go to Szczecin in Mecklenburg. So far, when I write about traveling conditions, it is understood that there are miles of wagon after wagon moving at a snail's pace. Finally, we came to Pomeranian, 7 kilometers from Stolp, where we got quarters on the Rittergut Vessin. That was on March 3, 1945. Here we should wait for further orders. On March 8, 1945 we were supposed to leave and flee towards Danzig; now it was clear to us: the road to Szczecin had already been cut by the Russians. But we didn't start driving anymore, because on the same day (March 8, 1945) at 3 p.m. the Russians occupied Vessin, and our struggling on the road finally came to an end. We have lived here in Pomerania for over ten months now and how long we will stay here

is not known. It is not possible to return home because horses and carriages were taken by the Russians at the beginning of the occupation. In addition to those of us from Deutsch-Kasun, there are many refugees from East and West Prussia. From the Deutsch-Kasuner Church there are the following people: Ohm Wilhelm Schröder and his wife, her daughter Martha with daughter Ursula, and also her son-in-law Leonhard Ewert; then there is Ohm Wilhelm's daughter, Mrs. Elfrieda Nickel, her daughter of her first husband, Miss Helene Bartel, and Mrs. Nickel her with her two youngest sons Bruno and Leo. One of her sons, Oskar, is missing, as already mentioned, and a second, Helmuth, was called up to work during our flight in February, and she has no further news. Some families are so torn apart that they are unlikely to ever get together again. Sometimes relatives and acquaintances are staying near each other without knowing it. Since the refugees have not yet been registered by the local government authorities and it is simply impossible to investigate the missing persons. For example, I had been here for 5 months when I only found out that 8 kilometers from here on another estate, Grundsinn, my sister widow Eva Görtz, her son-in-law Albert Busse with wife and children, my cousin David K. Schröder with his youngest son Witold and some friends were staying. I visited her there in early September. After 8 days my sister Eva Görtz died there. Albert Busse's mother and the widow Heinrich Nickel (mother of Oswald and Rudolf in Canada) died there sometime earlier. A few weeks ago I received the sad news that my just mentioned cousin David K. Schröder hanged himself there in despair. Dreadful! His eldest daughter Lydia with her husband, a certain Ewald Schulz, are somewhere in Canada, maybe my brother Heinrich knows their address and could gently tell them about it. (It has been done, the editor.)

Ohm Wilhelm Schröders received the last message from her son Eugen, from Norway in autumn 1944, who was also called up. Her son Alexander, as already noted, is missing on the Eastern Front and they have no news about the whereabouts of his wife Olga, née Bartel, nor of their youngest daughter Lydia, married Wolf in Bolimow near Lowicz. The man named Wolf was also with the Wehrmacht. My brother-in-law Jakob Nickel and sister Maria, with their children, were with their married daughter in Plock when I received the last message from them in January 1945. Since, as already mentioned, I am not in Fessin, but 4 Kilometers away, please send the answer to the following address: Mr. Leonard Ewert, Fessin village, region Ryczewo, powiat i poczta Slupsk, Pomorze, Poland, for D. Schröder."<sup>3</sup>

In addition, a report from "Mennonitische Märtyrer" Mrs. Margarete Schröder from Deutsch-Kasun, the daughter of the preacher Edmund Jantz from Markowczysna:

3) *Mennonitische Rundschau*, No. 17, April 24, 1946, page 4

"On September 5, 1939, when the war with Germany had just begun we were driven out of our apartment by Polish soldiers at 11 a.m. Included were: my mother with the youngest son and I with my two small children: Walter, barely 5 years old and Edith - 4 weeks old. We decided to flee to the next village, where people had not yet been chased away, where my sister Mrs. Kliewer lived. She was very happy because she had stayed all alone with her little ones. The men had all previously been arrested and driven away.

September 7th, all women and children were rounded up, supposed to be taken to a camp. But we were all driven to a nearby large farm; a Polish officer wrote all our names on a list and then gave a speech on how we should behave, and we all had to solemnly promise that we would follow all the rules exactly. Then we were all allowed back to our apartments.

The other residents of the village of Deutsch-Kasun, including my mother-in-law Jakobina Schröder, 53 years old and my sister-in-law Mrs. Beda Schröder, 32 years old, were driven to the next town Neuhoof and from there to the Modlin fortress. There they were roughed up and questioned. After that, some were released, but the others, including the two women mentioned, were taken to a neighboring Polish village on a military car under guard. They were driven past us - all innocent victims, they were in the hands of murderer. Under a large oak tree they are terrified for 24 hours, scared, and at night she was kneeling before her grave.

When the German occupation had firmly established itself in Poland, the buried bodies were found after long searches and questions. The mother-in-law had been shot in the head and must have been dead; but the sister-in-law had only a light graze on the right breast and arm, and we assume that she was not dead when she was buried. Still in the grave, she had her mother wrapped tightly in her lap. So we've learned our loved ones had suffered terrible deaths. And for what? They were innocent victims of the great hatred of the fanatical Poles."<sup>4</sup>

Today the former members of the Deutsch-Kasun church are scattered over the whole world. Some live in the United States, others in Paraguay, Uruguay and Canada, but some have also stayed in Germany. Only a few remained in Poland. Leo Ewert mentioned in the summer of 1967 only Hulda Bartel, daughter of Peter (Bogaty) Bartel, wife of Zacharias Bartel, whose husband died after an interrogation, and their four children, Johanna, Alize, Agnes and Bernhard still remained. The daughter Johanna married a Pole and her mother is with her. Bernhard lives in Wyszogrod, where he has a house.

In the period from 1920 to 1939, many migrated from Deutsch-Kasun to Canada, some to Paraguay and Brazil. From

4) Toews, A.A., *Mennonitische Märtyrer*, Volume 2, pages 347-348

there many members regularly sent letters and magazines to them. This served to maintain a constant connection. Especially in Drake, Saskatchewan, and also in other places, many Kasuner settled. Of the refugees who fled to Germany, around three quarters emigrated to Canada and the United States, and a quarter remained in Germany, while some went to South America.

Until 1914 the Mennonite Church in Deutsch-Kasun and its branches had a total of 666 souls. Due to the emigration between the wars and losses in World War II, in 1941 the community counted only 375 souls, including unbaptized children.

The community of Deutsch-Wymyschle still had 345 souls including children in 1943. When the flight was finally over, this resulted in a total of 720 souls including children and unbaptized relatives for the two Mennonite settlements in central Poland.

## XI. The church of Deutsch-Wymyschle from 1900 until after the First World War

In the first decade of the twentieth century the development of the Mennonite congregation Deutsch-Wymyschle was characterized by conflict between the increasingly waning Old Church and the expanding MB Church. In the early days of the Mennonite congregation, their services were held in the house of the preacher Heinrich Kliwer, and from about 1894 until the end of 1914 in the house of the Elder Peter Ratzlaff in Deutsch-Wymyschle. At that time he had a large, new house with a spacious, large parlor built to meet the space requirements of the young Church. Over time, however, it became a bit too small. However, the spacious church, located in the middle of the village, was visited by fewer and fewer people.

Due to the emigration to America and Russia, the Mennonite Brethren Church of Deutsch-Wymyschle also lost many members. At the end of 1914 it had only 86 members. Of the 100 souls who emigrated from Deutsch-Wymyschle between 1900 and 1914, 73 went to the United States from North America, 15 to Russia, 6 to Germany, 2 to Volhynia, and 4 to other regions in Congress Poland. Among the emigrants to Russia were the four sons of the Elder Peter Ratzlaff and two sons of the deacon Heinrich Wohlgemuth. They returned to their homeland shortly before the war ended or soon after.



Vorderansicht des Hauses, in dem die MBG Deutsch-Wymyschle bis 1914 ihre Versammlungen abhielt (1971).

Front view of the house where the MBC Deutsch-Wymyschle held their meetings until 1914 (1971).



Giebel des Hauses des Ältesten Leonhard P. Ratzlaff, der bis 1946 hier wohnte. Die Fenster sind an dem ehemaligen Versammlungsraum der MB-Gemeinde.

Gable of the house of Elder Leonhard P. Ratzlaff, who lived here until 1946. The windows are on the former meeting room of the MB congregation.

We have already described the experiences of the Deutsch-Wymyschle Church during World War I when we reported on the accommodation of the Mennonites who had fled from Deutsch-Kasun. When the Deutsch-Wymyschle front approached, some families fled to the Vistula lowlands, to Korzykow, Swiniary or Wionczemin. From a granddaughter of the deacon Heinrich Wohlgemuth, Mrs. Anna Foth, now of Winnipeg, we have an eyewitness account of the battle that took place around the village. She writes:

"The rumble of the war thunder came closer and closer. Russian soldiers marched through the village. Some of them came into the house and looked for the 'Germaniez' in small tins, in which my aunts had their crochet and knitting yarn. They asked for the best food and drink. One of my aunts was occupied making tea for the soldiers.

Grandpa, concerned by great unrest, drove two wagons from the garden side to the house, and here was packing, my mother things on one, and Granddad's stuff, that wasn't hidden, on the other. They were two high-loaded wagons; the guitar and mandolin were at the very top. Then the two wagons were driven down into the garden.

Now the village was full of Russians; most of them moved across the meadows, behind the gardens, to the Vistula. Grandfather, driven by uneasiness, let the horses out of the stable, including the cows, and drove everything to the meadows. However, the fences had all been trampled down so that the cattle could walk across the village meadows. Then he was back in the yard. We all had to stay dressed, ready to flee.

Suddenly there was a crash so loud that everyone in the house ducked; then Grandpa came in: 'Children, do you all live? Now our house is on fire and we are without a house; the whole roof is already on fire!' We went out of the house so quickly that my aunts even left their hand baskets, and no one dared to reenter the house. Grandpa was still running to the pigsty when there was a sow with a number of small piglets inside; the goose stable was also opened quickly. The sow came out, but the piglets and geese burned up. Now we stood in the courtyard and watched helplessly as the whole farm burned down.

Being rescued was out of the question, since almost the entire village had fled to villages closer to the Vistula. What now? The rain of bullets was getting thicker. So Grandpa and his four daughters grabbed the front of one wagon and pulled it down to the meadow. Then they fetched the other one, leaving about 10 feet free between the two wagons. Straw bales were placed in between, and we sat on them. My youngest sister and my cousin Hulda lay in our cradle; they were almost the same age. The more the cannons cracked, the louder the two screamed, so that the mothers were embarrassed. Everything around us was full of Russian soldiers. Everyone hurried to the Vistula.

There I saw wounded soldiers for the first time. Two soldiers had a wounded man on a stretcher who had no hands or feet, it was so vivid that I can still hear him screaming today: 'O plocho, o plocho!'

We sat crouched between the cars when suddenly a hit grenade our wagon just behind mother's back. We all fell on the straw bags in a daze. Then Grandpa called: 'Children! Report all of you! Is no one dead?' We all got in touch! Yes, God's protective hand

had saved us. But what had happened to us? We were all covered in white feathers. That was our salvation. The grenade was exploded in the tied duvets; the fragments of grenade had burrowed into the feathers and had lost their strength. Later we took the duvets apart, and in each ball there was a large or a small shell fragment. Pieces of the guitar and mandolin hung high in the willow branches. God's ways and help are so wonderful.

When it got quieter in the evening the Russian soldiers retreated. We suddenly heard someone shouting: 'Open up! We are here, the Germans!' We were all very excited. 'Now we're among the Germans,' said Grandfather, how are we doing now?' Then he went to the house next door from where he had heard the German voices. His homestead was still burning; since the outside was made of thick planks, it burned until the next day.

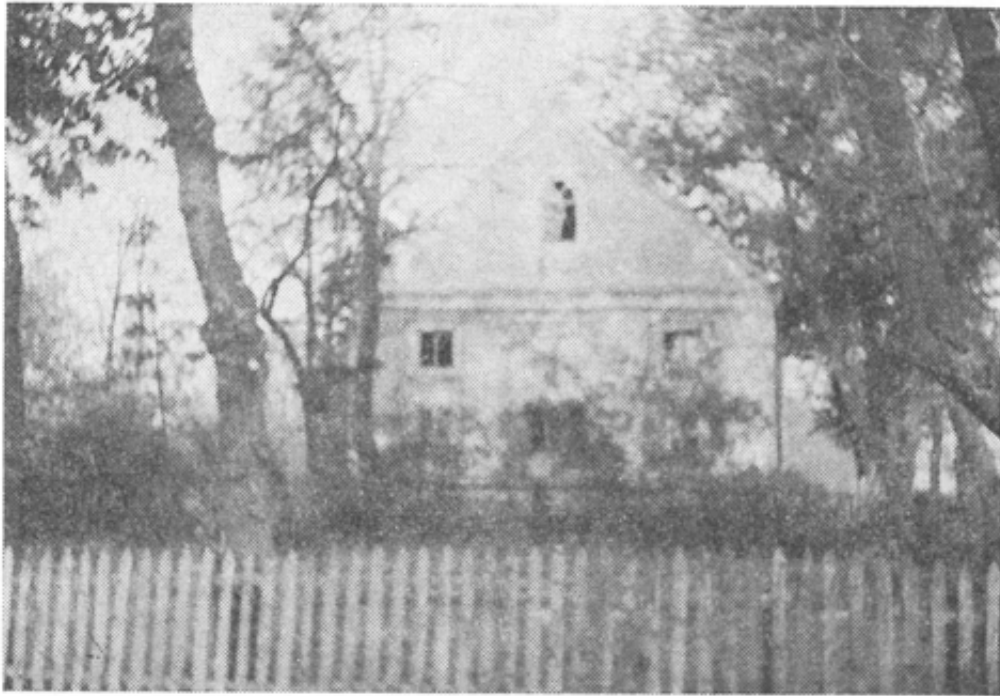
Grandpa asked the German soldiers not to open the houses because it was a German village; its inhabitants had fled to the Vistula but would be back in a short time. In most houses, one person was left behind to protect their belongings. They left the neighbor's house available for the family that had an accident, where Grandpa moved in with his daughters and grandchildren, so that they did not have to spend the night outdoors. This was in Uncle Witzke's house. The next day we searched for Papa's cattle and horses. Everything was found but where could we put them? No stable, no feed! However, when the residents of Wymyschle returned ways and means were found. Since Grandpa was the only one in the village whose yard had burned down, the farmers spread Grand Papa's cattle and horses between them and wintered them. In the spring he slowly rebuilt the house and yard, everything was very temporary and small, no comparison with the former large buildings."

So much for the description by Ms. Anna Foth, who was six years old at the time.

We have also mentioned earlier that the refugees from Deutsch-Kasun were able to return to their homes at the end of August 1915. Before that, Elder Rudolf Bartel contributed to reuniting the MB congregation with the Mennonite congregation in the church. Preacher Johann Kliever described this beautifully in the records we quoted earlier. Since the room in the house of Elder Peter Ratzlaff was occupied by the German military, the MBC had no meeting room.

Robert Foth writes about it in his notes: "After a few weeks the front approached. The Russian forces were pushed back by the German soldiers, and the latter occupied Deutsch-Wymyschle. The village was swarming with German soldiers. Wherever living space could be found, it was occupied by a soldier. The MBC meeting room was also occupied.

The military already planned to occupy the prayer house of the Mennonite congregation. The German Wehrmacht had already noticed that only a few villagers visited the prayer house on Sundays. The Mennonite church found out about this just in time, and Elder Rudolf Bartel made the prayer house available to the MBC for common use, with the consent of the community leaders. MBC gratefully accepted this friendly offer."<sup>1</sup>



Kirche der Mennonitengemeinde Deutsch-Wymyschle 1971, als Volkshaus benutzt.

Church of the Mennonite congregation Deutsch-Wymyschle 1971, used as a community center.

According to rumors that persisted even later among the parishioners, the board members of the Mennonite Church were given an ultimatum by the German local commandant to open the church to the MBC, otherwise he would fill it with soldiers. Which of the three versions is really the right one remains unknown, but all three may contain some truth. As always, various forces were at work to bring about this resolution. It has always had a beneficial effect in the long run.

From the end of 1914, until August 1915, both congregations held their services together, led by the ministers of the MBC, in the prayer house of the Mennonite Church, at which time Elder Rudolf Bartel was allowed to return to Deutsch-Kasun. The brothers Peter Ratzlaff, Johann Kliever,

1) *Mennonitische Rundschau*, June 12, 1968, page 14

Johann Schmidt and Heinrich Wohlgemuth I served in the MBC uninterruptedly for decades and had a beneficial effect.

Over time, the leading brothers grew older. The congregation saw the need to get younger people involved in the ministry. In the time frame 1930-1932 a new church council was elected from the ranks of the younger brothers and ordained to the office by the aged Elder Peter Ratzlaff. Leonhard P. Ratzlaff was elected as Elder, brothers Heinrich Wohlgemuth II and Gustav P. Ratzlaff as preachers and Erich P. Ratzlaff as deacon. The three brothers Ratzlaff were sons of the Elder Peter Ratzlaff.<sup>2</sup>



Familienbild des Ältesten Leonhard P. Ratzlaff; sitzend, v.l.n.r.: Anna Ratzlaff, geb. Wohlgemuth, Maria, Leonhard Ratzlaff, Richard; stehend: Erich und Hulda.

Family portrait of the Elder Leonhard P. Ratzlaff; sitting, from left to right: Anna Ratzlaff, née Wohlgemuth, Maria, Leonhard Ratzlaff, Richard; standing: Erich and Hulda.

Leonhard P. Ratzlaff was born in Deutsch-Wymyschle on January 18, 1880, the son of Peter and Wilhelmine née Prochnau. He attended elementary school in his home village, then his parents sent him to Zyrardow, where he received lessons in singing and music from the conductor of the Baptist church choir. After his return he took over the choir of the MBC that had just become independent. He had converted to the Lord at the age of 13 and was baptized on May 20, 1894 and admitted to the MBC at Deutsch-Wymyschle. On April 20, 1898, he married the young woman Anna Wohlgemuth born on August 25, 1875, daughter of Heinrich and Julianna, née. Foth.

2) *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, Vol. 11, page 42 b

Eight children came from this marriage, but only four remained alive. In 1913 the Leonhard Ratzlaff family emigrated to Milerovo in the Don region, southern Russia, where three of his younger brothers, Erich, Gustav and Bernhard, had found employment with Mennonite manufacturers and mill owners. In 1918, shortly before the collapse of the German front, he returned to Deutsch-Wymyschle with two brothers. Here he worked in the community as a Sunday School leader and preacher until he was elected and ordained in 1931.



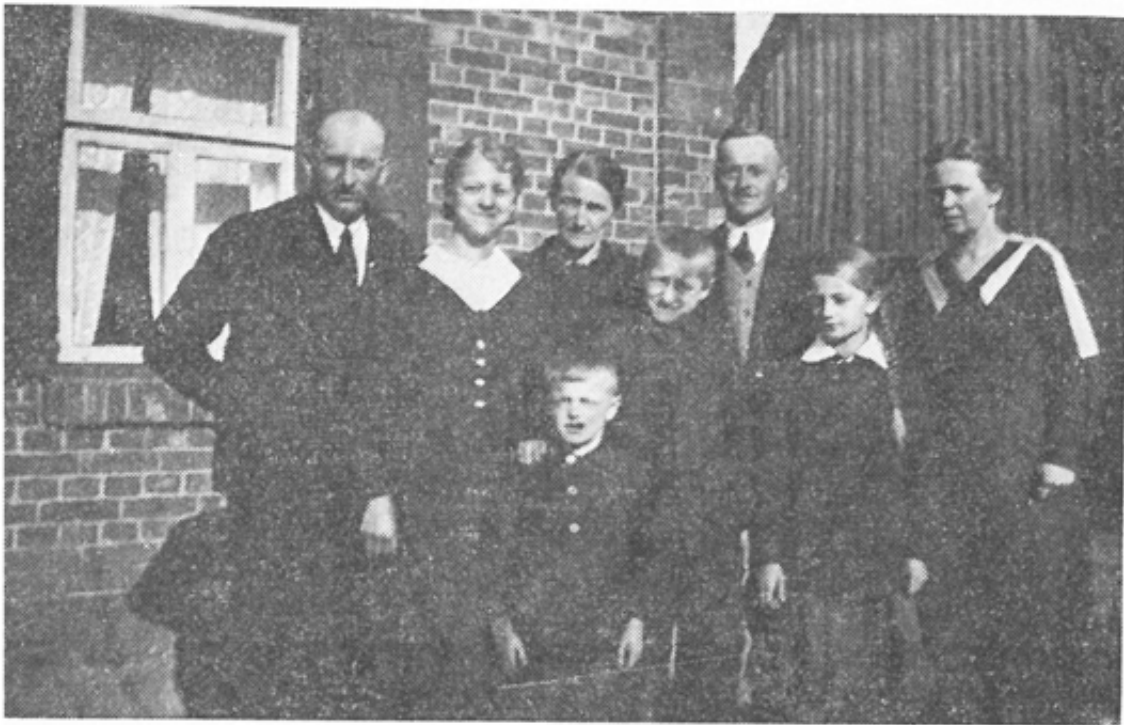
Familie Heinrich Wohlgemuth sen. Auf dem Bilde, v.l.n.r.: vorne, die Ehepaare Kornelius Wohlgemuth, Heinrich Wohlgemuth sen., Heinrich Wohlgemuth jun., hinten: Peter Foth, Wilhelm Kliewer, Rudolf Witzke und David Bartel.

Family Heinrich Wohlgemuth senior. In the picture, from left to right: front, the married couples Kornelius Wohlgemuth, Heinrich Wohlgemuth senior, Heinrich Wohlgemuth junior, rear: Peter Foth, Wilhelm Kliewer, and David Bartel.

Heinrich Wohlgemuth II, born March 16, 1884, in Swiniary, the son of deacon Heinrich Wohlgemuth I and Anna, née Bartel, married to Minna Kliewer, daughter of Heinrich and Eva, née Bartel, on December 29, 1911. During the war he served in the forestry service in Volhynia, but soon returned to Poland. Here he was active as the leader of the church choir and the youth club. For economic reasons, he moved to Szczawin near Gostynin in 1935 and from there two years later to Gradzanow near Raciaz in the Sierpc district, where he died of dropsy on October 12, 1943.

Gustav P. Ratzlaff was born on September 3, 1892 in Deutsch-Wymyschle, the son of Peter and Wilhelmine née Prochnau. Here

he also attended elementary school. In his childhood he accepted the Lord as his personal Savior and was baptized on March 19, 1904 and accepted into the congregation. At the advice of the traveling preacher Wilhelm Dyck, his parents sent him in 1909 along with his older brother Erich to Millerowo, where they were both employed at the Martens, DeFehr and Dyck factories. Shortly before the war, he studied at the Polytechnic in Hildburghausen, Thuringia, Germany for two years. He then returned to the above mentioned machine factory as a technician. During the war, he served as a medic for several years. Immediately after the war, on September 15, 1918, he was married in Millerowo to Maria Janzen, daughter of Franz and Maria, née Pätkau. During the revolution he had to flee to the Kuban, but came back to Millerowo, where he continued to work in the same company, now under state supervision. In May 1923 he was allowed to return to Poland as a migrant. Here he became active in youth work, founded a youth choir and later took over the community choir. In 1931 he was elected and ordained preacher. His ministry was fruitful until the church was dissolved.

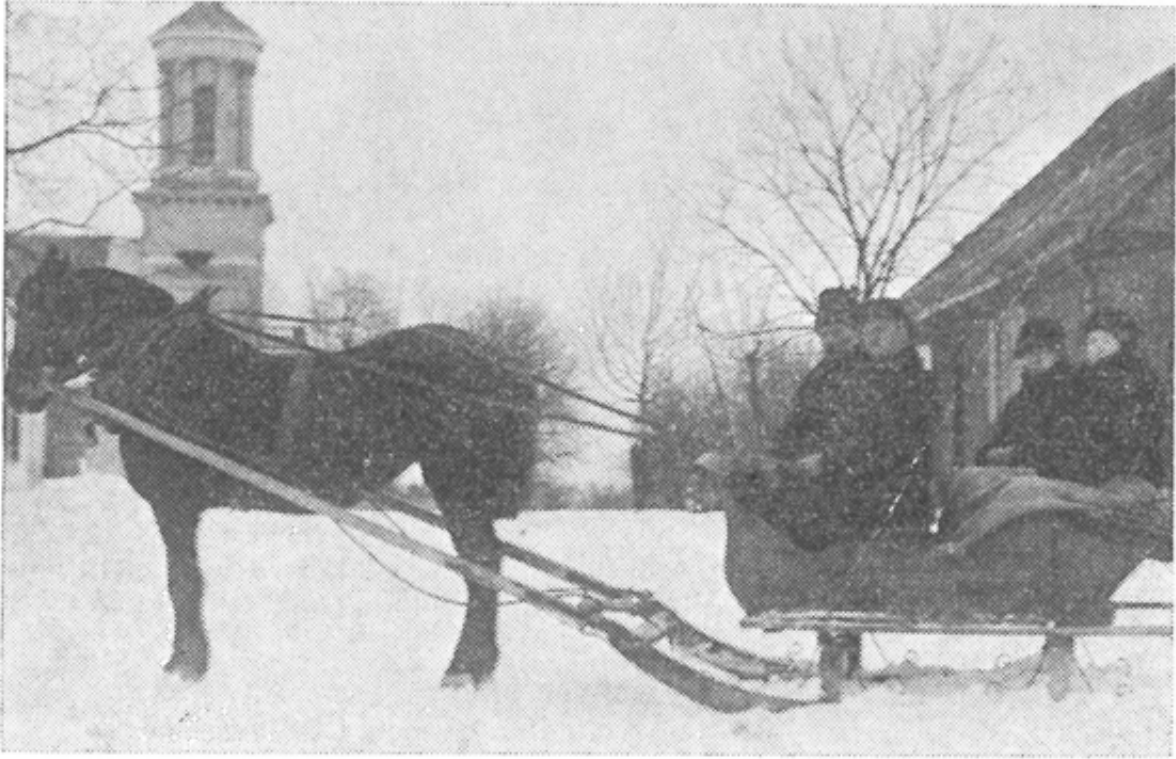


Familie Gustav P. Ratzlaff vor ihrem Haus in Wymyschle; ganz links Rudolf Witzke, Sonntagsschulleiter, ganz rechts Frau Maria Schulz, jetzt Vancouver, B.C., Kanada.

The Gustav P. Ratzlaff family in front of their house in Wymyschle; far left Rudolf Witzke, Sunday headmaster, far right Mrs. Maria Schulz, now [1971] in Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

Erich P. Ratzlaff was born on May 17, 1890, the son of Peter and the Wilhelmine, née Prochnau. After finishing primary school, he went to an apprenticeship as a master carpenter and learned this craft. He accepted the Lord as his personal Savior in his youth and was baptized on March 19, 1904 and admitted to the MB congregation.

In 1909, at the invitation of the preacher Wilhelm Dyck, he went to Millerowo in southern Russia, where he worked as a carpenter and mill fitter. Here he met Aganethe Janzen, daughter of Franz and Maria, née Pätkau, to whom he was married on September 22, 1912. In October 1918 he returned to Poland with his family, where he put in an oil, saw and later an engine mill. In 1931 the church elected him deacon, in which work he continued until the church was dissolved.



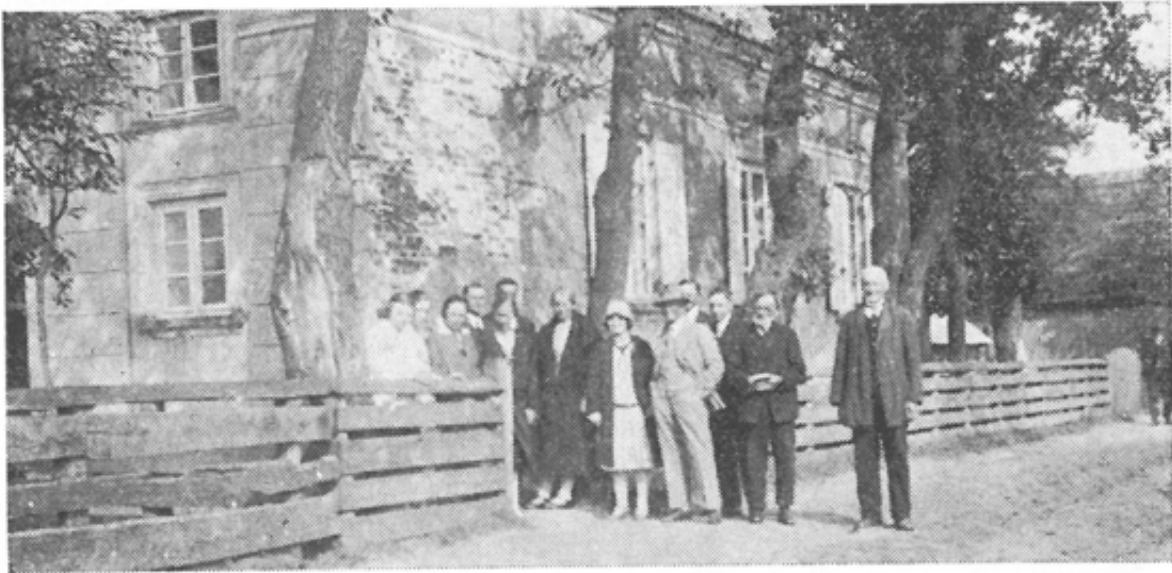
Die Brüder Erich und Gustav Ratzlaff mit ihren Frauen auf einer Schlittenfahrt in Gombin. Im Hintergrund die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Gombin.

The brothers Erich and Gustav Ratzlaff, with their wives on a sleigh ride in Gombin. In the background the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Gombin.

The Sunday School director Heinrich Wohlgemuth I, died in 1930, and his son-in-law Rudolf Witzke was chosen to succeed him. He devoted himself to this work with body and soul and had been a teacher at the Sunday School since his youth.

Due to strong natural growth, the problem of overpopulation arose, which made it necessary to look for new settlement areas. Robert Foth writes about this: "Many Russian Mennonites came to Germany around 1926 and then emigrated overseas to join their fellow believers in Canada, the United States, Brazil, Paraguay and Mexico. Some Deutsch-Wymyschle families also joined them. Some families managed to emigrate with many difficulties that the receiving countries and the Polish authorities put in their way. The number of those who emigrated from Wymyschle between 1926 to 1938 were: to Canada 27 adults and 9 children under 16 years; to Brazil

10 adults and 2 children; to Paraguay 17 adults and 7 children, and one person to the USA. Due to the emigration of some families and single persons, many fragmented farms came back into the hands of a single owner. From an economic point of view, that was also an advantage for the community. If there hadn't been so much difficulty put in the way of those wishing to emigrate, many more would have emigrated."<sup>3</sup>



Abschied der Geschwister Bernhard P. Ratzlaff, die 1929 nach Kanada auswanderten. Von rechts stehen: Ältester Peter Ratzlaff, Prediger Johann Kliwer und Bernhard P. Ratzlaff.

Farewell for the family of Bernhard P. Ratzlaff, who emigrated to Canada in 1929. From the right are: Elder Peter Ratzlaff, preacher Johann Kliwer and Bernhard P. Ratzlaff.

Despite the economic benefits, this turmoil brought the Church a great loss of valuable connections. Robert Foth writes about it: "The emigration of some dear and precious brothers and sisters had a negative impact on the spiritual life of the church, as well as on the cultural life. There were gaps in the life of the community that could not be filled immediately. It was like that with the emigration of the teacher Fritz Kliwer, who emigrated to Paraguay with his parents and siblings in 1930. Brother Fritz Kliwer had a great love for education and culture. He brought many lectures to the youth in the club hours. He was a tireless disseminator of good books. Through him many good books came into the library of the youth club. "

Now would be a good time to take a closer look at the educational efforts of the Mennonites in Wymyschle. Worth mentioning here are the children of Robert Foth, Heinrich and Martha, both of whom were teachers. They had acquired their education at high schools and teacher training seminars. They also persuaded others to be trained. It is also thanks to their influence that Fritz Kliwer and Erich L. Ratzlaff became teachers.

3) *Mennonitische Rundschau*, June 26, 1968, page 14



Dr. Fritz Kliever vor seiner Auswanderung nach Paraguay.



Lehrer Erich L. Ratzlaff, Redakteur der „Mennonitischen Rundschau“.

Left: Dr. Fritz Kliever before emigrating to Paraguay. Right: Teacher Erich L. Ratzlaff, editor [1971] of the "Mennonitische Rundschau".

The spiritual development of the Church between the two world wars is perceived by everyone as being at a high point. In "Die Geschichte der Mennoniten-Brüdergemeinde" by A. H. Unruh, Robert Foth gives the following apt judgment: "If we take a look at the inner life of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Deutsch-Wymyschle, we can rightly say: It was a lively one and wonderful life, as under the direction of the old brothers, and under the direction of their successors. The leading brothers have lead us well, which has left good memories of them in the church. In addition to the Sunday meetings, the Sunday School for the children and the youth classes, prayer, Bible and singing lessons were held in the private houses on the weekends of the evening "...<sup>4</sup>

In "Mennonitische Märtyrer", Volume 2, by A. A. Toews, quotes Erhard Ratzlaff from Germany in 1947: "Sunday services, Sunday School for the children, youth club, prayer and Bible classes, singing and music choir - all of these were sources of many blessings for the Mennonite population. In addition to individuals, the flow of emigration went overseas to Canada and Paraguay. Most of the time it was the best people who were looking for opportunities to own land and a new home."<sup>5</sup>

In the same book Heinrich Bartel, who went to Canada in 1938, writes, the following remarks about his former home community:<sup>6</sup> "At the time just mentioned, the church and church

4) Unruh, A. H., *Die Geschichte der Mennoniten-Brüdergemeinde*, page 222

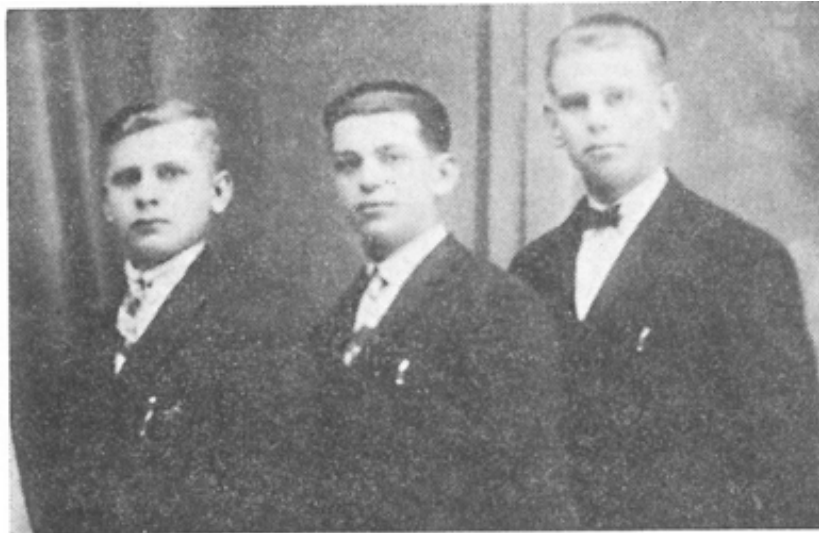
5) Toews, A.A., *Mennonitische Märtyrer*, Volume 2, pages 340-341

6) Loc. cit., page 349



Musikverein im Jahre 1933; erste Reihe (v.l.n.r.): David Kliewer, Gertrud Kliewer, Daniel Prochnau, Gertrud Schröder, David Ratzlaff; zweite Reihe: Minna Ratzlaff, Frieda Kliewer, Hulda Kliewer, Matilda Bartel, Frieda Pauls; dritte Reihe: Emilie Wohlgemuth, Hulda Ratzlaff, Erich Ratzlaff, Heinrich Bartel, Lydia Ratzlaff; hinten: Gustav Ratzlaff, Erhard Ratzlaff, Albert Foth, Franz Foth, Peter Schmidt, Reinhold Kliewer.

Music society in 1933; first row (from left to right): David Kliewer, Gertrud Kliewer, Daniel Prochnau, Gertrud Schröder, David Ratzlaff; second row: Minna Ratzlaff, Frieda Kliewer, Hulda Kliewer, Matilda Bartel, Frieda Pauls; third row: Emilie Wohlgemuth, Hulda Ratzlaff, Erich Ratzlaff, Heinrich Bartel, Lydia Ratzlaff; behind: Gustav Ratzlaff, Erhard Ratzlaff, Albert Foth, Franz Foth, Peter Schmidt, Reinhold Kliewer.



Drei Jünglinge aus Wymyschle um 1928, v.l.n.r.: Erich L. Ratzlaff, Erhard F. Ratzlaff und Richard L. Ratzlaff. Richard wanderte darauf nach Kanada aus.

Three youngsters from Wymyschle around 1928, from left to right: Erich L. Ratzlaff, Erhard F. Ratzlaff and Richard L. Ratzlaff. Richard then emigrated to Canada.

life was at a high level. The Mennonite Brethren numbered 150 members. We had a church and youth choir. Brother Gustav Ratzlaff was the conductor of both choirs. Sunday service was only in the morning, in the afternoon from 1.30 p.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday School and from 3.30 p.m. to 5 p.m. was a 'club hour' for the youth. Also, four or five times a year there were recitals by the young people. The head brother (conductor) was Leonhard Ratzlaff, son of the former Elder. Peter Ratzlaff. "

The whole time between the two world wars was a time of serious searching in Scripture, a constant struggle for sanctification in daily life, and an attempt to be a shining example of a church to the world. Yes, it was a "Church like no other", like Dr. Crous calls her, at least for us it was!

Finally, I would like to share the impressions of a man who stayed in Wymyschle for only a short time, but who contributed much to the spiritual upswing that the church experienced after the First World War. It was the preacher D. M. Hofer from Chicago, Ill., USA, already mentioned in connection with the MB group at Kasun. After visiting Russia, Poland was the first country he visited on his trip around the world. In his book he writes the following observations about this: "Our first stop in Poland was Warsaw. It is an important city with about one million inhabitants and is the capital of Poland. We drove on an elegant cab with an experienced coachman and also looked at the main streets of the city, and although we had good quarters in the 'Hotel Europa', we only stayed here for two days and, following the advice of the AMR representative, D. R. Höppner, accepted an invitation to the Mennonite settlement outside of Warsaw. From Warsaw on the Vistula we steamed about 60 kilometers (40 miles) down the river and after several hours of driving we came to the Mennonite settlement 'Wymyschle', where we found a whole community of very dear brothers and sisters.

Hearts and doors were wide open and we were allowed to enjoy a great blessing during our week together. There were meetings twice a day, including reading the Bible, and we were all revived and strengthened in our faith. The Lord began to work and a number of sinners were converted to God. One evening there were 16 precious penitent souls looking for peace in the blood of the Lamb and there was serious inner fighting and struggle. Glory to the Lord! In addition, we had 2 special meetings with the Sunday School. The children delighted us with their lovely songs, and we could say that under the current care of the Sunday School, the municipality of Wymyschle can soon count on rich growth.

The church's leading brothers are Elders Peter Ratzlaff, Johann Kliewer and J. Schmidt, who together with their families there have shown us a lot of hospitality. The church choir is under the direction of a brother Wohlgemuth and is very talented. We were overwhelmed

and blessed by the beautiful singing of the choir. Also, we couldn't miss out on home visits ... and the brothers and sisters brought us a full measure of warm brotherly love."<sup>7</sup>

7) Hofer, D. M., *The Famine in Russia and Our Trip Around the World*, pages 362-364

## XII. The relationship of the Central Polish Mennonites to other religious groups

The Mennonite communities in central Poland were not in a vacuum. With few exceptions, they lived in villages in where members of other religious denominations also settled. The village Deutsch-Wymyschle was, as we mentioned earlier, founded by Evangelical Augsburg settlers.<sup>1</sup> Only in the second generation were the farmsteads largely bought by Mennonites.

A reverse process can be observed in some other villages that were located directly in the Vistula lowlands. The village of Swiniary was originally predominantly Mennonite, but was later dominated by Lutheran settlers. The Mennonites very often had Protestant neighbors. But some also settled in Catholic Polish villages and therefore had Polish neighbors.

We have seen earlier that the religious currents among the evangelical Augsburg settlers did not leave the Mennonites untouched. Baptist evangelistic efforts in the 1860s also spread to the Mennonites, which can be seen from the example of Wola-Wodzynska. A mutual influence was also noticeable in the Vistula lowlands near Deutsch-Wymyschle. After the formation of the Baptist church in the lowlands there was a lot of traffic between them and the young MBC in Wymyschle.

The relationship between the Mennonites and those who had formed the congregation of Moravian Church is interesting. The Mennonites came into contact with this community in several places, and it sometimes appears to have had a fruitful effect on the Mennonite intellectual life. This was the case with Brenkenhoffswalde and Franztal in Neumark,<sup>2</sup> but also with Deutsch-Wymyschle, which was not far from the Moravian Brethren at Leonberg (Lwówek) near Gombin. We will talk about this relationship a little later.

1) Unruh, B. H., *Die niederländisch-niederdeutschen Hintergründe der Mennonitischen Ostwanderungen im 16., 18. und 19. Jahrhundert*, page 172

2) Friesen, P.M., *Alt-Evangelische Mennonitische Brüderschaft in Russland*, pages 82-83

After the First World War there was a new wave of revival in the German colonies in Poland, which was connected to the ministry of Fetler, but also with Pentecostal circles in Germany and America. Some Mennonites were also influenced by it. We then want to deal with the relationship of the Mennonites to these groups.

Statistical data on the ratio of the Mennonite population to other denominations are unfortunately not available. According to the existing family book of all Mennonite families in the area of the Deutsch-Wymyschle community, which existed in 1927-29, Mennonites lived in 17 different locations, but Deutsch-Wymyschle undoubtedly formed the center of the community, although eight Protestant-Augsburg families also lived in the village.

The families belonging to the Mennonite church were counted in the villages as follows: Deutsch-Wymyschle 37, Wonsosz 6, Strzemeszno 7, Romunki Troszynskie 3, Gombin 4, Alfonsow 5, Leonow 9, Deutsch-Zyck 9, Swiniary 5, Piotrkowek 3, Osiek 1, Korzykow 1, Drwaly 1, KempaWyszogrodzka 1, Biniewo 2, Dobrzykow 1, Okolusz 1, together 96 families. The first four towns were close together, and from Alfonsow you could walk to the church in Deutsch-Wymyschle. The other parishioners, however, had to harness their horses if they wanted to go to church.

The Mennonites had linguistically adapted to their Protestant neighbors over the years, but belonging to German nationality was never emphasized very much. The younger generation was more open to political trends. The older generation still lived in the atmosphere of the old tradition. They still thought about their Dutch ancestry and considered themselves a class that was above the Protestant Germans. They still remembered the persecution to which they had been subjected in Prussia because of their defenselessness, which forced them to leave Prussia.

The Polish government between the two wars was very tolerant and allowed the Mennonites to serve in medical units without weapons. This right was also granted to them under the Russian government. They were also exempt from the obligation to take an oath in court. Because of their special position in this regard, they were never very popular with their Protestant neighbors, and in addition, they did not have their children baptized. This is why mixed marriages only rarely occurred. However, the relationship was otherwise quite friendly, and there was rarely a dispute between the Mennonites and their neighbors of different beliefs. What is interesting is what Eduard Kneifel said about the Mennonites in Poland: "Kasun was the main settlement of the Mennonites in Central Poland. Besides them there were also Mennonites in Deutsch-Wymyschle, Wola near Kicin, Nieszawka near Thorn, Dragass, Montau and Gruppe Graudenz lowlands). There was also a Mennonite community of Palatinate origin in Lemberg (Lesser Poland). Only in Lviv did they have a theologically trained preacher,

in contrast, in other localities, the individual congregations were headed by Elders who were freely elected and performed all religious duties. The Mennonites were of Low German origin, used the Low German language and were exempted from military service because of their privileges. The Baptist or Neo-Baptist movements did not have this right. The Mennonites had many points of contact with the Baptists and conformed with them for a while, and in many cases joined the Baptist groups. But in the period that followed, the mutual relationship loosened. They reflected on their special nature and their own interests.

The Mennonites generally had two currents of thought, one orthodox and one liberal. The latter was predominant among the Mennonites in Poland. This was almost exclusively limited to community work, contained no propaganda and even reluctantly accepted members from other religious communities and groups. The difference compared to the Baptists' zeal for mission and expansion is striking here. Their attitude towards the Augsburg church was not unfriendly, like that of the Baptists and other sectarian groups. On the contrary, they worked in harmony with the Moravian Brethren Church and often let their preachers look after them. Of their total, the Mennonites were barely 2000 souls strong in Poland. What made them stand out was the faithful adherence to the heritage of their fathers - to their beliefs, their German culture, their morals and customs. Mixed marriages were almost non-existent among them. Families with a large number of children (ten), such as those in Deutsch-Wymyschle, were by no means rare among them. Because of this biological fact, for families with large numbers of children the employment and life opportunities



**Familien mit großer Kinderzahl waren in Wymyschle die Regel. Familienbild der Familie Wm. Schroeder, vor einigen Jahren in Arnold, B.C., aufgenommen.**

Families with large numbers of children were the norm in Wymyschle. Family portrait of the Wilhelm Schröder family, taken a few years ago in Arnold, B.C.

for the young adults were greatly reduced, so that Mennonite families emigrated overseas - Canada, Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay. Before the Second World War (1939) the leader of the Mennonite church was Elder Bartel in Kasun."<sup>3</sup>

Kneifel seems to give the impression here as if the church at Kasun was superior to the other groups he mentions, which is also reflected in the statement that Elder Bartel was the chairman of the Mennonite church. Of course, he knows nothing of the autonomy of each individual community, and although he speaks of two directions or currents in Mennonite, one does not know whether he is describing the "Flemish", which were considered conservative, the "Frisian", which are said to have more liberal tendencies, and whether the "Orthodox" refers to the Mennonite Brotherhood, in contrast to the liberal "church community".

Otherwise his observations are correct and one is amazed at how well he knows the conditions that played a role in the contact between the Mennonites and their Protestant neighbors. Of the churches listed by Kneifel, only the first three were actually in central Poland. His descriptions of the West Prussian communities are very good, even compared to the Polish researchers whom we mentioned earlier, so we won't go into detail here. P. Bachmann wrote a very good history of the community under the title "Mennonites in Lesser Poland" (Lemberg 1934) about the Galician Mennonites in the Kiernica-Lemberg community.

Kneifel's claim that the Mennonites are of Low German descent has recently been attacked by various parties. I would like to refer to the Dutch researcher J. S. Postma,<sup>4</sup> as well as to Kazimierz Mezynski, "O Mennonitach w Polsce". The latter is particularly targeting B. H. Unruh, in whose work he shows significant contradictions on this issue.<sup>5</sup>

A statement that the Mennonites conformed to the Baptists for a while and often joined them is a generalization that is not entirely factual. There were relatively few Mennonites who joined the Baptists, and when they first had the opportunity to form their own churches, they were often only guests of the neighboring Baptists, but were members of the Mennonite Brethren Church.

The passivity allegedly attributed to the Mennonites did not apply to the Mennonite Brethren Church, who also did missionary work among non-Mennonites and gladly included those who were converted into their ranks although not permitted under Polish rule.

Robert Foth did not write much about the relationship of the Mennonites to their Protestant neighbors in his notes.

3) Kneifel, E., *Geschichte der Evangelisch-Augsburgischen Kirche in Polen*, page 156

4) Postma, J. S., *Das niederlaedische Erbe der preussisch-russlaendischen Mennoniten in Europa, Asien und Amerika*, pages 14 and 15.

5) Mezynski, K., *O Mennonitach w Polsce*, page 32

Only when describing the decline of the Mennonite congregation Deutsch-Wymyschle does Foth write as follows: "As a result of the many Mennonite emigrations from the lower villages, the congregation also lacked preachers, for whom there was often no substitute for a long time and this had a negative impact on spiritual life. In addition there was the conversion of some members living in the distant villages to the Protestant denomination, and finally many members to the Mennonite Brethren, whereby the number of parishioners became ever smaller."<sup>6</sup>

As in the case of Wola-Wodzynska, a border settlement of the municipality Kasun, which was very open to the Baptist attack, and it was the same in the remote villages of Wymyschle, where Lutherans and Mennonites lived together, that Mennonites married their evangelical neighbors and then joined the Lutheran Church. They had to renounce the "Mennonite error", were taught catechism and rebaptized. Again, we are unable to provide any statistical data. (Page 169)

With part of the evangelical church, however, the Mennonites have had a very warm relationship at different times and in different places. At first the relationship had arisen from the expediency of necessity. I would like to cite two sources here: P. M. Friesen and Eduard Kneifel.

In P. M. Friesen we find the following statement: "What is interesting is the proven cordial relationship between the villages of Brenkenhofswalde and Franzthal (in the Neumark near Driesen) and the Moravian Brethren Church. This relationship endured from 1812 until the emigration in 1835 under an umbrella of protection and supervision to a certain extent!! This is how it happened: around 1812, various political associations with religious names and forms emerged in Prussia. As a result, all religious private meetings were prohibited except those whom Friedrich Wilhelm III, who enjoyed the Moravian Brethren Church, and those who were under the direction of the Brethren. The police became suspicious of the private buildings of the Neumark Mennonite community (Brenkenhoffswalde-Franztal) and did not want to recognize that the Mennonites have a peculiar church constitution and ecclesiastical rights. If it was a lack of political expertise or moral weakness on the part of the police officers, it was acceptable for the Mennonite Elder W. Lange and, the Neumark Mennonite-church (now "Gnadenfeld") to place itself under the protection and control of the Brethren for their private meetings, while remaining Mennonite, and were blessed by this relationship. This is the official history of the church and colony of Gnadenfeld, written by Heinrich Franz I - and we all shared the blessing and thank God for this offense against

6) *Mennonitische Rundschau*, June 5, 1968, page 14

the 'denominational self-confidence' of these dear old people far back in Neumark! It was just an interlocking consciousness of church unity resulting from one salvation. The general Christian Church, the Community of Saints'. "An immediate result of the influence of the Moravian Brethren, was that traveling preacher Gottlieb Jahr, Niederschuh and others, according to the Gnadenfeld 'Chronik', encouraged a clear knowledge of scripture, a vital Christianity, understanding and love for mission and school. The services for dedication of small children was practiced by this congregation (as well as by the fathers of the MBC, Heinrich Hübert, Jacob Reimer, Johann Claassen, Jakob Böcker), also followed the advice of the Moravian brothers. - It should also be mentioned that in W. Langes' term of office the youth were often baptized at a very early age (down to 12 years). - Baptism classes in Gnadenfeld under Wilhelm Lange lasted 2 years, one hour a week. Wilhelm Lange died in Gnadenfeld in 1841 at the age of 76."<sup>7</sup>

It is probably not wrong to conclude that the renewal movement among the Mennonites followed the example of the Moravian Brethren Church and therefore called itself the "Mennonite Brethren Church".

In his article on Moravian Brethren, Eduard Kneifel writes that in 1802 Leonberg (Lwówek) near Gombin was founded on the Sanniki estate. Kneifel also reports that the Moravian Brethren were liberated from military service by an imperial Ukase [Imperial decree] in 1824/25. They had to pay an annual bounty for this. Then he writes: "The church law of 1849 placed the Moravian Brothers, as well as the Mennonites, under the guardianship of the Augsburg consistory which supervised them and continuously asked them for lists of their places of residence and where they were finding new settlement areas."<sup>8</sup>

From this last statement we can see that the churches recognized by the state were suspicious and monitored the smaller religious groups. For example, a Lutheran teacher was always employed in the schools in the villages, most of which were Mennonites. This was the case in Kasun as well as in Wymyschle and Wola-Wodzyska. Robert Foth writes about it in his notes: "It was different with the school. The school authorities always staffed them with Protestant teachers. The Mennonite children here neither enjoyed the religious instruction they were entitled to, nor instructions on how to live their lives in piety."<sup>9</sup>

Among the names that my parents recalled as teachers in Deutsch-Wymyschle were the "old" Minz (supposed to have taught there for almost 50 years), then Galster, Hassenrück, Rudolf Raser, Ferdinand Schramm, then for a short time my Uncle Bernhard Ratzlaff (1919), also

7) Friesen, P.M., *Alt-Evangelische Mennonitische Bruderschaft in Russland*, pages 82-83

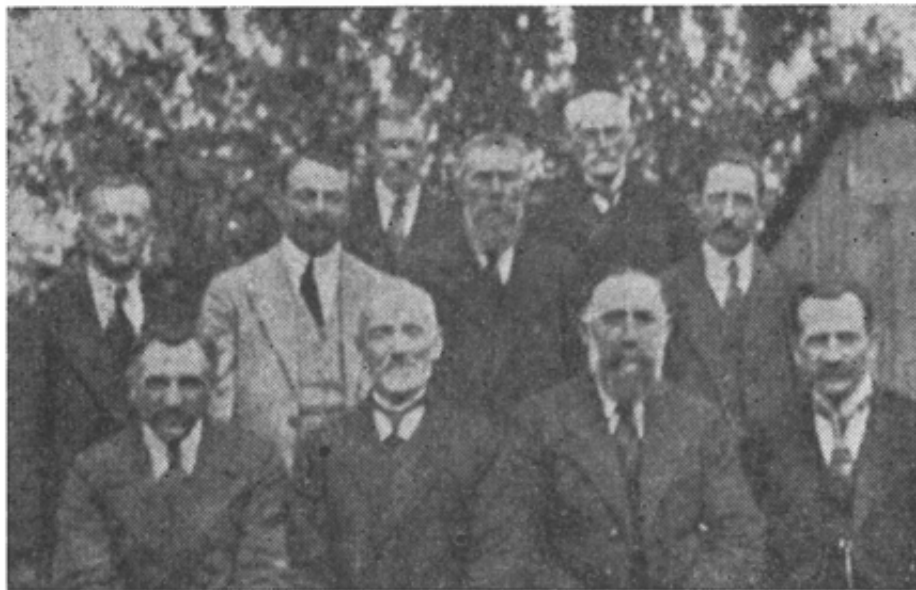
8) Kneifei, E., *Geschichte der Evangelisch-Augsburgischen Kirche in Polen*, page 155

9) Mennonitische Rundschau, June 5, 1968, page 14

Oskar Berg, Mrs. Anna Klatt and Theodor Kühn. I went to school with the last three teachers.

The relationship with the Moravian Brethren in Leonberg continued to be good. Several members of the Deutsch-Wymyschle community temporarily found work in the factories and mills in the Swabian colony. The nurse Arnstadt visited Deutsch-Wymyschle several times upon invitation. My parents lived in Leonberg for two years. I went to school with teacher Lidtke there. Father was employed by the Vogel brothers as a miller. The teacher Fritz Kliewer later worked there as a teacher before emigrating to Paraguay. The Swabians praised him as a competent teacher.

Swabians and Niederunger couldn't always get along well. This sometimes led to teasing each other. A Swabian came into the Vistula lowlands after a flood. There he saw the fences glued to the washed-up mud! and said: "I can braid such a fence, but I can't glue it like this!" The Swabians always thought that the Dutchman had come along the Vistula with his churn. Then he met a Wolf. He quickly crawled into his churn and closed the lid. When the Wolf started to run, he seized



Bibelbesprechung in Deutsch-Wymyschle um 1924. Auf dem Bilde, v.l.n.r., erste Reihe: Prediger August Dreher, Evangeliumschrist, Boryszewo; Ältester Peter Ratzlaff, MBG, Deutsch-Wymyschle; Prediger Johann Schmidt, MBG, Deutsch-Wymyschle; Pfleger Arnstadt, Herrnhuter Brüdergemeine, Leonberg; zweite Reihe: Jugendleiter Gustav P. Ratzlaff, MBG, Deutsch-Wymyschle; Dirigent Heinrich Wohlgemuth jun., MBG, Deutsch-Wymyschle; Prediger Heinrich Schade, Baptist, Wionczemin; Unbekannt, Prediger der Evangeliumschristen; hinten: Edmund Jantz, Leiter der MBG-Filiale Deutsch-Kasun; Diakon Heinrich Wohlgemuth sen., Alfonsow.

Bible Study in Deutsch-Wymyschle around 1924. In the picture, from left to right, first row: preacher August Dreher, gospel minister, Boryszewo; Elder Peter Ratzlaff, MBC, Deutsch-Wymyschle; Preacher Johann Schmidt, MBC, Deutsch-Wymyschle; Nurse Arnstadt, Moravian Brethren Church, Leonberg; second row: youth leader Gustav P. Ratzlaff, MBC, Deutsch-Wymyschle; Conductor Heinrich Wohlgemuth jun., MBC, Deutsch-Wymyschle; Preacher Heinrich Schade, Baptist, Wionczemin; Unknown, Gospel Christian preacher; rear: Edmund Jantz, head of the MBC branch in Deutsch-Kasun; Deacon Heinrich Wohlgemuth senior, Alfonsow.

the Wolf by the tail and let himself be pulled by him. Then the barrel broke on an old willow and the Dutchman landed in the willow thicket. From there he shouted: "Edksenockhollhiea!" I liked the Swabians. They had a lot of healthy humor that we often miss.

We earlier dealt with the relationship of the Mennonites to the Baptists when we were dealing with Wola-Wodzynska. There was also a good, friendly relationship between the local Baptists and the Mennonite brothers in the period when the Mennonite Brethren Church in Deutsch Wymyschle was founded, and in the period that followed. The Mennonite congregations, however, didn't have much time for the Baptists.

In his notes, Robert Foth reported something about the formation of a Baptist branch in the Vistula lowlands. But the first beginnings go back further. In my day, as I can remember, people spoke of a "Krause Church". It was also called the "Church of God" or "evening lights". However, I do not know whether it was identical to the congregations of the same name, which still exist in America today, or whether they were connected to them. Foth writes: "Around 1880 to 1890, a Baptist congregation was formed in Wionczemin, about 4 kilometers from Deutsch Wymyschle, in which all non-Mennonites believers in the surrounding villages were members. The congregation was often visited by traveling preachers from other congregations, mostly by preachers from the Zyrardow congregation, to whom it was also subordinate. These traveling preachers have spread a lot of blessings in Wionczemin. Their services were also popular among the Mennonites. The preachers were not infrequently invited by the MBC Wymyschle and also in Wymyschle awakened many hearts from their sinful sleep. We may say that the Baptists gave us a lot of blessings."<sup>10</sup>

"If the MBC Wymyschle had visiting preachers from the sister churches of southern Russia, they too were invited to Wionczemin to preach the Word of God, through whose sermon many were converted to the Lord. Even if the enemy sometimes succeeded to sow weeds among the wheat seeds, which caused some damage, this was the most wonderful time for the MBC and the Baptist congregations in Wionczemin. "<sup>11</sup>

This friendly relationship between Wionczemin and Wymyschle also existed in my time. We often went to their festivals and events, and they also occasionally attended our services.

Eduard Kupsch writes: "The stations Witmczemin and Sladow (the Zyrardow municipality) were formed by members of the Kicin municipality

10) *Mennonitische Rundschau*, June 5, 1968, page 14

11) Loc. cit., June 12, 1968, page 14

who settled in this area. The preachers Sommer, Brechlin, Freutel, Naber and today T. Tuczek worked in Wionczemin for many years. A chapel was built in 1908 after the attendance at the meeting became so large that they outgrew the space in the private home of the Schade family.. It was dedicated on December 13, 1908."<sup>12</sup> according to Kupsch.

The Mennonite Brethren write about the mutual relationship with Russia as follows: "The Mennonite Brethren and the Baptist congregation form two divided communities, but have spiritual fellowship and communion with one another."<sup>13</sup>

The names of Gebauer, Brauer, Lenz, Jordan, Kupsch, Kluttig and Gottschalk are known to me from the Baptist preachers who visited us between the two world wars in Deutsch-Wymyschle. The young missionary and preacher from the Kicin parish, Krause, had visited Deutsch-Wymyschle frequently. There has been no lack of attempts to persuade the Deutsch-Wymyschle congregation to join the Baptist Union in Poland. However, these attempts mostly failed due to the differences that had prevented the two communities from merging earlier as when the Baptist Church was developing in Poland.

Baptist literature was popular in Sunday School and in homes. For years, my parents read the "Hausfreund", the organ of the Baptist Union in Poland. We children read the "Morgenstern", published by I.G. Onken publishing house. In the Sunday School, the teachers used the "Führer", who also came from Kassel. At the same time, however, they read the magazines of the American and Canadian Mennonites. My grandfather read the "Wahrheitsfreund" and the "Vorwärts". Uncle Johann Kliewer received the "Zionsbote" from his son Wilhelm from the USA, and some families also had the "Mennonitische Rundschau". Before the First World War, the "Friedensstimme" from Russia was read. So, we are dealing here with a real symbiosis between two related religious communities that have mutually stimulated and spurred each other on.

Who does not like to remember the occasional summer visits of the Baptist choirs? For the townspeople it was an excursion to the country, but for us it was always an experience when a choir from Warsaw, Lodz or Zyrardow visited us. We had a good choir ourselves and were sometimes invited by the Baptists. So, we would make a trip with a rented truck to Placiszewo near Kicin. We also drove to our brothers and sisters living abroad, for example to Markowczynna and Josefow near Warsaw. These were highlights in the year!

This visit also brought with it some things ours brothers and sisters didn't like. The visitor to the big cities with their excitement and very modern

12) Kupsch, E., *Geschichte der Baptisten in Polen*, page 147

13) *Mennonitisches Lexicon*, Volume I, page 124

clothes and hairstyles. There were always some among our youth who wanted to follow their example. Then most of them mostly spoke Polish among themselves, which also didn't make a good impression on our people, young and old.

In addition to the Baptists, the Evangelical Christians, and ultimately the Pentecostal church, spread among the Lutheran settlers in Poland. The Mennonites also came into contact with them, and from time to time someone would join them. The Lutheran Church of course fought them hard. I would like to bring in excerpts from Eduard Kneifel, which quite factually describes the situation as it was then: "In our parishes, enthusiastic currents became noticeable quite late. In 1823, so-called awakened people held private meetings in the parish of Grodziec. A 16-year-old" prophetess", which pretended to testify about the hereafter in a state of ecstasy, caused a great deal of unrest. After years, the disillusionment returned. Similar enthusiasm broke out in other communities.

Before and especially after the First World Wars, our church communities were haunted by different sects. In the Kalischer Land, in the Lodz area, in the Vistula lowlands, in the Culm area and in Volhynia, the emissaries of sectarianism were busy at work. In Stawiszyn the "Evangelical Community" (towards Wecke, Bromberg) was only represented by about four families ...

The Evangelical Christians, whose preacher Fetler founded the so-called East Prussian (sic!) Mission with the preacher Boleslaw Götze in Warsaw, proved to be far more active than them. (They should actually be called "Eastern European". The author.)

The mission was very active in Poland and also in the other European countries. The Slavic Evangelical Christians comprised three groups: two in Warsaw and one in Kobryn Polesie. The German branch of the Evangelical Christians was led by a committee chaired by Adam Nickel from Rypin. The other preachers were Hildebrand in Rajszewo near Nowydwor, Dreher in Boryszewo near Plock, Kaczkowski in Lipno, Kramer in WolaLiskowa near Lublin, Kurtz in Nury near Pultusk. The former Jewish missionary Schiff (Jewish Christian) from Lodz, Schwalm and Ostermann traveled to the Cholmer Land. Preacher Stettler, a former church evangelist in Switzerland, was a missionary preacher, based in Plock, and edited the organ, "Die HeilsameLehre". In addition to these preachers, Götze from Warsaw, also sent missionaries and colporteurs. The number of German Evangelical Christians was estimated at approximately 4000 souls."<sup>14</sup>

The names Nickel and Hildebrand have a good Mennonite sound, although I wasn't personally familiar with these two preachers. Preacher Dreher from Boryszewo has preached many times in our church in Deutsch

14) Kneifel, E., *Geschichte der Evangelisch-Augsburgischen Kirche in Polen*, pages 251-252

Wymyschle. Some of our members have also been to Boryszewo on the right bank of the Vistula for special celebrations. However, cooperation did not take place to the extent that existed with the Baptists, probably because our Mennonites were too sober to participate in the exuberant expressions of emotion in the services.

As for the missionary work of the preacher Boleslaw Götze, it was financially supported by some Mennonites. Kneifel overestimated the connections between him and the Gospel (Evangelical) Christians. Götze was closer to the Baptists than to the Gospel (Evangelical) Christians. After emigrating to Canada, he was part of a Baptist congregation until his death. The "East Prussian Mission" seems to be a misprint, because it was an Eastern European Mission Society, which he chaired. Fetler came from Riga in Latvia and probably helped organize the mission in Poland, but later retired. It was similar with his connection to the Gospel Christians and the Pentecostal church, which we will deal with next.

Eduard Kneifel also describes their origin and effectiveness. He writes: "The 'Christians of Evangelical Faith' (Pentecostal Church), who have been active in Poland since 1921/22, owed their origin and spread to the preacher Fetler. The American preacher Ewald and after him preacher Bergholz in Lodz were the leaders. The other Preachers included: Mittelstadt in Alexandrow, Jung in Bialkowo near Plock, Schwucht in Konin, Schmeichel in Gostynin, Riske in Pelczanka near Wengrow, and the Pentecostal congregation held a preaching seminar in Danzig, which was led by Preacher Smith. While the Gospel Christians and the Baptists sometimes worked together, the Pentecostal Church quite strongly embraced the idea of "being isolated" from all other churches. According to their information, they had 19,829 members, and many Gospel Christians were included in that number. In our church communities, the "Pentecostals", as they were known, were only represented in very small groups. Their number in the area of our church could hardly have been more than 2000 souls. The higher numbers were fabricated by their preachers."<sup>15</sup>

Of the preachers of the Pentecostal church mentioned above, I only know Preacher Schmeichel from Gostynin. I can only remember visiting a group of "Pentecostals" in our prayer house in Deutsch-Wymyschle. One of them even tried "speaking in tongues" in prayer, but soon got stuck. He later said that the resistance was so great that the spirit couldn't speak. It was the only time that I heard these inarticulate sounds. They left an uncanny impression on me that I still haven't gotten rid of to this day. This is not the way that the one who should lead us into all truth, according to the word of Jesus, will reveal himself!

The Mennonite community in Poland never actually came into close contact with Catholicism.

15) Loc. cit., page 252

The denominational and cultural differences were too great to be able to interact with or to influence each other. There was a good neighborly relationship with individual Catholics, but mixed marriages were extremely rare. The benevolent attitude of the pastor Helenowski from the parish Czermno should be emphasized. It was thanks to him that the Mennonites in Deutsch-Wymyschle were saved from bloody riots during the Second World War. At the time of the German occupation, they were grateful to Pastor Helenowski for this and provided him with protection when the Germans wanted to send him away.

### XIII. The Economic Development and Importance of Mennonite Settlements in Central Poland

We have little historical evidence regarding the economic development of the Mennonite settlements in central Poland. In many cases, we have to stick to the passing references that other historians have made about it. We have a monograph on the Dutch settlements in the Sartowitz-Neuenburger lowlands in Polish by *Zdzisław Ludkiewicz*, published in Thorn in 1934 by the Baltic Institute under the title "*Osady Holenderskie na nizinie Sartawicko-Nowskiej*". I will use his introduction in free translation: "Poland has enormous natural resources and a large workforce. It would appear that we should be prosperous under these conditions, and that in any case economic and social life should support prosperity but we actually see the reverse. Especially when you approach Warsaw, the capital of a large country, you get the impression of being in the country of poverty. Everywhere the streets are in a pitiful state, next to the street are the settlements of people living of poor huts or dilapidated houses of a larger size. Everywhere there is dirt, disorder and a poverty stricken population that is suspicious of the people passing by.

Where do these contradictions come from? The main reason is the lack of trust in one's own strength, especially the lack of this trust in the leading sections of the population. A fatalistic inner burden covers us like the plague, the conviction that we are poor and weak, that we understand nothing about enjoying life,

And that it cannot be so in Poland; as abroad, where Mussolini could probably drain the Pontine Swamps, but we have no means of draining the Polish Swamps.

Although we have the vast areas of the Polish swamps, we also have a few hundred thousand hectares of previously fertile Werder along the Polish rivers, which are now a swampy bog that benefits almost no one.

I would like the reader to unleash his imagination and remember that a small piece of land, about 6000 hectares of this Werder on the Prypec, was historically transferred to Pomerellen and that Dutch people settled there, accomplished what was thought to be impossible. The fight against the water produced excellent results, the constant process of draining the swamp turns it from an unrecognizable landscape into a rich, beautiful landscape.

In fact, an empty swamp stretched along the Vistula a few centuries ago in the area of Schwetz and Neuenburg, which was flooded once or more times a year by the floods of the Vistula and swamped by the river Montau. In my monograph I draw a picture of what this swamp looks like today under the influence of the busy Dutch and Polish population. The Poles followed the example of the Dutch here, and it turns out that they can work equally as well as them, but they do need an example to follow.

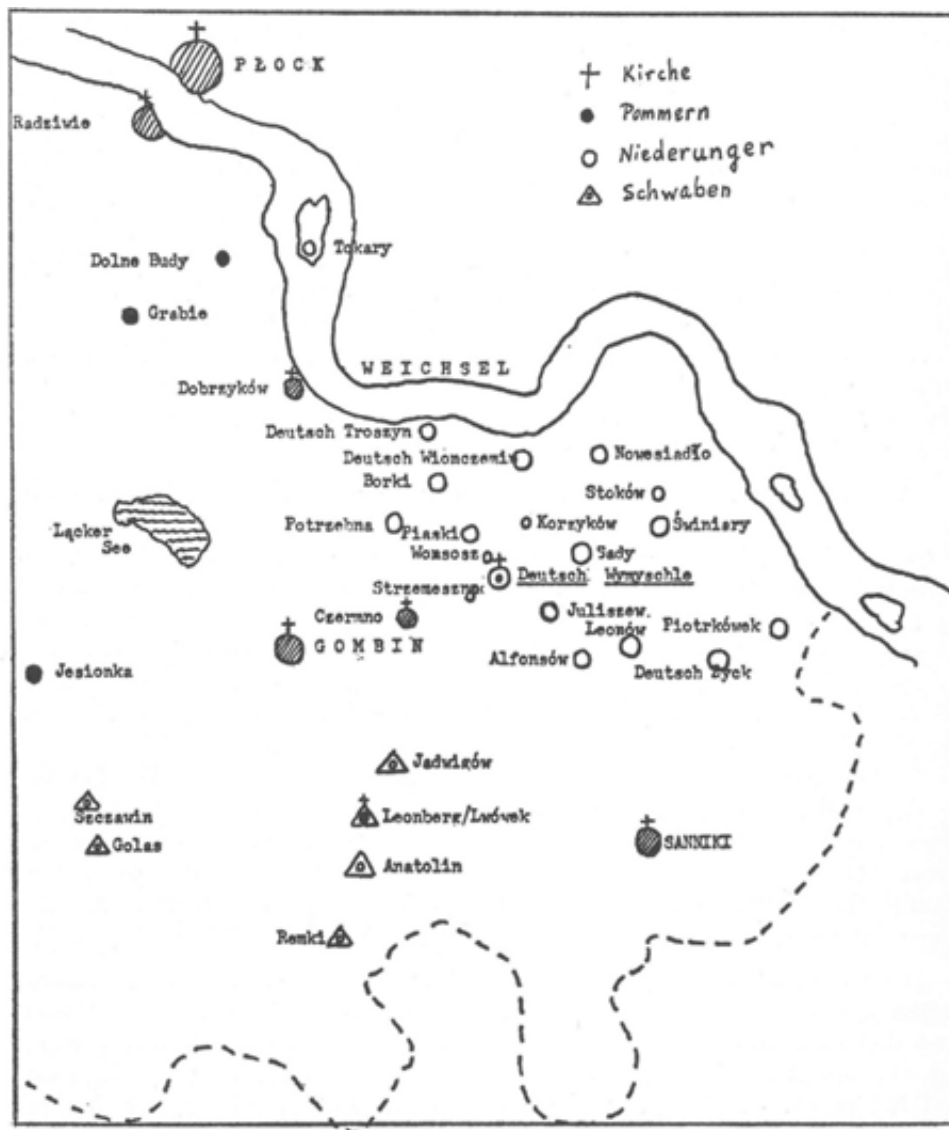
The main purpose of writing my monograph was to set an example to broad layers of our Polish intelligence. I wanted to show that we can find examples of how we should organize our economic and social life not only in other countries. On the contrary, we have better examples in Poland than in Bohemia, Germany, France and many other countries. You just have to keep your eyes open.

In my research I have relied exclusively on observers, on surveys and material from the archives. I hardly used any printed material when I read about my own book, *Struktura agrarna Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, t.I.Pomorze* ', as well as some publications listed in the bibliography. Under these circumstances I would not be able to carry out my project without the help of competent people. The main statistical office helped me, and even did some research when I asked for it."<sup>1</sup>

We have no statistical data available regarding draining the Vistula lowlands near Plock and Modlin, in which the settlements Deutsch-Wymyschle and Deutsch-Kasun originated, nor do we know when they built the first dam and the sluices, locks, canals and

1) Ludkiewicz, Z., *Osady Holenderskie*, pages 11-12

ditches. They did it, and here, too, German and Polish neighbors learned from them and helped them. In our times, the supervision of the dikes and drainage systems was in the hands of the municipal administration.



Karte der deutschen Siedlungen im Kreise Gostynin. bei Gombin.

Map of the German settlements in the Gostynin district, near Gombin.

Unfortunately, we do not have a good map of the Vistula lowlands where the Mennonite settlements were, or a map that would show the courses of the dikes and the canals that they built. For the Vistula lowlands at Gombin, in which Deutsch-Wymyschle was located

I made an inaccurate sketch, which I enclose, but the exact location of the villages cannot be determined from it. The Vistula flows here almost from east to west, with a sharp bend to the northwest at the Polish church village of Dobrzykow. The lowlands came to a head here, as a higher bank came here from the south to the Vistula. Along the Vistula were the villages Deutsch-Troszyn, Polish Wionczemin, from west to east, Deutsch Wionczemin, Nowosiadlo, Swiniary, Zyck and Piotrkowek. In parallel, however, were located on the southern edge of the lowlands the villages Korzeniowka, Borki, Piaski, Wasosz, Deutsch-Wymyschle, Juliszew and Leonow. On the higher bank of the Ice Age Vistula there was a third row of settlements where Mennonites lived from time to time, namely Potrzebna, Rumunki Troszynskie, Strzemeszono, Czermno, Polnisch Wymyschle and Alfonsow. Between the first in the series of settlements, where the lowlands were widest, were the villages of Polnisch Troszyn, Korzykow, Sady and Stokow. Korzykow lay between Wionczemin and Wymyschle, the village of Sady lay between Swiniary and Wymyschle, and Stokow was just to the east. The town of Gombin, where some Mennonite families also lived, was seven kilometers southwest of Deutsch-Wymyschle. (See sketch.)

Administratively, the villages of the Vistula lowlands belonged to three municipalities. The western villages Troszyn, Korzeniowka, Potrzebna, Borki, Piaski, Rumunki Troszynskie and Strzemeszono belonged to the municipality Dobrzykow. The middle villages Wionczemin, Swiniary, Nowosiadlo (Osiek), Korzykow, Sady, Stokow, Wasosz, Deutsch-Wymyschle, Juliszew, Polnisch Wymyschle and Czermno belonged to the municipality of Czermno, whose municipal office was in the village Juliszew. The villages Deutsch Zyck, Polnisch Zyck, Piotrkowek, Leonow and Alfonsow belonged to the municipality of Slubice. East of Piotrkowek the high bank came back to the Vistula and brought it to a natural conclusion. The dikes on the Vistula had to be kept in order by the villages whose land was on the flood plain. Every year the residents had to contribute labor hours to maintain the dikes. The neighboring farmers had to clean the sewers and drainage ditches, and this work was monitored by a dike commission.

To come back to Zdzislaw Ludkiewicz's statement, in the early days the Mennonites had served as an example to the Evangelical settlers and also to the Catholic neighbors by showing them how a marshy area can be drained by dikes, canals, ditches and locks. But they always strove to move to higher ground where they weren't exposed to constant flooding. By 1930, only 20 percent of the Mennonite families resided on the flood plain. The other farmsteads had been sold to Protestant Augsburg or Catholic owners through emigration to Volhynia, Russia and America. The Mennonites continued to be exemplary in that they

maintain a surprisingly high level of culture and economy in relation to relatively unfavorable economic conditions. The first settlers had acquired full farms from one Hufe of land (30 acres). With further division, many parcels had become small and yielded little revenue.

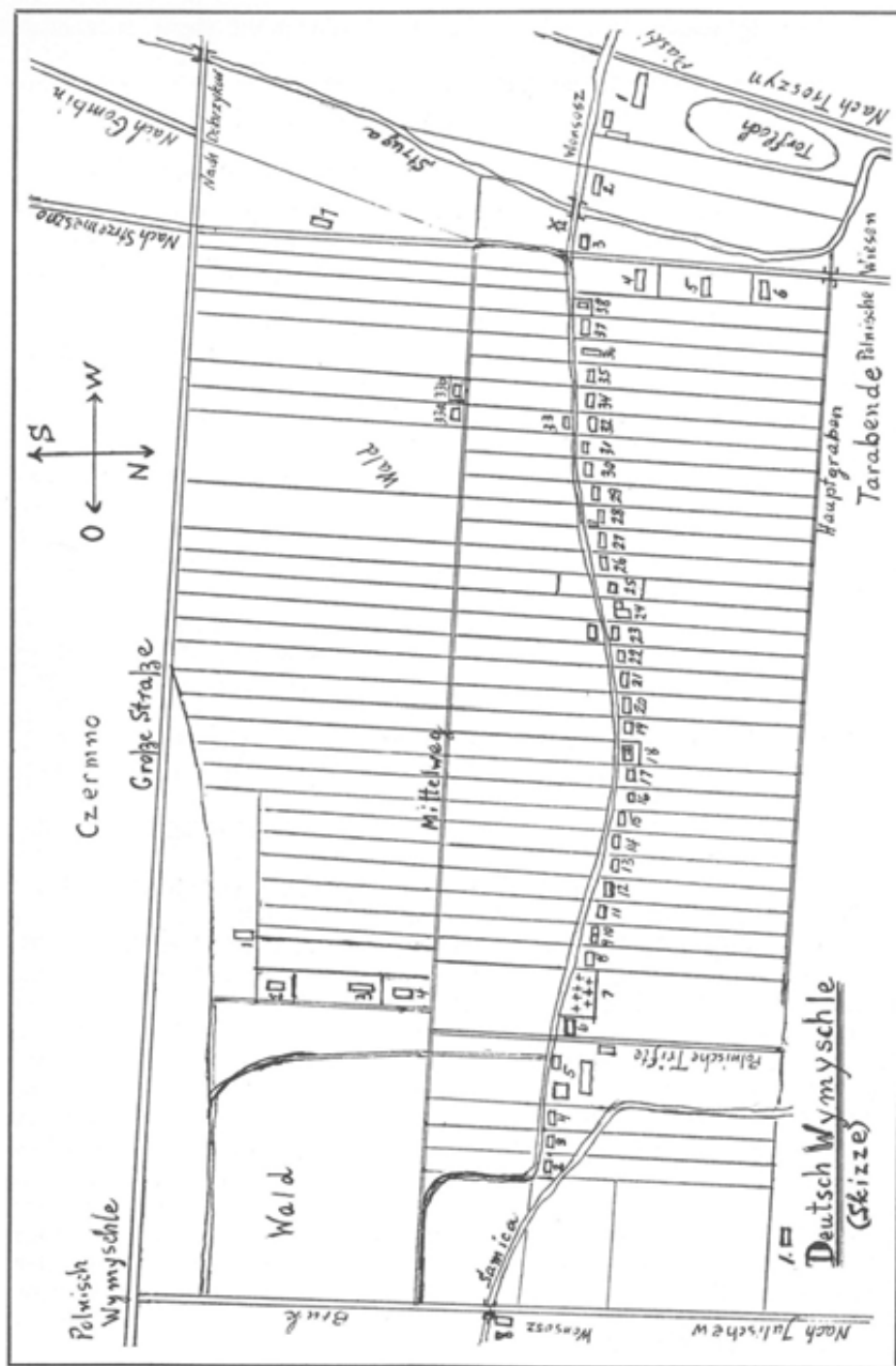
Ludkiewicz describes the Mennonite way of settlement as follows: "The Mennonites transferred ...the settlement system that had been used in Holland for centuries. Each settler received his land in one piece. On the Dutch marshes, the settlements were often laid out in such a way that the village was built on the edge of the marshes on mineral earth in which each of the settlers had relatively little land, the extension of which formed the marshland. In this way, each peasant had his land in a long stripe which was closed at the end of this strip, and the road was perpendicular to these stripes."<sup>2</sup>

So the land of the villages was placed on the edge of the Vistula lowlands. The village of Deutsch-Wymyschle followed the edge of a sandy hill, which was followed by the poor peat meadows. When the inheritances were distributed among the children, these strips became increasingly narrow, so that some could hardly feed a family.

The highland arable land was light sandy soil, which only supported rye and potatoes, and only if the soil was well fertilized. Most of the meadows were peat meadows. The bed of the ancient flood plain of the Vistula was gradually overgrown with reeds, moss and scrub. In order to drain the meadows, trenches had been dug at the boundaries of the properties, which led to a main ditch at the border of the village (village map, explanations in the appendix, page 170).

Robert Foth gives the following description of the economic situation of the settlement: "Economically, the Mennonites living in Deutsch-Wymyschle did not improve. Most of the soil was sandy and light, the yields of which hardly met the needs of the population. The smaller part was meadows, most of which were quite stable and yielded good yields of fairly good hay. The pastures also provided the cattle with quite lush grass, which meant that the dairy industry thrived fairly well and thus provided half of the income necessary for their livelihood. Originally, the village of Deutsch-Wymyschle was divided into around 30 larger farms. As long as each family had one full farmstead, they had a good living, but when the number of families grew, some families were forced to buy land elsewhere. Around 1860 a good opportunity arose when a part of the Studzienice estate was parceled out and the Polish village of Alfonsow was created, some families bought land there and moved to Alfonsow, about 3 kilometers south of the center of the village of Wymyschle.

2) Loc.cit., page 36





Haus des Rudolf Witzke in Wymyschle (1971).

Rudolf Witzke's house in Wymyschle (1971).

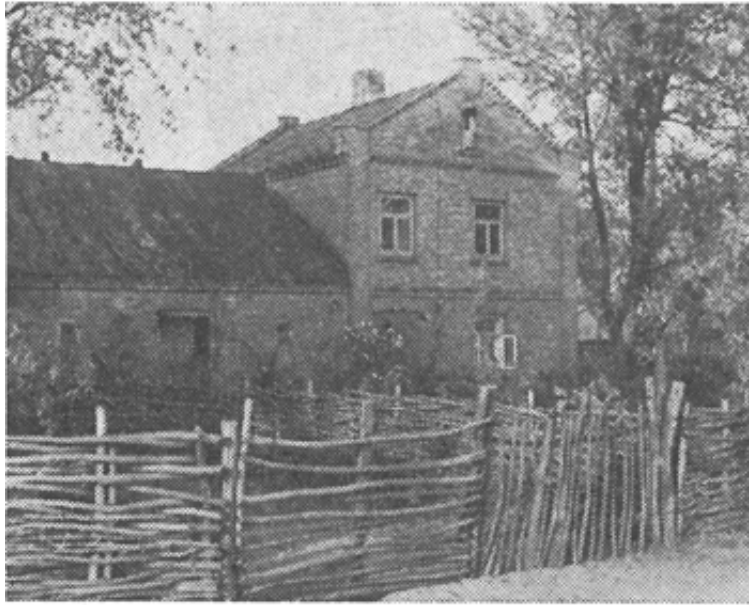


Haus, Stall und Scheune des Andreas Kliewer.  
Vor der Scheune das Roßwerk.

Andreas Kliewer's house, stable and barn. The 'Roßwerk' in front of the barn.

Around 1870 the wealthier families in the village purchased land from the neighboring estate Strzemeszno, which belonged to a Mennonite landowner named Luther. In Strzemeszno almost all of the soil was good for raising wheat. Those who could buy a few acres here were doing very well economically.

However, some inheritances in the village of Deutsch-Wymyschle were parceled out over time to the children. Consequently, many farms grew smaller and smaller. Families who wanted to avoid this either emigrated entirely or let their children emigrate. Emigration was not a difficult problem until World War I... It has been different lately.



Haus und Stall des Benjamin Foth, jetzt Marquette, Manitoba.

Benjamin Foth's house and stable, now living in Marquette, Manitoba.

Land was expensive and was getting more expensive, however the agricultural products in Poland were very cheap. Only a few Mennonites were able to buy more land. The population grew and the farms became smaller and smaller. In some houses up to three married children lived, some of whom had large families. The number of landless was also growing. What was to be done with the excess population? That was a burning daily question in the community of Wymyschle."<sup>3</sup>

The fact that nobody was really in need can be attributed to the thrift and economy of the residents.

The primary agricultural activity in most communities was animal husbandry. Each farmer owned several cows that found lush pasture on the meadows during the summer. The milk was partly made into cheese, partly skimmed and butter was made from the cream. The art of cheese-making was traditionally handed down from generation to generation. The product was a round, yellow whole milk cheese that when ripe had a mild, pleasant taste. Cheese and butter were bought by dealers. The farmers often took their products into the city themselves and sold them in the market. Butter or cheese was rarely consumed in one's own household. They had to be sold to bring money into the house to pay for clothes, utensils, and the few colonial goods one couldn't live without. These included salt, sugar, petroleum and matches. All other food was produced on the farm itself.

Almost every farmer's wife kept twenty to thirty chickens. The eggs were

3) *Mennonitische Rundschau*, June 26, 1968, page 14

mostly used in exchange for haberdashery, which Jewish traders hawked in the houses of the village.

Fruit was also an important source of income. Plums were the leading crop. Large truckloads of plums were brought to the Warsaw and Lodz markets. Many plums were smoked over wood chips and then sold as smoked plums. Some of the owners of larger plum orchards built large plum kilns which produced dried plums of better quality.

Apples, pears and cherries were also in smaller quantities brought to market. Some farms had produced large quantities of gooseberries. However, these became infected with powdery mildew and were gradually replaced by currants, which had good sales in Warsaw. Experiments were also made with garden strawberries, the so-called "Truskawki", but the soil was too light for this variety.

Significant quantities of onions were grown in Deutsch-Wymyschle. It was these reddish brown onions that were pretty pungent. These onions required good bog soil. The onion garden was therefore usually adjacent to the peat meadows at the end of the gardens. The onions were mostly bought by Jewish traders, but the local farmers also came to buy the tasty onions for their own use.

The main food was potatoes grown in the sandy soil. Not a day passed without potatoes being eaten once or several times. The potatoes harvested in autumn were stored in the cellar for the winter or sold.

Immediately after the potato harvest, the land was plowed, harrowed and then sown with winter rye. It soon opened and bloomed green under the blanket of winter snow. It then continued to grow in spring and ripened in mid-June. The harvested rye was driven into the barn and threshed in winter, formerly with flails, then with simple threshing mills driven by horses. The cleaned grain was stored in the attic.

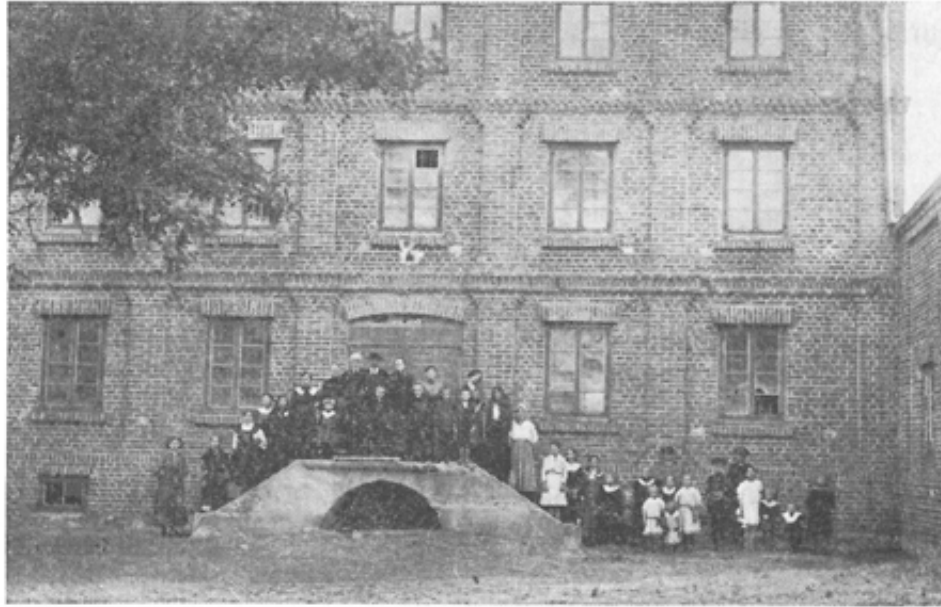
The rye was taken to the mill as needed to be exchanged for flour, from which strong bread was baked. Cakes were baked only for big celebrations or for weddings and funerals.

The farmer's pride was his horses. His horse was vital when tilling his field. The horses pulled the wagon and in winter a sled. Medium-weight draft horses were preferred. Mostly they were Fuchse with light or white mane hair, but other breeds of horses were also kept.

The field was worked with plow, harrow, feather harrow, cultivator, sprinkling plow and roller. Some of these farm implements were made by local artisans. Agricultural machines were manufactured in the neighboring Schwabendorf Leonberg in the factories of the Vogel or Blimle brothers and Co.

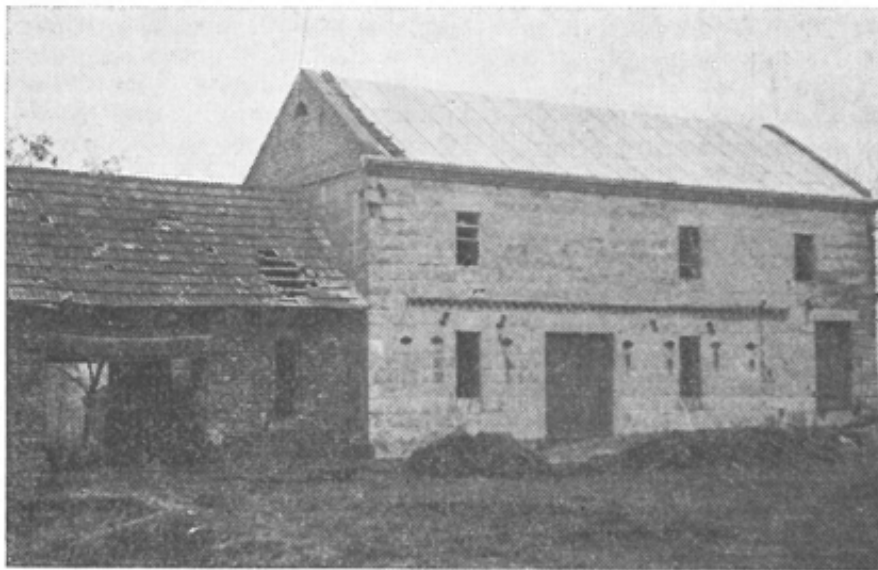
The cattle were mostly degenerate Holstein cattle with red, Polish

blood lines. The Poles mostly had red cattle that were not very productive in the dairy industry. Every farmer usually kept a few pigs. The breeding sows brought



Dampfmühle des Kornelius Kliewer, die er an Wegert verkaufte. Sie brannte vor dem Zweiten Weltkrieg ab.

Steam mill of Kornelius Kliewer, which he sold to Wegert. It burned down before the Second World War.



Motormühle und Sägewerk des Erich P. Ratzlaff in Wonsosz, 1960.

Motor mill and sawmill of Erich P. Ratzlaff in Wonsosz, 1960.

piglets, of which the surplus were sold. Pig slaughter has always been a big event.

The needs for fuel over the long winter were met by stocking up with wood and peat. The peat was cut out of their own meadows and dried.

In addition to agriculture, various attempts were made to create opportunities to earn a living, but they were very limited. Kornelius Kliewer built a three-story steam mill before the First World War. The brothers Erich and Gustav Ratzlaff had a sawmill. Erich Ratzlaff started with an oil mill, which he then transformed into an engine mill. Rudolf Witzke and Erhard Ratzlaff owned a dairy before and during World War II. The cream was delivered to Warsaw. However, there were no opportunities for expansion here and the settlement was not economically viable.

I couldn't find any documents about the economic development of Deutsch-Kasun, so I can't report anything about it.

#### XIV. The Second World War and the dissolution of the MB church in Deutsch-Wymyschle

By the end of the 1930s, heavy storm clouds were gathering on the political horizon of Europe. The tensions then came to a terrible explosion in September 1939. The political context is well known to everyone, so there is no need to go into detail here. In the middle of this thunderstorm there was now a helpless handful of Mennonites, crushed by forces it was powerless to withstand.

Robert Foth has the events of that time in his well-written "notes". I don't want to repeat them here. However, other accounts of this period have been published, and I will give you a partial list of them: "When the war broke out on September 1, 1939, internment, arrests and kidnappings of the male population took place in the next few days. The rapid progress of the German Wehrmacht shortened the time of suffering.

In the last days of September and the next few weeks, all the missing people returned. Those who remained in their home village were all alive, and the merging of the front had done no significant damage. The men called up to the Polish Wehrmacht all returned within the next few weeks and months...

The sparing of our community was a sign that God had held his protective hand over us. The benevolent position

of the Polish pastor of the Catholic Church in Czeremno may also have contributed to this. The hope and general opinion that after the end of the "Poland campaign" calm and peace would return, turned out to be wrong. Free and unhindered church life, as we have had up to now, was now restricted. The Christian youth club as such was banned and liquidated. This fact and further threats from the responsible German district leader cast a shadow over the previous community life." (After Erhard Ratzlaff in " Mennonitische Märtyrer".)<sup>1</sup>



Nachhochzeit des Erhard F. und Hulda Ratzlaff, hinten, Mitte (sitzend), v.l.n.r.: Leonhard und Anna Ratzlaff, Eltern der Hulda, Franz und Anna Ratzlaff, Eltern des Erhard. Hinten stehen Erich Ratzlaff, Wilhelm und Jakobine Schroeder, Maria Ratzlaff, das Brautpaar, Hedwig Ratzlaff, Lydia Ratzlaff, Albert und Anna Foth. (1934).

Post-wedding of Erhard F. and Hulda Ratzlaff, in the back, middle (sitting), from left to right: Leonhard and Anna Ratzlaff, parents of Hulda, Franz and Anna Ratzlaff, parents of Erhard. In the back are Erich Ratzlaff, Wilhelm and Jakobine Schröder, Maria Ratzlaff, the bride and groom, Hedwig Ratzlaff, Lydia Ratzlaff, Albert and Anna Foth.(1934).

The reporter himself was interned in the Bereza concentration camp Kartuska in Polesie, East Poland. He was later called up with many others to the German Wehrmacht. He continues to write about the conditions under the occupying power: "After the registration of the entire population under German occupation, the first conscription of men of all ages to military duty came soon. Even if the Mennonites did not swear an oath, the freedom from military service ceased to exist. It would also have been futile

1) Toews, A.A., *Mennonitische Märtyrer*, Volume 2, page 341

for the government to argue for a position of defenselessness because the Mennonites of the old empire were doing military service ...

Young people were increasingly involved in the various services. Mandatory service by the female youth, military marching training and various courses of an economic nature were common. Individual families were resettled, others looked for new jobs and chose other professions; all of this made the otherwise lively home village lonely and strange. Only on the festive days and special Sundays did people come from near and far, and the old picture appeared."<sup>2</sup>

Preacher Gustav Ratzlaff wrote the following about this time: "The spiritual life suffered a weakening in the time of the German occupation because many young people received jobs further away from their homes and as a result could not attend the church meetings regularly, as before. During the time of the German military administration, our young teams also had to do military service, which had a very negative impact on community life. Some still are reported to be missing."<sup>3</sup>

Finally, I would like to mention H. Bartel, who wrote about this time and describes the dissolution: "When the German Wehrmacht occupied Poland in 1939, Deutsch-Wymyschle escaped with little economic losses. A number of men were enlisted in the Polish army. In September, when German troops reached Deutsch-Wymyschle, searches were carried out daily for men on suspicion that they could help the Germans and then take them to the prisons where they were beaten, under German occupation from September 17, 1939 to January 1945 the economy hadn't suffered greatly. But community life was struggling. The youth club was dissolved immediately. They did not want to give the youth a Christian education, but a secular education. Although the services on Sundays were not prohibited, it had been difficult to hold them regularly because many Wymyschlers had to work abroad and were not always free on Sundays. They longed for the freedom they had had under the former Polish government.

On January 17, 1945, the Wymyschler received the eviction order. The Red Army was advancing westward. So women and children set off on their way with horses and wagons and what they could load and take with them. Almost all of the men had been drafted by the Germans. So you drove westward day and night. My stepmother and 3 half siblings drove like this for 9 weeks. A group of Wymyschlers was overtaken by the Reds, everything was taken from them, and too

2) Ibid., Page 342

3) Unruh, A.H., *The Die Geschichte der Mennoniten-Brüdergemeinde*, pp.397-398

they had to walk back. When they arrived in Wymyschle, other residents had already moved in there. They had lost the rights to their property."<sup>4</sup>

Then preacher Gustav Ratzlaff continues: "On January 18, 1945, the Mennonite Brotherhood following evacuation. Some came with horse and wagons, some without things, and landed in the western, but some in the eastern part of Germany. Some of them came up to about 70 km from home and, when they were overrun by the Russians, had to walk back mostly to their place of residence, where only misery and suffering were waiting. However, most have come from Poland to Germany thanks to the work of the MCC. Our leading preacher, Leonhard Ratzlaff, stayed behind, served the people who had returned there in Poland as long as he was permitted, and died on August 12, 1946, in Szczecin, when he was going to Germany with his children, and was buried in a mass grave. His wife, who was also with him, only found out about it later. Then she died after two weeks in the Rhineland."<sup>5</sup>

A. A. Toews writes in "*Mennonitische Märtyrer*": "Leonhard Ratzlaff has now served the Deutsch-Wymyschle community until his expulsion from Poland, his hometown, in August 1946. His dear wife accompanied him into exile. But both were old and had suffered greatly in the past few years from the harassment of the Poles, who treated them as slaves. They had to do hard work and the nutrition was very poor. That had ruined their health, and on the trip to Germany he fell ill in Stettin, now Polish territory, and was put there in a mass grave and buried along with so many other fellow sufferers. That was on August 12, 1946.

The widowed wife of L. Ratzlaff then moved with other refugees further and came to the Rhineland. Here she suddenly fell ill and soon died of a heart attack. She was only allowed to survive her husband for a few weeks; the day of her death was on August 31, 1946. She was happy to go to her Redeemer, whom she believed in as a child. Her longing to see her children again during her life has unfortunately not been fulfilled."<sup>6</sup>

Preacher Gustav Ratzlaff memorialized the two in the "*Mennonitische Rundschau*" with the following obituary: Our brother and sister Leonhard and Anna Ratzlaff were still in Deutsch-Wymyschle, Poland until August 5 of this year. They were expelled from there on the same date. The last few months our brother has been pretty sickly. However, he felt strong enough to undertake the trip. However, when he reached Szczecin, now Polish territory, came, he got so sick again that he had to be brought to the hospital, and also died there on August 12, 1946, from laryngitis. He was buried in a mass grave there.

4) Toews, A.A., *Mennonitische Märtyrer*, Volume 2, page 350

5) Unruh, A.H., *Die Geschichte der Mennoniten-Brüdergemeinde*, page 398

6) Toews, A.A., *Mennonitische Märtyrer*, Volume 2, page 345



Ältester Leonhard P. Ratzlaff.



Anna Ratzlaff, geb. Wohlgemuth.

Top: Elder Leonhard P. Ratzlaff. Bottom: Anna Ratzlaff, née Wohlgemuth.

His dear wife was unaware of his death. Then the sister-in-law drove to the Rhineland with other expelled persons, where his wife Anna Ratzlaff, née Wohlgemuth, also died unexpectedly on August 31, 1946 from lung complaints and stroke in the Dieringhausen infirmary, Hammertalerhof. Our dear brother was born in Deutsch-Wymyschle, Poland on January 18, 1880. Baptized there on May 20, 1894, married to his wife, who only survived him for two weeks, on April 20, 1898. His wife Anna Ratzlaff, née Wohlgemuth, was born in Deutsch-Wymyschle on August 25, 1875, christened October 25, 1897 in Deutsch-Wymyschle. Her marriage produced 8 children, of whom 4 children died at a young age. Three of the children still alive are in Germany, while Richard Ratzlaff, the oldest living son, lives in Acme, Alberta.

Her longing to see her children again did not come true. Our brother has been involved in church work since his youth. For a long time he led the mixed choir of the Mennonite Brethren in Wymyschle. From 1913-1918 they were in Millerowo, Russia. From 1930 he was the Elder of the Mennonite Brethren congregation in Deutsch-Wymyschle. Both of them have remained true to their Savior and Lord. In the difficult year of 1945 to the very end, he comforted the parishioners who remained there and was allowed to guide some to their final rest. We mourn our brothers and sisters, the scattered members of the congregation mourn their dear Elder, but as those who believe in a reunion with the Lord in eternity.

Gustav Ratzlaff, preacher, Ützingen, (20) ü / Walsrode, Krs. Fallingbassel, East Hanover."<sup>7</sup>

I got the last message regarding my parents from Mrs. Agnes Jantz who had been with my mother for the past few days. She comes from Kasun and now lives in Aldergrove, B. C. with her daughter, Mrs. Anna Kliewer. She writes: "When we arrived in Szczecin, Wymyschler brothers and sisters, especially Sister Rennert, greeted us with joy and told us straight away that they were ready to continue driving the next day. Only Sister Leonhard Ratzlaff would have to stay here because her husband, our Uncle Leonhard Ratzlaff, would be in the hospital in Szczecin, and so she would have to wait and see what would happen to him. So Sister Rennert asked us if we would be so good as to accept responsibility for Sister Ratzlaff, and I said yes immediately. So we went straight to Sister Ratzlaff in her room to tell her all this. When we came in we noticed that she was very depressed, but she was glad when she saw us and heard the news that we wanted to check on her from now on and try to get her a ticket on our train.

7) *Mennonitische Rundschau*, No.45, dated November 6, 1946, pages 1 and 4

Our main task now was to learn how things were going with our father. We would have preferred to have him healthy, but because he was so sick there were no prospects for it. In the reception office we could never get a clear answer. Then when we went with your mom and asked a nurse if we could visit him, the answer was no, he died yesterday. Then they gave us his laundry, and so we finally had the news, which was very difficult for Mama, but she soon recovered, and we returned to the camp."

"We were very sorry that we had to hear such a message about Papa. There was nothing that we could change, so now it was time to think ahead and act, because our train was coming soon. So, it was high time to change Mom's papers to get her on our train. I don't remember how I actually did it, I only "heartily wished and pleaded that the Lord would let me succeed. And really, our wish was fulfilled. To my knowledge, it didn't cause too much trouble, we got mom on our list and also in our car compartment with us. So, we drove together to the Lübeck border station.

When the train stopped, doctors and nurses came right away in the car and asked everyone who was ill to volunteer. They wanted to try to help right away.

They also asked your mom, because the doctors saw that she was not quite healthy. We also encouraged her to accept treatment, but she couldn't be persuaded, she wanted to stay with us. And now things were going very differently than we had wished and planned for. We wanted to keep your mom with us until we got a message from you because she had given us Hulda's address and we were just waiting to find a place where we could go to send a letter to find someone, and now I was the first one to be separated from Annchen who was with the children and your mom. There were rules there and you had to be compliant. So Annchen and her children stayed with your mom. They had to walk to the camp, and Annchen noticed that it was very difficult for your mom to walk. She asked mom if she had should order a car, but she didn't want to and said she could make it. Annchen suddenly noticed that she collapsed and passed out. Fortunately, there were more people, including men, who helped immediately. A car came right away and they helped her on the car and took her to the camp, and a doctor was called straight away. Unfortunately, I was unable to see her again during her lifetime. She had always asked her neighbors about me because she still wanted to speak to me.

When I was released three days later, I went straight to see her. When I asked about her, I learned that she had died the day before. If only I had been released yesterday. They immediately told me that she had asked about me until the very end. You can imagine how I was feeling, we had made a firm

commitment to keep her with us until we had found one of you. Annchen had taken her things with her straight into the neighborhood. I was given a basket with her personal belongings. We then all gave these to Erhard Ratzlaffs when we sent them messages and they came to see Mama's grave. This is all I can remember."

We are very grateful to Sister Jantz for being so had lovingly adopted our old mother when she was left all alone. We are also very grateful for the description of these last days of our parents.

Many other experiences of the members expelled from their homeland the Central Polish Mennonite communities could be collected and added to the book. Unfortunately, I have to refuse this due to lack of time. As far as I know, the members of the Deutsch-Wymyschle church that have survived have all come out of Poland but are now scattered in many countries. Some stayed in Germany, most are in Canada, some in South America, where a closed group struggles for their existence, especially in Uruguay. Robert Foth wrote the history of the MB community in Uruguay. We also occasionally find members of the community in Paraguay, Argentina, Brazil and the USA. They all share a common memory of their homeland, which they loved so much, but from which they were roughly torn out by forces over which they had no control.

What is now from the once so flourishing Mennonite settlements in Central Poland? The last inhabitants who were expelled from the villages brought with them a description of the decay, which soon became apparent in them. We have two sources from which we are fairly well informed about the villages where Mennonites lived. MCC Director for Europe, Peter J. Dyck, made a trip to Poland in the summer of 1960. Before he went there, he was on a lecture tour in Canada. On this occasion we met at the Mennonite Educational Institute in Clearbrook, where I was a teacher at the time. At his request I drew a sketch of the Deutsch-Wymyschle village for him to take with him on the trip. After his return, he wrote me the following letter on December 19, 1960, from Frankfurt am Main, Germany: "Dear Brother Ratzlaff, on the table in front of me I have the drawing of the village of Wymyschle, which you gave me in British Columbia at the time. Today, everything is much easier to understand because I have been there and myself, your former home and location. As for printed material, I will send you some photos so that you will be able to pass them on to others.

In '*Der Mennonit*' and probably also in Canadian or American Mennonite papers, I will tell you more about the trip to Poland.

In *Der Mennonit* my report may already start in the January issue and will continue thereafter.

It was a cloudy, rainy day when I arrived at Deutsch-Kasun, where I was

was allowed to take pictures of the former Mennonite church and also visited the cemetery, and then came to Deutsch-Wymyschle. The entrance, as marked on the map, is blocked today and we therefore had to take a different route. We definitely thought we were in the right village, but everything was so wrong. The houses stood with the exception of two, all on one side of the street and we also crossed a river at the entrance to the village, but everything seemed to be wrong until we figured out that we weren't coming from the west as we had assumed, but from the east side of the village.

In the cemetery, which on the street side still has its wall with gate, we found some gravestones that were still legible and the cows grazed among them. The church is still standing, as you will see in the picture, but is now used as a clubhouse. I also found your mill and sawmill and of course I photographed it to send you a picture of it. However, it does not seem to be in operation.<sup>8</sup>

On the whole, the village made a tired and neglected impression. Unfortunately, we didn't have the time to talk to the villagers for a long time, but the few we spoke to were extremely friendly and accommodating. Because of the bad weather, the photos didn't turn out very well either, and I'm actually sorry that I didn't go from house to house and photographed every courtyard. Will most of the former residents still be found? If so, I might be able to make up for what I missed if I come to Poland occasionally, which is by no means out of the question. I have made it my goal.

Hopefully the description and pictures of my visit to Wymyschle will be valuable to you even if, understandably, it will not bring you joy.

For the upcoming Christmas, we wish you very blessed quiet days and God's blessings in the New Year.

With brotherly greetings, Peter J. Dyck"

I have edited my reply to Peter J. Dyck:

Abbotsford, January 10, 1961

"Dear Brother Dyck!

In the name of all Wymyschler who live in B.C., I would like to give you a heartfelt "God bless you" for the great joy that you brought us with your dear letter of December 19, 1960 and the photos that followed. I received your very dear letter on December 27th and the pictures the following day. I couldn't believe my eyes when I was able to see the old and very dear places again, if only in the pictures. Thank you so much for the effort you put in!

8) This is a mix-up with my uncle of the same name, the deacon Erich P. Ratzlaff, who currently lives in Coaldale, Alberta.

I am pleased that the village map, which I was hastily preparing at the time, was helpful that you could orient yourself somewhat. I know that there are inconsistencies which are my fault. Wilhelm Schröder's house is no longer standing. The house you photographed was formerly a home for Polish workers who worked on the manor. What appears as a small river in front of the house is actually an extended ravine that only carries water after heavy downpours or when the snow melts. Franz Klier's estate to the west of the cemetery also burned down, so that the picture sent to me shows Wilhelm Hajer's house.



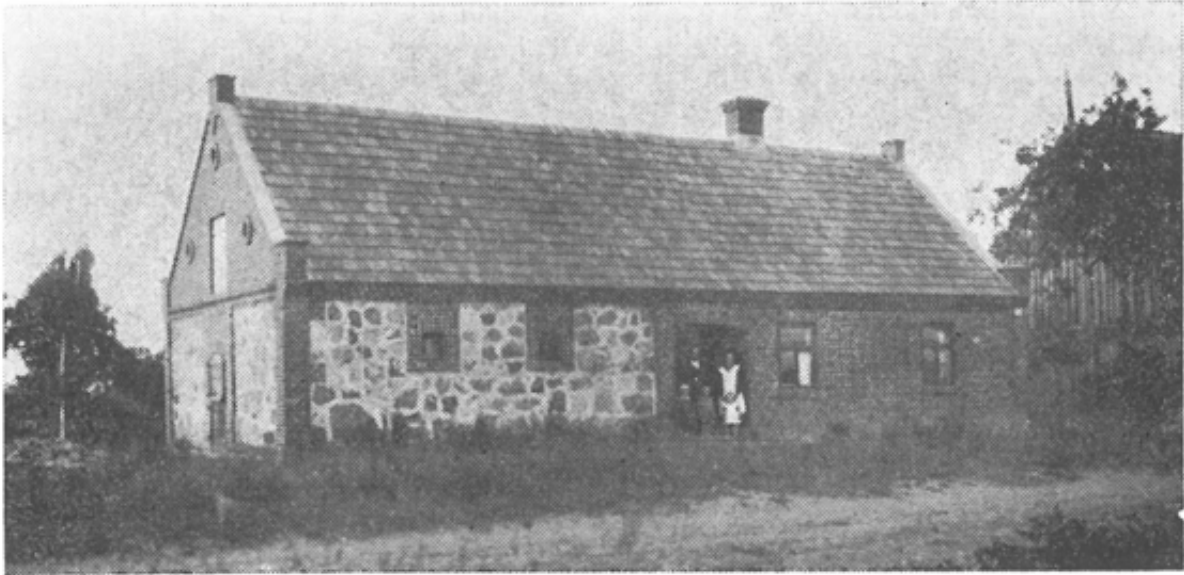
Haus des Wilhelm Hajer, 1960.

Wilhelm Hajer's house, 1960.

The image of the church was very clear. Was a picture of the front of the church not possible? ...The current use of our former prayer house is painful to us. The use of the cemetery where our loved ones rest as pasture fills us with sadness."

Peter J. Dyck reported in the "*Mennonitische Rundschau*" his visit to Deutsch-Wymyschle and Deutsch-Kasun the following: "If you go to Poland again," wrote Br. Gustav Ratzlaff, "would you be able to visit our former community of Wymyschle?" Erich Ratzlaff drew me a map of the village at my request. Preacher Gustav Ratzlaff and deacon Erich Ratzlaff, along with around 200 other members and family members of the Deutsch-Wymyschle community, have found second homes in Canada today.

Of course I wanted to go to Deutsch-Wymyschle this time and not just because it is a piece of Mennonite history, but also



Haus des Predigers Gustav P. Ratzlaff.  
House of the preacher Gustav P. Ratzlaff.

for the sake of my friends Gustav and Erich Ratzlaff and the others from Wymyschle in Canada, Uruguay and Germany. The same was true for Deutsch-Kasun, which is near Wymyschle.

From Gabin it was about 7 kilometers further when suddenly the sign "Wymysze-Nowe" appeared in front of us. We soon saw the courtyards, the school, the church and the cemetery, all on one side of the street, except two courtyards. What happened to the two then that they literally jumped out of line? Around 30 houses are built of wood and 7 of bricks.

The village looks peaceful, if not sleepy. Everything is gray, the only two houses with some white chalk on them are of course photographed. The teacher plays with the children in the school yard. We stop and ask something. How the boys are interested in the Volkswagen! We can't take them with us, but we can show them what the gray mouse can do. We'll be gone in no time and the children will return to their game in amazement.

The wall of the cemetery on the street side still stands, and also the iron gate is still there. The cemetery itself, although there are still some crosses and some graves can be clearly recognized as such, is used for more practical purposes today, it belongs to the neighboring cow pasture. Neighbors and cows are wide-eyed at the stranger who climbs over the wall, goes from grave to grave, takes notes and takes pictures. "This is where Mathilda Schröder, born October 25, 1871, died September 4, 1931," reads one stone. Another says that a David Schröder from Kozikow, January 31, 1900 - April 26, 1925, is buried there. And what might the big grave, about 18 meters long and 2 1/2 meters wide, be? It is either a family or mass grave. The stone is no longer there. Where the cow is, there is also a cross with a clear inscription. A non-Mennonite, the spelling, is buried here by name



Der mennonitische Friedhof in Deutsch-Wymyschle wird als Kuhweide benutzt.

The Mennonite cemetery in Deutsch-Wymyschle is used as a cow pasture [in 1971].

after that there was a different spelling then than today. On the cross it says: "The hour of death struck too cold, but God the Lord determined it ".

Yes, God the Lord determined them, and he also determined many other things in the history of Deutsch-Wymyschle. Did he determine everything? Did everything always go according to his will?

The first Mennonites came 200 years ago, in 1762 and 1764 from West Prussia and the Montau Group community near Graudenz up the Vistula upstream, settled not far from Gabin, near Warsaw, and founded Deutsch-Wymyschle. A church and school were built between 1764 and 1770. The church burned down about 100 years later, but soon a new brick and tin roof was built, which still stands today and serves as a clubhouse for the village. But the cross is still on it!

As from other West Prussian communities, the Mennonites emigrated from Deutsch-Wymyschle from time to time to Volhynia, South Russia and America. Until 1879 the parish had

about 300 baptized souls, but later the number steadily decreased, leaving only 86 in 1914. After 1921, the parish experienced encouraging growth until it was suddenly dissolved on January 18, 1945.

I was strongly reminded that there were members of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Deutsch-Wymyschle when we steamed on the "*Volendam*" to Uruguay and Paraguay. Our dear "father" B. B. Janz later introduced me to a conference of the Mennonite Brethren in Canada as the man who organized the Mennonite Brethren in Uruguay, on the steamer "*Volendam*". The Mennonite Brethren of Deutsch-Wymyschle actually started in southern Russia when Heinrich Kliewer from Deutsch-Wymyschle and Benjamin Schmidt from Arciechow were baptized there in Friedensfeld. That was in 1883. In the same year, several from Deutsch-Wymyschle were baptized in the Vistula and also joined the Mennonite Brethren. Thus, the Mennonite Brethren in Deutsch-Wymyschle was created by the influence of the Brethren in Russia, and after the two brothers Johann Kliewer and Johann Schmidt also joined the Mennonite Brethren as leading preachers, there was no longer any ordination of Mennonite Elders in Deutsch-Wymyschle. The small remnant of Mennonites, who ultimately didn't join the Brethren, was served by the Elders of the Deutsch-Kasun congregation with Lord's Supper and baptism.

When we drove along the village street, the courtyards one-by-one we looked at the others, got out from time to time and spoke to the current residents, it struck us quite strangely that nobody knew anything about everything that had happened here over the course of two centuries, even the word "Mennonite" was unknown. But then we met a man who said his name was Michael Sikora, he knew. And he not only knew, but his face lit up when we told him about Ratzlaffs, Foths, Bartels and Kliewers." I know everyone, everyone!" he said again and again with joy, showed us the courtyards where they had lived, inquired about their fate and ordered many warm greetings to all former residents of Deutsch-Wymyschle. But where can they be today? About 10 years ago there were 208 in Canada, 76 in Paraguay, 57 in Uruguay, 6 in Argentina, 2 in Brazil and 47 in West Germany. I send these greetings to everyone, in particular to Gustav Ratzlaff, the only preacher of Deutsch-Wymyschle still alive today, and to Deacon Erich Ratzlaff, both in B.C., Canada. Deutsch-Wymyschler, your dear home, greet you!

Before we came to Schönsee and Rosenort, our path led us to Deutsch-Kasun, Obernessau and some Mennonite farms near Malbork (Marienburg).

We found it without much effort and with only a small detour Deutsch-Kasun, the village, the chapel and the cemetery. The first church that was built in Deutsch-Kasun in 1823 was not behind the dike like the present one. Because of the risk of flooding through the Vistula,

the new church, dedicated on October 30, 1892, and destroyed in the First World War and was rebuilt next to the village behind the dike. Our path led along the dike, so that we suddenly saw the church rebuilt after the First World War "under" us, almost like in a small valley.

At the main entrance, a plaque with a Polish name said that the building of this former Mennonite church, as before, serves a dual purpose, now as a school and administration building, then as a school and chapel. We entered the wooden building, knocked on the office door and were politely received. All questions were answered without further ado. There was a second office and then we also looked into a classroom. They looked a little cheerful. When we were back in the yard, we met the first students. Soon there were several, and finally the teacher came too. If you could reset the world clock, if only 20 years, these children would probably be called Nickel, Schröder and Kliewer, and the teacher might be a Bartel, because apart from these names there were hardly any other names among the Mennonites in Deutsch-Kasun. It was different in the past.

Before the First World War 548 Mennonites belonged to Deutsch-Kasun, 375 of them were baptized members of the church and over half lived directly in the village of Deutsch-Kasun. In 1923 the Mennonite Brethren Church was organized from Deutsch-Wymyschle, and in 1940 there were still a total of 260 baptized members and 144 unbaptized children who lived in and around Deutsch-Kasun. But it all belongs to another time.

The years of horror for the Mennonites in Deutsch-Kasun began before 1945. As a small German-speaking group, they were surrounded by Poles, who naturally fought against the intrusion of Hitler's National Socialists with all their might. Even if the Kasuner did not speak Prussian High German in everyday dealings, but rather traditional Low German, and were otherwise generally regarded as quiet and peaceful citizens, Polish nationalism could see no difference in this, knew no limits in its defense, and let poor Kasuners feel how much they hated the Third Reich. When the German Air Force bombed Modlin in 1939, on September 7 of the same year, Elder Rudolf Bartel and 7 other members of his community were shot by Polish soldiers. All other male residents of Deutsch-Kasun between the ages of 17 and 60 were removed and interned in Bereza-Kartuska, not far from Brest-Litowsik. They were released by the German troops shortly afterwards, but when the Russian army invaded in 1945, it was known that all Mennonites fled, and Deutsch-Kasun remained as a dead village, like an empty shell from which life had fled the banks of the Vistula. So we found it again after 15 years, only that now other people had moved in who apparently knew little or nothing of everything that had been.

We visited a home in S. which belonged to a family that had emigrated to Canada and found that a woman, born Bartel, from Deutsch-Kasun, granddaughter of Elder Rudolf Bartel. How we relaxed and spoke of earlier times! She was also able to tell us some interesting things from her home village and report that she had returned to Deutsch-Kasun for the first time since the end of the war a year ago, but had hardly recognized the village. Many of the houses, she reported, had disappeared, and almost all of the beautiful orchards no longer existed. It hadn't been a happy homecoming for her, and she didn't feel like going back.

We climbed to the former church and school from the Kasun highway and after a few steps we were in the middle of the cemetery, today of course a meadow for cattle. You could just tell where some of the graves were, and I counted about 40. There were crosses here and there, maybe 6 in number, and some of the plinths also spoke their silent language of the past. The following words stood on a marble slab that was broken on the ground and overgrown with grass [translated from the German]:

"These lifelike passages  
Have now accomplished both.  
From the earthly throng,  
From many a night of suffering -

Deposed one after the other  
Now rest in silent peace  
Until the Life Lord calls them  
From the silent, dark crypt."

There were no names to be read because it was only a piece of the tombstone, the other part was missing. But on the back, it said "I know that my Redeemer is alive!" And this Redeemer knows the two and their names. What a belief, considering it right! What hope! Will they rise again? The Prince of Life will call them and then they will rise again, just rise here on the cow pasture in Poland, "from the quiet, dark crypt"?

Irene Bishop called to me from the other side of the cemetery, but it sounded distant, somehow from an old world, because in my mind I saw the cemetery cow pasture transformed. I don't really know how anymore, but there was something about which Paul so firmly and joyfully exclaims "Death is swallowed up in victory". It was a sacred moment for me "who gave us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

We kept going. I only looked around once, actually less around the former church and school, than around the cemetery framed with tall trees to take a last look at the quiet meadow with its nameless population. And then we went to Obernessau."<sup>9</sup>

The second source of information about the conditions in the old home are letters from people who stayed in Poland for various reasons, even though they were of German origin (non-Mennonites) and who now write to their Mennonite friends in Canada from time to time. One of the

9) *Mennonitische Rundschau*, No.6, February 8, 1961, pages 2-3



Herr Reinhold Wegert und Frau Irene, hinter ihnen Frau Martha DeFehr, geb. Pletz, deren Mann, C. A. DeFehr jun., Wymyschle 1971 besuchte und viele Bilder nahm.

Mr. Reinhold Wegert and Mrs. Irene, behind them Mrs. Martha DeFehr, née Pletz, whose husband, C. A. DeFehr Jr., visited Wymyschle in 1971 and took many pictures.

sponsors, Reinhold Wegert, writes quite regularly to the deacon Erich Ratzlaff in Coaldale and also to his former neighbor Benjamin Foth, now at Marquette, Manitoba. I translate some parts from his letters, which are written in Polish:

Wionczemin, March 24, 1961

..."And now a few words about Wymyschle. Wymyschle is like it was. The farms of Luther, Stockower Kliewer have burned down and the factory of Wilhelm Schröder has been dismantled.



Gehöft des Diakons Erich P. Ratzlaff, Wonsosz; ganz links eine Ecke der Mühle.

Homestead of the deacon Erich P. Ratzlaff, Wonsosz; far left corner of the mill. Cows and sheep graze in the cemetery, the chapel has been transformed into a 'Volkshaus' (Dom Ludowy) and a library.

Your farm has deteriorated, the mill has not functioned for 10 years, the roof is damaged, and it is raining. The garden is 70% dry, overgrown with grass and nobody is plowing it; as you plowed it last, it has not yet been plowed again to this day ...The meadows in Wymyschle look like Piaski. Everyone cuts as much peat as he has space to store it. We are now planting a lot of strawberries; some have 2 and 3 Morgen. They mainly plant in Wymyschle, Czermno, Alfonsow, Budy, Zyck and Piotrkowek, since they are all intended for export. With cordial greetings to Gustav, Bernhard and to all acquaintances."

Wymyschle-Nowe, January 4, 1966

..."Wymyschle finally received electric light. In 1964 the following villages received electricity: Budy, Alfonsow, Juliszew, Piaski, Borki, Korzeniowka, Dobrzykow, Strzemieszno, Romunki Troszynskie, Troszyn Polski. You would not recognize your factory. A tenant lives in the house because the owner now lives in Lignica, and Kaminski from Wymysle Polskie is now on your farm. The wind has torn off a few sheets of sheet metal from the mill and there is no one to repair it, and it has been like this for a few years, and it is raining, and everything is rotten inside. The engine house has collapsed and the engines are all broken and in ruins., , The trees are all cut down, only the thin alders are standing, the thicker ones are all cut down. The garden is completely dry and no one is there to replant it. The roof has already collapsed into the basement. Mr. Gustav's house has burst, and the end gable has fallen out and people live in it, but nobody is repairing anything. Wymyschle has been planted with forest up to the Mittelweg, the forest is growing well. There was one big fire in Wymyschle: Zacharias Schröder's house started to burn and Heinrich Foth's and Prochnau's house burned down, including Pauls, but it stopped at Hajer's house. There was a big wind and the fire jumped over. Everyone tried to extinguish Prochnau's house while Pauls started to burn. The house has already been rebuilt ..."

Wymysle-Nowe, March 10, 1966.

"We have received your letter, for which we thank you very much as it described what all the Wymyschler are doing there. When I read the letter, my wife said that I was lucky that the Wymyschler are doing so well because had they continued here, they would be barefoot and naked. What would they have done here in Wymyschle, after everything was taken from them? The innkeepers from Wymyschle almost all work in Plock, a car drives every day and takes the people with them and brings them in the evening back from Koty, that was the best factory and now it is the worst ...back ...A certain Klys lives in the factory of Franz Ratzlaff.

He has only one cow and he sold half the barn because he didn't need it. He only cultivates the land on Strzemeszno and in the meadows that Küster bought, the rest is idle, and the government has planted forest. Only two do good business in Wymyschle, that is Marjan Sikora, who was with Kühn and is now on her brother Leonhard's farm, and Franek Fronczak, who lives on Gustav Kliwer's farm, and there is not much to say about the others ..." The correspondence continues, but there is nothing more in the letters describing changes, so I refrain from further extracts. The descriptions above give a fairly accurate picture of the neglect that is common there. I am grateful to Uncle Erich Ratzlaff for providing me with the letters.

In the summer of 1971 C.A. DeFehr Jr. with his family visited Wymyschle. His report on the visit, which appeared in the "*Mennonitische Rundschau*" on June 30th and July 7th under the title "How we saw Poland", is still worthwhile. "Today was a very eventful day on our trip, especially for my dear wife! We left Poznan in the morning Wymyschle. At Gombin we turned and then drove the 7 km to Wymyschle over the narrow and wavy road. When we arrived in Polish Wymyschle, we showed the letter from Brother E .L. Ratzlaff to find out where Herr Wegert lived. Since we didn't speak Polish and nobody spoke any German, they drew the road to Deutsch-Wymyschle in the sand and we soon got there. Since we were probably the first to enter Wymyschle by car in a long time, everyone stood at the fence and looked at us with wide eyes. Children ran after them and there was a lot of excitement in the village.

The village looks very simple and poor, but the apartments are standing still and in my opinion are well preserved. Martha recognized the Kliwer's house where her grandparents lived. Afterward we met Mr. and Mrs. Wegert, we went through the whole village. We saw the former apartments of Hajers, Andreas Kliwers, Witzkes, Gustav and Erich Ratzlaffs and also their parents' house.

At Erich Ratzlaffs I went through the mill and looked at it various rooms and the long-rusted machines. The building itself is still fairly stable, even though the rear engine compartment has collapsed somewhat. It looks sad from the inside, since everything is broken, rusted and stolen away. The house still looks very good and is well preserved.

At Franz Kliwer's apartment, where Martha and her grandparents lived, we went to the courtyard, and here came the tears for Martha when she looked at all this. The house is still standing and, in my opinion, is still well preserved. Herr Wegert told everyone where we came from and that Martha her grandparents had lived here years ago. I also took a few color photos with my Polaroid camera and showed the finished



Haus des Franz Kliewer in Wymyschle (1971).  
 Hier wurde Frau Martha DeFehrs Mutter erzogen.  
 Franz Kliewer's house in Wymyschle (1971).  
 Ms. Martha DeFehr's mother was brought up here.



Familie David Bartel, Wymyschle; vorne, v.l.n.r.: Emma Kliewer, geb. Bartel,  
 Helene Bartel, geb. Wohlgemuth, Minna Kliewer, geb. Bartel; hinten: Franz  
 Kliewer, Sara Bartel (Frau Peter Kliewer), Friedrich Kliewer

Family David Bartel, Wymyschle; front, from left to right: Emma Kliewer, née Bartel, Hellene Bartel, née Wohlgemuth, Minna Kliewer, née Bartel; behind: Franz Kliewer, Sara Bartel (Mrs. Peter Kliewer), Friedrich Kliewer

images like the people standing around. They were all amazed and they widened their eyes because they had never seen anything like it.

We also visited the church. - The cross is still on the roof and the building also stands as a testimony to another time. Unfortunately, it doesn't look like this from the inside. All furniture has disappeared. Most of the windows are missing and the swallows build nests in them.

All sorts of pictures of Polish film stars are stuck to the walls. The building is used by young people as a meeting place and dance hall. I also went out onto the balcony and into a small adjoining room.

From here we went a little further to the cemetery. The big chestnut trees were blooming, and a thousand bees were buzzing. Cattle graze nearby and everything has deteriorated. The surrounding wall has been broken through on several parts, although it still goes all around. There are still a few stones with names on them, but even the stones that lie flat have all been tipped over and damaged. We were told that every piece of iron or wood was stolen. We saw a stone with the inscription E. Kliever, née Bartel, as well as others, including the large family grave of the Ratzlaff family. Even though it was smashed and devastated, we read the various inscriptions and names, and the silence in the country seemed like a sacred silence to us, "Now with the Savior", and "In eternal rest" all seemed very fitting and touching, but the one monument had a Bible verse that said that we have no permanent place here, but are looking for the future one - this was what it was for me was the best way to describe the whole Deutsch-Wymyschle in a few words.

The village has some wonderful memories for you dear ones, joy and suffering, but it's a whole different world now! Wymyschle now also has electricity and has two bulbs for street lighting, but nothing else but memories. People are all poor and have no idea of the outside world and, except for Mr. Wegert, no contact with it. The street is now only a narrow, sandy path, on which there is no room to drive a car other than a Volkswagen. I just hope that my pictures, which I have taken, get along well so that you can all see it again.

The Wegerts were very hospitable, and we ate dinner with them and drove away from them late at night. The land opposite the dwellings is still being worked on, but it no longer runs as deep because much has been planted with forest. The Wegerts send their greetings to all former Deutsch-Wymyschler and we also enclose our greetings to everyone.

From Deutsch-Wymyschle we drove to Gombin and Plock, found but nowhere to stay. It was late and dark, and dangerous to drive in the dark. Plock is now a city of 80,000 inhabitants and has become a chemical industrial city. The Russians bring oil and gas into their pipelines, and it is here that it is processed. Most of the Wymyschler now work there and are picked up by bus for work.

Since there was nowhere to sleep, we had to drive on to Ciechanow, and now I'm sitting here in the car writing this letter. Martha and the children sleep in the hotel, but I will sleep in the car this night so nothing is stolen. It is now 1 am and the trip here was really hair-raising! Driving on Polish roads during the day is an experience, but at night it is crazy! There is very little passenger or truck traffic, but pedestrians, bicycles, motorcycles and then these unpredictable farmers with their horse-drawn carriages. They have no light and the streets are narrow. I almost hit one from behind; then you get really hot and cold! Well, now everyone is sleeping and I can only hear the barking of the many dogs. The streets are calm and I only see a policeman every now and then, as I have parked my car in front of the police station.



Pferdefuhrwerk auf der Straße in  
Ciechanow, Polen.

Wochenmarkt auf dem Marktplatz  
in Ciechanow.

Left: Horse Drawn Cart on the Street in Ciechanow, Poland. Right: Weekly market on the market square in Ciechanow.

Yes, the landscape in Poland is very beautiful now in spring, but the poverty is great, and the way things are done here is hard to believe. I just hope that the country will experience at least another 25 years of peace so that it can go a little further.- It is already 26 years after the end of the war, but unfortunately this country and the poor population have very little to show for it.

We are warmly welcomed here and it only annoys me that I can't speak to people.- From the teenagers I have never met anyone who can speak German or English, except at the tourist office for foreigners in Poznan and at the border. We always have to go to the older generation, among whom you will find some who still understand a little German.

Well, all the best! Farewell and be thankful to God for the beautiful Times in Deutsch-Wymyschle, but much more that you are now in Canada are! Good night! Corny."

This concludes my work on the Mennonite settlements in central Poland. I originally planned to publish a comprehensive family research as the second part of the same. Unfortunately, due to lack of time and financial reasons, this will not be possible for me. But I will continue the research and reproduce it in other ways to make it accessible to those who are interested. In the foreword, I give a short family history and explain the research methods that I used.

We saw in this short outline how God led our ancestors who once immigrated to central Poland. We saw the development of flourishing towns and communities, but also major changes in the cultural and spiritual arenas. They were a living link in the chain of Mennonite migrations, closely interwoven with other groups in neighboring countries and mutually stimulated.

The Mennonites ultimately were not economically viable in central Poland, which was due to the confined space and unfavorable conditions. For this reason, a never-ending flow of emigrants flows from these settlements, which fades into the Mennonite streams moving to the east and overseas. However, they also served as teachers in their surroundings in Poland in the drainage of the swampy lowlands and as a living example of agriculture that achieved good results even on poor soils and under adverse conditions and was able to create a tolerable livelihood.

Spiritually, however, they blossomed. Then there was a bitter night frost, which creased and destroyed this blossom. However, we have learned from this experience that our home is not here on earth. And we are looking for heavenly home!

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# Appendix

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**List**  
**of the Mennonites from West Prussia who immigrated to Deutsch-Wymyschle and the Neumark, by Robert Foth**

No.	Name	Date of Birth	Place of Birth	Place of Residence	Wedding Day	Date of Death	GM#
1	Balzer Dietrich	27/6/1824	Jamerau	Dt. Zyck	2.9.1856	?	28306
2	Balzer Maria, née Foth	2/1/1827	Dorposch	Dt. Zyck	Remained single	?	28307
3	Balzer Eva (daughter)	27.7.1854	Dorposch	Dt. Zyck	25.4.1853	?	28308
4	Bartel David	?	Westpreussen	Wonsosz	4.4.1842	?	-
5	Bartel Maria, née Kliewer	25.3.1817	Nessau	Swiniary	24.4.1844	?	28316
6	Bartel Jakob (The Large)	1.3.1817	Niedergruppe	Swiniary	?	?	28371
7	Block Jakob	17.9.1839	Neusass	Dt. Wymyschle	11.9.1869	?	1118700
8	Block Helene	1.12.1846	Ostrower Kempe	Sady	11.9.1869	12.12.1933 OK	32231
9	Block Katharina, née Buller	24.7.1818	Ostrower Kempe	?	2.12.1841	21.6.1854Dt.Wy.	32230
10	Block Heinrich I.	11.6.1813	Jamerau	Sady	2.12.1841	9.1896 KS	32229
11	Block Heinrich II.	16.12.1844	Ostrower Kempe	Sady	11.9.1869	10.3.1930 KS	32219
12	Block Agnethe (Anganetha)	27.12.1849	Ostrower Kempe	Sady	15.9.1869	2.2.1926 KS	27429
13	Block David	21.11.1851	Ostrower Kempe	Sady	?	25.5.1861	32233
14	Buller Helene, née Unruh	20.1.1815	?	Dt.Wymyschle	20.1.1815	20.1.1855	28419
15	Buller Peter	21.8.1789	Brenkenhoffswalde	Dt.Wymyschle	5.11.1812	24.10.1860	28449
16	Buller Helene, née Buller	22.8.1790	Brenkenhoffswalde	Dt.Wymyschle	5.11.1812	29.9.1846	28450
17	Buller Heinrich	14.3.1817	Brenkenhoffswalde	Zog nachGnadenfeld,	Died single*	15.9.1871	33574
18	Buller Peter	2.12.1814	Brenkenhoffswalde	Dt.Wymyschle	19.9.1839	8.3.1856	28452
19	Buller Anna, née Wedel	18.12.1816	Niederausmass	Dt.Wymyschle	19.9.1839	13.1.1847	198679
20	Buller Heinrich	4.12.1787	Brenkenhoffswalde	Dt.Wymyschle	20.1.1815	20.1.1855	28418
21	Buller Anna	27.9.1816	Brenkenhoffswalde	Dt.Wymyschle	?	?	28408
22	Buller Benjamin	12.11.1806	Brenkenhoffswalde	Dt.Wymyschle	3.8.1832	11.8.1855	28411
23	Buller Tobias II	31.8.1813	Brenkenhoffswalde	Wonsosz	26.11.1848	23.3.1861	28451
24	Buller Petronella, née Penner	23.9.1822	Klein Niszewka	Wonsosz	26.11.1848	26.5.1873	28461
25	Buller Kornelius	27.1.1799	Brenkenhoffswalde	Sady	Died single	13.1.1856	1118739
26	Buller Tobias I	25.8.1791	Brenkenhoffswalde	Leonow	20.4.1823	5.4.1841	28455
27	Buller Anna, néeFoth	12.4.1799	Franztal	Leonow	20.4.1823	8.8.1871	20331
28	Buller Heinrich	17.8.1808	Brenkenhoffswalde	Dt.Zyck	14.1.1840	left 1848/1858	28422
29	Buller Anna, née Penner	27.11.1818	Niszewka	Dt.Zyck	14.1.1840	in Russia?Yes	28423
30	Dirks Heinrich	2.2.1834**	GrossLunau	Dt.Wymyschle	15.11.1859	6.12.1895 KS	518170
31	Dirks Peter	5.4.1815	Treuel	Olschyn	21.11.1847	30.7.1855	167871

No.	Name	Date of Birth	Place of Birth	Place of Residence	Wedding Day	Date of Death	GM#
32	Dirks Maria, née Kasper	4.5.1823	Neubuden	Olschyn	21.11.1847	20.2.1854	1119542
33	Dyck Gerhard	8.6.1835	GrossLunau	Dt.Wymyschle	?	?	1119543
34	Ediger Johann	15.9.1829	Treuel	Dt.Wymyschle	10.5.1855	?	1119544
35	EkkertKornelius	12.4.1824	Niszewka	Swiniary	3.6.1852	?	47777
36	Ekkert Katharina (m. #28489)	25.6.1829	Niszewka	Lady	14.11.1854	Russia 1875	28520
37	Ewert Peter	4.7.1793	Gogolin, Preuss.	Piaski	?	1.3.1856	39847
38	Ewert Elisabeth, Kliewer 1st Wife	10.8.1805	Vinodigen	Piaski	?	9.5.1850	39848
39	Ewert Helene, néeAdrain, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Wife	8.3.1822	Dulinowa	Piaski	21.5.1854	?	1018185
40	Ewert Peter II	1.3.1833	Niszewka	Piaski	?	1907 Russia	102914
41	Foth Peter	1797	Franztal	Dt.Wymyschle	?	?	20330
42	Foth Bernhard	26.2.1801	Franztal	Wonsosz	4.5.1828	7.3.1862	20332
43	Foth Benjamin	14.2.1806	Franztal	Leonow	25.12.1826	17.1.1860	20333
44	Foth Tobias II	29.9.1812	Franztal	Leonow	30.11.1838	U.S.A.***	20334
45	Foth Jakob I	26.6.1787	Dorposch	Dt.Wymyschle	4.8.1810	2.10.1853	10
46	Foth Helene, néeNachtigal	2.12.1793	Ostrower Kempe	Dt.Wymyschle	4.8.1810	12.4.1855	11
47	Foth Elisabeth	3.8.1816	Ostrower Kempe	Dt.Wymyschle	?	12.9.1851	12
48	Foth Anna	16.12.1818	Ostrower Kempe	Dt.Wymyschle	27.7.1851§	23.9.1871	13
49	Foth Peter (m. 16)	6.6.1819	Ostrower Kempe	Dt.Wymyschle	21.7.1838*	7.2.1855	14
50	Foth Eva, née Wedel	31.3.1821	Niederausmass	Dt.Wymyschle	21.7.1838*	16.2.1847	18
51	Foth Benjamin	24.5.1807	Dorposch	Dt.Wymyschle	15.4.1833	Migrated 1857 To Russia**	28479
52	Foth Eva, néeRatzlaff	9.5.1815	Dorposch	Dt.Wymyschle	15.4.1833		28480
53	Foth Helene, Tochter	7.7.1836	Dorposch	Dt.Wymyschle	?		28481
54	Foth Eva, Tochter	6.3.1838	Dorposch	Dt.Wymyschle	?		28482
55	Foth Heinrich	4.2.1812	Strijowka	Dt.Wymyschle	26.4.1842	?	28504
56	Foth Jakob II	21.11.1829	Dorposch	Leonow	1850	2.11.1861	20337
57	Foth Peter ?	?	Franztal	Dt.Wymyschle	?	(1841?)	-
58	Foth Wilhelmine, néeKonke	?	?	Dt.Wymyschle	?	?	28515
59	Foth Tobias I	?	?	Dt.WymyschleNr.22	?	?	28543
60	Foth Katharina, néeRatzlaff	?	?	Dt.WymyschleNr.22	?	?	28544
61	FothKornelius	?	?	Dt.WymyschleNr.21	?	?	286519?
62	Foth Maria, née Funk	?	?	Dt.WymyschleNr.21	?	?	28500?
63	Foth Maria (see 108)	26.2.1837	Klein Lubien	Swiniary	3.3.1859	?	29281

64	Frey Peter	11.11.1796	Gluchowka	Dt.Wymyschle	13.10.1822	21.1.1865	35845
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\* GM says 1840 \*\* Eva died in 1855 \*\*\* Emigrated to USA in 1874 § GM says 22.7.1851

No.	Name	Birth Date	Birthplace	Residence	Wedding day	Date of Death	GM#
65	Frey Anna, née Janzen	29.11.1806	Brenkenhoffswalde	Dt.Wymyschle	13.10.1822	25.2.1874	1119546
66	Funk Helene (néeBaltzer)	14.12.1798	Franztal	Dt.Wymyschle	17.7.1828	1.11.1854	284964
67	Funk Peter II	5.10.1830	Kompany	Nowesiadlo	13.11.1862	9.11.1870	286374
68	Funk Elisabeth, née ?	6.10.1830	Kompany	Dt.Wymyschle	22.9.1856	?	41702*
69	Funk Elisabeth	28.11.1833	Kompany	Szladow	?	17.7.1914 KS	41702*
70	Funk Peter I	6.8.1804	Niederausmass	Szladow	17.7.1828	12.6.1853	284963
71	Funk Helene, née Balzer	4.2.1798	Lunau	Szladow	?	19.8.1872	139234
72	Geddert Katharina	12.8.1834	Strijowka	Olschin	?	3.4.1883	1119547
73	Gerbrand Johann	20.4.1805	Wilhelmsbruch	Swinary	25.4.1845	17.1.1881 KS	108984
74	Gertz Peter	24.11.1777	Schweinegrube	Wonsosz	11.5.1848	6.6.1852	312097
75	Gertz Maria, Bartel, 2 <sup>nd</sup> wife	12.7.1812	Niedergruppe	Wonsosz	11.5.1848	?	139495
76	Gertz Franz	26.12.1837	Montau	Sady	1860	Russia§	27081
77	Görtz Heinrich	6.12.1798	Jamrauerhorst	Swinary	18.10.1854	?	1119548
78	Görtz Anna, née Penner	8.3.1810	Zieglerhube	Swinary	18.10.1854	?	282506
79	Görtz Peter	10.5.1825	GrossSanskau	Swinary	25.10.1843	12.10.1873	283634
80	Görtz Peter	Abt 1817	Vinedia	Dt.Zyck	5.10.1843	?	957605
81	Görtz Maria, néeKerber	1.5.1819	Vinedia	Dt.Zyck	5.10.1843	?	957917
82	Görtz Eva	13.7.1844	Vinedia	Dt.Zyck	?	?	1119551
83	Görtz Leonhard	9.2.1852	Podwitz	Dt.Zyck	?	?	1119552
84	Görtz Maria	3.8.1858	Podwitz	Dt.Zyck	?	?	1119553
85	Heier Karl	24.1.1812	Dt.Wymyschle	Dt.Wymyschle	17.11.1839	18.2.1885	29167
86	Heier Maria, née Wedel	21.9.1790	Dt.Kunopath	Dt.Wymyschle	18.4.1833	16.5.1864	106934
87	Heier Helene, née Schmidt	15.7.1819	Brenkenhoffswalde	Dt.Wymyschle	17.11.1839	15.1.1853	29168
88	Jantz Peter	15.9.1790	Neudessau	Sady	?	?	1119555
89	Jantz Andreas	4.10.1810	Dulinowo	Dt.Wymyschle	25.11.1836	26.3.1873	1119554
90	Kasper Heinrich	7.10.1810	Kl.Nischewka	Piaski	3.5.1833	?	26
91	Kasper David	10.1.1825	Neubuden	Piaski	30.1.1848	?	38352?/59860?
92	Kliwer Heinrich	2.10.1801	Obergruppe	Dt.WymyschleNr.13	13.10.1848	?	29284
93	Kliwer Susanna, née Buller	13.3.1815	Brenkenhoffswalde	Dt.WymyschleNr.13	13.10.1848	24.6.1886	29285
94	Kliwer Elisabeth	28.2.1832	Sanskau	Dt.WymyschleNr.13	29.4.1833	?	186679
95	Kliwer Heinrich	21.3.1833	Sanskau	Dt.WymyschleNr.13	29.4.1855	16.3.1856	29287
96	Kliwer Hanna(Anna)	11.1.1839	Sanskau	Dt.WymyschleNr.13	29.4.1855	16.3.1856**	29288
97	Kliwer Heinrich	11.4.1821***	Treuel	Dt.WymyschleNr.15	Fritz Kliwers Grandfather?Yes, #137216		29653

Information not in the original PDF but gleaned from GRANDMA is in blue font.

\* See Notes in GRANDMA\*\*GRANDMA says 29.3.1861

\*\*\*GRANDMA says 11.4.1821

§GM says 17.9.1915 KS

No.	Name	Birth Date	Birthplace	Residence	Wedding day	Date of Death	GM#
98	Kliwer Maria, née Franz	?	?	Dt.Wymyschle 1 <sup>st</sup> wife			-
99	Kliwer Johann	24.10.1805	Neusass-Treul	Korzykwcw	1836	Stokower*	29640
100	Kliwer Maria, néeTessmann	29.1.1794	Dt.Kunopath	Korzykow	1836	Kliwersfather**	103464
101	Kliwer Peter	22.6.1803	Nischewka	Poln.Wioncz.	17.4.1836	13.8.1869	29624
102	Kliwer Heinrich	1.9.1794	Nischewlm	Swiniary	?	11.11.1859	29275
103	KliwerAnna, née Adrian	4.9.1814	Nischewka	Swiniary	?		29276
104	Kliwer Eva	7.11.1830	Nischewlm	Swiniary	?	15.8.1849	29277
105	Kliwer Maria	23.12.1833	Nischewka	Swiniary	18.2.1862	16.7.1876 KS	27112
106	Kliwer Heinrich	9.4.1835	Nischewka	Swiniary	?	?	27279
107	Kliwer Helene	16.8.1847	Nischewka	Swiniary	?	30.5.1852	29280
108	Kliwer Maria, néeFoth	26.2.1837	Klein Lubien	Swiniary	3.3.1859	(1863?)	29281
109	KliwerFranz	15.12.1800	Hohenwalde	Swiniary	18.1.1845	?	29282
110	Kliwer Sara, néeKliwer	25.3.1817	Nischewka	Swiniary	18.1.1845	?	29283
111	Konke Benjamin	23.4.1776	Franztal	Dt.Wymyschle	?	10.11.1853	1119557
112	KonkeRosine, Daughter	12.7.1812	Franztal	Dt.Zyck	8.5.1832	10.4.1849	931273
113	Konke Helene, Daughter	13.8.1813	Franztal	Dt.Zyck	27.12.1835	23.11.1851	1119559
114	Kornelius Wilhelm	30.5.1781	Rehhof	Piaski	27.7.1848	31.7.1865	1119560
115	Kraft Rosine	5.1.1780	Alt-Bielitz	Dt.Wymyschle	5.5.1815	31.10.1853	136573
116	Kurzweg Helene	4.10.1794	Franztal	Dt.Wymyschle	Widow	21.5.1863	1119561
117	Kühn Maria, néeGeddert	2.7.1832	Stryjowka	Olschin	?	3.4.1883	1119562
118	Kühn Heinrich	28.8.1790	Przechowka	Leonow	7.4.1838	4.4.1855	28470?
119	Luther Maria, née Schmidt	24.4.1821	Przechowka	Gut Wymyschle	31.5.1838	6.1.1855	29869
120	Luther Michael	6.4.1819	?	Gut Wymyschle	31.5.1838	8.5.1885	29868
121	Luther Anna, née Jantz***	29.3.1849	Kl.Nischewka	Gut Wymyschle	?	?	29881
122	Lyhrmann Johann	13.11.1826	Przechowka	Worker?	?	?	-
123	Lyhrmann David	11.4.1829	Przechowka	Dt.Wymyschle	19.11.1852	Russia	42002
124	Nachtigal Anna, née Balzer	3.2.1787	Schönsee	Dt.Zyck	?	18.4.1852	1119564
125	Nachtigal David I	24.4.1809	Grentze	Dt.Zyck	?	?	30458
126	Nachtigal Helene, Buller, 1 <sup>st</sup> wife	5.9.1809	Ostrower Kempe	Dt.Zyck	?	17.2.1838	30459
127	Nachtigal Eva, Buller, 2 <sup>nd</sup> wife	19.10.1816	Ostrower Kempe	Dt.Zyck	1.5.1858	Russia	30463
128	Nachtigal Heinrich	19.5.1832	Ostrower Kempe	Dt.Zyck	?	18.3.1856	30460
129	Nachtigal David II	11.12.1819	Treuel	Dt.ZyckNr.34	7.2.1863	?	30470
130	Nachtigal Maria, néeEkkert	29.4.1826	Nischewka	Dt.ZyckNr.34	7.2.1863	?	30471

\* GM 10.4.1900 \*\* 27.2.1853 \*\*\* Married 29871

No.	Name	Birth Date	Birthplace	Residence	Wedding day	Date of Death	GM#
131	Nachtigal Heinrich	8.7.1833	Neubuden	Dt.Zyck	?	?	29886
132	Nehring David	3.7.1814	Kleinsee	Dt.Zyck	16.1.1848	?	1251292
133	Nickel Jakob	3.3.1804	Dulinow	Swiniary	?	20.2.1858	20368
134	Nickel Dorothea, néeFischer	5.10.1807	Nischewka	Swiniary	?	?	20369
135	Nickel Anna	9.11.1828	Nischewka	Swiniary	?	?	20428
136	Nickel Julianna	11.4.1830	Nischewka	Swiniary	?	?	20429
137	Nickel Heinrich	11.3.1833	Nischewka	Swiniary	?	?	20430
138	Pauls David	27.11.1817	GrossLubien	Swiniary	19.7.1842	?	30472
139	Pauls Helene, néeUnruh	8.10.1815	Brenkenhoffswalde	Swiniary	19.7.1842	?	30473
140	Pauls Peter	2.11.1825	GrossLubien	Swiniary	26.6.1849	?	30479
141	Pauls Elisabeth, née Kessler	8.4.1833	Niedergruppe	Swiniary	26.6.1849	?	30480
142	Pauls Anna	20.5.1850	Neubuden	Swiniary	?	?	30481
143	Pauls Leonhard	13.5.1852	Schöneich	Swiniary	?	Apr 1926 MI	30482
144	Pauls Maria	4.5.1854	Klein Lunau	Swiniary	?	?	30483
145	Pauls Elisabeth	31.8.1856	Niederausmass	Swiniary	?	?	30484
146	Penner Jakob	?	?	Wionczemin	?	?	56904?/30485?
147	Penner Helene, néeKornelius	?	?	Wionczemin	?	?	30486?
148	Penner Heinrich I	?	?	Dt.Wymyschle	?	?	30493?
149	Penner Anna, néeBuller	7.4.1821	Prussia	Dt.Wymyschle	28.11.1844	21.12.1914 Rus	68693
150	Penner Heinrich II	28.3.1821	Nischewka	Dt.Zyck	28.11.1844	25.5.1855	30496
151	Penner Katharina	28.3.1831	Klein Nischewka	Swiniary	?	?	30498
152	Penner Sara	18.3.1835	Nischewka	Dt.WymyschleNr.23	?	14.6.1839	30499
153	Ratzlaff Peter I	?	?	Dt.WymyschleNr.43	?	?	31767?
154	Ratzlaff Elisabeth, néeKonke	?	?	Dt.WymyschleNr.43	?	?	31768?
155	Ratzlaff Benjamin	13.1.1804	?	Dt.Wymyschle	?	?	31769/31770*
156	Ratzlaff Maria, néeFunk	?	?	Dt.Wymyschle	?	?	28500
157	Ratzlaff Jakob I	26.4.1771	?	Dt.Wymyschle	?	?	47739?
158	Ratzlaff Katharina, néePankratz	28.10.1772	?	Dt.Wymyschle	?	14.2.1810	43062?
159	Ratzlaff Tobias	?	?	Wionczemin	?	?	1251323
160	Ratzlaff Maria, néeWedel	?	?	Wionczemin	?	?	1251324
161	Ratzlaff Peter II	1.4.1789	Dt.Kunopath	?	Abt 1816	1870	59666?
162	Ratzlaff Helene, néeBuller	1797	Brenkenhoffswalde	?	Abt 1816	19.10.1854	59667?
163	Ratzlaff Eva, néeFoth	?	?	Mother of the wife of David Matis, Grochaly(#59695)			59694

\* Are these the same person?

No.	Name	Birth Date	Birthplace	Residence	Wedding Day	Date of Death	GM#
164	Ratzlaff Elisabeth, néeDreher	Abt 1800	Ostrower Kempe	Mutter von August Ratzlaff, Dt.Wymyschle			59700
165	Ratzlaff Peter III	23.7.1798	Dt.Kunopath	Dt.WymyschleNr.14	28.10.1821	13.10.1854	31787
166	Ratzlaff Jakob II	4.4.1803	Dt.Kunopath	Arciechow	29.7.1837	?	47848
167	Ratzlaff Andreas I	31.8.1799	Przechowka	Dt.Zyck	1821	9.3.1873	43193
168	Ratzlaff Heinrich I	4.4.1825	Dorposch	Dt.WymyschleNr.2	22.7.1851	21.2.1856	59674
169	Ratzlaff Heinrich II	10.11.1819	Ostrower Kempe	Dt.WymyschleNr.21	1852	30.9.1922 KS	59685**
170	Ratzlaff Anna, néeUnruh	4.8.1818	Przechowka	Dt.WymyschleNr.21	1852	30.1.1858 Volhynia	29643
171	Ratzlaff Anna, néeWilms	5.11.1837	Sanskau	Dt.WymyschleNr.21	29.8.1860	2.9.1922 KS	59688
172	Ratzlaff David	19.12.1831	Ostrower Kempe	Dt.WymyschleNr.14	31.1.1856	17.1.1908 KS	31797
173	Ratzlaff Andreas II	1.8.1822	Ostrower Kempe	Dt.WymyschleNr.18	20.11.1853	ToWola***	47701
174	Ratzlaff August	12.4.1838	Ostrower Kempe	Olszyn	30.10.1884§	19.4.1927	59701
175	Ratzlaff Johann	1.11.1844	Ostrower Kempe	Nowosiadlo	8.11.1873 ?	4.2.1920 KS	59686
176	Ratzlaff Peter IV	22.8.1826	Ostrower Kempe	Dt.Zyck	?	To USA 1874	59693
177	Rosenfeld David	1.5.1844	Grentze	Nowosiadlo	1.11.1865 ?		1119470
178	Schmidt Jakob	16.5.1773	Dt.Kunopath	Dt.WymyschleNr.9	? 12.5.1856	12.5.1856	103271
179	Schmidt Benjamin	9.4.1804	Dt.Kunopath	Dt.WymyschleNr.9	9.9.1830	?	103288
180	Schmidt Susanna, néeJahn	9.3.1815	Przechowka	Dt.WymyschleNr.9	9.9.1830	24.4.1846	74389
181	Schmidt Eva I	12.7.1832	Grentze	Swiniary	13.11.1851	14.3.1914 KS	20348
182	Schmidt Peter I	20.9.1790	Brenkenhoffswalde	Dt.WymyschleNr.9	27.11.1814	9.11.1858	350567
183	Schmidt Helene, née?	28.11.1793	Brenkenhoffswalde	Dt.WymyschleNr.9	27.11.1814	4.4.1866	350568
184	Schmidt Katharina	4.12.1794	Brenkenhoffswalde	Dt.WymyschleNr.10	?	25.1.1860	1119478
185	Schmidt Helene	18.7.1802	Brenkenhoffswalde	Dt.WymyschleNr.10	?	17.1.1876	1119497
186	Schmidt Peter II	17.12.1794	Franztal	Dt.WymyschleNr.22	15.5.1820	23.7.1877	136790
187	Schmidt Elisabeth, néePankratz	4.4.1803	Przechowka	Dt.WymyschleNr.22	15.5.1820	31.12.1871	25013
188	Schmidt Maria	24.4.1821	Przechowka	Dt.WymyschleNr.22	31.5.1838	6.1.1855	29869
189	Schmidt Eva II	7.12.1823	Przechowka	Dt.WymyschleNr.22	?	21.2.1884	136791
190	Schmidt Johann	9.7.1829	Przechowka	Dt.WymyschleNr.22	Drowned	13.6.1848	136790
191	Schmidt Andreas	20.10.1794	Kleinsee	Archiechow	4.5.1830	20.10.1860	103280
192	Schmidt David	8.5.1806	Kleinsee	Dt.Wymyschle	21.10.1864	22.3.1888	136802
193	Schröder David *	29.8.1796	Gr.Niszewka	Olschin	?	25.12.1855	1018188
194	Schröder Anna, néeKonrad	18.6.1796	Jurke	Olschin	?	7.8.1884	1018187
195	Schröder Peter	4.1.1804	Nischewka	Piaski	1830	22.8.1852	860090
196	Schröder Helene, néeAdrian	8.3.1822	Dulinowa	Olschin	25.5.1850	?	1018185
197	Schröder Heinrich	?	Nischewka	Poln.Wionczemin	1.2.1852	?	1286732?
198	Schröder Kornelius I	1.3.1802	Nischewka	Swiniary	19.11.1823	20.9.1856	49403

\* (m. 1018187 & 29637) \*\* See GM notes \*\*\* Died in OK § GM says 22.5.1862

No.	Name	Birth Date	Birthplace	Residence	Wedding day	Date of Death	GM#
199	Schröder Maria, née Kliewer	1.5.1799	Nischewka	Swiniary	19.11.1823	<a href="#">15.2.1892</a>	49404
200	Schröder Kornelius II	21.9.1824	Nischewka	Swiniary .	13.11.1851	13.12.1852	49405
201	Schröder Maria	27.3.1827	Nischewka	Swiniary	3.6.1852	<a href="#">13.9.1894 KS</a>	47778
202	Schröder Jakob	5.9.1833	Nischewka	Swiniary	19.11.1865	?	49406
203	Schröder Eva	23.8.1837	Nischewka	Swiniary	22.9.1859	<a href="#">22.6.1920 KS</a>	27850
204	Schröder Anna	27.9.1839	Nischewka	Swiniary	?	13.5.1849	286544
205	Schröder Anna, née Gerbrandt	13.8.1808	Wilhelmsbruch	Olschin	24.11.1835	15.3.1864	-
206	Unruh Erdman	?	?	Olschin	?	?	1119468
207	Unruh Maria, néeGörtz	23.2.1781	Steinwage	Olschin-1 <sup>st</sup> husband Albrecht	?	?	1119469
208	Unruh Heinrich I	18.6.1799	Dt.Kunopath	Dt.WymyschleNr.23	21.9.1819	1857 To Russia	41999
209	Unruh Susanna, née Buller	2.1.1805	Brenktenhoffswalde	Dt.WymyschleNr.23	21.9.1819		42000
210	Unruh Helene	6.2.1822	Brenktenhoffswalde	Dt.WymyschleNr.23	19.11.1852		42011
211	Unruh Benjamin	31.1.1808	Brenkenhoffswalde	Dt.Zyck	17.11.1833	1.1.1856	670457
212	Unruh Peter	9.11.1814	Przechowka	Dt.ZyckNr.34	14.1.1838	1856	287048
213	Unruh Heinrich III	17.8.1816	Przechowka	Dt.Zyck	16.2.1841	To Russia	107028
214	Unruh Helene, née Konke	16.7.1822	Przechowka	Dt.Zyck	16.2.1841		106106
215	Unruh Anna, néeEkkert	27.10.1817	Kl.Nischewka	Dt.Zyck	12.9.1845	?	1119463
216	Unruh Anna	4.8.1818	Przechowka	Korzykow	<a href="#">1852</a>	30.1.1858	29643
217	Unruh David III	12.12.1836	Schöneich	Swiniary	22.9.1859	<a href="#">28.3.1912 KS</a>	27849
218	Unruh David I	?	?	Dt.Wymyschle	5.5.1815	?	136572
219	Unruh Rosine, néeKraft	5.1.1780	Alt-Bielitz	Dt.Wymyschle	5.5.1815	30.9.1853	136573
220	Unruh Tobias	?	Przechowka	Korzykow	?	?	29642?
221	Unruh Maria, néeThessmann	29.1.1794	Dt.Kunopath	Korzykow	?	27.2.1853	-
222	Unruh David II	?	?	Dt.Wymyschle	?	?	106889
223	Unruh Elisabeth, néePenner	?	?	Dt.Wymyschle	?	?	279889
224	Unruh Heinrich II	10.9.1803	?	Swiniary -Eltern von 217	<a href="#">24.2.1828</a>	<a href="#">6.2.1884</a>	132128
225	Unruh Petronella, néeNickel	<a href="#">1.10.1801</a>	<a href="#">Jamerau</a>	Swiniary -Eltem von 217	<a href="#">24.2.1828</a>	<a href="#">6.4.1843</a>	132129
226	Wedel Peter	8.1.1793	Dt.Kunopath	Dt.WymyschleNr.21	11.11.1818	1.9.1855	28570
227	Wedel Maria, néeBetke	1.1.1793	Przechowka	Dt.WymyschleNr.21	11.11.1818	<a href="#">18 Nov</a>	28571
228	Wedel Franz	2.10.1833	Franztal	Dt.WymyschleNr.21	?	<a href="#">1900 KS</a>	1287419
229	Wedel Jakobine	17.1.1841	Franztal	Dt.WymyschleNr.21	?	?	28573
230	Wedel Friedrich	18.11.1844	Franztal	Dt.WymyschleNr.21	?	13.7.1852	28574
231	Wilms Peter	6.2.1820	Klein Lunau	Wonsosz	?	25.5.1861	1119747
232	Wilms Katharina	9.1.1840	Sanskau	Dt.Wymyschle	3.10.1862	4.6.1912	135763
233	Wilms Pauline	2.5.1841	Sanskau	Dt.Wymyschle	3.6.1864	16.11.1903	135060
234	Unruh Katharina, néeFoth	6.10.1812	?	Dt.ZyckNr.47	?	?	-

## Directory of Mennonites who emigrated from Deutsch-Wymyschle

List 1	List 2	Name	Birth Date	Birthplace	Last Residence	When emigrated	Emigrated to	GM#
28	1	Buller Heinrich	17.8.1808	Brenkenhoffswalde	Dt.Zyck 32	1858	Russia	28422
29	2	Buller Anna, néePenner	21.11.1818	Niszewka	Dt.Zyck 32	1858	Russia	28423
	3	Buller Peter	20.4.1841	Leonow	Dt.Zyck 32	1858	Russia	28424
	4	Buller Wilhelmine	20.1.1844	Dt.Zyck	Dt.Zyck 32	1858	Russia	28425
	5	Buller Julianna	29.9.1845	Dt.Zyck	Dt.Zyck 32	1858	Russia	28426
	6	Buller Kornelius	4.9.1849	Dt.Zyck	Dt.Zyck 32	1858	Russia	28427
	7	Buller Wilhelm	6.5.1851	Dt.Zyck	Dt.Zyck 32	1858	Russia	28428
	8	Buller Eva	7.7.1856	Dt.Zyck	Dt.Zyck 32	1858	Russia	28429
	9	Buller Johann	8.2.1858	Dt.Zyck	Dt.Zyck 32	1858	Russia	28430
17	10	Buller Heinrich	14.3.1817	Brenkenhoffswalde	Dt.Wym.13	?	Russia	33574
94	11	Buller Elisabeth, Kliewer	28.2.1832	Sanskau	Dt.Wym.13	?	Came back	186679
	12	Buller Karl	10.3.1826	Dt.Wymyschle	Dt.Wymyschle	11.8.1854	Volhynia	28456
51	13	Foth Benjamin	24.5.1807	Dorposch	Dt.Wymyschle	1857	Russia	28479
52	14	Foth Eva, néeRatzlaff	9.5.1815	Dorposch	Dt.Wymyschle	1857	Russia	28480
53	15	Foth Helene	7.7.1836	Dorposch	Dt.Wymyschle	1857	Russia	28481
	16	Foth Anna	5.8.1848	Dt.Wymyschle	Dt.Wymyschle	1857	Russia	28484
	17	Foth Peter	3.12.1830	Wonsosz	Lady	1875	Russia	28489
36	18	Foth Katharina, néeEkkert	25.6.1829	Nischewka	Lady	1875	Russia	28520
	19	Foth Heinrich	18.11.1856	Lady	Lady	1875	Russia	28521
	20	Foth, Wilhelmine	21.11.1857	Lady	Lady	1875	Russia	28522
	21	Foth Franz	2.2.1862	Lady	Lady	1875	Russia	28523
76	22	Görtz Franz	26.12.1837	Montau	Dt.Wionczemin	4.6.1877	USA	27081
	23	Görtz Maria, néeSchröder	10.9.1838	Dt.Wionczemin	Dt.Wionczemin	?	?	284616
	24	Konke Karl	5.12.1815	Dt.Wymyschle	Dt.Zyck 44	?	?	1119430
113	25	Konke Helene, née?	13.9.1813	Brenkenhoffswalde	Dt.Zyck 44	?	?	1119559
	26	Konke Karoline	17.9.1837	Dt.Wymyschle	Dt.Zyck 44	?	?	1119433
	27	Konke Julianna	4.8.1840	Dt.Wymyschle	Dt.Zyck 44	?	?	81686
	28	Konke Karl	21.3.1842	Dt.Wymyschle	Dt.Zyck 44	?	?	1022056
	29	Konke Samuel	4.10.1843	Dt.Wymyschle	Dt.Zyck 44	?	?	1119439
	30	KonkeFriederika	27.7.1845	Dt.Zyck	Dt.Zyck 44	?	?	1119441
	31	Konke Johann	26.7.1848	Dt.Zyck	Dt.Zyck 44	?	?	1119442

List 1	List 2	Name	Birth Date	Birthplace	Last Residence	When emigrated	Emigrated to	GM#
	32	Konke Peter	26.8.1850	Dt.Zyck	Dt.Zyck 44	?	?	1119443
	33	Konke Jakob	2.4.1852	Dt.Zyck	Dt.Zyck 44	?	?	103384
	34	Konke Benjamin	22.4.1827	Dt.Wymyschle	Dt.Zyck 44	?	?	1119445
	35	Konke Elisabeth, néePenner	5.4.1826	Sady	Dt.Zyck 44	?	?	1119446
	36	Konke Samuel	14.4.1846	Dt.Wymyschle	Dt.Zyck 44	?	?	1251411
	37	Kühn Peter	13.5.1839	Dt.Wymyschle	Piaski	?	Volhynia	1119409
	38	Kühn Helene, néeEwert	20.1.1837	Piaski	Piaski	?	Volhynia	1119411
	39	Kühn Johann	23.8.1868	Lindenthal, Wolhyn.	Piaski	?	Volhynia	1119413
	40	Kühn Benjamin	25.3.1841	Dt.Wymyschle	Piaski	?	Russia	1119418
	41	Kühn Anna, néeUnruh	26.10.1844	Dt.Wymyschle	Piaski	?	Russia	1119421
123	42	Lyhrmann David	11.4.1829	Przechowka	Dt.Wym.Nr.23	?	?	42002
	43	Lyhrmann Helene, née?	6.2.1822	Dt.Wymyschle	Dt.Wym.Nr.23	?	?	42011
125	44	Nachtigall David	24.4.1809	Grentze	Dt.Zyck	?	With his 2 <sup>nd</sup> wife &	30458
126	45	Nachtigall Helene, néeBuller	5.9.1809	Ostrower Kempe	Dt.Zyck	?	w/10 kids to Rus	30459
	46	Nachtigall David	2.9.1835	Piaski	Dt.Zyck	?	Russia	30461
	47	Nachtigall Peter	13.4.1837	Piaski	Dt.Zyck	?	Russia	30462
127	48	Nachtigall Eva, Buller, 2 <sup>nd</sup> wife	19.10.1816	Ostrower Kempe	Dt.Zyck	?	Russia	30463
	49	Nachtigall Benjamin	31.12.1838	Piaski	Dt.Zyck	?	Russia	30464
	50	Nachtigall Helene	27.4.1843	Piaski	Dt.Zyck	?	Russia	30465
	51	Nachtigall Wilhelmine	31.7.1845	Piaski	Dt.Zyck	?	Russia	30466
	52	Nachtigall Anna	28.12.1850	Dt.Zyck	Dt.Zyck	?	Russia	30467
	53	Nachtigall Agatha	23.9.1853	Dt.Zyck	Dt.Zyck	?	Russia	30468
	54	Nachtigall Maria	14.9.1856	Dt.Zyck	Dt.Zyck	?	Russia	30469
	55	Penner Jakob (Widower)	10.6.1804	Dt.Wymyschle	Dt.Zyck	?	Russia	56904
	56	Penner Karl	1.10.1835	Dt.Wymyschle	Dt.Zyck 43	?	Russia	931272
	57	Penner Luise	2.3.1842	Dt.Zyck	Dt.Zyck 43	?	Russia	136410
	58	Penner Karoline	24.12.1844	Leonow	Dt.Zyck 43	?	Russia	1119391
	59	Penner Wilhelmine, Buller	24.10.1822	Dt.Wymyschle	Dt.Zyck 43	?	Russia, 2 <sup>nd</sup> wife	56905
	60	Penner Wilhelm	15.12.1851	Dt.Zyck	Dt.Zyck 43	?	Russia	399970
	61	Penner Julianna	7.9.1853	Dt.Zyck	Dt.Zyck 43	?	Russia	1119392
	62	Penner Martha	27.4.1856	Dt.Zyck	Dt.Zyck 43	?	Russia	56908
	63	Ratzlaff Jakob	10.11.1830	Dt.Wymyschle	Piaski	8.12.1884	USA	59669

List 1	List 2	Name	Birth Date	Birthplace	Last Residence	When emigrated	Emigrated to	GM#
	64	Ratzlaff Helene, Schröder	6.1.1834	Dt.Wymyschle	Piaski	8.12.1884	USA	400165
	65	Ratzlaff Jakob	6.2.1861	Piaski	Piaski	8.12.1884	USA	400166
	66	Ratzlaff Susanna	31.5.1863	Piaski	Piaski	8.12.1884	USA	400167
	67	Rlatzlaff Benjamin	30.4.1865	Dt.Wymyschle	Piaski	8.12.1884	USA	400168
	68	Ratzlaff Anna	15.12.1868	Dt.Wymyschle	Piaski	8.12.1884	USA	400169
	69	Ratzlaff Helene	3.11.1870	Olschin	Piaski	8.12.1884	USA	400170
	70	Ratzlaff Franz	8.3.1873	Dt.Wymyschle	Piaski	8.12.1884	USA	400171
208	71	Unruh Heinrich I	18.6.1799	Dt.Kunopath	Dt.Wym.23	1857	Russia	41999
209	72	Unruh Susanna, née Buller	2.2.1805	Brenkenhoffswalde	Dt.Wym.23	1857	Russia	4200
	73	Unruh Peter	7.10.1823	Dt.Wymyschle	Dt.Wym.23	1857	Russia	31795
	74	Unruh Helene, néeRatzlaff	31.7.1823	Dt.Wymyschle	Dt.Wym.23	1857	Russia	31789
	75	Unruh Benjamin	26.2.1846	Dt.Wymyschle	Dt.Wym.23	1857	Russia	284809
	76	Unruh Heinrich	15.12.1848	Dt.Wymyschle	Dt.Wym.23	1857	Russia	284810
213	77	Unruh Heinrich III	17.8.1816	Przechowka	Dt.Zyck 33	1858	Russia	107028
214	78	Unruh Helene, néeKonke	16.7.1822	Przechowka	Dt.Zyck 33	1858	Russia	106106
	79	Unruh Julianna	30.1.1842	Dt.Wymyschle	Dt.Zyck 33	1858	Russia	106107
	80	Unruh Heinrich	11.10.1844	Dt.Zyck	Dt.Zyck 33	1858	Russia	860399
	81	Unruh David	24.11.1846	Dt.Zyck	Dt.Zyck 33	1858	Russia	860401
	82	Unruh Wilhelm	25.4.1851	Dt.Zyck	Dt.Zyck 33	1858	Russia	106319
	83	Unruh Dorothea	13.4.1853	Dt.Zyck	Dt.Zyck 33	1858	Russia	860403
212	84	Unruh Peter	9.11.1814	Przechowka	Dt.Zyck 33	1858	Russia	287048
	85	Unruh Maria, néeHeier	24.1.1816	Dt.Wymyschle	Dt.Zyck 34	1858	Russia	278352
	86	Unruh Julianna	27.9.1840	Leonow	Dt.Zyck 34	1858	Russia	286379
	87	Unruh Samuel	10.3.1843	Leonow	Dt.Zyck 34	1858	Russia	287052
	88	Unruh Helene	24.7.1845	Leonow	Dt.Zyck 34	1858	Russia	70143
	89	Unruh Peter	27.6.1851	Leonow	Dt.Zyck 34	1858	Russia	287055
	90	Unruh Wilhelmine	7.9.1853	Dt.Zyck	Dt.Zyck 34	1858	Russia	287056
	91	Unruh Anna	26.10.1844	Olschin	Dt.Zyck 34.	?	Russia	1119421
217	92	Unruh David III	12.12.1836	Schöneich	Swiniary	1878	USA	27849
203	93	Unruh Eva, néeSchröder	23.8.1837	Nischewka	Swiniary	1878	USA	27850
	94	Unruh Eva	27.2.1862	Swiniary	Swiniary	1878	USA	11985
	95	Unruh Maria	26.7.1864	Swiniary	Swiniary	1878	USA	117481

List 1	List 2	Name	Birth Date	Birthplace	Last Residence	When emigrated	Emigrated to	GM#
	96	Unruh Helene	23. 4.1868	Swiniary	Swiniary	1878	USA	27851
	97	Unruh David	12. 3. 1870	Swiniary	Swiniary	1878	USA	39536
	98	Unruh Wilhelm	4. 4.1872	Swiniary	Swiniary	1878	USA	28217
	99	Unruh Julianna	21. 4.1874	Swiniary	Swiniary	1878	USA	117482
	100	Unruh Albertine	26.11.1876	Swiniary	Swiniary	1878	USA	34185
	101	Unruh Benjamin	16. 12. 1824	Deutsch-Wymyschle	Leonow 7	?	USA	135496
	102	Unruh Maria, née Wedel	17. 1.1826	Deutsch-Wymyschle	Leonow7	?	USA	135497
	103	Unruh Heinrich	21. 11.1848	Deutsch-Wymyschle	Leonow7	?	USA	32179
	104	Unruh Benjamin	8. 7.1850	Deutsch-Wymyschle	Leonow7	?	USA	135499
	105	Unruh Susanna	31. 5.1852	Leonow	Leonow7	?	USA	30801
	106	Unruh Maria	14. 8. 1854	Leonow	Leonow 7	?	USA	12582
	107	Unruh Johann	19. 2. 1857	Leonow	Leonow7	?	USA	40327
	108	Unruh Anna	28. 8. 1860	Leonow	Leonow7	?	USA	135502
	109	Unruh Helene	30. 3. 1862	Leonow	Leonow7	?	USA	135503
	110	Unruh David	6.11.1854	DeutschZyck	Deutsch-Wymyschle	?	?	135049
	111	Unruh Kornelius	23. 7. 1827	Deutsch-Wymyschle	GermanWym. 26	?	?	137718
	112	Unruh Julianna, néeWedel	15. 1.1829	Deutsch-Wymyschle	GermanWym. 26	?	?	286455
	113	Unruh Wilhelmine	15. 10. 1850	Deutsch-Wymyschle	GermanWym. 26	?	?	286527
	114	Unruh Julianna	23. 9. 1852	Deutsch-Wymyschle	GermanWym. 26	?	?	286528
	115	Unruh Kornelius	14. 1.1855	Deutsch-Wymyschle	GermanWym. 26	?	?	286529
	116	Unruh Johann	22. 3.1858	Deutsch-Wymyschle	GermanWym. 26	?	?	286530
	117	Unruh David	19. 10. 1861	Deutsch-Wymyschle	GermanWym. 26	?	?	286531
	118	Unruh David	25. 3.1843	Swiniary	GermanZyck	?	?	137728
	119	Unruh Maria, néeKasper	8. 10. 1848	Piaski	GermanZyck	?	?	427026
	120	Unruh Anna	15. 1.1868	Leonow	GermanZyck	?	?	286532
	121	Unruh Johann	28. 1.1871	Nowosiadlo	GermanZyck	?	?	232820
	122	Unruh David	12.11.1873	Zyck	GermanZyck	?	?	1251412
	123	Unruh Wilhelmine	8. 7.1875	Zyck	GermanZyck	?	?	517968
	124	Unruh Heinrich	22.11. 1848	Deutsch-Wymyschle	Leonow	?	USA	32179?
	125	Unruh Eva, née Unruh	1. 8.1850	Nowosiadlo	Leonow	?	USA	32180?
	126	Unruh Peter (Twin)	2. 8.1869	Nowosiadlo	Leonow	?	USA	60032
	127	Unruh Benjamin (Twin)	2. 8. 1869	Nowosiadlo	Leonow	?	USA	60033

List 1	List 2	Name	Birth Date	Birthplace	Last Residence	When emigrated	Emigrated to	GM#
	128	Unruh Heinrich	11. 8.1873	Leonow	Leonow	?	USA	60035
	129	Witzke Peter	11. 8.1863	Deutsch-Wymyschle	Alfonsow	?	USA	352572
	130	Wohlgemut Benjamin	?	Deutsch-Wymyschle	Deutsch-Wymyschle	?	USA	35775?
	131	Bartel Franz	23.10.1865	Deutsch-Wymyschle 16	DeutschWym. 16	?	Russia	28331
	132	Bartel Heinrich David	16. 8.1892	Deutsch-Wymyschle 16	DeutschWym. 16	1910	Russia	28351
	133	Bartel Peter	25.11.1884	Leonow	Leonow	?	USA	28357
	134	Bartel Mathilda	26.11.1884	Swiniary	Swiniary	?	Germany	1251413
	135	Bartel David	?	?	?	?	Volhynia	135045
	136	Bartel Maria, née Schröder	18. 1.1827	Nowe-Budy	?	?	Volhynia	135044
	137	Buller Peter	26.12.1861	Isabella (Isabellin)	Deutsch-Wymyschle	?	Zyrardow	28448
	138	Buller Emilie	17. 3. 1851	Wonsosz	?	?	USA	28463
	139	Buller Anna (m. Rossol)	6. 1.1855	BialeBlota	?	?	USA	28464
	140	Buller Elisabeth	23. 8.1857	Wonsosz	?	?	USA	28465
	141	Buller Helene (Twin)	24. 9.1861	Deutsch-Wymyschle	?	?	USA	28466
	142	Buller Julianna (Twin)	24. 9.1861	Deutsch-Wymyschle	?	?	USA	28467
	143	Buller Julianna widow Görtz	3. 6.1838	Deutsch-Wymyschle	Leonow	?	USA	28460
	144	Foth Benjamin	5. 5.1846	Leonow	Leonow	?	USA	28495
	145	Foth Karoline, née Buller	22. 8.1834	Leonow	Leonow	?	USA	28459
55	146	Foth Heinrich	4. 2.1812	Stryjowka	?	?	Germany	28504
	147	Foth Eva, née Ratzlaff	24. 6.1817	DeutschWionczemin	?	?	Germany	28505
	148	Foth Wilhelmine	4. 4. 1843	Deutsch-Wymyschle	?	?	Germany	286516?*
	149	Foth Julianna (to 146)**	14.12.1844	Deutsch-Wymyschle	?	?	USA	28507
44	150	Foth Tobias (Voth)	29.11.1812	Franztal	Leonow	?	USA	20334
	151	Foth Susanna, née Buller	5. 5.1816	Deutsch-Wymyschle	Leonow	?	USA	28547
	152	Foth Benjamin	1.11.1839	Leonow	Leonow	?	USA	28548
	153	Foth Andreas	23. 4.1841	Leonow	Leonow	?	USA	28549
	154	Foth Kornelius	18. 6. 1842	Leonow	Leonow	?	USA	28550
	155	Foth Daniel	6. 1. 1846	Leonow	Leonow	?	USA	28551
	156	Foth Samuel	21. 5.1851	Leonow	Leonow	1904	USA	28552
	157	Foth Peter (Wonsosz)**	21. 4.1866	Deutsch-Wymyschle	Deutsch-Wymyschle	1903	USA	28511
	158	Foth Wilhelm	6. 1.1881	Arciechówek	Drwały	1903	USA	28557
	159	Foth Benjamin	9. 4.1885	Arciechówek	Drwały		USA	28560

\* Unlikely to have emigrated, died < 1 y.o.    \*\* Unclear reference

List 1	List 2	Name	Birth Date	Birthplace	Last Residence	When emigrated	Emigrated to	GM#
	160	Foth Wilhelmine	22.3.1890	Arciechówek	Drwaly	1910	USA	28562
	161	Heier Andreas I	6.1.1844	Dt.Wymyschle	Dt.Wymyschle	?	USA	29170
	162	Heier Jakob	18.1.1847	Dt.Wymyschle	Dt.Wymyschle	?	USA	29172
	163	Heier Franz I	16.9.1862	Dt.Wymyschle	Dt.Wymyschle	?	USA	29179
	164	Heier Franz II	2.3.1883	Alfonsow	Dt.Wymyschle	1905	USA	37691
	165	Heier Anna	6.6.1885	Dt.Wymyschle	Dt.Wymyschle	1908	USA	137953
	166	HeierAnderas II	11.2.1891	Dt.Wymyschle	Dt.Wymyschle	1908	USA	12485
	167	Heier Heinrich	20.8.1893	Dt.Wymyschle	Dt.Wymyschle	1913	USA	37967
	168	Jantz Heinrich	22.8.1882	Dt.Wymyschle	Alfonsow	1905	USA	-
	169	KliwerKornelius	15.1.1881	Dt.Wymyschle	Dt.Wymyschle	?	Russia	28468
	170	Kliwer Julianna, néeBalzer	?	Dt.Wymyschle	Dt.Wymyschle	?	Russia	28311
	171	Kliwer Johann	23.6.1874	Leonow	Dt.Wymyschle	1899	USA	29827
	172	Kliwer Julianna, néePenner	1881	Dt.Wymyschle	Dt.Wymyschle	1900	USA	30513
	173	Kliwer Peter	8.11.1862	Korzykow	?	?	USA	29824
	174	Kliwer David	26.12.1839	Poln.Wionczemin	Leonow	?	USA	29627
	175	Kliwer Maria, néeSchröder	26.12.1842	Warschau	Deonow	29.5.1876	USA	29833
	176	Kliwer Franz	15.4.1869	Leonow	Deonow	?	USA	29835
	177	Kliwer Eva	18.2.1876	Leonow	Deonow	?	USA	29836
	178	Kliwer Heinrich Peter	18.2.1882	Wionczemin	Dt.Zycke	?	USA	29842
	179	Kliwer Paul	15.9.1882	Wionczemin	Dt.Zycke	?	USA	137154?
	180	KliwerKornelius	15.9.1882	Dt.Wymyschle	Dt.Wymyschle	?	Russia	29848
	181	Kliwer Wilhelm	3.2.1882	Dt.Wymyschle	Dt.Wymyschle	1901	USA	29850
	182	Kliwer Peter	?	?	?	?	USA	-
	183	Nickel Leonhard	?	?	Dt.Wymyschle	?	Germany	283940?
	184	Pauls Benjamin	?	?	WolaWodzinska	?	USA	1122544?
	185	Penner Heinrich Julius**	1873	Dt.Wymyschle	Alfonsow	12.8.1892	USA	30507
	186	Penner Peter Julius	1875	Dt.Wymyschle	Alfonsow	12.8.1892	USA	30504
	187	Penner Robert Julius	1877	Dt.Wymyschle	Alfonsow	1897	USA	30509
	188	Penner Franz Julius	1879	Dt.Wymyschle	Alfonsow	1897	USA	30512
	189	Penner Benjamin Julius	1883	Dt.Wymyschle	Alfonsow	1901	USA	30515
	190	Penner Johann Julius	22.5.1886	Dt.Wymyschle	Alfonsow	1901	USA	30516
	192*	Penner Zacharias Heinrich	25.7.1886	Dt.Wymyschle	Dt.Wymyschle ?·	?	USA	138109
	191*	Penner Peter (Oschemotte)	1.1.1887	Dt.Wymyschle	Dt.Wymyschle	24.4.1909	USA	30492

\*These 2 lines are out of order in the original document

List 1	List 2	Name	Birth Date	Birthplace	Last Residence	When emigrated	Emigrated to	GM#
	193	Ratzlaff Benjamin	26. 4.1825	Deutsch-Wymyschle	Deutsch-Wymyschle	?	WolaWodzinska	59668
	194	Ratzlaff Wilhelmine, Kuhn	12. 8.1828	Deutsch-Wymyschle	Deutsch-Wymyschle	?	WolaWodzinska	59690
	195	Ratzlaff Susanna	3. 1.1853	Deutsch-Wymyschle	Deutsch-Wymyschle	?	WolaWodzinska	59691
	196	Ratzlaff Johann	11. 8.1851	Deutsch-Wymyschle	?	?	USA	31793
	197	Ratzlaff David	9. 5.1854	Deutsch-Wymyschle	?	?	USA	40613
	198	Ratzlaff Pauline	1.10.1872	Deutsch-Wymyschle	Leonow	?	USA	59711
	199	Ratzlaff Friedrich	10. 7.1878	Deutsch-Wymyschle	Leonow	?	USA	59714
	200	Ratzlaff Anna	5. 1.1882	Leonow	Leonow	?	USA	59715
	201	Schmidt Andreas	24.12.1859	Wonsosz	Deutsch-Wymyschle	?	USA	136903
	202	Schmidt Jakob	14. 4.1864	Wonsosz	Deutsch-Wymyschle	?	USA	136904
	203	Schmidt Benjamin	25. 3.1868	Wonsosz	Deutsch-Wymyschle	?	USA	136578
	204	Schmidt Johann	3.10.1874	Deutsch-Wymyschle	Deutsch-Wymyschle	?	USA	136908
	205	Schmidt Benjamin	25. 4.1878	Deutsch-Wymyschle	Deutsch-Wymyschle	?	USA	134403
	206	Schmidt Peter (zu 219)	26. 3.1883	Deutsch-Wymyschle	Deutsch-Wymyschle	1914	USA	136629
	207	Schmidt Andreas Daniel	15.10.1881	Alfonsow	Alfonsow	1913	USA	136917
	208	Schröder Peter	18. 1.1829	Deutsch-Kasun	Nowosiadlo	?	USA	41701
68	209	Schröder Elisabeth, née Funk	6. 10. 1830	Kompanie	Nowosiadlo	?	USA	41702
	210	Schröder Helene	18.12.1861	Nowosiadlo	Nowosiadlo	?	USA	284956
	211	Schröder David	7. 8.1863	Nowosiadlo	Nowosiadlo	?	USA	41703
	212	SchröderKornelius	27. 3. 1865	Nowosiadlo	Nowosiadlo	?	USA	23540
	213	Schröder Andreas	18. 1.1867	Nowosiadlo	Nowosiadlo	?	USA	284957
	214	Schröder Anna	7. 3.1869	Nowosiadlo	Nowosiadlo	?	USA	284958
	215	Schröder Gerhard	6. 9.1871	Nowosiadlo	Nowosiadlo	?	USA	284959
	216	Schröder Peter	7. 8.1873	Nowosiadlo	Nowosiadlo	?	USA	284960
	217	Schröder Peter	14. 2.1873	GermanZyck	Leonow	?	USA	1251421
	218	Schröder Eva	17. 7.1868	Deutsch-Wymyschle	Deutsch-Wymyschle	?	USA	136575
	219	Schmidt Eva, néeSchröder	31. 1. 1890	Deutsch-Wymyschle	Deutsch-Wymyschle	1914	USA	136625
	220	Schmidt Johann	25. 3.1865	WolaWodzinska	Deutsch-Wymyschle	?	USA?	135630
	221	Schmidt Heinrich	2.12.1870	Deutsch-Wymyschle	Deutsch-Wymyschle	?	USA	286642?

Remarks: Almost all of the above list from No. 131 emigrated after 1900. Some of them already belonged to the Mennonite Brethren Church. From the outbreak of the First World War (August 3, 1914) to August 18, 1926 no one from Germany Wymyschle emigrated. This directory was created by Robert Foth based on old family registers.

Elders, preachers, presidents of the Mennonite congregation Deutsch-Kasun  
(List by Adalbert Goertz)

### Elders

1. The first Elder was named Peter Schröder and lived in Markowczysna.
2. In 1833, Johann Bartel from Markowczysna, 36, was elected Elder. He died on February 18, 1862 and had served as a teacher and Elder for 30 years
3. On June 16, 1864, Heinrich Bartel from Deutsch-Czastkow (Tschoonstchow), 34 years old, was elected Elder with 79 votes. He died on February 27, 1898, at the age of 68 years, 3 months and 10 days after serving as a teacher and Elder for 36 years.
4. On June 16, 1901, Peter Tgahrt from Deutsch-Kasun, 56 years old, was elected Elder with 38 votes and on June 5, 1909 the Elder Johann Schmidt from Deutsch-Wymyschle (Sady) from the Plock congregation was consecrated. On October 9, 1912, he moved to Germany.
5. On September 22, 1912, Rudolf Bartel from Deutsch-Kasun, 38 years old, was elected Elder with 46 votes. He was born on April 18, 1875, the son of Peter Bartel and Elisabeth née Vogt born. The Gemeindekalendar 1941, pp. 89-93 reported on his life.
6. On October 3, 1940, the last Elder Leonard Ewert from Deutsch-Kasun, 42 years old, was elected with 22 votes. He was born on June 21, 1898 in Deutsch-Kasun to Andreas Ewert and now lives in Aldergrove, B.C.

### Teachers and Preachers

1. In 1832 Johann Bartel from Markowczysna, 35 years old, was chosen as a teacher.
2. In 1828 Gerhard Nickel from Malawiesz was elected teacher. He died on April 20, 1854 and was a teacher for 26 years.
3. In 1832 Heinrich Nikel from Deutsch-Czastkow, 30 years old, was elected teacher. He died on September 23, 1874 at the age of 72 years, 9 months and 22 days and was a teacher for 42 years.
4. In 1812 Peter Goertz from Malawiesz was elected teacher. In May 1867 he moved to Russia with his family.
5. In 1842, Peter Schröder from Borke, 31, was elected as a teacher. He died on January 24, 1879, at the age of 69 years, 5 months, and served as a teacher for 36 years.
6. On June 13, 1858 Heinrich Harms from Neuhöfer Kämpe, 40 years old, was elected. He did not take the office.
7. On June 13, 1858, Salomon Gertz from Deutsch-Kasun, 33 years old, was elected. He did not take the office.
8. On June 30, 1861, Zacharias Bartel from Neu-Kasun was elected as a teacher. He moved to Russia with his family on April 11, 1867.
9. On June 30, 1861 Heinrich Bartel from Deutsch-Czastkow, 31 years old, was elected teacher.
10. On June 30, 1867, Jakob Bartel from Markowczysna, 36, was elected teacher with 68 votes. He died on March 1, 1874 at the age of 43, 7 months less 2 days.
11. On June 30, 1867, Johann Bartel from Markowczysna was elected teacher with 56 votes. He was born on January 20, 1838 and emigrated to America with his family in 1879.

12. On April 17, 1876, Gerhard Jantz from Deutsch-Kasun, 36 years old, was elected teacher with 43 votes. He resigned on May 3, 1894 due to illness and died on August 9, 1906.
13. On April 17, 1876, Peter Vogt from Deutsch-Kasun, 24 years old, was elected with 36 votes. At the end of April 1911 he emigrated to Russia.
14. On April 17, 1876, Gerhard Nikel from Deutsch-Czastkow, 36 years old, was elected with 28 votes. On June 7, 1879, he emigrated to America.
15. On July 31, 1881, Peter Tgahrt from Deutsch-Kasun, 36 years old, was elected with 72 votes. He took office on October 22, 1882.
16. On July 31, 1881, Gerhard NikelfromDeutsch-Kasun, 35 years old, was elected with 44 votes. He took office on December 24, 1892. His service was interrupted between March 15, 1896 and July 2, 1899.
17. On June 30, 1889 Peter Schröder, from the CzosnowerKämpa, 34 years old, was elected with 29 votes. He took office on February 4, 1912.
18. On June 30, 1869, Andreas Bartel from Deutsch-Kasun, 36 years old, was elected with 24 votes. , He did not take up his position.
19. On September 23, 1898, elected Peter Schröder from Borke, 31 years old, was elected with 33 votes. On January 17, 1905, he moved to Russia.
20. On September 23, 1898, Timotheus Schröder from Deutsch-Kasun, 37 years old, was elected with 29 votes. He did not take up the office and moved to Germany on October 19, 1906.
21. On September 23, 1898, Johann Schröder from Deutsch-Kasun, 28 years old, was elected with 28 votes. He did not take office.
22. On July 5, 1911, Rudolf Bartel from Deutsch-Kasun, 37 years old, was elected with 35 votes. Appointed March 3, 1912.
23. On June 5, 1911, Wilhelm Schröder from Deutsch-Czastkow, 35 years old, was elected with 19 votes. Appointed March 10, 1912.
24. On June 13, 1920, Edmund Jantz from Markowczysna, 36, was elected with 63 votes. Appointed July 4, 1920.
25. On October 3, 1940, Gerhard Nikel, 36, was elected with 19 votes.

## Deacons

1. Peter Bartel from Malkowczysna, elected in 1832, died February 6, 1862.
2. Peter Bartel from Deutsch-Kasun, 34 years old, elected in 1840, died February 16, 1870.
3. Peter Bartel from Markowczysna, elected on June 30, 1867, 33 years old, served until 1891.
4. David Bartel from Deutsch-Kasun, elected June 22, 1873, 24 years old, died November 9, 1899.
5. Peter Bartel from Deutsch-Kasun, elected on December 26, 1895 with 37 votes, 44 years old, son of Peter Bartel.
6. Zacharias Bartel from Deutsch-Kasun, elected December 26, 1895 with 23 votes. Office not accepted.

## Song Leaders

1. Andreas Schröder from Deutsch-Kasun, elected in 1821, died in 1851.
2. Andreas Nikel from Deutsch-Kasun, elected in 1842, 42 years old, born November 13, 1799, died August 25, 1875, his son was Gerhard Nikel.
3. Heinrich Jantz from Deutsch-Czastkow, elected in 1842, 34 years old, emigrated to America in 1877.
4. song leader Gerhard Vogt from Deutsch-Kasun, elected June 29, 1851, 36 years old, died February 12, 1855.

5. Heinrich Harm from NeuhöferKämpa, elected June 29, 1851, 33 years old, died May 26, 1884.
6. Zacharias Bartel from Neu-Kasun, elected June 13, 1858. Emigrated to Russia on April 11, 1867 with his family.
7. Jakob Bartel from Markowczysna, elected on June 13, 1858, 27 years old, in office until 1867.
8. Peter Koppert from Deutsch-Kasun, elected in 1870 with 48 votes, 37 years old. Emigrated to America with family on May 5, 1877.
9. Heinrich Schröder from Deutsch-Kasun, elected in 1870 with 34 votes, 29 years old. He did not take the office.
10. Peter Schröder of the CzosnowerKämpa, elected on April 22, 1870 with 29 votes and since February 4, 1912 served as a preacher.
11. Jakob Nickel from Markowczysna, elected April 22, 1878 with 26 votes, 33 years old. Appointed May 27, 1883.
12. Bachelor David Schröder from Deutsch-Kasun, elected May 25, 1885 with 31 votes. 17 years old, in office until January 6, 1890, then moved to Volhynia.
13. Bachelor KorneliusSchröder from the CsosnowerKämpa, elected May 25, 1885 with 26 votes, 24 years old, office not accepted.
14. Gerhard Nickel from Borke, elected June 10, 1889 with 22 votes, 33 years old, in office until July 15, 1906, then moved to Deutsch-Wymyschle (Sady).
15. KorneliusSchröder from Deutsch-Kasun, elected June 10, 1889 with 22 votes, 28 years old, died on February 8, 1903 at the age of 42 years, 3 months and 22 days.
16. Peter Schröder from Deutsch-Kasun, elected June 10, 1889 with 27 votes, 26 years old, office not accepted.
17. Wilhelm Schröder from Deutsch-Czonstkow, elected June 7, 1903 with 36 votes, 27 years old. Preacher since March 10, 1912.
18. Heinrich Schröder from Deutsch Czastkow, elected June 7, 1903 with 47 votes, 26 years old, in office until June 18, 1905.
19. Peter K. Guhr of the CsosnowerKämpe, elected May 20, 1907 with 22 votes, 33 years old, moved to Siberia on March 26, 1912.
20. Bachelor Peter P. Schröder from the CzosnowerKämpe, elected May 20, 1907 with 23 votes, 23 years old.
21. Peter A. Guhr from Malawiesz, elected May 20, 1907 with 21 votes, 25 years old.
22. Hermann J. Janz von der NeuhöferKämpe, elected May 20, 1907 with 23 votes, 33 years old, in office until March 22, 1908.
23. Peter K. Schröder from Deutsch-Kasun, elected May 20, 1907 with 27 votes, 21 years old.
24. Bachelor Gerhard G. Nickel from Deutsch-Kasun, elected June 24, 1917 with 22 votes, emigrated to America after 1918.
25. Bachelor Heinrich P. Schröder from the CzosnowerKämpe, elected June 24, 1917 with 14 votes, 18 years old.

PRZETCHOWKA from "Mennonite Lexicon", Volume III, page 404: [ also see:  
[https://gameo.org/index.php?title=Przechowka\\_\(Kuyavian-Pomeranian\\_Voivodeship,\\_Poland\)](https://gameo.org/index.php?title=Przechowka_(Kuyavian-Pomeranian_Voivodeship,_Poland)) ]

Przechowka (pronounced Pschechowka, German: Wintersdorf) in West Prussia, formerly the seat of an old Flamingian community, the mother community of Brenkenhoffswalde in the Netzebruch and of Alexanderwohl and Gnadenfeld, leading communities in Molotschna. It is located inland with the villages of Deutsch Konopath (on the Kunpfade) and Diworczieska (Dworeczisko, German: Wilhelmsmark) and along the river with the villages Glugowka, Kossowo and Christkowo (German: Christfelde), southwest of Schwetz, along with Ostrow (German: Ehrenthal upstream in the Klein-Schwetzer lowlands, south the Frisian communities of Montau Group and Schönsee, Przechowka and Diworczieska were royal villages, Deutsch-Konopath, Kossowo and Christkowowere noble villages, and Glugowka partly royal, partly noble. The settlements are said to have arisen around 1540; in 1661 we found her as a member of the Groninger Altflaminger society, founded in 1628, which held most firmly to the old traditions. In the 18th century we came across advanced settlements of the Altflaminger northwest in the noble village of Jeziora (German: Kleinsee) halfway Tuchel and northeastern beyond the Vistula in Schönsse, Posterwolde and Horst.

The Przechowka estate had at that time been sold to five Mennonites from Holland by the heirs of Polish noble and other fellow believers followed, so that the village community ultimately was made up of 15 parcels. The first lease contract was granted to the village in 1642 by the Danzig caretaker and Swiss elder Johann Zawadzki for 50 years (1640-1690) for ten Hufen; "The land varied in quality; for five Hufen 100 guilders, a total of 400 guilders to pay" (Wiebe, p. 29). In 1653 we heard of an association of Dutch people holding services in the schoolmaster's office (they had their own school early on!), funeral services for believers who died, etc., and in 1668 we heard from a "Manista Johannes" who, according to his belief, affirmed his testimony by touching his chest. The privilege of John II, Casimir of November 28, 1650 extended that of him on June 16 of the same year, in consideration of the interventions of noble Wilbald Haxberg, the Mennonites in the Werder extended the protection of their goods, rights and traditions given to the Mennonites in the Werder on June 16 of that year, taking into account the interventions of the noble Wilbald Haxberg Graudenz and Swiss elder. On February 9, 1672, King Michael Wisniowiecki expressly confirmed this document, among other things, for Przechowka, Kossowo and Christkowo.

In Christkowo, Dutch Mennonites in 1649, except for two aristocratic courtyards, leased the whole village<sup>a</sup>. The 1664 Lustration (Munsterung) also mentions these settlers, who paid 115 guilders for their use. In 1722, Countess Dönhof gave the Dutch Jakob Pandt, mayors Gerhard Giert and Martin Wilk, representatives from Kossowo, Tobias Blumenberg, Schulz Michael Blumenberg and Andreas Bartz, representatives from Christkowo, as representatives of the places without breweries for 40 years in Emphyteuse<sup>a</sup>: Gottespfennig<sup>b</sup> 12,000 guilders Prussia; with annual interest rate 300 guilders Prussia. Free removal of the grain, free house drink for wedding and baptisms (!); own choice of school, civil jurisdiction, freedom of religion, permission to hire their own schoolmaster in both villages. Regulations on trade and traffic round off this "Willkür", as it was mostly given to the settlers. The contract was renewed in 1747, 1757 and 1762.

At the beginning of the 18th century, the Elders Alle Derks (1670-1733) from Groningen and Hendrik Berents Hulshoff (1664-1745) from Zenderen near Borne in the province of Oberijssel visited the brothers and sisters in 1732, at the request of the societies, a collection for the needy brother in Prussia and Poland had been taken.

Both lists include those families that were visited.

Their counts:

in Przechowka	39 (Derks) respectively	57 (Hulshoff)
In Deutsch Konopath	32 (Derks) respectively	52 (Hulshoff)
in Posterwolde	10 (Derks) respectively	14 (Hulshoff)
In Schönsee	9 (Derks) respectively	13 (Hulshoff)
In Horst	3 (Derks) respectively	21 (Hulshoff)
In Jamerau	1 (Derks) respectively	- (Hulshoff)

Totals	94	157
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Children are generally not mentioned (especially by Derks). It should be noted that in Deutsch Konopath that Lutherans live among the Mennonites. The names Ratzlaff and Unruh, Becker, Foth, Nachtigal and Wedel predominate. Hulshoff, whose diary from 1719 is available, stayed in Przechowka from July 5 to 17, from 18 to 29 on the other side of the Vistula in Posterwolde and Schönsee. He preached over a Sunday (9th), a Wednesday (19th) and a Tuesday (25th) Eph. 6, 11-13; Heb. 1 and generally about the fruit of the spirit. One Thursday (13th) there was an election of two deacons (Abraham Unruh in Przechowka and Jakob Isaaks in Postelwolde) and their ordination the following Sunday (1st June). A Sunday washing of feet was celebrated. A day or two before the Ecclesiastical acts, Hulshoff, by profession a spinner and weaver, "stayed with the books". The Polish brothers asked for such Dutch <sup>a</sup> bible, old song books, martyr books, writings by Menno Simons and Dirk Philips. The joy that the visit caused and the feeling of tears are mentioned several times. At that time, the focus in agriculture was on rye production and rye harvest. In 1738 and 1765 the brothers still came from the Netherlands.

We read about Jesiorka in Maerker (p. 219/220): "In 1727 the land belonged to the widowed wife Hedwig von Steffens-Wybczynska, then in 1767 passed to Anton von Wybczynski and in 1773 belonged to Lukewitz.

On May 1, 1727, the widowed woman had Hedwig von Steffens-W. with the guardians of their children some Mennonites 1 Hufe meadows and a field of 19 Morgen ruined by the soldiers for an annual interest of 1.Gld. 15 Gr. vom Wiesenmorgen and 1. Guilder von Landmorge for 40 years with the right to practice religion freely, subject to parish taxes to Driczmin.

Furthermore, in 1767 Anton von Wybczynski leased Jeziorken with 17 Hufen to several Mennonites for 40 years for 1733 Thaler. 30 gr. Purchasing, an annual canon of 372 thaler. 60 gr. and the obligation of Jeziorken to plow 51 acres of land in Simkau and to do 3 days of manual work for each tenant there.

In 1773 the farming village of Jeziorken with 17 Hufen farmland and 32 households with 612 mostly Lutheran, and some Mennonite inhabitants, including 19 farm farmers and 2 farm tenants and 1 craftsman. The country has suffered from stagnant wetness since General von Czapski created the upper mill in 1765. It belonged to the Konitz district, the Schwetz district and the Driczmin parish.

In a comparison with the Catholic pastor of Driczmin charged each of the local families; Radaw (4), Lidke (2), Forth, Schmidt (4), Kuehn, Richter, Nachtigall (2), Janz (2), Unrau (2), Becker, Schneider, Grönke and Panzer 2 tubs rye and 2 tubs oats Decem and 9 large calendars, the latter from every landlord - excepting the pastor, as is otherwise customary, is allowed to publish the calendars himself."

It must have been Steffens' wife who, a few years after the Mennonites were facing eviction because Mennonites in Culm had taken Lutheran and Catholic proselytes from Lithuania with them, stood up for them before the episcopal commission saying that they were honest people who would harm no one.

Since 1743 the Mennonites in Jesiorka had their own prayer house like that in Przechowka and also the Altflämingerin Schönsee.

From Jesiorka in 1764, however, three Mennonite emissaries, who stood out for their traditional dress, moved to the Kingdom of Prussia to explore new settlement options. They were followed by more than 30 families to the Netzebruch, from where they migrated to Gnadenfeld in the Molotschna in the 1930s. The connection between the Altfläminger from Brenkenhoffswalde and Przechowka continued.

We have mentioned as the Elders of the Altfläminger congregation in the SchwetzerNiederung (the church register has been kept since around 1780; it is now in Alexanderwohl, Kansas): Benjamin Wedel, who preached in Dutch until 1785 (since then the language was optional), Jakob Wedel (died in 1794 or earlier), who in 1787 based on older creeds, drafted one in 30 articles from the scriptures, a second Benjamin Wedel since 1799 and Peter Wedel since 1814 (born May 26, 1792, died July 8, 1871). In 1784 Benjamin Wedel I and Jakob Wedel, then still a preacher, visited the brothers with the request to help three recruiting officers who hurt them badly. In Rosenort they are advised to contact the king, Frederick the Great, directly; the Elder Gerhard Wiebe from Elbing designed a memorial for them. In 1787 they received a return visit from Wiebe and the Heubuden Elder Cornelius Regier.

In the lists of names of the preachers etc. from 1759 and 1805, from which, surprisingly, that in West Prussia does not distinguish Flemish and Friesian, but "old Fläminger" and "Wasserländer" (Waterlander), we find the following entries:

1759 - In the Culm district (Spit) on Kunpad (Deutsch Konopath) and Przechowky: old Fläminger Benjamin Wedel, Elder; Jakob Wedel 1747, Peter Ratzlaff, Hans Voet, Laurens Sparling, Abram Unrau. On Jezorke: old FlämingerAndriesVoet 1754; Hans Buhler.

1805 - In the Culm district: Benjamin Wedel, 1785; Tobias Jantzen 1785. On Przekowski and the Hunpfade (Deutsch Conopath) with Schwetz: Benjamin Wedel 1791, Elder 1799; Andreas Pankrat 1785, Heinrich Ratzlaff 1791, Hans Unrau 1799. On Kleinsee (Jeziorka) near Schwetz: Peter Ratzlaff 1795.

Of these, Abraham Unger and the two Benjamin Wedel and Jacob Wedel have already been mentioned in the Dutch book. 1805 "in Culm district" probably means the Altfläminger in Schönsee.

Mannhardt (p. 136/137) describes the situation at the time as follows: "In 1784, an incident showed how strictly and unbreakably in important circles one should hold onto the freedom of defense of the Mennonites granted for the sake of faith by the privilege of grace. Three young Mennonites from the Groeningen community in Brenkenhoffswalde near Driesen in the Neumark, 'nefarious people', had spoken out, despising the beliefs of their fathers enlisted in the Crown Prince's regiment. One of them was not yet baptized. When he asked for his baptism on the orders of the Crown Prince, the Elder Peter Jantzen refused to do so because it was against the principles of the Mennonite religion to accept a soldier into the community. Those three young people came to Przechowski at Schwetz as soldiers on leave from the Groeningen Mennonite congregation and actively traded there. Among other things, they secretly put

money in the pocket of a local Mennonite, pretended that he had taken their money and wanted to force him to call . Since he got away from them, they had his host thrown into prison. As soon as the Crown Prince heard of it, he sternly forbade such improper conduct against the Mennonites. Soon afterwards those fellows must have been struck by conscience because of their apostasy; they deserted their posts. Then the Crown Prince Pardon sent them to Nischefski at Thorn and granted them farewell with complete military freedom."

Under the leadership of Peter Wedel and (since 1813) preacher Heinrich Buller, the majority of those who remained with Schwetz half a century ago emigrated to Molotschna, where they founded the community of Alexanderwohl, in 1819/20 and 1823/24.

Stobbe (pp. 15/16) then reports on the end of the Vistula: "The prayer house stood in the current school garden. When the Przechowko congregation ... built its own school in 1832, it wanted to acquire the Mennonite prayer house and convert it into a school. The few Mennonites still resident there resisted and sold it to be demolished. Where the prayer house has remained cannot be determined, since the school records were also destroyed by a fire in 1857.

Mrs. Maria Kuchenbecker, owner from Glugowka, born a Mennonite, writes, however, that the Mennonites lived there in the villages of Glugowka, Dworziski (now Wilhelmsmark), Przechowka, now Wintersdorf and GrossDeutsch-Konopath. Her maternal grandparents, along with many others, immigrated from Neumark by Driesen to the villages in 1823 and 1824, at least to the sites that were built over the years left by the Mennonites in 1818 to 1820, but all moved to the Black Sea in the 1930s, including some at Plock in Poland. Then none remained other than their grandparents named Schmidt. The last Elder was named Richart and lived in the GrossDeutsch Konopath. The owner's son Peter Franz from Gross-Lubin married into this Schmidt family. A daughter from this marriage Maria Kuchenbecker; the other siblings moved to America with the mother after the father's death. They had all been baptized and were members of the church in Montau. Thus the community, which had around 300 souls at the end of the 18th century, completely dissolved. "The small group from Altflamingen in and near Schönsee, however, merged with the Frisian one there on October 12, 1849.

## BRENKENHOFFWALDE

*"Mennonite Lexicon", Volume I, page 263:*

*Brenkenhoffswalde and Franztal*, villages in the so-called Netzebruch near Driesen in the Neumark, Brandenburg province. Once in 1765, Frederick the Great, who had the marshy Netzebruch settled by the war and domain council Brenkenhoff, took 35 Mennonite families from the Culm lowlands here, expelled by Polish noblemen, of which 16 families with 95 people in Brenkenhoffswalde and 19 families with 97 people in neighboring Franztal. From then on they formed the Mennonite community of Brenkenhoffswalde, which existed until 1834. The king gave them land and supplied them with lumber, they were also tax-free until 1771 and remained "completely free of recruitment and enrollment\*" through privately signed privileges by the king. They belonged to the "Groningen Mennonites", a connection that was closer to the Flamingers than to the Frisian Mennonite communities. This explains why they did not join the larger Frisian community in Schönsee in the lowlands of Culm but had formed their own community with a few scattered fellow believers near Thorn and Schwetz.

They remained in contact with those in Brenkenhoffswalde.

The history of the community contains many interesting facts. In 1788, the Lutheran schoolteacher Wilhelm Lange von Brenkenhoffswalde, who was employed there by the state, applied to allow him to convert to the Mennonite denomination, since he had grown up and was raised under Mennonites and was closer to their views. On October 24, 1788, he received the decision that he could join the Mennonites, but that the liabilities against the state and the civil duties would remain unchanged. After his transfer, Wilhelm Lange became a respected and influential member of the parish, so that in 1802 he was elected a preacher and in 1810 even an Elder, which office he still held when the community emigrated to Russia. This happened in 1834. Lange in 1833, in the name of 40 Mennonite families in Brenkenhoffswalde and Franztal, petitioned the Emperor of Russia with the request to allow them to immigrate to Russia after [receiving approval from] the government in Frankfurt. The consensus on emigration to Russia was granted. It can be assumed that the Mennonites in the Netzebruch could not see the possibility of larger land acquisitions [in Prussia] and therefore turned their eyes to Russia, where the Groningen Mennonites from the Culmer and Schwetzer lowlands had largely moved. In 1823 there was still a small remnant of these families under a teacher Jacob Ratzlaff on Przekowski and the Kunpfade near Schwetz, but in 1824 they also emigrated to Alexanderwohl and other places in southern Russia.

Lange and his family were informed on January 10, 1834, by the Russian consulate general in Gdansk, that the Emperor of Russia had approved immigration under the following conditions: 1. That the Prussian government present an emigration census, 2. only families of 5 or more are allowed to immigrate, 3. a sum of 800 rubles is to be deposited, which will be returned to you on the spot. In the same year 1834 the 40 families moved to Russia and were initially welcomed in Alexanderwohl, but then founded the colony and community of Gnadenfeld. With this, the Mennonite community of Brenkenhoffswalde dissolved. The few who stayed behind went to the regional church, including school teacher Peter Janz, who later worked as a Protestant teacher.

According to reports from today's school teacher Richard Schild in Brenkenhoffswalde to teacher Stobbe in Montau, there are still many memories of the former Mennonite colony. The church, which was under one roof with the school house, broke down after it had served as a Protestant chapel for a while. Today's Evangelical Church is in the old Mennonite cemetery. This is due to today's school and will still be marked by a wooden plate, which has an inscription only half legible, with the request to pass without noise and not to disturb the rest of the dead. Old Mennonite names, albeit partially garbled, still occur in Brenkenhoffswalde, such as Voth, Rettslag (Ratzlaff), Neckert (Rickert) etc.

H. G. Mannhardt

## EXTRACTS FROM A MICROFILM

The archive of mechanical documentation, photo microfilm workshop, Order 138 date 2/3 IV – 1963

Files of the State Council of the Kingdom of Poland regarding reporting for the year 1860  
No Vol 15a: Section I (Page 171)  
Confession of the Menonists

Number of confessors 1566, has 1 prayer house located in Kasun.

Files of the State Council of the Kingdom of Poland regarding reporting for the year 1861  
No. Vol: 15b section I  
Menonist sect.

Number of confessors 1399; owned a prayer house in the village of Kasun, Kreis Warsaw; 82 children were born in the sect and died 54 people.

No Vol: 16a Section I  
Menonist sect.

Confessors of this sect, which is part of the Evangelical Confession, a total of 1399 people and mainly located in the Warsaw Governorate. They have their prayer house in the village of Kasun in the district of Warsaw, where the religious duties of one of the chosen co-confessors are fulfilled.

Menonists who live further from Kasun go to the services of the next Protestant churches. They also bury their deceased in the Protestant cemeteries.

The registry of the registry office is managed by the leader who holds the services in Kasun, and in other places by the pastors.

In 1861: 82 were born, 54

Files of the State Council of the Kingdom of Poland died regarding reporting by all government agencies of the Kingdom for the year 1862  
No Vol: 15c Section I.  
3. Menonists.

The confessors of this sect represent an evangelical branch that live in the kingdom mainly in the Warsaw governorate. Their number is 1,328 heads.

They have their prayer house in the village of Kasun, opposite the NovoGeorgiewsk fortress.

However, those who live further away from this place go to the services of the ordinary evangelical church, and

they also bury their deceased with other Evangelicals in common cemeteries.

They have a special registrar in Kasun; however, the civil registry books in other localities keep the pastors of ordinary Protestant churches. In 1862, 101 people were born in the confession, and died 66. (page 173)

### 3. Menonist sect.

Confessors in the sect were 1328 heads in 1862; they owned a prayer house in Warsaw Governorate; - 101 children were born in this sect, 66 people died. Regarding the two sects just mentioned, that is the Menonisten and Herrnhuter, or Moravian Brothers, the administrative department of the Treasury considers that, according to the decisions taken earlier, which are still in force today, the conscripts of the sects mentioned are exempt from military service, which they cannot perform due to their confession, and are obliged to pay a fee of Zlp 6 annually, but this tax is an extremely small number in the budget and does not correspond to today's views on freedom of confession and has therefore prepared a reasoned submission, which is attached to this report. (Page 174)

Elsewhere in the microfilm is this undated court judgment, which is discussed in the section above: (page 175)

With the fifth judgment, the residents of the Kingdom of Poland  
Menonists and their children are exempt from personal military service, for a payment of zp 6 annually per person of mandatory age.

Files of the State Council of the Kingdom of Poland regarding reporting by all government agencies of the Kingdom for 1863,

No Vol: 15d section I.

Reporting by the Department of Religious Affairs and Public Education for 1863

Menonists and Herrnhuter.

The population of these evangelical confessions, located only in some localities in the kingdom, counted in relation to the first 1354 heads, compared to the second of 2005. The changes that have taken place during the year are included in the figures in table no other details are included in the 1862 report.

The report above also mentions the Baptists or Grand Baptists who the government has not yet acknowledged and who have not renewed efforts in this regard in the past year. (Page 172).

No. 807. Warsaw, 12th / 24th February 1843.  
General Consistory  
of the Evangelical Confessions  
in the Kingdom of Poland

The request received by the government commissioner from Peter Bartel, a day laborer from the village of Wymyschle Niemieckie, to His Princely Refugee, the governor, for approval to belong to the Mennonite sect, is sent to the Lord by the Consistory with a request for return Superintendents for explanation and assessment.

Treasurer of His Imperial and Royal Highness  
Senior President  
(-) signature  
senator  
Präses  
(-) signature  
secretary  
(-) signature

To the  
Excellency  
Mr. Superintendent  
in Kalisch

To the  
Highly commendable consistory of the Ew. Aug. Church in Warsaw  
No. 438th

With the return of Peter Bartel's application of December 23/4. January, in addition to the request of the Consistory of Ev.-Aug (Lutheran Church). Church from February 12/24, current year, no. 807, we have the honor to give the following explanation of this request: since the Mennonite sect belongs generally to the Evangelical Church, because the majority of the members of this sect have returned to their church in our century, and because the provisions regarding the Mennonites refer to the cases that have always belonged to them and to their children, but not to people who want to be included in this sect, for these reasons it is appropriate that Peter Bartel especially with the necessary religious instruction from the Evangelical Church to instruct him to convince him that the principles that previously motivated the Mennonites to separate from their Evangelical Church are unclear and from the interpretation of the Holy Gospel descendants who contradict the same gospel. -

In the opinion of the Superintendent, Peter Bartel should be referred to the responsible pastor for religious instruction, and if he continued to insist upon it, demand evidence from him that his ancestors had in fact belonged to the Mennonite sect and that all of his relatives, too belongs to it, and where the community of Mennonites to whom he would like to belong is based in our country. However, it is to be expected that if the pastor understands how to deal with Peter Bartel in the spirit of the Holy Gospel, he will refrain from his desire.

(-) signature

Explanations of the village map by Deutsch-Wymyschle (page 114)  
Directory of Homeowners

DEUTSCH-WYMYSCHLE

1. Heinrich Schade
2. David Bartel I.
3. Wilhelm Mielke
4. Wilhelm Schröder
5. Gut Wymyschle
6. Eduard Luther
7. The cemetery
8. Franz Kliewer I.
9. Herman Pauls
10. Benjamin Balzer
11. Wilhelm Hajer
12. Heinrich Penner
13. Heinrich Foth
11. Zacharias Schröder
15. Albert Foth (Friedrich Kliewer)
16. Reinhold Kliewer
17. Heinrich Kliewer
18. The Church
19. David Ratzlaff
20. Rudolf Witzke
21. Franz Kliewer II.
22. Wilhelm Kliewer (H. Wohlgemuth)
23. Reinhold Wegert (K. Kliewer)
24. Benjamin Foth
25. The village school
26. Friedrich Nuremberg
27. Andreas Kliewer
28. Franz Ratzlaff
29. Gustav Kliewer

30. Leonhard Ratzlaff
31. Gustav Ratzlaff
32. Wilhelm Schmidt
33. Ferdinand Rennert
- 33a Albert Kerber
- 33b David Bartel II.
34. Tobias Foth
35. Herman Tober
36. Arnold Schmidt
37. Eduard Nuremberg
38. Franz Balzer

WONSOSZ

1. Erich P. Ratzlaff
2. Friedrich Kinzel
3. Heinrich Schmidt
4. Peter P. Foth
5. Peter H. Foth
6. Pauline Foth
7. Wladyslaw Pienkowski
8. Otto Schade

POLISH RESIDENTS (Anwohner)

1. Adam Kobus
  2. Michal Frontczak
  3. Jan Deleski
  4. Wladyslaw Wlodarski
  5. Wincenty Bedyk
  6. Jozef Nowicki
- The last two are not in the plan drawn.

**AKTA**  
**RADY STANU**  
**KRÓLESTWA POLSKIEGO**

tyczące się

*Sprawozdań  
za rok 1860*

*15<sup>a</sup>*

**N<sup>o</sup> Vol:** *15<sup>a</sup>*

**Sekeya** *I*



### 3. Mieuowiści

Wyznawcy tej sekty stanowiącej  
jedną, z galezi wyznani Ewange-  
lickich, zamieszkuja, w Królestwie  
głównie w Gubernii Warszawskiej  
Liczba ich wynosi około 1325.

Oni swój medytacy mają, we  
wsi Razuń na przeciw twier-  
dzy o. Nowo-georgińskiej. Ci zaś  
którzy ciągle od tej miejscowości  
muszkają udają się na nabo-  
żeństwo do zwykłych kościołów  
Ewangelickich, również z inne-  
mi wyznawcami Ewangelicki-  
mi na wspólnym cmentarzu się  
chowają. W Razuń mają  
osobne urządzenie stanu cywil-  
nego, księgi zaś stanu tego utrzy-  
mują, w innych miejscach Paśte-  
rowie zwykłych Ewangelickich  
wyznan

W r. 1862 urodziło się u tam wy-  
znani 150  
umarło 11

### 3. Sekta Menonistów.

Wyznawców w tej Sekcie było w roku 1862 głów 1,328, posiadali dom modlitwy jeden w Gubernii Warszawskiej;— urodziło się dzieci tej sekty 101, umarło osób 66.

### 4. Sekta Hernhutów.

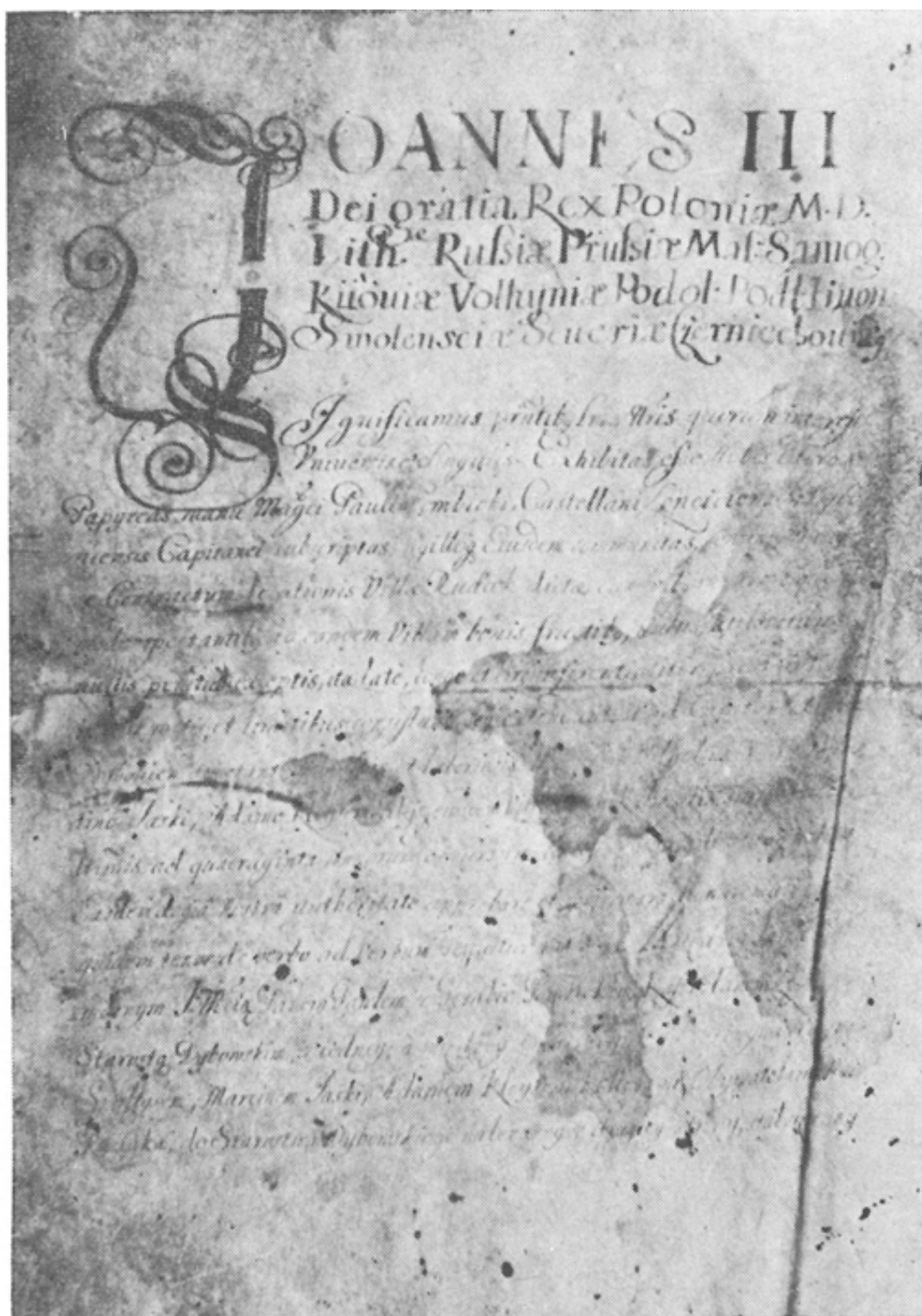
Sekta Hernhutów liczyła wyznawców 1,773, urodziło się 176, umarło 103, dom modlitwy mają jeden w Powiecie Łęczyckim.

Co do dwóch dopiero wzmiankowanych sekt, to jest Menonistów i Hernhutów, czyli Braci Morawczyków, Wydział Skarbowo-Administracyjny zważywszy: że wedle dawniejszych Postanowień dotąd w mocy obowiązujących będących, popisowi do sekt pomienionych należący, za uwolnienie onych ze od służby wojskowej, do której z zasad wyznania swego wstępować nie mogą, pociągani są do opłaty po Złp. 6 rocznie, sądził, że podatek ten nader małą w Budżecie stanowiący cyfrę, nie odpowiada dzisiejszym pojęciom o swobodzie wyznań i dla tego przygotował wymotywowany w tej mierze wniosek, który do niniejszego dołącza.





Jan III. Sobieski (1674—1696) nahm die Mennoniten in Schutz und wies ihnen neue Ländereien zu, was aus dem nachfolgenden Privilegium hervorgeht.



Privilegium des Königs Jan III. Sobieski, 1685, Seiten 1 - 7. (Archiwum Panstw. w Toruniu, V, dep. 13, syg. 3, kat. II, nr 6)







nie przypaśćto by, a kiedyby się na potym napiawis na pleśń on z tego, tak  
mały przed tym, a to ma być z rozumianiem widać. Ona przeto zsta  
mała małą, wolno dla drogi, y wygania była, ze wsi, a drugie dwa przety  
od wsi, od których płacie nie powinni. Rzemieśniki wolno im mieć między  
sobą jakichby chcieli. W Obozie w takich tylko do buconaria, więc dawa  
byli mieli wolne rabanie za naznaczeniem Pana Józsefa, go a dzień  
do palenia, bez tego krzywe, albo co się do buconaria nie godzi, y do górze  
nia płotówbyli mieli wolne rabanie, namieć to, aby gdzieś dawać nie wynieśli  
ani przedawali pod wianą Pana, przynajmniej Dwieście. Prosty wolno im  
chować sobie każdego. Lodu także ładę zwykłą między sobą. Ostrony  
były całe od nich zachowane były a najmniej ich nie nienawidzi, ani wywali  
liem się na parobku widać. Cóż ich też: M. D. Karsztelax y J. K. K.  
jego do wszelkich inżynierów y krzywe białe, albo Karsztelax y J.  
Inna zaś to y łódź Inżynierów los mały, byleż nie miernie, p.  
miernie, przysięgłego, y dobrze wiadomego, którego. Właściciel y  
sumptem sprawać powinni. Świątek was pomienionych gniaz  
pożynać, y od samego Męhu po którym idzie do Torunia, ostantu  
a konie jeść mały, u samej wsiły przeto. Harcma. Sam kowi. W to  
ryżkiemu mężył do wsi, a wiecie, góra y od samej wsiły, y  
po górę piaseczystą ku Czerniemu, ku Strakoniu, tak przez długi, y  
alle, starych gniaz na Łucaka, y Łucorzyne. Cóż doład nanie, i na

drugiego zastępowac defekty, którego tu wypowiem być powinien y  
ich pilnowac y przeciwieć maia, aby przeciwny przeciwny przeciwny  
penieniony nie zginał. Wziąwszy należyte opłaty, aby do czasu  
naki wreszcie, a Jan Polakowi kora należy pilnowac ie powinien y kasty na  
nich otrzymywać. Kosciółem radayk budować nie powinni ochrom Kato-  
lickich. Inne kondyccy wszystkie kościołnic w dawnych prawach  
Swich, ciż to Holendronie maia, approbue Jan. Karstelan y pozmier  
dra, y przy wszelkich wolnościach zachować. Co wszystko sedit  
obiednie strony trzymać przychodząc. Jest pomieniony Holendronie za  
dawnych wszystkich zapisniać. Dnia 14 na Dybenie Roku Darskiego  
Tylnego Szerszego smudzińskiego średniego. Dnia Wierkiego  
Chapnia. Tadea rozstrzygnię punkt o Dzielnicy tak się dokona  
Jan. Karstelan z tych pułgach, które przy przyznaniu wypłać  
jednie połowę zastępowac, a Holendronie drugą, połowę do Zaxen dalać  
powinni być. Drugi punkt o wymierzeniu, po wyiszu lat Dwidziestu,  
co kościołnic z morgow unajętych, tak to od których teraz czynsz płaci,  
też już więcej płacić nie będą powinni tylko od tych, które wymierzone  
były. Trzeci punkt, który się nigdy nie porył, a własnym prawem  
napisany, że nikt na ich własnych gruntach, past. Łąkach, jako też y ro-  
ślach, tak płodna, jako y mierzna nowelakiego łowu nie powinni,  
a to że przez polewanie w zbożu y łąkach, szkód mieć mogą.

Daret na Gombark Grubicki, Kasztelan Legazicki, Stanislas Dybowski  
 Wilelmus Ritz, Amb. Maria Jerak, Rona Aligi. **Notarius**  
**Joannes Rex** supplicationi prefata, uti iusto et equo iudicio p.  
 rigne accedentes prosperas lucras, carumq. consortia in modis paucis, clauditis,  
 astutis, et conditionibus, approbat et confirmat qd. duxit, uti p. d. n. in  
 quantum iuri communi non repugnat, carumq. iuris habetur, approbat, ratifi-  
 camus, et confirmamus p. n. b. l. t. r. Decernit carum vin. et i. s. p. r.  
 potius firmatis cluere debet. In cuius rei fidei presentes manu Ro-  
 na subscriptas sigilli Regi communi iudicis. Dat. Vilanova Die VIII  
 Mens. Iulii Anno Domini MCCCXXI. Regi vni Nostri et Ludovico.  
**Joannes Rex**

Confirmatio Carum iuris super Notaria  
 carum Villam Padat dicta in  
 Regia Palencia sita in agro Arcei p. n. b. l. t. r.  
 Notaria Joannes et Ludovico et Ludovico.

Christophus Tarandski  
 Cancellarius Regis

Podgonia Feria Quinta post Festum Visitationis Beate Virgine  
 Mariae scilicet die quarta mensis Julij anno Domini Millesimo  
 Septingentesimo Octuagesimo Secundo sequenti sub Notaria  
 ne p. n. b. l. t. r. Tertium ad v. t. c. n. e. m. p. n. b. l. t. r. p. n. b. l. t. r.  
 v. l. e. g. y. i. n. i. c. e. s. i. t. o. b. l. a. t. a. A. u. b. e. d. i. l. l. e. g. i. t. a. Joannes Polczynski



August II. der Starke bestätigte alle den Mennoniten verliehenen Privilegien. Auch bestätigte er neue Siedlungsverträge, wie das folgende Dokument beweist.



Privilegium des Königs August II., 1724, Seiten 1-7. (Archiwum Panstw. w Toruniu. V. dep. B. svz. 4. nr. 79)

kub Koplin, Michal Ducklau, Holendrzy, Supplikując y upraszając  
mij, o kontrakty y Prawo, na Gronia puste y siedliska, w Starostwie  
moim Dybowskim bez żadnego pożytku leżące Stawek nazwane na  
których to groniach przed wojną, Szwedzką, blisko przeszła, już było  
kilkuasto Holendrom osiadło, lecz przez pomienioną wojnę gniło-  
nymi wojskami zostawszy, y niemając kim y o czym gospodarstwa  
prowadzić, też gronia opuścili, y pustymu zostawili. Lecz tedy te gron-  
ia do dawney pory y ku pożytkowi Zamku Dybowskiego iak nayle-  
piejtemu przyprowadzono były, Staruając się do prozby y Suppliki, wy-  
zey pomienionych Holendrom, y uważając rzecz słuszną, według  
Prawa y Starostwu Dybowskiemu pożyteczną, aby też Starostwo in  
antiquo floro & statu gośtowało, chcąc ie uisnie do tego przyprowa-  
dzić, nie trzymować. Łączym z sursdykcy Moicy, y Prawa Anie od  
Najiasniejszego Króla Inku, teraz Nam Szcze, luno Januującego  
nadanego y powierzonego, tymże przereczonym Holendrom wyzey wspo-  
mniono Gronia, ze wszytkimi prawami, pożytkami, Łakami,  
pastwiskami, y przyległościami, do nich należącymi, iako w swoich  
mie, cach y granicach zdawna gośtowały, niniejszym puszczam Pra-  
wem y sposobem: A naprzód aby ci Holendrzy wyzey wyrażeni  
w tym Prawie swoim, przy otrzymaney approbacy od Najia-  
niejszych Królow, bez wszelkiego naruszenia, od Zamku Dybowskiego  
przez Sukcesorow y Possessorow po mnio następujących zawsze gośta-  
wali: Jeżeli by zaś tych Groniow przereczonych, tyle brdz miało, żeby  
krom tych w tym terazniejszym Prawie wyrażonych, więcej pokazało,  
na których by y inni Holendrzy pomieszać się mogli, y tamże się budować  
y gospodarować chcieli, tedy do takowego Prawa y ci którzy by po-  
zniej osiedli, i iakie się terazniejszym daie / należyce będą, powinni,

Ławo to

którymi wyżej pomienionym Polendrom, iakiemi kondycjami  
wymieniono Gronta przeregaia, sy, które y oni dobrowolnie na sy przy  
muia, y one pełnić obliguia, sy, to jest na Święty Jan Chrzciel w Roku  
terazniejszym Trziesiącznym Siedemsetnym Dwudziestym Trzecim przy  
padaia, sy, iak wiele przez ten czas gospodarzow cięsc będzie chciało, ka  
żdy z nich y Woły Swoiey, względem całej Włoki grontu, powinni być  
dye zapłacić do Zamku Dybowskiego Palarow twardych Dziennie,  
to jest pięć Groszow w Palar rachuiac; Drugą zaś Rotę takowoz na  
drugie Święty Jan Chrzciel w Roku da Bóg przysłym Trziesiącznym  
Siedemsetnym Dwudziestym Czwartym przypadai, sy, także do Zamku  
Dybowskiego, to jest z tylu Włok wiele sy ich, ednich poia dłych pokaze.  
Albowiem każda Włoka grontu na Dwinnasce Palarow Twardych po  
stanowiona/ wypłacić powinni będą, y pod utratą, terazniejszego Prawa  
obowiazuia sy, a to pieniądze przez nich wypłacone, in vim okupu, po  
mienionych grontow, zachowano być powinny, y tenże okup służyć im  
powinien, tak iako y inni Polendrzy Starostu a Dybowskiego w Pra  
wach Swoich okupnych mają, do Lat Czerdziesiąt Włko. Względem  
za wybudowania sy y nymuowania grontow przereczonych, które  
po większej Części, różnymi Chrościami pożarały, daleu im tym Pra  
wem terazniejszym wolności od Czynszu dorocznego, któryby corocznie  
powinni płacić, do Lat trzech zupełnie po Sobie idai, sy, to jest rachui  
ac od przysłego Święta Świętego Jana Chrzciela w Roku terazniej  
szym Trziesiącznym Siedemsetnym Dwudziestym Trzecim przypadai, sy,  
az do takowegoż Święta, Świętego Jana Chrzciela w Roku da Bóg  
przysłym Trziesiącznym Siedemsetnym Dwudziestym Czwartym, nastę  
puai, sy, a po wyjściu tego czasu na Nowy Rok, to jest na pierwszy Dzień  
Czerwca

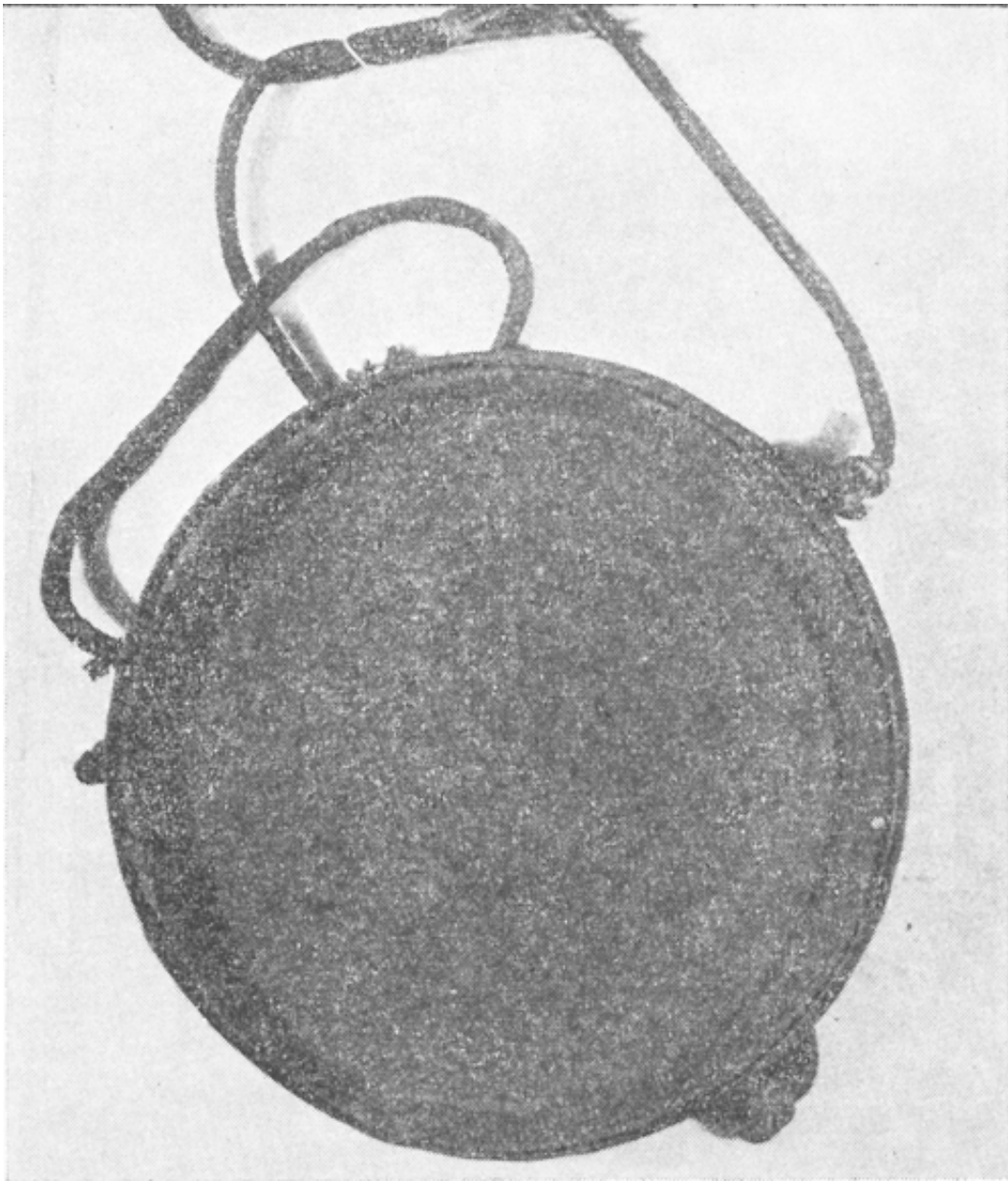
Stycznia w Roku Trynależnym Siedemsetnym Dwudziestym Siódmym  
przypadający, równo z innymi Wziami do tegoż Starostwa Dybowskiego  
należącymi, to jest z Włoki całej Słotych Praskich Dwadzieścia, rachun-  
jąc w Łotę pięć Kołaków białych, a z Morgu po grzyby Dwadzieścia Pa-  
skich, do Zamku Dybowskiego, ciz wrzecz pomienieni Polendrzy zapłatę  
powinni będą. Gronta zaś przereczono Stawkiem nazwane, aby w swoich  
Granicach y międzjach gościwały, będą z Zamku Dybowskiego, od innych  
latiniency mianowicie Wzylantu odłączone y wygraniczone, aby wrzecz  
pomienieni Polendrzy w spokojnych Siadłiskach swoich, od innych  
Somsiadów y Mieszczanów nie naruszani byli, która granicę między tymże  
grontem Stawkiem nazwanym a między Wzylantem Kow będzie czynić,  
y ten Lew, iako między tymi grontami długo porędzie, powinnego będą,  
ciz Polendrzy spólnym kosztem wykopac dla swowey wypowy. Od bydła zaś  
Zamkowego Małdanskogo y Podgurskiego na Ładach swoich żadney nie  
powinni mieć przeszkody. Także deklaruję im niniejszym Prawem iż  
od wszelkich zaciągów robot Zamkowych wolnymi załatwiać będą, powinni.  
A kto y pomienieni Polendrzy, lub ich potomkowie Swiadectwa Dzieciom  
swoim Urodzenia ich żądać będą, tedy im Zamek Dybowki Listy takowe  
wydawać obiecać; Wolno im też będzie swy okupny gront z Domoństwem wy-  
budowanym, każdemu z nich, iak swow własne Dobra według upodobania  
swego, komu chce sprzedać, najać, y arędować bez wszelkier Zamkowey  
trudności, iednak, aby Zwiernosci Królewskuy posłuszeństwo y Czynę należęcy  
także Podatek zupełny do Zamku był oddawany; Podatek Rzeczypospolitey po-  
myśliciu Wolności, iaki się proporcjonalnie na nich włoży, taki powinni będą, ro-  
wno górugiem wyplacać Zamkowi Dybowskiemu; Zamek zaś onych od  
wszelkich krzywd, osobiście ten który na ten czas Jurisdikcyę, Starostwską wini-  
użymać będzie, bronić y zastępować deklaruję, iż; Solska też wolno im będzie  
z między siebie każdego Roku obierać, iczeli go będą potrzebowali; Piwo zaś nie

inſje powinni pic, tylko Zamkowe y z Karczmy naybliſzſzey Zamkowej  
 brać, albo też u ſiebie ſzynk piwa Zamkowego trzymać, iako też y go-  
 rzałki. Jeżeliby zaś kudy akć taki trafił ſię u nich, toieſt Wóſſe, albo  
 Chrzęſtiny, tedy natenczas wolno im będzio w Zamku na piwo przyſtać;  
 albowie według gwydzau innych, Wóli Holenderskich, którzy też to mają;  
 w Prawach ſwoich, za opowiedzeniem ſię Zamkowi, z kąd inąd na  
 ſwoię własną potrzebę beczkę piwa przywieſe. Ciz Holendrzy ie-  
 den za drugiego defekta wſzelkie zaſtępowac powinni będa, y ſami  
 ſiebie pilnowac y przestrzegac, mają; aby przez uſtąpienie, którego  
 z gruntu pomienionych y wyprzedanie Czynsz galegły, wyzey pomienio-  
 ny Zamkowi nalegacy niżejnoſt. Poſłuſzſtwa zaś takowe Zamkowi za-  
 niſze czynić powinni będa, iako y Inni Holendrzy w tymże Staroſtwie  
 Dybowſkim mięzkający Zamkowi czynić zwykli. Dzuſycina zaś ze  
 wſz płaci z Holendrow Dybowſkich y innych allinenczi Staroſtwa tego  
 do Wrocławſkiego Kapituły przez Zamek Dybowſki, tedy y oni wſz Dze-  
 ſtjeiny powinni będa, bydz inkluadowani. Do zadnych zaś dawnieyſzych  
 gaległych Podatkow, iakoby ſię znajdowały nalezeć niebęda, powinni.  
 Ze zaś ieſt wtey obſzerności gruntu droga publiczna, toieſt goſcieniec Wro-  
 cławſki do Torunia, iakoteż z Torunia do Warszawy, więc ty dro-  
 gę powinni będa, proporzonalnie w szerokoſci zaſtawić, toieſt ma być z  
 przodu cztery wſzerz, która to droga do pomiaru gruntu niebędzio ſię racho-  
 wała. Działo ſię w Zamku Dybowſkim Dnia VIII. Mieſia-  
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## **Timeline of the history of the Mennonite settlements in central Poland**

- 966 Poland adopts Christianity, King Mieszko I.
- 922-1025 Boleslaw I. Chrobry, Poland from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea.
- 1333-1370 Casimir the Great expands Poland to the east.
- 1466 Wladislaw Jagello conquered West Prussia by the Teutonic Order (Battle of Grunwald 1410).
- 1528 Dutch are settled in Danzig Werder.
- 1563 Neudorf located near Brest.
- 1573 On January 8, the Warsaw Confederation is ratified, which grants freedom of belief.
- 1629 Sachsenkämpfe settled near Warsaw.
- 1642 On December 22, Vladislav IV gives the Mennonites a Priviligium.
- 1694 On August 22nd, Jan III. Sobieski continues all the privileges previously given to the Mennonites.
- 1697 September 20 August II confirms all previous privileges.
- 1732 October 12th gives August II. a new privilege for the Mennonites.
- 1733 The tenant Bartel manages the Marymont estate near Warsaw.
- 1733 Stanislaw I. Leszcynski flees from Warsaw to Marymont, where he finds refuge.
- 1736 August III confirms all previous privileges on April 16.
- 1750 On September 19th, August III. all privileges on the entire Vistula lowlands. Mennonites move up the Vistula to Plock and Warsaw.
- 1758-1762 lease in Deutsch-Kasun.
- 1759 Deutsch Wionczemin settled with Mennonites by landlord Szymancmski.
- 1762 Establishment of the community of Deutsch-Kasun.
- 1762 Mennonites move to Plock after the Vistula delta.
- 1765 Mennonites settle in Netzebruch and found the community of Brenkenhoffswalde.
- 1769 The village of Sady is occupied by settlers from Zablocki.
- 1776 The Hilsen brothers set up the Mennonite settlement in Kasun.
- 1792 The village of Deutsch-Wymyschle founded and settled from Evangelical Lutheran Church
- 1795 Third division of Poland. Warsaw and the surrounding area belong to Prussia.

1798 Mennonite settlers buy the Markowczysna estate.

1813 Deutsch-Wymyschle community founded, Jakob Pankratz preacher.

1818 Franz Ewert elected preacher, worked in Wola-Wodzynska.

1820 Wola-Wodzynska founded by Mennonites.

1832 Construction of the first prayer house in Deutsch-Kasun. Johann Bartel elected teacher.

1833 Elder Peter Schröder dies. Johann Bartel is elected Elder.

1834 Brenkenhoffswalde municipality moves from Neumark to Russia.

1836 Peter Buller elected preacher of the Deutsch-Wymyschle church.

1837 Benjamin Foth elected preacher in Wola-Wodzynska.

1838 Peter Buller is elected Elder in Deutsch-Wymyschle.

1842 Jakob Köthler and Heinrich Kliever elected preachers in Wola-Wodzynska.

1843 Peter Bartel, Deutsch-Wymyschle, submits an application to become a Mennonite.

1849 Mennonites and Moravian Brethren come under the supervision of the Ev.-Augsb. Consistory.

1854 Church and school in Wymyschle burn down. School is built separately.

1855 Gerhard Bartel elected teacher in Deutsch-Wymyschle.

1857 Peter Froms elected preacher in Wola-Wodzynska.

1858 Baptist Johann Penner, Adamov, visits Wola-Wodzynska. Mennonites are converted.

1859 Friedrich Alf is ordained in Hamburg as a Baptist preacher. Active in Adamov.

1860 Preacher Alf visits Kicin. Peter Ewert takes him on.

1860 According to the State Council, there are 1,566 Mennonites in Poland.

1860 Alfonsow village is created. Some Mennonites live there.

1861 Report to the State Council of Poland: 1,399 Mennonites, born 82, died 54.

1861 Heinrich Bartel elected teacher.

1861 On August 4, Jakob Penner, Adamov, is expelled because he ordained preachers.

1861 Letters from Alfs and Peter Ewert to MBC in southern Russia

1862 According to files of the State Council, 1328 Mennonites, 101, died 66 in Poland.

1862 Easter gathering of converted Mennonites in Wola-Wodzynska is violently dissolved.

1863 There are 1,354 Mennonites in Poland, according to reports to the State Council.

1864 Heinrich Bartel elected the Elder of the Deutsch-Kasun community.

1864 Construction and inauguration of the new church in Deutsch-Wymyschle.

1864-1865 revival in the area of Gombin and Sanniki.

1866 Jakob Schröder was elected teacher in Wymyschle.

1869 Gerhard Bartel elected Elder.

1870 Gut Strzemeszno is divided by Michael Luther. Mennonites buy land here.

1874 Jakob Foth elected teacher in Deutsch-Wymyschle.

1875 Jakob Foth elected as the Elder. Peter Kliewer elected teacher.

1881 Bartstreit in Deutsch-Kasun settled by preachers from Prussia.

1883 Heinrich Kliewer and Benjamin Schmidt are baptized by MBC in Friedensfeld.

1884 MBC Friedensfeld branch founded in Deutsch-Wymyschle.

1885 Johann Kliewer elected the Elder of the Mennonite congregation Deutsch-Wymyschle.

1889 The Vistula ice jam destroyed the village of Borki near Kasun.

1891 On December 6th, Peter Ratzlaff is ordained by H. Peters in the MBG.

1892 The new church in Deutsch-Kasun was inaugurated on October 30th.

1893 Johann Kliewer joins the MBC by baptism on July 17.

1895 Establishment of the MB community Deutsch-Wymyschle. October 20, an application for admission to the governor in Warsaw is submitted and approved. On November 4, Peter Ratzlaff was ordained the Elder, Johann Kliewer the preacher and H. Wohlgemuth the deacon of the new MB congregation. Elder Jakob Jantz, Friedensfeld, ordained.

1902 Peter Tgahrt elected Elder in Deutsch-Kasun and ordained by Johann Schmidt.

1906 Johann Schmidt registrar (kept church books?) for Mennonites and MBC in Wymyschle.

1907 Johann Schmidt joins the MBC.

1908 The Baptist Church in Deutsch Wionczemin is inaugurated.

1909 The Mennonite congregation Deutsch-Kasun buys a harmonium to accompany the singing.

1912 Rudolf Bartel is elected Elder and introduced on October 9 by Peter Tgahrt.

1914 August 1st, outbreak of the First World War.

1914 September 25th, Kasuner trek to Deutsch-Wymyschle.

1914 November 20, fight for Deutsch-Wymyschle. The Germans move in. At the end of the year, Mennonites and MBC hold church services in the church.

1915 August 31st, return of the Kasun community after the freed Deutsch-Kasun.

1920 June 13th, Edmund Jantz elected preacher in Deutseh-Kasun.

1923 Foundation of the branch of the MB community in Markowezysna.

1924 Renovation of the church in Deutsch-Kasun with help from the United States.

1924 Bible discussion in Deutsch-Wymyschle with the participation of Baptists, Gospel Christians and Moravian Brethren.

1927 The Mennonite church of Deutsch-Kasun buys wind instruments.

1928 Leo Ewert takes over the ministry of preacher on the 21st of Olüober.

1931 The MB congregation in Wymyschle elects and ordains the following brothers: Leonhard P. Ratzlaff as Elder, Gustav P. Ratzlaff as preacher, Heinrich Wohlgemuth II as preacher and Erich P. Ratzlaff as deacon.

1937 Elder Rudolf Bartel, Deutsch-Kasun, celebrates his 25th anniversary.

1939 Outbreak of the Second World War on September 1st. Arrests in Deutsch-Kasun.

1939 On September 4, arrest and internment of some members of the Wymyschle community in the Bereza Kartuska internment camp.

1939 Elder Rudolf Bartel shot dead by the Polish military on September 7th.

1939 German troops take Deutsch-Wymyschle on September 17th.

1940 Elder Leonhard Ratzlaff, Deutsch-Wymyschle, attends the teaching service meeting in Kalthof, Prussia.

1941 First conscription of Mennonite men to the German Wehrmacht.

1944 Deutsch-Kasun is evacuated on July 30, as the front approaches Warsaw.

1945 Evacuation order for Deutsch-Wymyschle on January 17. Elder Leonhard P. Ratzlaff remains in Wymyschle with his wife.

1945 Dissolution of the community of Deutsch-Wymyschle by the flight on January 18.

1946 Elder Leonhard Ratzlaff expelled from Wymyschle on August 5.

1946 Elder Leonhard Ratzlaff dies in Stettin in the camp hospital on August 12th. His wife Anna Ratzlaff died on August 31 in Dieringhausen in the Rhineland.

1960 Peter J. Dyck, MCC director for Europe, visits Deutsch-Wymyschle.

1961 To the present day, Reinhold Wegert writes letters from Deutsch-Wymyschle.

1965 Wymyschle receives electric light.

1971 C. A. DeFehr jun. visits Deutsch-Wymyschle with his family.

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