

The History of the Village of Tiegenhagen (Prussia)

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Mennonite Heritage Archives

Unfortunately, it is impossible to give an exact date for the founding of Tiegenhagen, our ancestral village, because the original document, the certificate of incorporation of the Teutonic Order, went missing shortly after it was granted. However, the settlement within the village demarcation occurred during the third decade of the 14th century and therefore Tiegenhagen can be proud of its 600-year existence. The evidence lies in the reconstructed map of our homeland, from 1300, found in Bertram's publication "*Das Weichsel-Nogat-Delta*" and in the documents containing the already confirmed founding years of the neighbouring villages. As early as 1328 the neighbouring village of Petershagen on the opposite side of the Tiege River, was awarded its certificate of incorporation by Werner von Orseln, the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order. In the year 1345 the village of Tiege, which had already been established for some time, was given 13 *Hufen* of forested land along the Linau River, and later became the village Tiegerweide, southwest of our village Tiegenhagen. Tiegerweide has now been incorporated into Reimerswalde. This precisely demarcated award of land proves that there had already been a southwest boundary for our village, and as a result, Tiegenhagen would have previously been in existence. In the year 1349 when Tiegenort received its certificate of incorporation from the Grand Master Heinrich Dusemer, it was indicated that the land between the forested area belonging to the village of Tiege and the new demarcation for Tiegenort, namely our village Tiegenhagen, had long since been reclaimed and fully settled. The text in the Tiegenort certificate of incorporation also provides proof of the previous existence of our village, contained in the following sentence: "We also would want the settlers to give of themselves to the minister at Tiegenort and do what is right, as those in Tiegenhagen are doing". If one checks Bertram's restored map from 1300, one can find that the greatest portion

of the village demarcation along the Tiege [Tuja] River is documented as dry land interspersed with swampland and open water from the Linau River and the *Haff* [Vistula lagoon]. It is obvious why settlers were immediately lured to Petershagen, something that happened at the beginning of the 1330's and is verified in the certificates of incorporation awarded to Tiege and Tiegenort.

The first certificate of incorporation that was received for our ancestral village "Thuenhain" (the following names were found in later Teutonic Order documents: Tuyenhain, Tuenhayn, Thuenhagin, Tuhenhagen, Thuwenhagen) was issued on August 12th, 1352 by the Grand Master of the Teutonic Knights, Winrich von Kniprode. The certificate also indicates that at the time it was awarded, it was not about the establishment of the village, since the settlement of our village had long since been completed. In it, the village district was established as 60 *Hufen* (*wlokas*) to the right of the Kulm district, including six free *Hufen* for the mayor as well as the bestowal of our village church St. Nikolai. In the bestowal document it reads: "*auch wir lyhen Gote ezulobe und unsir frowen vier huben aller Diege frey ezu der wedme*".

The identity of the first settlers and the details of how the colonization of our ancestral village happened, is difficult to determine, because the settlers streamed into the area from all the regions of Germany. However, they always took up residence in those areas that most closely matched their customs and ways. As a result, our colonists here were from Lower Saxony, who, according to the writings of Dormann, had to provide occasional labour "under the direction of Werner von Orseln and 70,000 Lithuanian prisoners, in the construction of dikes and new villages". Reclamation, deforestation, and the drainage of water were the first jobs our Tiegenhagen settlers carried out according to plan, together with the Prussian unpaid labourers [*Froehner*] assigned to them. It happened under the supervision of their leader, occupant, founder of the village and later, the village mayor who received the six free *Hufen* in return. It was particularly beneficial, as already mentioned, that the settlement area for our village, which was located along the Tiege River, was primarily made up of land, though small but of substantial length and at a higher altitude. The marshy strip of the village district land was also not wide; the altitude of the southwestern portion of land increased as it approached Susz Lake, and the western portion also rose as it approached the Linau forest. There were a great many trees, piles and lots of shrubs marking the village boundary and after the construction of the dam at Tiege, there was carried out, in this new village, a required linear extension of the dam from the Tiege River on the western boundary as far as Susz Lake (Later in the 16th century the outlet channel to provide drainage for the Linau River was dug alongside the dam!). The dam followed Susz Lake and from there "the green embankment" forming the southern boundary of the village extended as far as the Tiege River. Thus, the village district was completely surrounded by dikes and the assignment of the land could proceed. This was decided by drawing lots, after their leader had selected his six *Hufen*, as was designated for the mayor. It cannot be assumed that the full complement of settlers was immediately in place at the time of the founding of the village, given that at the time of the granting of the second

document particular mention is made of the four church *Hufen*. The assigned parcels of land were probably three *Hufen* in area, since this number was not commonly exceeded by the Teutonic Order. The 1766 Charter of Privileges which will yet be alluded to later, mentions the owners of the rent-free 3 *Hufen* plots. In 1766 these were probably the remnant of the *Koellmer* settlers at the time of the founding of the village, and as such lawful landowners, in contrast to the Mennonite lease holders, in tenure by an emphyteusis, who had since migrated to the area. It is no longer possible to report on the status of the six free *Hufen* designated for the mayor; Dormann explained that in the same Charter of Privileges from the 14th of November, 1766, received from the Polish King Stanislaw II August, that the mayor no longer receives the benefit of six free *Hufen* of land because the other Tiegenhagen settlers have long since reassigned the land. The designated plot of land for the mayor is probably where the present-day homestead of the landowner Bernhard Epp is located, in the middle of the village. Today, the best and highest-altitude Tiegenhagen land belongs to him and according to Bertram's map of 1300, it is located at the widest part of the landholding designated for the settlement. Every settler was supposed to receive from the leader, who had selected the widest section of the property for himself, a portion from the first three *Hufen* of this strip of high-altitude land along the Tiege River. As a result, we find that the parcels of land allotted to the settlers narrowly extend from the Tiege River to the western edge of the village boundary. The church was left with three standard *Hufen* of the 4 *Hufen* that had been specifically designated for that purpose in the second document. This was to be a continuous piece of land extending as far as Susz Lake.

The founding settlers built their farmsteads in a single row, in the middle of their elevated section of land, not close to or on the Tiege dike as was done in Petershagen. They further raised the elevation of the farmstead site, as they had been known to do back in their homeland. A small hill, which they came across on the strip of land along the Tiege River, was also raised and extended. The church and cemetery were located here later. Since the elevated strip of land ended not far from the area designated for the church, the settlers who arrived later built their farmsteads on the northern parcels of land close to or on the Tiege dike, as was the custom in Petershagen. In the northern part of the settlement and as already mentioned, in the middle section of the land, there were lower-lying areas and even parts that were largely swampland. At the beginning those parcels of land remained unclaimed, but were assigned and settled later as per the second document.

A number of settler farmsteads can be found in the middle section lowland where the church's 4th *Hufe* was also allocated, apart from two small pieces of land in the large bend of the Tiege River. The other three *Hufen* for the mayor were probably also located in the northern lowlands of the village district. Several settlers possibly established their farmsteads in the middle of the parcels of land or may have preferred to construct their buildings on the higher altitude western boundary of the village where they also had land tenure. The sections of land in the central and northern part of our village which were allocated to the subsequent settlers were

most certainly less than three *Hufen* according to the old saying: “*Den letzten beissen die Hunde*”. At the same time as the farmsteads were being built, the founders of the village began the construction of the drainage channels and the waterwheels situated near the dike. The waterwheels used simple bucket-wheels to move the surface water to the Tiege River. On the sections of land along Susz Lake small waterwheels, the so called “*Schnecken*” [snails] were used to drain water into the Lake. The later settlers in the lowlands of the central district connected their drainage ditches to the channels moving the water to the Tiege River. Our village diagram, even today, with its rows of farmsteads easily shows the outlines of the first settlement, even though those original parcels of land have seen many changes through the years. Most farmsteads still exist today, especially those located on the higher ground along the Tiege River and those on the homesteads of our village founders along the northern edge bordering the Tiege dike, and our village paper speaks of “*Tiegschen*”, “*Feldspiekern*” [carpenters] and “*Landgraeflichen*” [noblemen]. Today the total number of farmsteads in our village is noticeably larger than at the time of its founding and also, the appearance of some farmsteads differs from those that are from the beginning era. This increase in the number of farmsteads and decrease in the size of each property from the early days was caused by the forced division during the time after the occupation and seizure by Frederick the Great and his followers, as the later history of the village will show. The number was even greater during the closing years of the previous century and the beginning of this century, however, many of these smaller subdivided properties have disappeared again through a buy-out process and only the remains of the farmstead foundations or the farm buildings give evidence of their former existence.

As was the custom with the founding of a village, the Teutonic Order would build an inn or tavern called the Order Inn. Tiegenghagen was to receive an inn also, however, the Order had concerns about the length of the village and the difficulties presented by the Tiege dike and river and the main street being located on the outer edge of the village. This caused the Order to depart from the usual custom and build two Order Inns. One of the inns was later referred to in documents as the tavern [“*Pisskrug*”], today it is called the Dutch Inn [“*Hollaender*”]. The other Inn was located on the Tiege dike at the most northerly corner of the village boundary, where today you find the Inn at the Watergate [“*Gasthaus zur Schleuse*”]. This Order Inn was of particular benefit to the settlers of what would later become the village of Tiegengort, evidence of the always forward-looking planning of the Teutonic Order. Both inns were built by the Order, and the innkeepers [“*kreczemer*” or *Krueger*] were never the owners, rather only leaseholders. The Order blacksmith shop was built on the dike across from the first village inn. In its place there stands a large building which, even today, is referred to in the village paper as the village blacksmith [“*Dorfs- oder Herrenschieme*”]. The ferry-boat will already have been established, a necessity for Petershagen. As was common in all Order settlements in our *Werder* homeland, all *Hufen* were taxable after the first five rent-free years, except the aforementioned six *Hufen* for the mayor and the four *Hufen* for the church or minister. The *Hufen* landowners, however, had to pay the December spiritual tithe to the minister beginning

in the first year. This tax or tithe was naturally only paid for the occupied *Hufen* and not for the as yet unoccupied land. The Marienburg Monastery Book from 1399-1412 [*“Das Marienburger Konventsbuch der Jahre 1399-1412”*] sheds light on the amount of the payments made to the Order when it states that on February 14th, 1400 the village of Tuenhayn paid 43 ½ Marks [*“Tuenhayn das Dorff dede runt 43 ½ m. hubinczins minus 4 sc. item dede runt 4 m. und 4 sc. pflukgelt”*]. In it we also find recorded the yearly lease payment for both Order Inns, however, one can observe that both failed to make their rent payment for the previous year. The entry in the monastery book reads: *“Petir Wichmann kreczemer dedit (gave) 2 m. (Marks), Jacob Hofmann kreczemer dedit (gave) 2 m. (Marks)”*. In addition, the residents of Tiegenhagen had the yearly obligation to provide freely, on average, six days of assigned physical labour for the Order; the mayor with his free *Hufen* was naturally exempt from that obligation. The brunt of the load for our Tiegenhagen founding settlers was naturally the work on the dike system, the maintenance and improvement of the channels within the village district, as well as the work on the Great Dike. We are no longer able to ascertain what responsibilities our village had for the latter, but this will be addressed later. The Teutonic Order constitution [*Kulmische Handfeste*] naturally also outlined the military obligation of our forefathers, the military service of the “Koellmer” (land owners allowed to settle according to Kulm law) who were provided with light body armour and weapons upon their arrival at the location, whenever they heard the battle cry or the summons rang out across the land. The military service was only required if the enemy was to approach the Nogat River. The chief enemy of the Tiegenhagen settlers was to be the water. Its control demanded all of their physical strength. All these obligations for the Order, that have been cited, were nothing special, they simply belonged to the *Kulmer Recht* (rights or laws) according to which our village was founded and settled.

Tiegenhagen belonged to the Archcommandery in Marienburg; the Vogt of Leske had the overall jurisdiction over the roadways and the court with regards to the Prussians, the Poles and the Wends (Slavic people). The *Kulmer Recht* (Chelmno rights or laws) was in operation in our ancestral village and its residents were of German ancestry and free people who owned their land outright, possessing unrestricted freedoms such as selling their property and arranging for their sons and daughters to inherit the farms. Likewise, the people of the community also had autonomy over the matters of the community. The leader of the villagers was the *Schultheiss* or mayor. He would also have been the one to lead the first settlers into the forest and fields of our present village and guide their work to establish the settlement. Besides receiving from the Order, the six, already mentioned, free *Hufen* designated for the mayor, he was entrusted with the legal jurisdiction in his community, for which he received one third of the legal fees; the other two thirds went to the Teutonic Order. His jurisdiction extended to “*Blut und Blau*” issues [assaults causing bodily harm], therefore more minor injuries. He had to look after the upkeep of the roads and ditches within the village district, the maintenance of public peace and safety and enforcing the Order laws against luxuries, gambling, the nightly carousals at the inns and the acceptance of runaway servants. It was also incumbent on him to collect tax or rental payments for the Order and the tithe for the minister, at the designated

time. He even had to take on the role of a bailiff during difficult times. Support in these duties came from the village elders and advisors whose exact numbers for our village is no longer ascertainable. His aides had to be available at any time during the day to help him enforce the laws, particularly when visitors (strangers) were seeking justice. The mayor had duties he had to complete every year together with his advisors: inspecting the village boundary to determine if any changes had been made, inspecting the roads to see if they still met the Order's directive of maintaining a 16-foot width to help the wagons avoid a mishap, and checking that each settler maintained a 7-foot-wide roadway approach in front of the gate to his yard. Upon the death of the village mayor, the duties of the mayor, the free *Hufen* and all income of the job went to the closest paternal male relative [*Schwertmagen*]. The mayor [*Schultheiss*], with the approval of his relatives as well as permission obtained from the Marienburg Commandery, could even sell his office and the entitlements that came with the office. If the mayor died without any heirs, the office and property were returned to the Order, to be sold again. However, in that case the wishes of the community were probably taken into consideration.

The golden age of the Teutonic Order occurred in the years that followed the establishment of Tiegenhagen. Our ancestors were free from the troublesome military invasions that crossed the boundaries of the village districts and the laws of the Order took care of justice and order with rigour and fairness. The cultivation of the land resulted in fruitfulness that was without comparison and Marienburg, Elbing and Danzig provided opportunities for the easy and profitable sales of the produce. In fact, Tiegenhagen enjoyed the privilege of transporting their products themselves to these three trading centres by simply using the waterways. An uninterrupted era of peace reigned throughout this blessed stretch of land for almost 80 years. As a result, it also produced in Tiegenhagen an uncommon prosperity and a strong self-assuredness in what they had achieved. Arguably, the plague wreaked havoc in the *Werder* from 1352 to 1354 and returned again in 1361 causing many deaths among our village ancestors. In 1376 the embankments of the Vistula River were breached in four places, resulting in great damage in our village also, along with the loss of cattle and onset of crop failures. Nevertheless, very fruitful and productive years followed and prosperity and self-confidence increased year after year. However, soon bleak years followed, that brought increasing hardship and adversity. Violent storms caused major damage; in 1394 Tiegenhagen was covered by the floodwaters that resulted from the breaching of the dikes of the Vistula and Nogat Rivers. A lull in the wind did not even lower the water upstream. In 1395 another flood occurred, and was repeated in 1398, 1403 and again in 1409. The latter flood appeared to have been particularly disastrous for our Tiegenhagen because the 5 farmers of our village who had been instructed by the *Tressler* [treasurer of the Teutonic Order] to deliver 750 bushels of oats for payment, were in no position to fulfill this commitment. The Monastery Book contains the following entry describing that incident by the treasurer: "*Thuwenhagen Peter Rode Nickel, Hanke Rode Nickel, Niklos Orloff, Battis Fischaw und Heyncze Lindenow tenentur (owe) 750 habir mit gesampter hant, eyner ist borge vor den andern, Hanke Syfrid czu Nydaw ist borge vor sy alle*". However, all of that was still nothing when compared to the suffering endured by our

ancestors following the fierce battle at Tannenberg on July 15th, 1410 when the Polish king and his hordes laid siege on Marienburg. To be sure, the brave Heinrich von Plauen successfully defended the castle but many of our Tiegenhagen ancestors helped in this defense on the walls of the Marienburg fortress. After all this, thieving bands of Tartars and Lithuanians roamed throughout the Werder region, causing terrible destruction. That which the inhabitants had not fastened down was pillaged, abused, the villages were laid waste and the grain fields burned. They conducted their raids as far as the *Weichsel Nehrung* (Vistula Spit), plundering villages and churches. In the end, the Polish king was forced to give up the siege and withdraw from Prussian territory in the face of the courageous and aggressive Heinrich von Plauen. However, utter destitution remained because the grainfields were trampled, the reserves of grain gone, the livestock stolen and many a homestead without its owner or heirs. We don't find any more records of Tiegenhagen in the treasurer's monastery book which contained information up until 1412. How great must the suffering have been in Tiegenhagen, when the expectation of services to the Order remained in place, even though they could have used every penny for themselves! To be sure, the First Peace of Thorn [February 1, 1411] returned the entire Prussian territory to the Order, however, it also instituted large monetary obligations and a drive to assemble the largest collection of armaments for a decisive battle with Poland, which undoubtedly was to follow soon. Taxes were introduced, something our Kulm ancestors wanted nothing to do with; devaluation of the money followed, which kept away the foreign merchants, trade and sales ceased, every village endured crop failures, floods, and insect infestations combined with perpetually newly imposed taxes. An aversion to the Order was awakened and many people deserted their homes and farmsteads because it was impossible to restore or maintain the farming operation under those circumstances. The tax burden imposed by the Teutonic Order led to rebellion; the Polish king used the opportunity to bring about the downfall of his sworn enemy; the Thirteen Years' War [1454-1466] arrived and from 1453 to 1466 friend and foe resided in our fatherland under equal fear and dread. In addition, during the war years, there occurred some of the worst floods because, naturally, no one looked after the dikes. On October 19th, 1466 the Second Peace of Thorn was signed and Marienburg and both *Werders*, together with our ancestral village also, became a Polish protectorate! It is also easy to imagine how hopeless it would have appeared here. Wasteland and desolate underbrush had replaced the most magnificent fields of grain, which had produced fortune and prosperity. What had happened to the inhabitants? Killed in war, died from great hardship and the plague, scattered (several lines are intelligible here) not many people returned home, so that many homesteads remained without an owner and thus were returned to the Crown.

Under the direction of the Polish king, the Marienburg Commandery was divided into two administrative districts (*Starosteien*): Stuhm and Marienburg, and Tiegenhagen was therefore answerable to the Marienburg district administration. The state administrator, who at first was also referred to as "*Hauptmann*" (head man), had authority over policing and judicial matters, and from a military point of view, he was the commander of the Burg. The revenue from the

levies and dues coming from the Marienburg district did not, however, flow into the city treasury, but the administrative district was declared a "*Koeniglichen Tafelgute*" (imperial domain or economic centre) and an administrator was specially appointed with the responsibility for agricultural matters. If the valley of the Elbing Vistula had been set as the boundary with Danzig in 1466, it was soon going to be changed because as early as 1457 the king pledged Scharpau together with Tiegenort to a citizen in Danzig and since 1530 Danzig was in full possession of Scharpau. At the same time, the northwestern boundary of Tiegenhagen became the Polish land border with Danzig! The village Order Inn located in that corner now became a border station. The financial difficulties of the Polish kings continually increased. It is hardly surprising therefore, that because of the constant introduction of new levies, entire regions and individual villages of this crownland, the Marienburg administrative district, were reassigned (*tenuta*). The revenue from those properties would then go to the pledge holders (*tenutario*) for the interest on the debt. One probably needs no evidence to recognize that these pledge holders sucked the blood (life) out of their villages.

However, Tiegenhagen escaped this fate. Evidence thereof, despite its great suffering during the last war, was that not even one money lender could be found who would take it on in the form of a pledge. According to the reports, bears, wolves and foxes were frolicking throughout the desolate, newly forested land, which had seen one flood after another, leading the last of the self-sacrificing village inhabitants to despair. In 1472 there was a major breach in the dike at Sommerauerort which led King Casimir IV to offer 100 Marks to the *Werder*. In 1473 he also arranged for wood to be delivered for the repair of the breach and granted permission to the farmers in the *Werder* to access the wood found on the crown forests surrounding Stuhm, Danzig and Elbing. However, it got even worse. The Grandmaster Albrecht of Koenigsberg declared war against the Polish King Sigismund I (the Old), and his troops moved through our area here, towards Danzig, to lay siege to the city. What remained after those troops marched through, was then carried off by the troops of the Polish king, who camped along the Vistula in order to intercept the advancing reinforcement troops led by the Grandmaster and cut them off from those that were already near Danzig. A long-lasting peace treaty was agreed to in 1523, however friend and foe had wreaked the most dreadful havoc in our area. In addition, in 1526 there was a terrible breach in the dike at Schoeneberg, which exemplified the overall hardship experienced in the plundered *Werder* region, for it took 5 years for the dike to be repaired.

Around 1550 a sad fate befell Tiegenhagen, becoming property lien collateral: King Sigismund II Augustus leased the following villages to the nobleman Simon Loitz and his brothers: Ladekopp, Schoeneberg, Orloff, Tiege, Reimerswalde and our ancestral village. The responsibility of the villages, as was precisely outlined in the granting document, encompassed the administration of the Chelmno Rights (*Kulmer Recht*) and all expenditures for the dikes. Further details regarding these dike expenses will be shared later. A document from 1565 indicates that Petershagen also came under the administration of Simon Loitz. Naturally, a loan company lay

behind these enfeoffments, since Simon Loitz was the son of Hans Loitz, the mayor of Stettin, who owned a large bank there and a branch thereof in Danzig. In his publication Schmidt mentions that the 1772 Prussian Land Register shows a record of a pledge of 200,000 Marks. Simon Loitz now set up a farmstead on the western shore of the Tiege River, probably in the Orloff district and named it Tiegehof (Tiegenhof). Parts of the foundation wall of the present-day evangelical church in Tiegenhof and the name "*Schlossgrund*" (castle foundation) still bring back memories of Simon Loitz's establishment. The new homestead was to serve as the center for the administration of his fief business and people even talked about a Tiegenhof Starostwo (administrative district). However, the Loitz grandeur was short lived. Simon's nephew Hans Loitz succeeded him, but as early as 1572 the bank declared bankruptcy and in 1578 King Stephen III of the Kulmer voivodes (provinces), awarded the Tiegenhof administrative district to Ernst von Weiher who was a creditor of the Loitzes, an award made in spite of many objections from the other creditors.

During this time period of the worst suffering in our home village, caused by wars, flooding and now the pledges of collateral to the Loitzes, an important historical event happened: the arrival and spread of the Protestant Reformation. Luther's teachings had already made their entry into Danzig and Marienburg around 1520. All the threats and warnings of punishment from the Polish king and the watchful eyes of the bishops were for naught: the teachings spread like wildfire in the *Werder* and as a matter of course also found their way to our Tiegenhagen. The followers of Luther secretly gathered for church services in barns, storehouses, porches or homes belonging to their owners. Their numbers steadily increased. On July 5th, 1557 Sigismund II Augustus had to give the Danzig inhabitants his royal sanction for their freedom of religion and in 1569 the Lutherans in the *Werder* received the authorization to conduct the services in their churches according to the Augsburg confession of faith. The fact that Georg Meermann was ordained as Lutheran pastor for Tiegenhagen in 1574 attests to the number of Tiegenhagen inhabitants who had already become Lutheran at that time. Our church, a massive structure, was built shortly after 1352 (therefore, after the second constitution) as the brick tiles in the northern side aisle, as well as behind the high altar, and technical features on the gable, the wrought-iron work and a statue of St. Catharine show. Naturally, the constructor of the church was the Teutonic Order and in the records of the Order the head builder is simply referred to as "*Maurer*" (mason), therefore a man, who held the job of a present-day master-builder. Under his supervision worked the masonry labourers, our present-day journeymen, and unskilled workers ("*die Bauden*"), the Prussian occasional labourers. The church was smaller at first but with the present-day height. However, Tiegenhagen flourished shortly after its construction, resulting in an extension of the sanctuary to the west, easily recognizable in the different wall thicknesses and window shapes. The instability of the subsoil in the *Werder* also did not allow our Tiegenhagen Church to have a massive bell tower and as a result she got a high wooden bellfry built upon a massive low substructure. The church was dedicated to St. Nicolas, the patron saint of ships and sailors. If one studies the entrance archway of the bell tower and also the entrance to the church today, then one immediately notices its unusually low level. At the

time of construction, the floors of the church and the tower were over half a meter lower than today, but the many floods soon forced our ancestors to raise these, as well as the surrounding cemetery to the present elevation.

As of September 7th, 1629, the Lutherans, again, had to give back the former Catholic churches and as a result, our village church has been the property of our fellow Catholic inhabitants to this very day. Indeed, in 1633 again, King Wladyslaw IV allowed the Evangelicals “to preach the gospel according to Christ and the teachings of the Apostles in their churches, which were built in ancient times and have been newly rebuilt”. The Lutherans in our village, however, did not avail themselves of this privilege. The rest of the history of Tiegenhagen will reveal the reason for this.

In the report of the establishment and settling of the village, it was mentioned that a large number of Prussian unpaid labourers (*Froehner*) were assigned to the *Lokator* (location agent for settlers) of the Order. After the completion of the common tasks, a considerable number of these temporary workers naturally remained in the village as servants of their families. The mayor, together with his advisors, and the minister, in particular, had to keep an eye on them. As a result, they largely established their homes around the church, in that section of the village which the paper (*Dorfmund* “village mouth”) today still calls the “*Geistlichkeit*” (spirituality). The others, a smaller number of the labourers settled along the Tiege River, on the edge of the mayor’s property, so that the mayor could likewise keep constant watch over his sheep. That explains the present-day cluster of small homes at these two locations in our village district.

As mentioned earlier, it is necessary to go into more detail regarding the condition of the dikes in our community. Although our Tiegenhagen, since its establishment, belonged to the Marienburg Commandery, it, together with Ladekopp, Orloff, Tiege and Reimerswalde, did not belong to the Dike Association of the “*Grossen Werder*” (large marsh), “*der kore bynnen dem grossen werder czu thamrecht*”, which was later called “*Gross-Werder-Kommune*” (Gross Werder Local Authority District).

When and how the *Gross Werder* District emerged during the Teutonic Order era, whether as an initiative of the Order or a voluntary association of individual communities, is impossible to determine. The common task of many locations was simply the maintenance of the dikes, the most necessary requirement for their welfare and economic prosperity. A crest, signifying a dike digger raising a spade in his left hand and framed by the inscription “*sigillum (seal) insulae majoris (majority)*”, was a unique symbol that united them. Today, this crest is our official seal. The *Gross Werder* District (“*kore*”) was even allowed to seal their documents with green wax, something that was usually only reserved for the Grand Master. Because of their major responsibilities, the district received special rights and freedoms from the Order. The district was divided into five areas and after the addition of the Elbing locations, there were in fact six areas, according to a document from Winrich von Kniprode. Each area elected their dike jurors who in turn elected a dike lord and together with the “*Ordensvogt*” (Order administrator) at

Leske, collectively managed the entire dike business. A document from 1461 gives us the names of 6 dike jurors, later the number even increased to 8.

According to the constitutional documents from the time of establishment, the villages of the Tiegenhof administrative (*Starostei*) or agricultural (*Oekonomie*) district, along with Tiegenhagen, obviously also had the obligation to maintain the dikes. That cited enfeoffment document from Simon Loitz mentions it as well. However, at the time of the Teutonic Order, the villages were not under the "*kore*" (*Gross Werder* District), but under certain Order officials such as the *Fischmeister* (fisheries master) in Scharpau, when they first began with the cultivation activities. He, as the "*Deichpolizist*" (dike police), already ensured that they fulfilled their dike responsibilities in the local authority district. However, this changed considerably during the Polish rule. Soon after Poland conquered the area, neither the *Starost* (administrative official) in Marienburg nor the agricultural official did anything about ensuring that dike responsibilities were met in our local district, and any and all supervision disappeared once it was given over to the ever-changing enfeoffee (pledge holder). In addition, one should not forget what it was like in this region, particularly in Tiegenhagen, during the occupation by Poland and how much the population numbers had decreased. There was no oversight of the dikes, their maintenance by our distressed ancestors was barely carried out, hence real Polish economics was emerging.

The *Gross Werder* District then spoke up, so that they could obtain the supervisory authority over this matter, including in Tiegenhagen. King Sigismund I could not meet all their requests and in 1526 ordered,

"...that, if a breach in the dike was expected or developed, the *Gross Werder* District, together with the hands and help of the community ("*communi manu et auxilio*") be pressed into action and the aforementioned villages, Tiegenhagen etc., be equally committed and obligated to help."

The implementation of such a directive, however, did not occur as quickly as was the case during the time of the Teutonic Order. The *Gross Werder* District ("*Kommune*"), however, did not give up and, in 1554, once again introduced a regulation from King Sigismund II Augustus, "...that the villages, Tiegenhagen etc., definitely do not enjoy any special exemptions from the obligation of dike maintenance, but rather are expected to offer the same services as expected from other *Werder* settlers, in accordance with the size of their property (*Hufenzahl*).

Similar reminders of the dike maintenance obligation were issued by the Polish kings in 1564, 1569 and 1605,

"...that Tiegenhagen etc. as well as all the rest of the land (*Hufen*) owners of the joint diking system in the *Werder* are obligated to fully maintain the dikes as well as all that is connected to the embankments."

Hereby, Tiegenhagen's assimilation into the *Gross Werder* District was complete. It wasn't the negligence of our ancestors that resulted in the reminders from the Polish kings, but rather the small number of still occupied farmsteads and cultivated *Hufen*. The few farmers who were eking out a miserable existence, truly could no longer fulfill the duties of a former village in its heyday years. Nevertheless, we will leave the discussion of the efforts of the "*kore*" regarding the meeting of the dike maintenance obligation and address it later on.

Since the establishment of those villages, the water from a portion of the Tiegenhof agricultural district and the Danzig district had been draining into the Linau River. This area, which had its own water drainage association, had been known as the "Linau-District (*Kommune*)" for many years. The Linau River only had one outlet and this was inadequate to meet the water drainage needs of the expanding and low lying Linau-District, once the Vistula Lagoon began receding in light of progressive sedimentation. It finally occurred to them to create a second waterway linking the Linau and Tiege Rivers. This was already completed in the middle of the 16th century. This is our ditch, also called "*Landwehrgraben*", which was dug close to the Tiegenhagen boundary dike. However, many breaches originating from the Elbing Vistula, particularly one such event at Kalteherberge in 1611, caused it to gradually become completely silted up. A document from September 12th, 1614 mentions the renewed excavation. How many water shortage problems will the Tiegenhagen ancestors living along the boundary have had to endure in the interim!

Since 1578 our ancestral village, together with the Tiegenhof agricultural district belonged to the Weihers and soon there was to be a new development for both. The Weihers were capable landlords. At their mansion, the former property of the Loitzes, and on the opposite side of the Tiege River, they established a market town, which was known as Weihershof for a long time, until it became commonly known as "Tiegenhof". By now the marsh and reeds had disappeared on the eastern shore of the Tiege River, making way for such a development and it was the Mennonites who had reclaimed that land.

The Weihers wanted to improve the agricultural potential of their land, so they could increase their income, and the Mennonites became their instruments for this. The Loitzes had already brought in the first Mennonites from Holland with the guarantee of religious tolerance, after having observed their creative drive in the Elbing district, of which Ellerwald remains an excellent example even today.

In just a few years they had transformed the reed covered marsh east of Tiegenhof into productive farmland for the Loitzes. At the beginning, those Mennonites held that newly reclaimed land tax-free, however in 1578 Hans von Loitz, who was short of money, leased out the land for a 30-year term at a tax rate of 52 *Gulden* (florin) and 13 *Huehnern* for each *Hufe*. When the Weihers took over the district, they soon became aware of the hard-working Mennonites on the reclaimed land east of the Tiege River. Ernst von Weiher immediately

retracted those contracts, issued new ones for 20 years and arranged for new immigration into his district. They settled on the vacant homesteads in our ancestral village and with their tenacity and hard work, created a new and prosperous Tiegenhagen.

The wretched state of this area at the time of the Mennonite immigration is manifested in the stories of the older people which mentioned that only the church, one part of the “*Geistlichkeit*” (spirituality), and three cultivated farmsteads still remained. Otherwise, all the land had become marshy and overgrown with bushes and woods.

The widow of Ernst von Weiher continued his work likewise, offering agreements of 20 years and every farmstead owned by Mennonites was called “*hollaendische (Dutch) Hufen*”. Notwithstanding the newly settled area, Tiegenhagen remained a village with Kulm laws, as was the case when it was established by the Teutonic Order, even though actually only a few (3) old farmsteads were owned by the original Kulm owners. The new settlers in our village were long-term leaseholders (*Zeitemphyteuten* or *Zeitpaechter*). Hence, they had a lifelong use of the property with the stipulation that the condition of the property at least not deteriorate. The lessor had to be paid a tax for the use of the land; of course, the tenant could sell his property, however, he needed the approval of the lessor for that. If new buildings were constructed and the property were transferred to another person after the expiry of the lease period, the landlord inheriting the interest had to reimburse him for his expenses. The real reason for this new way of awarding land was certainly not the blossoming of our homeland and village, rather the increase in revenue for the pledge holders of the Tiegenhof agricultural district and the Polish king!

Let us look more closely at what these new Mennonite homesteaders in Tiegenhagen had to pay their landlords in Tiegenhof. How great the amount was, in the first agreement which Hans von Loitz demanded of our fellow believers in the new settlement east of the Tiege River, was mentioned already: 52 *Gulden* (florin) and 13 *Huehner* for each *Hufe*. Those in our village were also obligated to pay this yearly tax because their work, at the time of the move-in, was assessed as a completely new establishment. However, the renewal of the contracts, called rentals, netted the pledge holders much more money. The tax amounted to 600, even 1000 *Gulden* (florin) for each *Hufe*. Naturally, the Polish king had to grant approval for such a move and that confirmation cost a great deal of money. It is probably not even worth mentioning that the imperial officers in Marienburg, acting as middle men at all such renewals, needed to be well considered.

After these taxes were introduced, the new settlers in Tiegenhagen were not to be harassed regarding any religious matters, for it was religious persecution that had driven them from their former homeland. They were promised freedom from all unpaid labour, dike maintenance (except for the dikes in the village), providing leadership and billeting and naturally an exemption from military service. Otherwise, the deeply religious men would not have entered

into the contract at all. Their military service was also of minor importance for the Polish king since all of Poland-Prussia was responsible for defending the country in the case of an invasion by an enemy.

If one examines the agreements of the Loitzes and Weiher with their Mennonite tenant farmers, one notices immediately the guarantee of freedom from dike maintenance, although that area really belonged to the *Gross Werder* District. They immediately appeared on the scene and didn't rest until they had the king's assurance to no longer grant freedom from dike maintenance to any more *Hufen*. Our Tiegenhagen ancestors, however, bragged about their agreements. The kings were always short of money, compounded by the corruption of their officers which led to a continual fight with the *Gross Werder* District until March 27th, 1664. In the Warsaw declaration all the freedoms from dike maintenance promised by the Loitzes and Weiher were revoked:

"Because we know, how much our kingdom and the land of Prussia attaches importance to the maintenance of the dikes and also how others of the *Werder* shoulder the load and combine their efforts to tackle and carry out the task, and that, as a result, our Marienburg castle and the nobility of our kingdom in Prussia, as well as the trading towns and merchant business remain primarily prosperous, we have seen fit through this perpetual statute, that from now on, all who have land in the *Werder* region, shall perform the work of maintaining the dikes etc., without refusal. It is a necessary servitude carried out at the discretion of the dike wardens and the jury for the well-being of all."

More exact details of the burden of the dike maintenance imposed on our village will be laid out in another context.

The immigration of the Mennonites to the leased territory of the Loitzes and thereby also to the district of our ancestral village, proved to be a blessing for subsequent centuries. These true German Lower Saxons, like the original settlers of our Tiegenhagen, didn't only wrest all the land from a reversion to marsh and woodland, but expanded the area with the establishment of the villages of Peterhaegnerfeld, Reinland, Rosenort, Neustaedterwald, Stobbendorf, Haberhorst, Pletzendorf and Platenhof, and thus created, as Hartwich records in his chronicle, a "Garden of God" ("*Garten Gottes*").

Our Tiegenhagen settlers had to have been very exceptional colonists, as many of the writings of their landlords show. One of their greatest contributions, however, was the formation of a fire mutual aid fund, which was replicated throughout the Tiegenhof leased territory, indeed even in the Elbing and Danzig area, and exists to this very day as the Tiegenhof Private Fire Insurance ("*Tiegenhoefer Privat Brandordnung*"). Practical neighbourly love was always an exemplary quality of the Mennonite people. That led our village *Altvordere* (ancestors), to make a plan to help out our fellow believer and neighbour, who had suffered a fire and as a renter was liable for the maintenance of those buildings, with cash levies from fellow villagers. This

idea was quickly adopted by the neighbouring villages and on May 29th, 1623 nine communities of the Tiegenhof administrative office agreed to establish the Tiegenhof Fire Mutual Aid Fund ("*Tiegenhoefer Brandordnung*"). Since the foundation date of that covenant of love three hundred years ago, many books recording fires ("*Brandbuch*") have been generated and filled, however, that first founding statement or recommendation is contained in each one as a preface.

"May it be known and apparent to everyone, but particularly those who have a concern for and a need to know, that we, the inhabitants residing in the villages of the lower district of the *Grosswerder* listed below, for us and our descendants, have approved and adopted joint and binding fire regulations and insurance governing fire loss, as God the Almighty's punishing hand may yet test each one of us. This occurred on May twenty-ninth in the year one thousand six hundred and twenty-three. Therefore, at the aforementioned time, all the village communities belonging to and located in the Tiegenhof administrative district of our powerful and gracious master Melchior Weiher are as follows:

Gross-Tiegenhagen and Platenhof,
Klein-Tiegenhagen, Reimerswalder and also
Petershaegnerfeld located near Tiegenhof,
Ploetzendoerfer as well as Altendorf,
Stobbendorf and Haberhorst

These village communities named above have devoted everything and worked hard to draw up and establish this system of regulations to manage fire loss. In the meanwhile, were one to study it, one would determine that these regulations were not too unbearable for us, rather reasonable, Christian, and also worthy of praise that one will come to the aid of poor distressed people and be ready to offer the help that is due, so that they can rebuild and continue to earn their living. Therefore, we have met with approval on the following points, and, amongst ourselves, have promised our constant and binding help. That promise of help is extended only to those who are committed to our association and who are prepared to fulfill their obligations with us."

The excitement that greeted the development of this association is evident from the fact that by June 16th of that same year the subjects of the council in Danzig and the inhabitants of the Elbing district joined the alliance of nine villages, adopted the provisions of the mutual fire insurance (*Brandordnung*) and on February 26th, 1624 it came into effect with the following name:

"The *Gross Werder* Mutual Fire Insurance, concerning the Dutch lowland villages that belong to the Tiegenhof administrative district, located in the region of the powerful gracious master Melchior Weiher, and including the subjects of the Danzig and Elbing districts who have jointly approved and adopted it."

The idea of an act of love and the plan behind such a mutual aid fund originated in Tiegenhagen, and as a result, the first principle stipulated that its head office must remain in the Tiegenhof district for all time, and more particularly in our home village.

Farmers were the founders and the first members of this beneficial organization and so the actual ownership of land became the benchmark for the buildings that would be insured. One deduced that an increasing number of *Morgen* (.3 hectare of land) would require larger buildings. Anyone who suffered a fire loss was to receive 20 Marks for each *Morgen*, recorded at registration, through a levy assessed to all members, to help rebuild the farmstead which had burnt to ashes. The mayors of the villages belonging to the mutual aid fund were obligated to meet at the homestead of the distressed farmer on the third day after the fire or face a penalty of one Hungarian florin trading coin (*ungarischen Floren*). Under the direction of the Tiegenhagen chairman of the mutual aid fund, it was immediately determined how much monetary support (*Brandgeld*) the farmer would receive and according to the land register on hand (containing a listing of the number of *Hufen* and *Morgen* owned by each member), how much of a levy each neighbour had to pay. Every mayor had to collect this amount from his community by a specific deadline and submit it to the chairman, who then passed on the funds to the distressed farmer. If a member delayed paying his assigned levy to the mayor for more than three weeks, then he had to pay his “brother in need” double the amount. Whoever did not fall in line with the order, was immediately removed from the organization because of noncompliance. The buy-in fee for new memberships was assessed at 8 Marks per *Hufe*!

Many more policy conditions could be reported on, such as the detailed provisions of the firefighting equipment and the penalties for late payers, however, more important is the fact of the fast growth of the mutual aid fund: merchants, craftsmen, boatmen, fishermen and renters (*Einmieter*) were asking to become members. This was granted them according to the following: their furnishings equated to one *Hufe*, and the house was insured for ½ *Hufe* if they had little or no land around their buildings.

The first compensatory fire accident happened on March 18th, 1626 because of a dirty and leaky chimney. As a result, the mayor was assigned the primary duty of inspecting chimneys at Eastertime and Michaelmas [September 29] every year, although a more frequent inspection was highly recommended. These inspections are mentioned often in the documents of the mutual fire aid fund and remained a “problem child” in spite of the steep fines levied during the increasing influence of the Polish economic activity later on. The land registries (*Kataster*) even report on the expulsion of some village mayors or negligent neighbours.

On June 1st, 1639 we find the first fundamental change in the fire aid policy. What occurred in the past, when the monetary support was determined by the mayor and chairman, based on the particulars of each incident and only meant for the reconstruction of a building, was

changed to a fire insurance reflecting the current state of the art. The members could now also take out insurance for their livestock, and the exact amounts of compensation for each category were set. It is not surprising then, that on May 1st, 1640 appropriate compensation amounts were set for household utensils and hand tools of the members who were craftsmen. However, the overall amount of insurance for livestock could only equal up to a half of the insured value of the homestead.

How often the fire aid fund had to demonstrate brotherly love during that time is evident in a resolution from October 7th, 1641, in which it laid down that “anyone who hung flax or hemp to dry near the stove in the house or hatchelled flax or hemp in its light and thereby caused a fire, would receive no insurance money”. It was understood from the outset, that a wilful fire starter would receive the same penalty.

Tiegenhagen, in these acts of love through the fire aid fund, earned a good reputation throughout the region. Even though our ancestors had shown themselves to be strong advocates of the right to freedom from dike responsibilities against the *Gross Werder* District, in this situation they showed themselves to be true Christians. The further history will, on many occasions, show them as exemplary champions for the community.

If we take a look at the local government in our ancestral village, little had changed since the era of the Teutonic Order: it had remained a *Koelmer* village in spite of the newly settled area and its few true “*Koelmer*”. Even though, as the fire insurance records show, the northern part of the village district was called “Klein-Tiegenhagen” and the southern part was called “Gross-Tiegenhagen”, the village only had one mayor who led the community, together with two aldermen elected each year. The latter had to be affirmed by the administration in Marienburg; the mayor had to take his oath there. When anything important happened in the village, he sent around a messenger on horseback, who, with a proclamation (“*Zaras do Soltysa! Gleich dem Schulzen!*”) called everyone to gather. This invitation from the mayor to a general meeting, was called a “*Verbottung*” and even today we talk about a “*Schulzenbott*”, when the mayor of the community collects the village levies on a particular day. Every farmer (land owner) was then obligated to attend according to the promise made to the mayor, or send a representative. Whoever failed to do this received a penalty of 6 *Groschen* (10 penny piece). Otherwise, Mondays and Fridays were the days the mayor conducted his business. He supervised all village council business, which also included all purchases, sales and auctions. The mayor also mediated the loans and debts and could deny the taking on of a new debt. He remained in office for life and beginning in 1600 had to keep a village record book and a book recording legal penalties. These books, which could offer us the best insight into the lives and activities of the inhabitants of Tiegenhagen, were unfortunately destroyed in a fire at the community office. One third of the fine was imposed on the mayor. Naturally, he also possessed the authority over the police, and so on Shrove Tuesday an annual accounting of him

and his assistants took place in front of his villagers, at which time decisions were also made regarding the new hire or rehire of his two helpers.

As was already reported, in 1633 King Wladyslaw IV of Poland had allowed the Evangelicals (Lutheran) to build new churches. However, the vast majority of village inhabitants were Mennonites who were only allowed to conduct their worship services in private homes. It is not surprising then, that the few Lutherans in Tiegenhagen could not take advantage of that right. The Evangelical (Lutheran) as well as the Mennonite villagers were obligated to pay the tithe and all other dues to the Catholic Church and the charge for a plot in the churchyard for funerals was particularly steep. The old cemetery surrounding the church, which was once established by the founding settlers at the time the church was built and raised later on, was almost at capacity. In the previous three hundred years the cemetery was sufficient for Petershagen, which had only a small chapel, Tiegenhagen, whose church had its 4 *Hufen*, and Altendorf. Nevertheless, how the area has grown as a result of the new Mennonite settlements! Therefore, a new graveyard was established on the church's land next to the old "*Gottesacker*" (God's Acre). In view of the many past floods, this cemetery was raised even higher than the old one by obtaining the necessary soil from the adjoining land. The paper (*Volksmund*) called it "*Elf-Doerfer-Kirchhof*" (the Eleven-Village-Cemetery) because it was to serve as the final resting place for the inhabitants of eleven communities. These were the communities: Tiegenhagen, Petershagen, Reimerswalde, Tiegerweide, Platenhof, Pletzendorf, Altendorf, Petershaegnerfeld, Haberhorst, Stobbendorf and Neuendorf. The 11 mayors of these villages formed the "Church Society for the New Tiegenhagen Cemetery", in which our mayor was the job calculator and maintained the cash book. This society of 11 communities, was responsible for the payment of the yearly feudal dues (*Grundzins*) to the church and the maintenance of the cemetery land and fencing. The costs were divided up among the individual communities according to the number of *Hufen*, collected by each mayor, delivered to the head mayor from Tiegenhagen, and he gave a yearly accounting to a gathering of the society, either in January or February. Today there are nine communities who have ownership of the new cemetery and share in the maintenance responsibility. Tiegerweide amalgamated with Reimerswalde, Haberhorst joined Stobbendorf, Petershaegnerfeld was split between Petershagen and Tiegenhof, and Neuendorf united with Tiegenort. With that, Tiegenhof became a member of the society, thus, nine villages belong to it and the paper now talks about the "Nine-Village-Cemetery".

For the Evangelicals (Lutheran) and Mennonites, the charges for the plots in the cemetery were very steep and so one can easily understand their desire for their own cemetery (*Gottesacker*) and church. This, however, was not yet the time for that, because horribly difficult years followed the first years: the Swedish-Polish wars from 1625 to 1635, from 1655 to 1660 and from 1700 to 1718. Before going into more detail about these most stressful times, there will be additional reporting on the pledge holders of the Tiegenhof administrative district and the suffering through religious persecution that our Mennonite villagers had to endure.

The Weiher had been pledge holders of our ancestral village since 1578. In 1625 that was no longer the case, rather the Dutch man Jacob Jacobson, a citizen of Danzig since 1623 and money lender or money man there, was their successor. The Prussian groups did not want a foreigner and protested against that at the Warsaw *Reichstag*. Even so, their efforts were for naught, because the son, Abraham Jacobsen, was given the Tiegenhof administrative district. However, the protesters did not relent and finally their urging of the Polish aristocrat to give the pledge to a native-born person, was successful. The district was taken from Abraham Jacobson and for 200,000 *Gulden* (florin) pledged to Christoph Gembicki, Gnesen's steward, in 1654 and in 1676 Andreas Gembicki was named as pledge holder.

In the case of all these pledges or liens it was continually emphasized that Tiegenhof etc belonged to the Marienburg administrative district, wasn't an independent territory (1645) and was part of the "Royal Domain" (*Koeniglichen Tafelguetern* 1649). In 1671 the status groups wanted to redeem the pledged area, but King Michael I would not allow it. However, King John III Sobieski, at the *Reichstag* in Grodno in 1679, did not give in to the request, until he received the permission for the encashment. In spite of all the hardships during that era, Tiegenhof and the other villages in our region must have been exceedingly prosperous to be able to cash out the leased land of the Mennonites to the pledge holders and consequently also earn great sums of money for the king. In the same way as the previous owner, the king would now own and bequeath our territory, as had been determined by the *Reichstag*, and after King John's death in 1696, his sons Jacob and Konstantin were his successors. They were followed by the Marienwille Monastery in Warsaw, which in turn pledged our villages to the Polish king.

How much this frequent change in governance, with the constant need to renew contracts, probably will have cost our forefathers! Imagine what they would have had to do, using hard work and good management, in order to remain prosperous through it all, as the history from that time indicates! Also, how they must have yearned to be rid of this forced tenancy, and longed for Kulmer ownership, which their ancestors from the era of the Teutonic Order had possessed and a few of their neighbours still held.

In spite of all the nice promises in the contracts with our Mennonite village inhabitants and the promise of freedom from all encumbrances in religious matters, the Bishop of Kulm, already in 1608, commanded the Anabaptists (*Wiedertaefer*) to disappear. He saw them not so much as a religious adversary, but much more as a national enemy against whom one had to use all manner of course of action. In this matter the Danzig council came to their defense, by clarifying for him the monetary benefits (*Geldnutzen*) from the Mennonites, so that he accepted it without protest. They now enjoyed peace until 1642.

Then it happened, however, that the chamberlain [Wigbold] von Haxberg was able to surreptitiously obtain a directive from King Wladyslaw IV of Poland, whereby the Anabaptist

sects whose trade and commerce interfered with that of other subjects, be treated with all-out severity and their property seized immediately. Haxberg received these properties as a gift from the king and threatened all owners with eviction unless they immediately paid him a ransom for the permission to continue to remain there! So also, he blackmailed Tiegenhagen for 150 florins for each *Hufe*! His haul in the Tiegenhof district was 80,000 florins. And even then, it was not enough! He promised them a new privilege from the king, for which they had to pay 1000 florins. When nothing resulted from that, the Mennonites petitioned the king, and the Prussian groups complained about the extortions as well. Finally, in 1642, he renewed their former privileges in return for a new demand for a high fee. Naturally, there was no hope of a punishment for the extortionist, because the king had profited from all of it. Haxberg even continued with his oppression, despite the renewed privileges! In 1649 he had to be paid a large sum of money again; he demanded two Hungarian *Gulden* for each *Hufe*.

Now however, King John II Casimir of Poland assumed the throne. In 1650 he freed them from all the levies, prohibited any more extortions or oppressive acts and confirmed all the old freedoms and privileges.

Peace did not last long with the onset of persecution by the Catholic clergy. The *Werder* region was to become Polish and the Bishop of Ermland wanted to get a court order requiring the Anabaptists to leave their land entirely within three years. However, Casimir recognized how detrimental an exodus of the Tiegenhof district inhabitants would be to him, so he arranged that from now on, any order against the industrious Mennonites, sent from the Royal Chancellery, was no longer valid! Still the clergy frequently incited them, unleashed a storm of protest against the Mennonites in the Prussian parliaments, but the kings, for a start, had recognized the beneficial value of Mennonites to the country and not least of all to their own revenues. Therefore, all harassment was unsuccessful.

It was previously reported that the dues from our Evangelical and Mennonite forefathers to the Catholic Church were very high. They had patiently tolerated this the whole time, so as not to irritate the clergy even more. However, now that they were more confident of the king's favour, they complained to the king about the high church dues. He appointed a commission, under the direction of the chairman of the Kulmer bishops, to settle the matter. In the so called "Malachowski Accord of February 6th, 1677" certain statements were set down in writing by the commission, the most important ones are being cited here:

1. "The parish priest shall collect the tithe owed by the parish members and inhabitants of the village, from every village mayor within the two weeks after the feast of Saint Martin [November 11] in the form of good quality grain, according to how much God has blessed them, in fact, a good profitable measure.
2. There is a charge of 2 Polish florins, coins that are viable in the *Werder* (15 *Groschen* from the poor), for weddings or marriages. This is to be paid to the parish priest if a marriage

certificate is received from him or his vicar, rather than giving him meat and beer as had been done in the past.

3. For carrying out a baptism [or, in the case of a Mennonite, a birth], the *Werder* villagers, and as previously mentioned, if they receive

a certificate, shall pay the parish priest 1 florin 15 *Groschen*.

4. When a corpse, at whatever location, is buried and a Lutheran (Mennonite) minister conducts a memorial service, the minister shall receive 2 florins for the funeral, but only 1 florin if there is no service with the burial. 10 *Groschen* shall be paid before the death knell.

5. The *Werder* inhabitants also promise to give the following, in due time during Christmas, according to custom and produce of good quality:

The parish priest: a dried boar's head, a *Bratwurst* (sausage), a pig's foot, a bowl of peas, half an allotment of salt, a round of home-baked bread and 15 candles.

The schoolmaster: half of a boar's head, a *Bratwurst* (sausage), peas, a quarter allotment of salt and 8 candles.

At Eastertime and on the Feast Day of Saint Vitus (June 15th): 15 eggs and a round of home-baked bread for the parish priest; 8 eggs and 1 bread for the schoolmaster.

6. Beyond that, the inhabitants of both the *Kleinwerder* and the *Grosswerder* also promise to provide the schoolmaster with the following support: yearly, at the tithing time, a quarter allotment of rye from every household, as well as 2 *Groschen* every three months from each adjoining house, 1 ½ *Groschen* from every cottager with his own garden, and 1 *Groschen* from a cottager renting his garden. These are to be given to the church elders who will pass them on to the schoolmaster."

Much was gained through this settlement, though the joy over the hard-earned achievements was short lived because new repressive orders lay ahead as early as the following year, 1678. However, King John II Casimir granted his "money providers" (*Geldlieferanten*) special protection and in 1694 confirmed the freedoms and rights that they had received in the first agreements. Of course, their obligation to maintain the dikes under the direction of the *Gross Werder* District, remained.

Then a new enemy of the Mennonites emerged in the person of the Bishop of Ermland. They, the "Germans", were to be driven off the land (*Tafelguetern*) or in exchange for the right to remain, pay a three-fold head tax as well as perform all the other services and in their treatment, they were to be ranked lower than the Jews and gypsies!

The hatred of the Polish clergy towards the Mennonites simply knew no boundaries, despite all the advantages they had because of their tireless hard work. Yet, in 1732, 1736 and 1764 all their rights and privileges were restored to them, though they were restricted to farming and cottagers operating small shops (*Hakenbuednerei*); the brewing of beer was forbidden.

As was already mentioned once before, since their immigration, our Mennonite village forefathers strove to have their own church building and cemetery (*Gottesacker*). Finally, in 1768, that is almost 200 years later, their wish was fulfilled: In a document issued on June 17th, 1768 in Althaus, Bishop Andreas Baier of Culm authorised them to construct proper buildings out of wood for their church services, but they were not to outclass the appearance of residential buildings. The frame church they were allowed to build was 40 Ells (.6 meter) long, 20 wide and 7 high, with the chancel and chimney, a roof made of reeds and straw, as well as simple windows and doors. As a return service for the permission granted, they were obligated to renovate the Catholic Chapel in Petershagen. Their small church on the bank of the Tiege River was then probably built with much joy and love and area for the cemetery laid out. This church stood until 1892, when room had to be made for the new, much larger church. The Catholic Chapel, that stood next to the Priebesch Nailsmithery in Petershagen, has disappeared. Only the elevated land where the chapel stood remains and is referred to in the paper (*Volksmunde*) as the chapel mount (*Kapellenberg*).

Now to the hardships that our village forefathers had to experience during the three Swedish-Polish wars and thereafter the floods that they fortunately overcame.



On July 5th, 1626 Swedish King Gustav II Adolf landed at Pillau, captured Marienburg, and occupied Neuteich and also our Tiegenhof district. Of course, he did not find any resistance here; as early as July 16th, the dike administration (jury) of the *Gross Werder* District had already paid homage to him. After victorious battles, he left his troops in the *Werder* and

departed Tiegenhof on November 5th via the Tiege River, on his way to Sweden. After the king's departure, the Polish troops gathered their courage and began advancing. Because of illness, the Swedish troops retreated to the Elbing district and Marienburg, and now the Polish forces invaded the *Werder*, robbing and plundering. Tiege, especially, suffered serious damage on December 27th. Now the dike administrators were asked to swear an oath to the Polish Imperial Field Marshal. They refused and, as a penalty, were forced to make a payment in order to avoid further predation in the villages. In spite of the fact that 2/3 of the money was paid immediately, the Polish forces continued robbing and plundering, so that the inhabitants of the *Werder* were hardly able to still make the last third of the payment at the beginning of 1627. In addition, the Swedish troops entered the land, needless to say, also robbing and plundering. They got as far as Altebabke and Groschenkampe and there was no end to the raiding and looting until King Gustav II Adolf's return in May of 1627.

The entire war year of 1627 was a difficult year for our *Werder* homeland, because the Swedish king's troops had to be housed and supported. The situation became more dire yet, when the king returned to Sweden in November and winter quarters were required for his troops that were left behind. Cossacks, Poles, Danzig troops and true robber bands invaded and looted throughout the land, taking whatever was still left. Finally, relief arrived on March 18th, 1628: a cease-fire! However, friendly and enemy forces had wreaked the most dreadful havoc throughout the country! Our homeland was so devastated that the Swedes no longer found anything there and had to import grain from Stockholm for their use.

The provisional truce was finally followed by the six-year long cease-fire at Altmark on September 6th, 1628. During this period of time, our ancestral village was put under the administration of Georg Wilhelm, the Elector of Brandenburg. This chapter ended in 1634 and Tiegenhof returned to Polish control.

Soon our hard-working villagers overcame the fear, looting and theft from the years of this war and prosperity began to return. The old Order privilege of using their own vehicles to transport their grain to market had continued under the Polish kings, and it now proved to be very useful for them.

1655 signalled the beginning of the second Swedish-Polish War and it brought unspeakable tribulation and hardship. Our homeland was so devastated by the warring factions, that they had to resort to eating meat from horses, cats and dogs. During the war years, no-one cared about their agreements guaranteeing freedom from providing accommodation for troops and homesteads were willfully or vengefully torched, if a raid was unsuccessful or unproductive. The Treaty of Oliva on May 3rd, 1660 brought an end to all the suffering with an "everlasting peace".

These horrible war years had led to the nearly complete dissolution of our fire mutual aid fund, after having had such a beneficial influence till then. An old record book of fires reported the following:

“The Great Elector of Brandenburg fought for Sweden against the Poles in the battle at Warsaw. Therefore, the Poles now retaliated and devastated all German land, also entering the territory that had membership in our mutual aid fund, where they perpetrated many acts of arson. The raids and looting left our brothers so impoverished that it was no longer possible for them to make the fire insurance payments. However, on June 9th and 16th, 1664, at a meeting of mayors at the home of Heinrich Albert in Reimerswalde, our valued fire mutual aid fund was reinstated and it was decided that all the fires up to that date could not be recompensed, since almost all members of the fund had lost their possessions during the war and had sunk into poverty. However, they vowed that beginning now, they were again going to extend their hand in love to each other and faithfully comply with what had been agreed to in the past by their forefathers.”

On June 21st, 1664 the simple assessment of burnt furnishings ended and from now on the fire claimant was to receive 6 Marks of compensation for every *Morgen* that was insured.

“Everlasting peace” was introduced with the Treaty of Oliva in 1660. Even if the peace was not “everlasting”, it did last for 40 years and soon prosperity returned to our home village again. What abject misery was then brought upon the villagers during the third war, beginning in 1700!

By the third year of the war, the *Werder* could no longer pay its taxes. The king had to exempt our villagers and the whole of the Marienburg administrative district (*Starostei*), his best “money providers” of all time, of half of the taxes on their land (*Hufen*) and all other dues, in order to save them from destruction. How many more years of suffering followed until 1715 when the war finally ceased in our region! In 1705 the Poles and Saxons captured Marienburg from the Swedes and before long the Polish armed gangs arrived in the Tiegenhof area, hauled away livestock and grain, looted everything that they could carry off and on top of that, extorted 11 florins per *Hufe* from our villagers. In 1706 the Swedes were back, did very similar things and coerced them to pay a lot of money. The year 1709 brought a damaging frost and the plague, which raged on into 1710 and sacrificed an awful lot of human lives. Up until 1715 we find Poles, Saxons and Russians alternately passing through our area, extorting money, grain and livestock. November 18th, 1716 finally brought our village deliverance from all the suffering: the peace agreement was signed in Warsaw!

What heavy sacrifices those years had demanded of the *Werder* region and our ancestral village and what sacrifices the Polish king now expected in 1718, so that he could pay off his imperial army! The *Werder* was to procure 25,313 florins and our Tiegenhof district was responsible for 3,034 of them, based on the order from the dike administrators.

Above and beyond that, Tiegenhagen was hit with a particularly painful stroke of fate. All the documents of our village were lost during the war years, including the Teutonic Order constitution with its rights and freedoms, as well as the affirmation of the latter by the Polish kings. Tiegenhagen followed Kulmisch law and was declared a long-term pledge holder (*zeitemphyteutisches*), a tenant village (*Paechterdorf*)! All Kulmisch freedoms, such as jurisdiction over their mayoral court, the right to ownership similar to the last Koellmish farmers from the era of the Teutonic Order, and the right to independently sell their products in Danzig, were to end and additionally, noticeably higher dues were to follow. However, our forefathers did not give in that easily! In the succeeding peaceful years, they did not relent in engaging in legal actions to regain the village's Kulmisch freedoms from the king, but had to sprinkle money wherever to sweeten the process. On November 14th, 1766, King Stanislaus II Augustus of Poland re-established the old Kulmisch rights for Tiegenhagen and some of its neighbours, returning to *Koelmisch* hereditary justice. The king's ruling, which was won after a long process requiring courage and good faith, was known as "*Privileg*" (Privilege). Aside from the restoration of the *Koelmisch* Rights and Freedoms, it outlined the following:

"that the owners of the 55 *Hufen* 27 *Morgen* should pay their taxes (interest) in two installments. 4 *Hufen* are designated for the minister and will remain as such. The owner of 3 *Hufen* which was rent-free till now (the old Koellmer homesteads!) should pay 36 florins per *Hufe* from now on; the owners of 5 *Hufen* 12 *Morgen* 225 *Quadrat-Ruten*, who paid 67 florins 7 ½ *Groschen* before, should now pay 36 florins per *Hufe* yearly; the owners of 11 *Hufen* of lowland should pay 55 florins per *Hufe* annually and finally, the owners of 36 *Hufen* 14 *Morgen* 75 *Quadrat-Ruten* should pay 60 florins annually. If the mayor, who is intitled to six free *Hufen*, is not making use of them, the village will get 3 free *Hufen* in the future and the mayor can get an immediate 36 florins per *Hufe* reduction on his other taxes. Each owner must provide 40 wooden piles for the maintenance of the big Vistula dike and hammer them down at the dike, as well as provide 70 *Fuder* shrubs for the dike and weigh them down with soil as per the instructions of the dike administrators. They also had to pay the *Gross Werder* Dike Association (*Kommune*) an annual fee of 2 florins per *Hufe* for the upkeep of the dike. When there are breaches at the Vistula and Nogat, they carry the same responsibility to repair the breach as all the other *Koellmisch* owners. It is their responsibility to maintain the walls and embankments within their territory. If these, however, suffer a breach or are damaged, the whole dike community should repair the breach or restore ruined walls and dikes if there were to be a flood. They are to be free of all other dike duties and in the case of a flood, after an investigation, their dike duties and taxes are to be reduced."

What jubilation this “*Privileg*” (Privilege) probably triggered among our villagers! The *Koellmisch* rights and freedoms were fought for and hard-earned again, for the village and each individual homestead, and the dike responsibility was finally settled. The *Koellmisch* hereditary justice (*Erbgerechtigkeit*) for the Mennonite homesteads, the Dutch *Hufen*, had not yet been arrived at but that couldn’t detract from everyone’s happiness and joy. Tiegenhagen was again a shining example of self-sacrificing solidarity, faithful to the ideals of the forefathers who forged a bond of love when they founded the fire mutual aid fund.

The liberation from a forced tenancy towards *koellmisch* ownership was to remain reserved for our Hohenzollerns.

An earlier segment already reported on our village’s Order Inn, which was replaced by our hotel or tavern “*Zum kleinen Hollaender*” (the small Dutchman) at the same location. During the Polish era, the tavern was renamed; “*Pisskrug*” (probably because of “pivo” beer) was the name used in documents. It is hard to tell whether that name was meant to convey a judgement call on the quality of the locally brewed and served beer.

The second Order Inn, located in the most northerly corner of the village territory, did good business during and after the founding of Tiegenort. Now, also during the Polish era, its leaseholders earned good money from the Mennonite settlement encroaching on the east. The first and subsequent excavations of the ditch or artificial watercourse affected the wallet of the leaseholders in no small way. This outlet, next to the tavern, discharged the water from the Linau River on the Tiegenhagen and Tiegenort boundary into the Tiege River, and the watergate that was built there led to the inn’s name “*Gasthaus zur Schleuse*” (Inn at the Watergate).

On May 1st, 1765 a third tavern was established in Tiegenhagen, “*Der rothe Schacht*” (The Red Chamber), and was located on the same land as the present day “*Knipsbiedel*” (nickname: brandy pouch) on the Tiege River. Part of that building has been incorporated into the ferry boat-house located there. Its certificate of incorporation can be found in the Tiegenhagen documents from May 1st and reads as follows:

“From the land designated for the clergy, Juergen Joseph Cienski, Canon in Gnesen and a provost in Braunsberg and Tiegenhagen leased Paul Claassen 7 *Morgen* of land for 20 years (1765-1785), giving him and his descendants a license to bake bread there, brew beer and vinegar, sell flour, linen, woolens etc., make malt and groats, distill brandy and open an inn or tavern and so on. The yearly rent of 86 florins was to be paid in two installments. He is to be free from work at the castle or as an occasional day labourer on a farm but is liable for the clergy payment. With the knowledge and blessing of the minister, he can leave the land to a third person. Should God punish with water, then he shall pay rent according to a determination by two impartial people.”

The waste water from the brewery and brandy distillery of the new pub "*Der rothe Schacht*" was not dumped directly into the Tiege River, rather into a special ditch that was part of the drainage channels along our village boundary. Even today a portion of this drainage ditch remains and is referred to as the "*Schaempergraben*" in the paper (*Dorfsmunde*).

Our current hotel "*Zum kleinen Hollaender*" was built on the former location of the old Order Inn, "*the Pisskrug*". It is impossible to know if the old Order Inn fell into disrepair or burned down. According to stories told by its reconstructor, who was a Mennonite, therefore Dutch (*Hollaender*), the hotel received its name in the same way as one still occasionally talks about "*hollaendischen Hufen*" (Dutch *Hufen*). Another report points out that it was named after a special type of boat that in the past was called a "*Hollaender*". That particular sailboat in the form of a weathervane adorns the gable of the hotel even today.

The hotel has always been a tavern for mariners, at which every barge liked to dock. Often up to 6 horses were available in the guest stable, which the innkeeper kept ready for towages and which earned him a pretty penny. A nail smithery was even established on the yard by one of the farmers, and its products were very much sought after by the boatmen. In 1829 a corn windmill was built on this man-made hill, giving that corner of the village a particularly beautiful scenic charm, the innkeeper a larger income, and our Tiegenhagen villagers many a convenience. Next to the church with its clergy, the big windmill (*De grote Moehl*) was one of the village's landmarks. Unfortunately, after its almost one-hundred-year existence (1928) the mill was demolished by the innkeeper, to the sorrow of all the villagers. From the soil of the hill on which the windmill stood, there arose the Port Committee for the restoration of the Tiege dike.

The hardships endured by our Tiegenhagen forefathers during the Polish era, that were resultant from their struggle to retain their religious freedoms, freedoms regarding military service and their village rights, have been described, but the water problems should not be overlooked.

During the first one hundred years after the establishment of our village, the dike breaches on the Vistula and Nogat Rivers occurred with a similar frequency. The Nogat River, however, when it became the main river channel later, caused most of the flooding from which our ancestral land suffered often enough. There were several main contributing factors for the many breaches on the Nogat River, which, in and of themselves were not particularly applicable to the estuary arm. These factors include the rising elevation of the river bed, the large bends in the dikes, the Vistula Lagoon (*das Haff*) with its long remaining ice cover, a shortage of outer dikes, swells, damage caused by wars, a lack of money and not lastly, the ongoing sedimentation in the Vistula Delta.

Let's look at the series of floods that occurred in our village: 1466, 1472, 1526 (caused by a breach at Schoeneberg on March 15th, whose closure was delayed 5 years), 1595, 1602, 1607,

1612, 1617 and 1622. In the latter year a breach developed at Wernersdorf and another one in the Elbing Vistula dike at Kuechwerder. The resultant flooding was so devastating that the walls of the western expansion of our church caved in and the walls as well as the entire roof framework had to be reconstructed. Flooding also occurred in the years 1652, 1661, 1668, 1669, 1673 and 1674. In the latter year the Vistula broke through the dike at Schoeneberg again, and the breach was not repaired for 7 years. As a result, historical records describe 1674, 1675, 1677, 1679 and 1680 as the worst time, in their memory, of adversity caused by flooding. The breach brought about a thorough re-examination of the existence of the fire mutual aid fund since “our *Werder* has become a wasteland and complete villages are uninhabited, because the villagers were forced to leave their homes”.

All village mayors gathered on July 22nd, 1681 at the home of Nickel Reimer in Tiegenhagen. All the neighbouring villages had elected him as chairman of the organization, acclaimed him and decided and committed themselves anew to the bond of love of their forefathers. The redevelopment process of the mutual aid fund soon led to improvements; in 1701 und 1702 regulations (*Hilfsfuhrordnungen*) to manage the assistance were established, with the purpose of helping the victims source the building materials as quickly as possible. The alliances (*Verbuendnis*) among villages were worked out and finalized as follows: Tiegenhagen, Platenhof, Reimerswalde and Tiegerweide on December 24th, 1701; Schoeneberg, Schoensee and Neunhuben on December 20th, 1701; Gross-Brunau, Klein-Brunau and Jankendorf on December 19th, 1701; Orloff, Orloffsfeld and Siebenhuben on May 16th, 1702; Marienau, Rueckenau, Tiege and Ladekopp on May 17th, 1702. On June 19th, 1702 Altendorf, Stobbendorf and Haberhorst finalized their alliance. What a blessing this improvement, together with the fire mutual aid fund would turn out to be in the centuries that followed, and continues to be even to the present day!

September 23rd, 1728 was another important day in the evolution of our fire mutual aid fund. Not only was the fire damage compensation assessed at 180 Marks per *Hufe*, but differentiated amounts were decided upon for different building types. The house with its furnishings was assessed and compensated at 350 Marks per *Hufe*, the barn at 230 Marks per *Hufe* and the stall and outbuildings at 200 Marks per *Hufe*. Separate insurance for individual buildings was not yet available and the size of the property (number of *Morgen* and *Hufen*) was and remained the measure used to determine the fire insurance fees and the monetary compensation received.

Till then the administrators of the fire mutual aid fund always held their consultations in the village of their chairman, Tiegenhagen, but after 1730 they took place in the Big Tavern (*Grossen Krüge*) in Tiegenhof. Nevertheless, meetings after a fire were naturally still held at the site of the fire. For fire events in the Danzig and Marienburger districts, 2 to 3 officials were sent to investigate the respective damage.

Major damaging water events happened in the years 1689, 1693, 1700 and 1709, but 1716 and 1717 were particularly devastating. All the land was covered with a high-water level, even extending into May. 1718, 1737, 1742, 1744, 1745, 1749 and 1750 were years that produced horrible floods. These periods of flooding continued into the Prussian period.

The disastrous floods between the years 1736 until 1749 put a heavy strain on the fire mutual aid fund and once again put in danger its continued existence. Living for long periods of time on the floors of the houses led to many a fire and the poverty of many members meant it was a struggle to collect the fees. On top of that, as the fire record books indicate, the mayors have, for 16 years, not dutifully inspected the chimneys and fire fighting equipment, and as a result may have some culpability for certain fires. On November 5th, 1751, however, the members who were in default of making their payments, were firmly dealt with, and certain names removed from the membership as a consequence. All fire damage could receive compensation and the requests for memberships from all over were so numerous, that on January 28th, 1757, it had to be decided that new applications for insurance could no longer be accepted from areas beyond the Vistula and Nogat Rivers. This was done so as not to make the administration more difficult because of the vastness of the area. New memberships were no longer to be allowed from the cities of Neuteich and Marienburg, because one had to count on potential fire events there, for which the fund could not shoulder the financial burden.

Peace reigned in the country since 1716, and despite all of the many floods, the results of which Tiegenhagen, using its five waterwheels, worked hard to try to get under control, and also despite the bad government, the exploitation and religious persecution, our ancestral village soon achieved prosperity again. The soil produced in great abundance and the merchants in Danzig, with all their vast foreign trading connections, bought everything at high prices, whatever products our forefathers could get there, by way of our convenient waterways. A never expected life of luxury arose throughout the *Werder*, to the point that dike administrators felt compelled to appeal to the administration in Marienburg to impose a clothing policy. In 1681 (that is right after the second war!) the girls in the *Werder* were forbidden from copying the large city fashions: the wearing of silk and satin dresses, gold-embroidered bonnets, gold and silver lace and trim and edging on dresses. This would result in the loss of the article of clothing and a 20 *Taler* fine! And how might this luxury have been viewed during the prosperity of the many peaceful years!

On August 5th, 1772 the First Partition of Poland occurred and on September 13th Prussian soldiers of Frederick II (Frederick the Great, “der Alte Fritz”) entered into Marienburg: Tiegenhagen became Prussian, a new era had begun! The Tiegenhof district was not simply taken away from the last pledge holder, on the contrary, on November 29th, 1774 the pledge was redeemed for 17.35 *Reichstaler* 16 *Groschen*, and the Tiegenhof administrative district became one domain. There was a sigh of relief with the arrival of Prussian orderliness which

paid attention to the smallest details. However, the high-income producing sources of our Tiegenhagen villagers were now tightly controlled.

King Frederick II (*der Alte Fritz*) immediately blocked the boundary in the direction to Danzig. Tiegenhagen's village boundary, the embankment, became the border, and the Inn at the Watergate (*Gasthaus zur Schleuse*) became the border crossing point with Prussian customs officials who sought only, to bring the highest honour to their king. Frederick II imposed high export duties on products, in order to weaken Danzig's reputation as a trading centre and instead, make Elbing the Prussian city for trade. However, Elbing had almost no trading connections with other countries, and our forefathers had to take a punishing from the lack of sales of their good quality grain and the fractional amount of the payments in Elbing and Marienburg, as compared to what they had been paid in Danzig. Their right and privilege to conduct their trade, during the Teutonic Order and Polish eras, had ceased to exist. In addition, flooding also set in immediately in 1780, 1782, 1783 and 1786, causing major field and crop damage and heavy financial losses. Our village suffered the most, with flooding extending into June, so that three families surrendered their homesteads and in turn, Frederick the Great sent three Prussian settlers to our village. Tiegenhagen, though, also decided to make a move that will be reported on later.

Soon brighter, better years followed the initial dark, difficult years under Prussian rule and prosperity returned to everyone. Because America severed ties with England, Danzig's trade partner, Elbing's foreign trade increased, and the prices also climbed upwards, almost to the previous level.

A report will follow on how Prussia's king also provided for Tiegenhagen, through his public policies, rights and obligations.

The landowner relationships were regulated as early as 1772. The land was divided into 3 categories based on the quality of the land and soil and the following determination of the tax rate was made, whereby particular value would be given to the road connections. The tax to be paid on the best *Hufen* was 8 to 10 *Taler*, 3 *Taler* 14 *Groschen* 4.8 *Pfennig* for the average *Hufen* and 2 *Taler* for the poor *Hufen*. The taxes imposed on each of our three taverns were 8 good *Groschen* per barrel of beer and 12 *Groschen* for one eighth of a barrel of brandy. Now Tiegenhagen's villagers were receiving the benefits of their forefathers' struggle for the rights and freedoms of the village: it was stated that "*Koellmern*" fully owned their property and that they received the patronage rights to the Evangelical school.

At that time there wasn't an Evangelical school in our village yet, in contrast to the long existent Catholic School which belonged to the Catholic Church. Yet, in October 1780 a new village policy for West Prussia was issued with an admonition preceding it, to encourage children to attend school, to raise them in a God-fearing manner, and to teach them to obey the

authorities. Immediately a schoolroom was set up in the small cottage belonging to the farm owners' cooperative. An itinerant teacher then served our school, alternately with a school in Tiegerweide. However, the "schoolroom" was in a most deplorable shape, close to collapsing, and the children and teacher feared for their lives. Then in 1815, the school was housed at the master carpenter Lepke, who served as "*Einpauker*" (lecturer) as well. In 1819 that "*Schulkate*" (school cottage) burned down and the farm owners' cooperative built a new school between the Tiege dike and village road (*Dorfweg*) and hired Gottlieb Hecker from Krebsfelde as its teacher. That building was the Evangelical school for our village until 1925.

As had been achieved for the free *Koellmisch* villagers, the land ownership problem was also immediately settled for our Mennonite villagers, the long-term leaseholders (*Zeitemphyteuten*), thereby fulfilling their centuries long yearning. After the lease period in the old contract expired, the Prussian kings could not demand any more buy-in money, so they were finally free owners of their land and property.

Promptly, Frederick the Great instituted a new tax in return for the military service exemption of our Mennonite villagers. The West Prussian Mennonites had to make an annual payment of 5000 Talers to the Culm Military School, in return for a release from military service and because of their withdrawal from the defense of their country. Now there was talk in Tiegenhagen about "*kantonfreien Grundstuecken*" (canton-free districts, free from military service). In order to prevent the number of these canton-free districts from increasing, Mennonites were not allowed to purchase homesteads belonging to people of other faiths. Exceptions were only allowed when a seller from a "*kantonpflichtige*" (with mandatory military service) territory retained enough land to support himself and his family, in other words, he must continue living on a portion of his property. An exception was also made if the sale would free the seller from his debt, but even then, the king gave his approval only if the seller had enough money left over from the sale to re-establish his homestead. Mennonite newcomers were allowed into Prussia if they brought with them a minimum of 2000 *Taler*. However, they and their sons born out of the marriage were entitled to freedom from military service if they purchased a Mennonite farmstead (ie. *kantonfrei*) which already had that right. As per the statutory orders from 1775 and 1777, our Tiegenhagen canton-free farmsteads had to make payments to the Catholic Church for baptisms, marriages and deaths, the surplice fees according to their assets, the parish taxes and in addition the tithe of produce ("*Kalende*"). Whoever of the Mennonites voluntarily and dutifully served in the army, could acquire land anywhere and did not have to make the annual lump sum payment to the Culm Military School.

All these restrictions, which also remained in place for our Mennonites under King Frederick Wilhelm II of Prussia in the Edict [concerning future regulation of Mennonite life] from July 30th, 1789, made it almost impossible to plan for the future of their sons and daughters. Many new, small farmsteads gradually arose within our village district as a result of this forced apportionment! The number of farmsteads almost doubled and there was a strong growth in

the number of inhabitants. But it was all to no avail, the canton-free territory was no longer adequate and repeated efforts to appeal to the king to loosen the restrictions were fruitless. Around 1800, an initial large emigration of Mennonite families from our ancestral village to South Russia began. The Russian government offered them an area along the Dnjepr River that was similar to their former homeland and since 1805 there arose in the region around Melitopol, the flourishing village of Tiegenhagen.

What was the local government like in our village? In 1780, as already mentioned, Frederick the Great had issued a new village policy for West Prussia. The village mayor with his two councilmen remained as it had been since the time of the Teutonic Order. It was the mayor's job to pronounce the governmental regulations and monitor their execution, carry out pledges or seizures, report bad innkeepers, and review and revise animal husbandry, stables, buildings and firefighting equipment. His work was also reviewed by the administrative officials from Marienburg, who showed up biannually and also provided support.

Under such an orderly system, which stood the fire mutual aid fund in good stead, fire compensation money (also called fire treasure) was rarely paid out and it wasn't surprising that the level of prosperity continued to rise, especially after Danzig was incorporated into Prussia, and the tariff barriers disappeared, creating an enormous increase in market opportunities.

It was a matter of course, during the Prussian times, that the supervision of the dikes was carried on with precision and diligence. Even so, the flooding from the Nogat River continued and naturally the water damage from the Vistula River was also present. The terrible flood years were 1780, 1782, 1783 and 1786. Nevertheless, our Tiegenhagen villagers did not want to see their prosperity decrease because of that. The floods inspired them to protect their land by all available means and find ways of draining the water as fast as possible.

Their Tiege dam and its five wind powered waterwheels had been kept in exemplary order throughout the centuries. The artificial watercourse was maintained by the Linau dike association; after all it was their drainage ditch. During the many years after its first excavation in the middle of the 16th century, it had been trenched and built up again several times (in 1718/1719 and 1751). They themselves kept the dam at Susz Lake and the green embankment in excellent condition. However, in recent years the flood waters from the Nogat River have impacted us here and gone over the green embankment, covering the fields along Susz Lake. Furthermore, those two embankments were lower than the *Landgraben* dam and naturally, noticeably lower than the Tiege dam.

Shortly after receiving advice from the dike supervisor Wenzel, our Tiegenhagen villagers made a decision to strengthen and raise these two embankments, without approval from the Tiegenhof district official. They stuck their necks out and promised each other they would initiate legal proceedings, since the whole upper Werder region was up in arms against such

autonomy. The court case lasted from 1789 to May 7th, 1844! According to the opinion of the people from the upper *Werder* region, their flood waters could not properly drain over these embankments, resulting in enormous damage, which was precisely what our people wanted to protect themselves from. Bundles of documents accumulated and decisions disadvantageous to our village were rendered. Again and again, however, Tiegenhagen filed an appeal, to be able to benefit from their raised dikes for as long as possible. During that period there were a number of years of terrible floods: 1809, 1813, 1816, 1829 and 1839, when the water rose 11 feet above even the highest ground! This last flood year forced the Linau district authority to add spillways to the Linau embankments. Thereby the danger of flooding from the green embankment and Susz Lake was greatly reduced for our people, and as a result Tiegenhagen quietly accepted the last judgment on November 28th, 1843. Now there was no more talk about lowering the dikes to the old height and our villagers were supposed to create 5 spillways, totaling up to 60 *Ruten*. The locations were then also selected on May 7th, 1844, in the presence of the plaintiff and under the supervision of treasurer Steltner from Tiegenhof, and piles were placed in the prescribed manner to mark the area. For the event of an emergency, Tiegenhagen was obligated to deposit the soil from the area of the established spillways as far as the sunken crossbeam of the wall, onto the village property. To show how far-sighted and sustentative our forefathers were, I want to highlight the following: When Susz Lake was dredged in 1931, they came upon a piece of paving. It was one of those spillways that had been created, with a bottom that was paved, to prevent the flood waters pouring into the spillway from wearing away and breaking its walls! The spillways became redundant when the Vistula Haff Canal was built between 1840 and 1844. Its construction was another reason that our people finally accepted the last judgment in the legal process.

The narration of these processes, which demonstrates how the stubbornness of our Tiegenhagen villagers served the public good of the entire village, has moved the years forward. The last report dealt with the prosperity that returned under Prussian rule. It did not, however, last for all that long because a miserable war arrived and brought the French army and its troops into the country. They crossed over on planks laid on the thin ice of the Nogat River at Marienburg and also entered our village at the beginning of March 1807, where they dwelt for 22 months! It is impossible to list all the oppressive acts during this time. During all the wars that our ancestors lived through, no army rampaged through this area or wreaked as much havoc as was done by Napoleon's army. Listen to what Heinrich Lepp, an eye witness and co-sufferer from that era in our village, has written:

"The quartering of troops begun in 1807 and 1808
cost 3824 florins and 17½ *Pfennig* per *Hube*

For each man, 2 florins daily	1129 florins, 22 ½ <i>Pfennig</i>
439 7/8 horses at 1 florin daily	439 florins, 26 ½ <i>Pfennig</i>
Money paid to the village mayor	753 florins, 11 ¼ <i>Pfennig</i>
per <i>Hube</i>	

For delivered grain	per <i>Hube</i>	469 florins
The livestock delivered	per <i>Hube</i>	647 florins, 26 ¼ <i>Pfennig</i>
<u>The clothing for the French troops</u>	<u>per <i>Hube</i></u>	<u>379 florins, 21 <i>Pfennig</i></u>
The total of the numbers above		3824 florins, 17 ½ <i>Pfennig</i>

This list does not include the horses that were taken. They were taken by force and along with everything else that was stolen, is not included in the accounting. The 67 horses that were supplied, remained with the carts and wagons. 66 head of beef cattle were supplied, but we had to buy many more. The beef cattle cost 18 to 24 *Dukaten* per animal. In addition, we had the misfortune of having an outbreak of the cattle plague and in our village up to 80 head of cattle died. Because of the pestilence, the cattle became very expensive, costing up to 38 *Dukaten*. 23 vehicles have disappeared. We had to pay a fire ransom fee [a ransom to prevent looting and arson] of 30 *Thaler* per *Hufe*. The French troops lived lavishly and the soldiers were big-time racketeers, intent on tormenting us daily. They said that they were accustomed to it, that they wouldn't leave until everything had been consumed and called our little island a "*Schmalzgrube*" (a lard pit or rich land). Nevertheless, we could still do the much-needed cultivation of our fields. In areas where many soldiers were being billeted and there was a shortage of oats, the seeding had to take place under the cover of darkness."

The last of the dairy cattle and pigs belonging to our people were carried off. Even trying to hide them in the furthest corner of the Vistula lagoon was pointless, because young runaway men and farmhands, as well as Poles, who already had always and particularly been eager to work as seasonal labour in our area, and who had joined the French army and become real petty thieves, revealed all the hideouts. The troops stationed in our area were not the only ones fed by our *Werder*, for almost all of the provisions for the main army also came from here. The Treaty of Tilsit on July 9th, 1807 brought peace, but the hordes, drunk with victory, returned to this area, and like locusts (*Heuschrecken* as Lepp referred to them) hauled away the last of the cattle and the new harvest. "Peacetime" turned out to be even more horrific than wartime, with the cattle plagues and diseases introduced by the vanquishers. Finally, the enemies themselves realized there was nothing more to be gained from the "*Schmalzinsel*" (island of lard/riches), and they finally cleared out in November 1808.

"The last ones who were staying with us (writes Lepp) were Hussars, only a small number, but we had to pay 400 florins for wine because they demanded to have many of their foods cooked with wine. The wine that they drank cost 7 florins 18 *Pfennig* per *Butelge* (cylinder). Our oxen and sheep, the last livestock, were slaughtered right in front of our eyes and the horses were forcibly taken and not returned, in spite of our pleas."

Rarely has “Now thank we all our God” (*Nun danket alle Gott*) been sung with such fervour as after the departure of Napoleon’s victorious army!

Difficult times continued for our Tiegenhagen villagers, and poverty remained a guest in every household, due to the very high taxes. The special protection money (*Schutzgeld*) for our Mennonite villagers had even risen eleven-fold. They were fearful of the revocation of their military service exemption and another war – and another immigration to their South Russian brothers in the faith has begun.

Gradually the circumstances improved, however these years of recovery were only short lived, because in 1812 Napoleon’s troops were here again, on their way to Russia.

Everything was carried off again, draining life from our homeland. Several farmers from our village, with their horses and wagons, were even taken as far as Russia.

Heinrich Lepp writes “that our village had quartered (billeted) 34,358 $\frac{3}{4}$ men and as a result spent 3505 *Taler* 16 *gr.* We have to make do without the stolen items that were not included: 11 horses, 99 trace horses (extra), 21 lost wagons, 128 beef cattle, 197 bushels 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ *Metz* flour, 263 bushels 10 *Metz* barley, 2601 bushels oats, 219 bundles of hay, 6806 bundles of straw, 78 bushels 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ *Metz* groats, and 373 bundles of grass.”

The groats (grits) which that chronicler writes about, come from the two groats mills that were in our village at that time. The first one was located in the tavern, “*Der rothe Schacht*”, and the other one in a farmyard along the old Tiege, also known today as “*Krumme Tiege*” (curved Tiege), and behind our former Order Inn “*Zum kleinen Hollaender*” (the small Dutchman). A neighbour held the charter to operate a groat mill on that property since 1799 and made use of it until 1904. The buildings on that yard belong to the oldest in our village and the *Dorfsmund* (newspaper) now still refers to that farmstead as “*Gritterbergmann*” (Bergmann who produces grits).

Poverty reigned in Tiegenhagen in the wake of the invasion by Napoleon’s troops. When the refugees streamed back, in order to find safety and security behind Danzig’s walls, an epidemic (*Fieberseuche*) and the Grim Reaper (*Gevatter Tod*) also returned with gruesome consequences, ending many lives of our inhabitants who had already suffered terribly.

The spring of 1813 also allowed our people, who had had the last life sucked out of them, to make one last sacrifice in their struggle for liberation: food, cattle, grain, clothing and underwear were sent to the besiegers in Danzig and the last valuables to the fatherland. All their suffering and sacrifices had not been in vain: the final victory and peace came, with a renewed flourishing in our *Werder* and also in Tiegenhagen! The allocations from the king were a major reason for the recovery of our village, who, as Heinrich Lepp writes, “in true fatherly

fashion, gradually paid for almost 2/3 of the war burdens suffered by our village and thereby dried many of the tears of his children". In 1835 our village introduced the cultivation of rapeseed, a new source for income and prosperity.

The danger and troubles from the many floods were and remained a concern. In 1840 a breakthrough occurred in the Vistula River near Danzig at Neufaeher creating an opening to the sea and increasingly developing into the main branch of the estuary. The Vistula River at Elbing was gradually silting up, and the shortage of water was threatening to paralyze the busy shipping traffic between Elbing and Danzig. In order to prevent this traffic from dying out and in fact to increase it, the construction of the Vistula Haff Canal was immediately begun in 1840. The route followed from the Vistula at Rothebude to our Tiege River at Platendorf, and also used the Linau River in some places. It was of great benefit to the Linau dike association in helping to manage their water drainage, in that they now had drainage channels for the Tiege River: Proesnik, *Landgraben*, the Vistula Haff Canal. The new shipping lane continued from the Altendorf corner through the Muellerland Canal into the Vistula Lagoon. The work on the canal took until 1844 to complete and also changed our village landscape a lot, because the whole length of the Tiege River, through Tiegenhagen as far as the Inn "Zum kleinen Hollaender", was straightened.

The straightening of the river isolated some areas from the rest of the village: the "*Bergmanns-Busch*" (Bergmann's woodland) behind the inn on the Petershagen side; the church across from the so-called "*Pfarrwaeldchen*" (parish grove); in a southerly direction, "*Der rothe Schacht*" (tavern) soon to be called "*Knipsbiedel*" (brandy pouch) or "*Die Insel*" (the island), together with a small homestead and several *Morgen* belonging to the church; and in the south part of our village near Petershagen, the "*Fleischerbucht*" (butcher's cove). At the "*Knipsbiedel*" they immediately constructed a ferry; the maintenance thereof and the compensation for the ferry operator was the responsibility of the state and is today supported by the Port Committee. The "*Fleischerbucht*" was purchased in 1912 by farmstead owner Johannes Friesen and now belongs to our Tiegenhagen Drainage Association. On this now isolated sweep of the Tiege River, across from the "*Fleischerbucht*", was located our most southerly water wheel, the so called "*Niedermuehle*" (lower mill). Of course, the latter was now condemned to inactivity and became redundant. Therefore, our village now owned only 4 working wind operated waterwheels.

The spring of 1853 brought with constant still air conditions, and our Tiegenhagen land was still completely covered by water in May, while Petershagen, which had already owned a steam powered water wheel since 1846, at that stage was fully drained. Our village also wanted to own such a gem. Abraham Friesen, elected as the treasurer of the Tiegenhagen Drainage Association, on May 31st, 1854 wrote a report, in the newly created cash journal, of the history of the construction of the steam powered water wheel. His report was a compilation from all the people in the area and is worded as follows:

“The desire for a steam powered drainage machine to be built continued to grow. On May 4th, 1853 Mayor Franz Nickel, after consultation with the land steward *Herr Seltner*, sent out the first Call for Tender to carry out this work. It was decided in a 23 for and 17 against vote that a steam powered drainage machine was to be built, in fact, with 30 horse power and an approximate price determination of 12,000 *Taler*. The construction representatives included the following people from the area: Abraham Friesen, Jakob Staess, Heinrich Adrian, Peter Nickel, Heinrich Lepp, and Jakob Froese from the Susz Lake area. One of the locals, Cornelius Wiens, was named as the bookkeeper. A second deliberation took place on May 11th at which several fellow villagers joined the original group and later Jakob Froese and particularly Heinrich Lepp gathered a few more signatures. In total, 40 villagers had signed up, seven held off on signing.

During this period of time, the weather cooperated most favourably for the attaining of our goal, for we often had rain with predominantly calm winds and high water in the Tiege River. We only had a little bit of wind during the last days of May, and on the night of May 27th the waterwheels worked properly for the first time this spring. We had just about envisioned that the lowlands would again be flooded with the arrival of a downpour accompanied by strong thunderstorms on May 28th. Everyone worked feverishly to carry out the accepted project through to completion. The hydraulic engineer from Rothebude and the land steward *Herr Steltner* from Tiegenhof had initiated the preliminary work to obtain the construction agreement. On June 19th a contract was agreed to with the mechanical engineer *Herr Schichau* from Elbing, for a steam engine with 30 horse power efficiency and an iron scoop wheel costing 7000 *Taler*, for which he was paid 2333 *Taler* 10 *Silbergulden* as a down payment on June 24th. Building materials were now busily purchased or eagerly contributed. Construction began on July 23rd with the digging of the construction pit, followed on the 28th with the driving of the piles into the ground, the last ones driven in on August 27th. Some most unfavourable rainy weather hampered the work tremendously, and so in 26 days 149 piles were driven into the ground, the longest ones were 26 feet long. There are 27 piles under the smokestack and the others, partly under the boilers and partly under the waterway. The carpentry work was done by master carpenter Schlage from Tiegenhof and the bricklaying, which was begun on August 29th, by master mason Schroeter from Tiegenhof. On October 11th they started to brick up the smokestack, since the necessary foundation masonry for that, for the boilers and also for the waterway had been completed thus far. Since the masonry work had been done in a somewhat careless manner, the smokestack would not be able to be fully completed before the approaching winter and that decision was made on November 14th. The machine plates and the bearing plates for the scoop wheel were still firmly bricked by the 21st of November. On December 14th *Herr Laser*, the engineer from Elbing, arrived to assemble the machine. This work was only completed by March 22, 1854, because *Herr Laser* had to leave on several occasions during that time. Subsequently, the machinery had to pass a tough test, because on March 17th, there was an accumulation of water due to high water on the Tiege River overflowing the top of the dike at a number of locations and causing small breaches in the dike.

Although we already had 26 ½ inches of water from the winter, we now had an additional 11 ½ inches. Therefore, we now had 3 feet 2 inches of water to remove. On March 22nd at 5 o'clock in the evening the machine started up. At the beginning it struggled with the very high-water level which no water wheel could have managed. As *Herr* Schichau had promised, the machine worked perfectly right from the beginning, even though not quite consistently. By April 11th we had brought the water down to a level of 13 inches, at which point it could no longer operate because of a shortage of coal. The draught in the chimney flue was very good, although the chimney was still far from the specified height of 78 feet. The construction of the residence for the machine operator and boilerman (stoker) were also completed at this time and both were able to move in. In the fall of 1853, the Upper Watermill was torn down and the Steam Mill Institution was located in its place. In the fall of 1854, the Lower Watermill (after not being operational for 10 years) was purchased by the village of Rueckenau for 200 *Taler*, and disassembled in order to then be reconstructed near Schwente for their own use. The full cost of the plant and machinery actually amounted to 15, 614 *Taler* 16 *Sgr.* 3 ½ *Pfennig.*"

The newly created cash journal listed 48 names of people who had made financial commitments to the project, and whose names were to be recorded in the plant, along with the size of their farmstead. Is that record not an exalted hymn of sacrificial community spirit of those ancestors of ours, who tackled such a colossal project for those times, on their own accord and with their own resources! The Spirit of our forefathers, who established the fire mutual aid fund as a covenant of love, who fought for religious freedom and village rights and freedoms, who strove to keep their German culture, who laboured to protect their land from flooding from the Upper *Werder* on so many occasions, that Spirit was still very much alive!

Up until spring of 1854 the drainage fees had been collected by the office of the mayor. On May 31st of that same year, our ancestors went against the custom of their forefathers and elected a bookkeeper specifically for this task. Abraham Friesen was the first administrator of this office and the person whom we can also thank for the history of the construction of our grand steam powered drainage mill. His exemplary designed and managed cash journal begins with the following report:

"Till now the drainage fees have been collected and paid out by the office of the mayor, but now the necessity has been realized, to have a specific bookkeeper appointed for this duty, who, at the same time, would oversee the steam powered drainage machine. The reason for the necessity of specific bookkeeping for this matter lay in the circumstance, that the Catholic parish priest benefice, ordered by a judicial judgment, will from now on be added to the drainage fees. Villager Heinrich Warkentin, who owned 7 ½ *Morgen* which are separated from the village community by the canal, had opted out of that. As a result, the *Hufen* Register became a separate entity, in which the office of the mayor collected the village community dues and consequently, the bookkeeping for the drainage fees also had to be separate."

In the years to come, there were many who followed in the footsteps of the writer of the preceding excerpt. Everyone did their best to fulfill their duty to preserve the fertility of the soil in our ancestral village, and more than that, to improve it. After all, the soil was the main contributor to our prosperity. Their names will appear in the addendum.

The old windmill remained standing until the new steam powered mill was completed. A new water channel was excavated for the latter, creating a wedge-shaped piece of land in front of the mill, which was given the name "*Schwienskopp*" (pig's head) by the *Dorfsmund* (newspaper).

The three functioning wind powered waterwheels were still standing: one somewhat behind the Inn "*Zum kleinen Hollaender*", the second one approximately 1000 meters north of there on the banks of the "*Krummen Tiege*" (curve in the Tiege River) where the second steam powered mill was later located, and the third at the junction of the *Landgraben* (ditch) and the Tiege River.

At Eastertime 1855 there was a breach in the Vistula at Gross-Montau, and the resulting flood exceeded all previous floods in formidableness. It turned all the land into a sea for many weeks. The chronicle of the Catholic School reports on this inundation of water:

"The water came so fast and rose so high, as no one had ever experienced it. Many thousands of livestock, animals and birds, drowned. At school the water rose 2 inches beyond the window sill. The teacher with his family, together with other families who had come to the school looking for safety, sat in the attic of the house, enduring terribly cold temperatures for 10 days and nights. It was only on May 30th, after the water had covered the land for 9 weeks, that instruction in the school could resume."

The new steam powered mill was put through its most serious field test during this flood, and the seven villagers, who until the end had withheld their consent, had to shamefully take responsibility for their error. As the years passed, in fact, it became evident that the small waterwheel behind the "*Hollaender*" was redundant, and so it was torn down. There is some uncertainty about the exact year. The mill account for 1861 still lists 3 wind powered mills, that of 1864 lists only 2. Therefore, the mill disappeared between 1861-1864. It should be noted, that the task of the mills focused on removing the overland floodwaters as fast as possible; the possibility of reducing the groundwater was something one would naturally never have thought of.

Through Otto von Bismarck's endeavours in 1867, the North German Confederation came into being and on November 9th of that same year, the first conscription law came into effect. It gave rise to many serious inner struggles and physical battles among our Mennonite villagers

because it identified that “every male inhabitant of the confederation was liable for military service and existing exemptions from this provision were being repealed”. Arguably, from now on all special charges were to end, above all the mean restriction on canton-free homesteads, however, our Mennonites, because of their conscience, could not accept military service. Many a delegation made the pilgrimage to King Wilhelm I, the commander of all federal armed forces, to make an appeal for their former exemption from military service. Their efforts were not in vain; King Wilhelm I tried to unburden them from having to take on military service and prescribed that they could serve as unarmed drivers, medics, clerks, or military mechanics. Even in the face of these mitigated measures, for many, their conscience prevailed over their love of homeland and they took to the road to look for a new home in America. Those who stayed here, complied, though with heavy hearts, and were now free lords of their own land and property, true “*Koellmer*”, as had been the case for all the other village neighbours since the founding of the village: a struggle that had begun with the immigration of the forefathers, was now over!

The two remaining wind powered waterwheels in the northern part of the village, in the last number of years, had managed poorly with the surface water in their area. It was gradually realized that when wheel of the steam powered “sister” mill was driving hard, much surface water drained into that area and was difficult to handle and control with the two waterwheels. Adding to the problem was the lack of wind, altogether resulting in an increase in complaints from those villagers about the poor drainage. Given that situation, in 1870 the Tiegenhagen Drainage Association decided to also construct a steam powered water mill in the place of the so-called “*Eckmuehle*” (corner mill), the second one past the “*Hollaender*”. That happened, and in the following year “*de kleene Dampfmoehl*” (the small steam mill) began its operation. Both steam mills, “*de grote*” (the big one) and also “*de kleene Dampfmoehl*” (the small steam mill) owe their existence to the determination and the personal resources of our fellow townsfolk!

As a result of taking this action, the northern part of our village had now been helped, and the last wind waterwheel, “*de Vochtmoehl*”, was torn down. The “*Eckmuehle*” (corner mill) had already disappeared during the construction of the second steam powered mill. The network of drainage channels for the mills was now completely reworked. The old channels had to be widened and deepened, new ditches had to be dug and no cost was spared, since it was indeed for everyone’s benefit.

The coming years produced a number of gains for our village. In 1881 a sugar refinery was constructed in Tiegenhof and immediately the cultivation of sugar beets was begun here. In the same year the district council decided to construct our Platenhof-Elbing Vistula Highway, whose route through our village gave rise to many a neighbourly disagreement. The construction plan laid out a route starting at our big mill, across the so-called “*Mitteldrift*” (middle ford or trail) to the *Landgraben*, thereby following the shortest route. A large portion of our “*Feldschen*” (country residents), at that time, wanted nothing to do with it and didn’t want

their peaceful life disturbed. The hailstorm of protests was to our benefit, the "*Tiegschen*" or "*Dorfschen*" (village residents), and the clergy, because the road, which was built in the next couple of years, followed the Tiege River fairly closely as far as the church, and then straight north to the *Landgraben* and on to Tiegenort. Would those protesters still want to adopt the same stance today as then, against the boon of a highway!

The year 1885 was another milestone in the evolution of our ancestral village, because that was the year Peter Nickel I, Gerhard Unger, Peter Penner I, Abraham Regier, Konrad Froese, Cornelius Wiens, Cornelius Hamm, Johann Friesen from Tiegenhagen and Heinrich Mekelburger from Petershagen made the decision to start a dairy operation.

On October 1st, 1886 the train line from Simonsdorf-Tiegenhof was established and later on, with the strong participation of our district administration, a narrow-gauge railway, following alongside the roadway, was also built.

The year of the great flood of 1888, brought us a large volume of floodwater, but the two steam powered mills carried out their task and soon had all the surface water drained away.

Over the years the boiler and the scoop wheel of our large water drainage steam mill became worn out and required an urgent renewal. Therefore, in the fall of 1901 the members of our Tiegenhagen Water Drainage Association contemplated replacing all the machinery, and on December 28th of that same year, the decision was made to build a pumping plant under the direction of Schichau from Elbing. On May 20th, 1902 the preparatory work was started, on July 9th the new 40 horsepower machine was set up, and on September 9th it was taken down. In the summer of 1903 Schichau mounted a better gyroscope for the pump and from then on, the big mill's performance was exemplary, and it provided a service that met with everyone's expectation. Our villagers collected 28,188.44 M for the new plant.

Ever since the great flood of 1888, they had finally begun to clear the Nogat River of ice flows. The course of the Vistula River was first regulated and a new outlet created from the breakthrough at Schiewenhorst in 1895. Then the canalisation and constriction of the Nogat River was begun, with completion by 1916. As a consequence, the threat of flooding for the *Werder* and also our ancestral village was finally eliminated, after a centuries long struggle.

How had the fire mutual aid fund, the covenant of love of our forefathers, evolved since 1757? The stiff penalties assessed dilatory village mayors brought about dutifully performed inspections of chimneys and fire extinguishing equipment and careful drying and hatchelling of flax and hemp near stoves, so that fire damage rarely happened. The amount of compensation was changed frequently in the years following, that is increased. The requests for membership in the aid fund also continued to increase, but they had to be denied because of the decision made on January 28th, 1757. [On January 28th, 1757, it was decided that new applications for

insurance could no longer be accepted from areas beyond the Vistula and Nogat Rivers, so as not to make the administration more difficult, because of the vastness of the area.]

A similar fire aid fund was established (the year is unknown) in the villages of the Upper *Werder*, and its formation caused a name change for our fund. The lengthy title once given to it by our forefathers on February 26th, 1624 and which reads as follows: “The *Gross Werder* Fire Mutual Aid Fund, concerning the Dutch lowland villages that belong to the Tiegenhof administrative district, located in the region of the powerful gracious master Melchior Weiher, and including the subjects of the Danzig and Elbing districts who have jointly approved and adopted it”, now became “The Tiegenhof Mutual Fire Insurance”. The newly established fund in the Upper *Werder* has long since folded. The name change of our fund is the only trace of its existence, that has been left behind.

The fire mutual aid fund which saved our village and with it the whole district from a Polish empire fallen into ruin, now under Prussian orderliness, saw steady further development from a once mutual aid fund to a splendidly developed fire insurance. In 1807 when Napoleon’s troops waged war here, the official seal was stolen and the newly acquired seal received the inscription “*Tiegenhoeftische Privat-Brandordnung*” (Tiegenhof Private Fire Insurance). To this day, that name has remained for our forefathers’ covenant of love.

In the past three hundred years, the village mayors have been the pillars of the organization in the individual communities. Today the fire insurance has divided the insured area into 56 districts in which each has a fire officer who looks after the collection of the current insurance fees. The director, called a “*Brandregent*” (Fire Regent) since 1882, still has his residence in our ancestral village, as was once stipulated in 1623. The names of the directors, that are still ascertainable, will appear in the addendum of the village history; they were certainly among the most capable and energetic of our forefathers.

Throughout more than 300 years, the work of our ancestors had continued, against the great odds of all the turbulent times full of wars and floods, and dried many a tear of the unfortunate. It still holds true for today, just as it did in the past, a covenant of Christian love will weather all future storms and withstand all hostilities and persecution.

A century old verse from one of the many “*Brandbuecher*” (fire registries) may well bring closure to an accounting of the history of the fruitful work of our village ancestors. It reads:

“The covenant of love you have made among yourselves is everlasting,
God’s grace will never leave, His heart remains open to all of you.
Let this pure true love always keep watch, pray and call out,
and may his peace alone be the keeper of your heart.
May God’s grace-filled glances together with his peace revive you.
Let nothing disturb your peace and nothing disrupt your covenant,

Rather, may the peace within the covenant be preserved like a treasure.
May this brotherhood stay mindful: never grieve others through wrong.
Just and righteous is this work, gladdening the hearts of sufferers.
Those who do not abide by this, cannot be part of us!"

Throughout the centuries the Tiegenhagen villagers had developed their own Water Drainage Association and had striven to do an exemplary job of draining their lands, the source of their prosperity. They were able to do this with great success because of the favourable location on the high Tiege embankment and more recently, their two great steam powered mills allowed them to quickly drain the surface water from their land. The situation was dire, however, for the Linau Drainage Association, in close proximity.

All the villages belonging to this association had to drain their water into the Linau River, nevertheless, the river could not contain all the water, because, often enough, it received additional surface water due to an ice jam in the Vistula Lagoon. Almost always, the villages belonging to that association, had to put a hold on draining their land just when they were ready to proceed, because the Linau River had no more capacity. The "mark" had been reached, a mark that was decided upon by the dike and silt juries [administrators sworn to care for the dikes] together with the mayors of the Tiegenhof and Baarenhof districts and Scharpau on March 11th, 1801. The decision was made at the Tiegerweide wind powered scoop mill, the so-called "*Buschmuehle*" (bush mill), and a marker was placed in the drainage channel tagging the height of 11'6". The villages were permitted to continue the drainage process until 11' was reached, then all the mills had to stop until the Linau River level had fallen below 11'.

In order to remedy this troublesome situation and speed up the drainage process, the dike drainage office had, for decades already, considered a plan to build a larger pumping station for the Linau alone. All those drainage associations that had till now drained their surface water into the Linau and had suffered damage as a result of the "marker" plan, were to contribute money to the proposed pumping station. However, some of the cooperatives were reluctant to take on the costs and the plan was abandoned again. Other plans surfaced, but the world war got in everyone's way.

After the war, however, and the forcible separation of our homeland from the German mother land, the dike drainage association again immediately embraced the idea of lowering the level of the water in the Linau River. Yet still, challenges persisted, the biggest one of all was that of the Vistula Haff Canal from Rothebude to Platenhof, constructed in 1840-1844 and sharing the use of the Linau River. The Port Committee then took the canal out of service, because the costs of its bank reinforcement and the maintenance of the lock at Rothebude, which had also become a great concern during high water times on the Vistula River, were no longer tenable. Also, during the process of regulating the Vistula, the Elbing portion of the Vistula was cut off by a lock at the *Danzig Haupt* (Danzig Head) from the tidal change and thereby was made

navigable again. With that, the outflow possibility for the Linau was probably removed, left only with Proesnik and *Landgraben*. Nevertheless, the dike association could not come up with anything more reasonable.

They immediately latched on to the old idea of a pumping station for the Linau River, but in a new form: a plant had to be constructed that not only drained the excess water from the Linau, but also dropped the water table by 50 cm below the most low-lying land around the Linau. That being said, all the drainage pumps from the surrounding dike associations could then become part of the system. All these groups were to be amalgamated into a large association made up of 22,000 ha, which was to be named "Linau Lower Dike Association".

In 1924 our Tiegenhagen Water Drainage Association was asked if we would want to join the new larger water drainage organization, even though our drainage happened by way of the Tiege River. In response to this inquiry, our then "Poggenschult" (frog mayor) and one landowner were sent to meet with them. At a general meeting of our village communities on September 16th, 1926, both delegates gave a report and with a vote of 139 for and 21 against, the decision was made to accept the invitation by the Linau association. As a result, the village drainage association, existent since the establishment of the village at the time of the Teutonic Order, ceased to exist.

Of course, that dissolution was not going to happen without some struggles. In regards to the regulation of the cost factor, the new association proposed the following: all stakeholders would pay 10-12 G. per ha and the power station would be built with money borrowed at 6-8%. The construction of the pumping station on the Elbing portion of the Vistula River began. Since however, no lender could initially be found for such a high amount needed for the construction, so the executive of the Linau committee took out a loan of 1,000,000 G. with an interest rate of 10% (included were 2% amortization and administrative costs) and decided that the balance of the building expenses would be covered through a levy from all stakeholders. The initial dues that were set at 10-12 G. per ha, increased to 15 G. per ha because of that. According to that plan, the construction was to be completed in 8 years.

This amended rate of payment caused dissatisfaction among many of the members of our former village water drainage association and brought about their motion at another general meeting to reverse the decision, made on September 16th, 1926, to become affiliated. The motion for the revival of the local drainage association of our forefathers and separation from the Linau Lower Dike Association was accepted with a vote of 117 for and 78 against. This decision was made despite all the efforts of the drainage association's chairman who, as such, belonged to the Linau association executive.

However, since the first decision to become affiliated, the bylaws of the new association and Tiegenhagen's membership were approved by the Senate, and so that separation vote was

futile – our local water drainage association, after functioning almost six hundred years, had ceased to exist!

On February 11th, 1929 our fellow villager, Ernst Pelz, had been elected head of the village water drainage cooperative, and handled all the transitional transactions and operations. The expansion and joining of our mill channel system to the Linau had begun under his direction and the connection was complete on June 26th, 1929. On September 1st, 1930, the new pumping station of the Linau association was complete and immediately started operating. Within three days the water level on the Linau River had dropped 2 m.

A distressing situation arose in our village district, which was reminiscent of 1853 when our then newly built big steam powered mill began working. In that year much of the surface water was drained away to the northern part of the village and the 3 remaining water mills could not carry it away fast enough. Now, in spite of the completed connection with the Linau River and the deeper mill channels, the water came to a standstill in the eastern part of the village. As a result, our old big steam powered mill had to work with its little sisters in order to drive the surface water out, in the fall of 1930 and again in the spring of 1931.

To remedy this unsatisfactory state of affairs immediately after the water problem in the fall, and thereby enable the whole village district to enjoy the benefits of the new pumping station, our head of the drainage cooperative mapped out the construction of a new connecting trench from the first transverse mill channel, to the second one and on to the new channel connecting to the Linau. This plan was immediately adopted at the general meeting of the members of our village water drainage cooperative on January 20th, 1931. The costs, however, of completing the construction were still pending.

The head of the drainage cooperative, who recognized the advantage of a quick rollout for the connecting trench he designed, made every effort to reduce the costs and make it as affordable as possible for our villagers. He had some success with the Senate: he obtained financial support for land improvement in the amount of 3000 G. and for providing productive work for the unemployed to the tune of 2 G. per day, with a limit of 4000 G. for the latter. With that funding in place, it was decided to begin the work immediately, and the job was completed on October 6th of the same year. Now that the water problem had been remedied, the water drainage to the Linau River was superior and beyond anyone's expectations.

In order to accelerate the drainage in the southern part of the village, a connection over the "*Gruener Wall*" (green embankment) to the former Vistula Haff Canal was made through the Andres farmstead, using the old Reimerswald steam mill, and in the western part of the village a connection was made to the Tiegerweide steam mill. It was here that the evidence was found, of the paved spillways at Susz Lake from the time of our forefathers, that, as reported, they had constructed during the process from 1789-1844.

With this work, the construction of the mill channel system had been completed to the full satisfaction of all fellow villagers, drainage happens quickly, the groundwater in our village district has dropped significantly, and all tracts of land have increased in value. The trenches on our land were now completely dry, and in the spring and summer of 1931 pumps had to be driven into the ditches everywhere, for water for the livestock. It was then discovered, that out of all the pumps, those that were driven in along the edge of the elevated land in our village district produced spring water on their own accord. Of course, these pumps remained in their locations in the dry trenches. At the beginning, the water was sweet, ferrous, now however, the water has developed a salty taste.

Since the drainage system to the Linau River was operating to everyone's utmost satisfaction, and the unsatisfactory water drainage from the fall of 1930 and spring of 1931 had been corrected by the new channels, our two steam powered water mills, the landmarks of our forefathers' community spirit and their willingness to make sacrifices, had become redundant.

At a general meeting on September 28th, 1929 the land on which the big steam mill was situated, was sold for 4000 G. to Jakobaufderstroth. In the sales contract particular mention was made of the fact that only the building site was included in the sale, not the "*grote Moehl*", the big mill house itself. This was to remain the property of the former local water drainage association and was to be dismantled six months after the take-over by the Linau station.

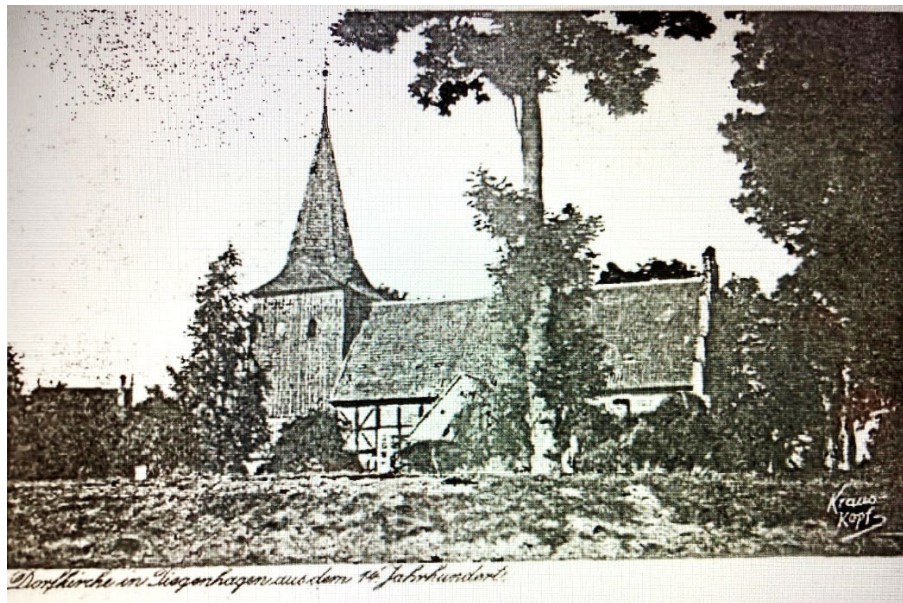
This dismantling took place from August 1st, 1932 to the beginning of September. The Kawaschinski brothers from our home village offered to do this work, after the head of our drainage association made many efforts to find someone. It was heavy work for them, because the demolition of the formidable chimneystack, built by our forefathers to last for eternity, required of them all their courage and all their skills. It was not possible to use a catapult against that behemoth, constructed of large monastic bricks (*Klosterziegel*). The proximity of the roadway and adjacent dwellings prohibited that. Instead, with great difficulty, they had to drive 50 climbing irons into the inner sides of the smokestack and after successfully completing this work, knock loose one brick at a time and slide the bricks to the ground using a self constructed chute. 39,000 usable monastic bricks were recovered from the smokestack and then sold to interested parties by the head of the drainage association. At the current time, no purchaser has been found for the first-rate, well-kept machinery, and there is not even a possibility of selling it as scrap iron. The business, Epp & Co. from Stutthof, who looked after dismantling the machinery and the demolition work, acquired the machinery for 55 *Gulden*!

After the disappearance of our corn windmill in 1928 and now with the dismantling of this formidable mill smokestack, another landmark of our village had vanished. Everyone had watched it disappear with a quiet melancholy. Now that the Kawaschinski brothers already had

experience, they took on the demolition of the chimney of the small steam mill at their own expense, for a payment of 212 *Gulden*.

The pump of the small mill, with arrangements made by the business Epp & Co. from Stutthof, was sold on October 19th, 1932 for 400 *Gulden* to the water drainage cooperative in Grebinerfeld in the Danzig lowlands. The mill house was sold to our neighbouring village of Bielefeld for 500 *Gulden*. What our forefathers took pride in and what had become our village landmarks, were now gone forever.

However, one jewel has been preserved throughout all the centuries: It is our village church and the balance of the village chronicle will be devoted to this little gem. The last information that was shared, was that between 1637 and 1647 the western section of the church, along with the complete roof framework, had to be replaced, because the walls had collapsed as a result of the many floods. In 1687 the wooden upper structure of the steeple was rebuilt by mayor Peter Conradt, a master builder from Petershagen. On March 17th, 1768 when the spire was brought down during a storm, a new one with a knob and flag was made in Danzig and mounted again on August 27th of the same year.



In 1846 the sacristy as well as the portico were built and the steeple was refurbished and received a new covering of shingles. In 1912 the latter was repaired again and re-tiled with new shingles. At this time the spire on the steeple was also restored. Among the old papers, there were three documents, two originating from 1687 and 1768 in one manuscript dated 1846, and a third from 1846.

The interior of our church is largely laid out with limestone tiles from Gotland, that were procured in 1747. Old brick tiles originating from the original construction of the church in the 14th century, are still found in the northern side aisle and behind the main altar. The ceiling is

composed of boarding under the beams and figuratively painted. The holy trinity is represented above the high altar: God the Father, Christ with the cross and dove, encircled by angels. On the western side of the middle of the ceiling are found a lamb on the Book with Seven Seals, and Mary, Elisabeth, Anna, John the Baptist, Joseph and Joachim left and right respectively of a hanging crucifix from the year 1750. Saint Nicholas, the patron saint of our church is portrayed on the eastern side, above the organ.

The struts, in a manner similar to the ceiling, are covered by boards, creating an arch. Head and shoulder paintings of holy persons looking down, are portrayed on the eastern half, continuing from the painting of the angels of the Holy Trinity. These are found on the southern portion: Adam, Eve, Noah, Melchizedek, Aaron, Joshua, Gideon, Mary Magdalene, Peter, James the Elder, Thomas, Matthew, Phillip, James the Younger, Mark, Luke and Matthias. On the northern part, beginning in the east, we find Simeon, Isaiah, Zachariah, Simon of Cyrene, Joseph of Arimathea, Veronica, Andrew, John, Judas Thaddaeus, Bartholomew, Simon, Laurentius and Stephen.

The images, which were painted with oil-based paint on a blue background, were completed during Dekans Mocki's term in office. In 1747 he made larger expenditures for the inside décor of the church, and account books in the parish archive report that the painter, by the name of Wichert, who was from the city of Mehlsack, in 1751 received more than 400 florins for his paintings in the church, not counting the cost of the gold and paints.

The high altar which was built in 1730, was gilded in 1737, for which he was paid 250 florins. In the main painting he has portrayed Mary as Queen of the Crown of Roses with the inscription "*Ecce homo*" (Behold the Man) above the image.

The side altars were carved in 1748 by a sculptor from Danzig, and were painted and gilded in the years following. This work was again done by master artist Wichert. Along with the name of the latter, the account books, beginning in June of 1752, also make mention of a guilden named Rucz, who was a painter too. The last payment entered was on November 15th. The side altar at the northern end is dedicated to Saint Nicholas with his portrait on the bottom. The "*Marienaltar*" (Mary's altar) is at the south end and portrays the birth of Christ, above which is the proclamation of Christ. On May 13th, 1749 the painter received a payment of 85 florins for all four paintings on the side altars.

The pulpit was made in 1747-1748 and finished in May 1748. On the parapet wall we find a painting of Paul's conversion and a vivid portrayal of Christ as Judge of the World. The back wall has on it a painting of twelve-year-old Jesus in the temple. Around the rim of the pulpit ceiling or sounding board are positioned small carved soldier figurines: on the right, Roman legionary soldiers, on the left, Saxon-Polish infantrymen from the time around 1750. In the middle stands the Archangel Michael. The meaning comes from the inscription on the banners: "*Stetit itaque*

Sol obediens Domino voci hominis” (the sun stood still, Jehovah hearkened to the voice of a man) which is based on the verses from Joshua 10: 13-14. Joshua’s battle with the Amorites is being associated here with the battle of the Archangel Michael (Revelation 12: 7).

The organ loft also contained paintings on the panels of the parapet wall: the proclamation, the birth, the appearance in the temple, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus carrying the cross, and the burial. The three-spired organ façade had carved scrollwork on the sides with two statues: King David and an angel. It dates back to 1748. The baptismal font, in an octagonal form of a chalice, is made of wood, decorated with paint, with the inscription: “in the year 1654” and stands on a simple pedestal. Four large oil paintings on canvas, from 1752, portraying the “Transfiguration of Christ”, the “Crowning with Thorns”, the “Flagellation”, and the “Crucifixion”, also hang on the walls and were done by the previously mentioned painter Wiechert from the city of Mehlsack. The large painting of Mary, above the entrance to the sacristy, was, however, produced by a different master artist. It is no longer possible to determine his name.

As was mentioned earlier, the east pediment (gable) was the oldest part of our church building. On the right side we find the old wall ciborium (vaulted canopy), closed in by lattices with slide bolts, a veil and a box lock. In 1913 when the ceiling was restored by the painter A. Fahlberg, a painting of the crucifixion was uncovered on the east wall. Under the plaster, it was also determined that, immediately after its construction in 1352, the church had been painted red on the inside at the beginning and that the picture would have been painted shortly after 1360. The painting is extremely valuable, both artistically and particularly in regards to the history of the church, because it is a “Living Cross”, with human arms and hands reaching out from the ends of the beams. The right hand is shown crowning the church while riding the tetramorph beast [symbol of the four evangelists] (Ezekiel 1:10), the left arm is piercing the synagogue [Jewish faith] with a small sword and is riding a donkey, the bottom hand is using a hammer to break the gate of hell, and the upper hand is unlocking the gates of heaven [paradise]. The upper hand with the key has not remained preserved, only the bit of the key is still visible on the painting. At the same time, decorative paintings of green tendrils were found on a portion of the wall behind the pulpit, giving evidence of the first paintings of the inside of our church.

The middle of the three bells, the so-called Gothic Bell, has still been preserved from the time, soon after the construction of the church. A cross and 21 capital letters are engraved on the shoulder of the bell. However, the letters are not consistent, partly distorted and mostly in a state of decline. The first 15 have been interpreted retrospectively as follows: “*O. REX. GLORIE. V(eni). C(hriste). C(um). P(ace)*” [O King of Glory, Come Christ with Peace]. Old stylistic features indicate the casting of the bell happened in 1352, the year of the dedication of our church as per the Teutonic Order constitution by Winrich von Kniprode.

On the shoulder of the big bell was the inscription: “*Verbum domini manet in aeternum anno 1755 mense September*” (The Word of the Lord Endures Forever, in the year 1775, month of

September), and on the western side of the bell's waist "S. Nicholas" with a Nicholas figure above it. On the eastern side of the bell were the words "Chairman Jacob Classen, Peter Classen cum divino, auxilio me fundit ioh. gottfr. Anthony Gedani". The small bell, which was recast in 1884 by Collier in Danzig, was delivered in 1917 during the difficult war time. Therefore, in 1925 a new bell, that was cast in the Danzig Shipyard, was purchased.

With this report on our village church, the only landmark that was preserved through the six-hundred-year history of my village, the Tiegenhagen village chronology is brought to a close. The latter aims to rescue from oblivion, the stories of the establishment of the village, the two-fold settlement of the area, the inhabitants' fate during war-time and floods, their uphill battle to gain prosperity, and the struggle for property, village and religious rights and freedoms. May our village, at all times, be made up of inspired German inhabitants committed to community spirit, a readiness to make sacrifices and faithfulness, as its forefathers have demonstrated to this point, throughout 600 years!

In conclusion I would like to thank fire regent (executive) *Herrn* Friesen, who allowed me to look through the valuable books of the Tiegenhof Fire Mutual Aid Fund, and to farm owner *Herrn* Ernst Pelz, who gave me the idea of compiling these village chronicles and encouraged my work by helping me in various ways.

Erich Meyer, Teacher in Tiegenhagen

Addendum **to the** **History of the Village of Tiegenhagen**

A. The bookkeepers, Drainage Association chairmen or "*Poggenschulten*" (frog mayors) of the Tiegenhagen Drainage Association cooperative since May 31st, 1854.

Abraham Friesen	1854-1856	Aron Andres	1897-1907
Jakob Froese	1856-1860	Hermann Bergen	1907-1909
Peter Schulz	1860- 1865	Aron Andres	1909-1912
Heinrich Quiring	1865-1872	Peter Wiens	1912-1913
Peter Nickel	1872-1878	Gerhard Loewen	1913-1914
Gerhard Unger	1878-1881	Aron Andres	1914-1918
Cornelius Janzen	1881-1895	Gerhard Loewen	1919-1929
David Heidebrecht	1895-1897	Ernst Pelz	from 11.2.1929

On average throughout all the years, the drainage costs paid amounted to 10.50 G. per ha.

That included the three years of construction costs (the big mill, the small mill, the pumping system for the big mill).

B. The registry of all *Hufen* that were subject to payments for the Tiegenhagen Water Drainage Association from 1854.

	2 <i>Hufen</i>	18 <i>Morgen</i>	115 <i>Quadratruten</i> (square rods)	
Bernhard Andres				
Abraham Friesen	2 "	1 "	48	"
Jakob Hamm	2 "	18 "	228	"
Widow Schulz	1 "	20 "	80	"
Jakob Wiebe		20 "	130	"
Peter Regier	3 "	1 "	181	"
Johann Rahn	1 "	20 "	165	"
Jakob Staess	2 "	14 "	257	"
Cornelius Wiens	2 "	23 "	159	"
Heinrich Warkentin		10 "	170	"
Heinrich Adrian	2 "		211	"
Ephraim Schwarz		17 "	128	"
Franz Nickel	1 "	13 "	6	"
Jakob Claassen	1 "		215	"
Jakob Froese	1 "	21 "	109	"
Heinrich Unger	2 "	1 "	142	"
Aron Schulz		18 "	50	"
Johann Claassen		25 "	81	"
Peter Nickel	2 "	15 "	62	"
Johann Wiens	1 "	3 "	78	"
Johann Toews	2 "	7 "	169	"
Jakob Rahn		14 "	133	"
Heinrich Lepp	1 "	24 "	120	"
Heinrich Quiring		16 "	30	"
Heinrich Penner		28 "	127	"
Daniel Nickel		12 "	50	"
Widow Entz		16 "	281	"
Widow Penner		22 "	211	"
Jakob Froese		16 "	150	"
Johann Mekelburger		24 "	11	"
Heinrich Mekelburger	1 "	7 "	43	"
Simon Mekelburger		16 "	6	"
Heinrich Mekelburger	1 "	23 "	7	"
Jakob Wiebe		16 "	157	"
Widow Vogdt		15 "	225	"

Martin Langnau		4	"	225	"
Heinrich Dau		20	"		
Jakob Froese	1	23	"	114	"
Peter Pauls		26	"	150	"
George Batrau		12	"	219	"
Simon Friesen		14	"	50	"
Martin Thiessen	1 <i>Hufen</i>			7 <i>Quadratruten</i>	
Widow Kaethler		15	<i>Morgen</i>		
Jonas Nickel		28	"	150	"
Jonas Quiring		17	"		
Johann Koester		15	"		
Martin Brommer		2	"		
Parish Priest Lingk	3	17	"		
Total	59 <i>Hufen</i>	4	<i>Morgen</i>	150 <i>Quadratruten</i>	

C. The "Tiegenhof Private Fire Insurance" regents (executive members)

The names of the men who rendered outstanding service in the establishment of this blessed work can no longer be ascertained, since few old documents have been preserved. The war years after 1656 and the major floods from 1674 to 1681, that first led to the ransacking of our ancestral village and then saw almost all of our forefathers flee for their lives, have led to the destruction of all documents and any traces of the founding of this "covenant of love". Thus, it is not surprising that the names of the first chairmen were lost to the ensuing ages.

A document from 1652 reveals the first known name of a chairman, when it reports on a meeting of the association at the home of Julius Kroeker.

1. In 1673 Peter Rahn is identified as the chairman-bookkeeper in a report about a meeting at the home of Hans Krause. In this transcript from the 9th of October, the compensation for the secretary has already been set: 2/3 of all fines go to him and 1/3 to the person collecting the payments.
2. On July 22nd, 1684, following the end of a seven-year water shortage, the organization assembled in the home of Nickel Reimer, newly sworn in, after the convener was elected as chairman by our villagers, for the reason that Peter Rahn had since passed away. Nickel Reimer held the office until his death on January 4th, 1695.
3. His son, Hans Reimer, succeeded him as clerk and held this office until he moved from our home village to Marienau in 1711.
4. Nicolaus Suckau was the chairman of the association from 1711 until his death in June 1725.
5. At a general meeting called by our village mayor, Franz Klassen, Jakob Steffen was elected as the successor. He oversaw this office until 1740, when he vacated it, after

being elected to the ministry in our Mennonite Church.

6. Peter Siemens took over the position until his death on August 2nd, 1750.
7. Berend Classen was elected as chairman on August 15 by our forefathers in the mayoral office of Heinrich Penner. The former remained in the office until August 30th, 1768 and then resigned because of his advanced age.
8. While Heinrich Quiring was the mayor of our village, and under his direction the son of the former chairman, Peter Classen, was elected as the clerk and he led the fire mutual aid fund until his death on October 30th, 1809.
9. During the mayoral leadership of Johann Rahn, the neighbours of the deceased elected Peter Classen to succeed his father. He was the chairman of the fire mutual aid fund until December 31st, 1841. On March 2nd, 1838 at a meeting of mayors in Tiegenhof at the "*Grossen Krüge*" (big tavern), he had already requested that a successor be found due to his advancing age, so that he could properly brief him on all the duties.
10. The mayors at that meeting approved his request and there upon, on April 2nd, 1838, our villagers elected Peter Schulz to become the chairman of the fire mutual aid fund. He was the associate chair until December 31st, 1841 and then became chairman of the fund when Peter Classen vacated the position. Peter Schulz was the chairman from December 31st, 1841 until his death on March 20th, 1853.
11. On April 1st, 1853 at the behest of our village mayor, Franz Nickel, our villagers appointed Heinrich Lepp as chairman of the fire mutual aid fund. On April 19th his appointment was approved by all mayors and he carried out the work of our forefathers until November 29th, 1882. Because of his advancing age, he asked the then village mayor, Jakob Froese, for someone to replace him.
12. On the aforementioned day, our villagers appointed Julius Wiens to this office. At the mayoral meeting in Tiegenhof on December 29th, 1882 the chairman-elect assumed the office and remained the fire insurance regent until the end of 1900.
13. Since January 1st, 1901, *Herr* Johannes Friesen has administered the office of the fire insurance regent with exemplary faithfulness. He has led the work of our forefathers through the inflationary times and under his direction it has become a fire insurance that doesn't have to shy away from any comparison with others.

Since December 12th, 1905 there are new statutes which were endorsed by the government on January 6th, 1906. Among other things, they defined that the fire insurance regent, as the forefathers had set out over 300 years ago, must be a landowner in our ancestral village Tiegenhagen, however, his election will no longer be carried out by the insured of our community as before, rather, in a general meeting with all members of the fire mutual aid fund.

D. The Teachers of the Catholic School in Tiegenhagen

The information about the teachers who worked in the one-room school at the turn of the previous century, comes from the verbal accounts of Goering, Kewitse and Wolowski. The latter retired in 1841. Teacher Malies administered the school until 1849. His successor was

August Zint, until he retired on October 1st, 1882. August Goerlz held the job until April 1st, 1899 and after that, head teacher Teophil Wronski until June 1st, 1926. A period of substitute teaching by teacher Hans Ott followed. Beginning on October 1st, 1926 until March 31st, 1929 teacher Franz Packheiser held the position at the school. On December 1st, 1929 teacher Heribert Duschinski assumed, not only the school teaching job, but also the post of organist.

The present-day wooden school building was opened on October 9th, 1843 and an extensive classroom addition was built in 1907 and dedicated on November 17th, 1907.

E. The Teachers of the Evangelical School in Tiegenhagen

1. Soon after 1780 an evangelical itinerant teacher alternated between Tiegenhagen and Tiegerweide.
2. Around 1800 teacher Schwarz was assigned to our village and the "*Armenkate*" (poorhouse) served as the schoolhouse.
3. Beginning in 1815, the koellmisch landowners' cooperative acquired a different building to use a schoolhouse. The school chronicle lists master carpenter Lepke as "*Einpauker*" (lecturer). After that schoolhouse burned down, the one-room "old" school was built near the Tiege dike in 1819. It served as the schoolhouse until September 30th, 1925.
4. Teacher Hecker worked in that school from 1820 until October 1st, 1876.
5. Adolf Schulz was the teacher from the latter date until his death on August 14th, 1912. The landowner's cooperative had the right to hire a teacher, since the schoolhouse had been built in 1819. The government's role was to approve the hire.
6. A period of substitute teaching by teacher Fietkau followed.
7. The community then appointed teacher Jaake to their school for a term which lasted until March 31st, 1920.
8. Teacher Deutschmann was his successor from June 1st, 1920 until his early death on December 6th, 1923.
9. Teacher Zerell administered the school until May 31st, 1924. On June 1st of that same year the school became a two-room school.
10. Teacher Meyer was hired to teach the first classroom and teacher Zerell remained to administer the second classroom until March 31st, 1926.

In 1925 the new two-room schoolhouse was built with the support of the community, the state and the district. On October 12th of the same year, it was dedicated and instruction began on October 16th. The old schoolhouse was acquired by the retired head teacher Teophil Wronski from our Catholic School, as his retirement home. After teacher Zerell stepped away, teacher Hoeft began as the second teacher. He taught here until March 31st, 1929. On April 11th of that same year teacher Mews assumed the second teaching position, for which our community had also received the hiring right.

Tiegenhagen



Kreis Gr. Werder

