

## The Mennonite Settlers in Chortitza

### Part 5 – Jacob Dyck and Anna Dyck

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Jacob Dyck (1763-1838) and Anna Dyck (1760-1813)

*Jacob and Anna are the author's fifth great grandparents, and their son Johann (1796-1839) is the author's fourth great grandfather.*

Jacob and Anna migrated from Prussia to the Mennonite settlement of Chortitza in 1789, among the earliest settlers to make their way to eastern Ukraine in search of land and economic opportunity [1]. Jacob, a cooper, was originally from Neustadterwald [2]. His father, also named Jacob (about 1740-1790), owned land in Neustadterwald [3]. Anna came originally from Stobbendorf but by the time she was in her teens her family also lived in Neustadterwald, where her father, another Jacob Dyck (1727-1792), owned land [4]. Neither family was well off. Although Jacob and Anna had the same family name there are no records to indicate they were closely related.

Jacob and Anna were married in the Flemish Church in Tiegenhagen in 1785 [5]. Tiegenhagen was a village situated midway between Danzig and Elbing. Established in the fourteenth century, by the seventeenth century Tiegenhagen was a Mennonite center in the lowland area occupied by many Mennonite settlements in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth [6]. Historically Mennonite settlers were able to secure land in these lowland regions by draining the marshy areas and cultivating the rich, reclaimed soil.

When Jacob and Anna moved to the village of Chortitza in the new Mennonite settlement they had only one child, a son named Jacob (1788) [7]. Within a few years their family had grown to include four more children: Peter (1792); Johann (1796); Anna (1798); Barbara (1800); and Isaac (1802). Barbara and Isaac died while still young children.

As the family grew so did their wealth. The census records reveal a steady increase in the number of cattle and horses, as well as material possessions such as wagons, harrows and spinning wheels. Between 1811 and 1813 the family established a herd of sheep. The introduction of sheep was a fairly common trend as the Mennonite communities diversified their farming operations.

In 1813 Anna died, at the age of 53. According to vital records for the Chortitza settlement Jacob married Aganetha Hamm, the widow of Johann Schellenberg, later that year. Aganetha had lived in the village of Chortitza as recently as 1795 and would have known Jacob in those early years of the settlement. She and Johann had moved to Rosenthal around 1801 and then to Kronsthal where they had a prosperous farm, with considerably greater assets than the Dycks.

A curious anomaly in the historical information is the contradiction between the marriage record of 1813 and the 1814 census records in which widow Aganetha is reported living on her farm in Kronsthal. She joined Jacob Dyck in 1815 on his farm in Chortitza. No doubt the practical matter of managing two farms and settling family assets accounts for the separate living arrangements.

Among the surviving children of Jacob and Anna there is no information about son Jacob (1788) or daughter Anna (1798). Second son Peter (1792) married Elisabeth Bueckert, and they had a large family of eleven children [8]. Third son Johann (1796) married Sara Klassen (1801) [9], whose family moved to the Chortitza settlement from Prussia in 1805 [10]. *[Johann and Sara are the author's fourth great grandparents.]*

Over the course of a twenty-year marriage Johann and Sara had nine children, of whom only two or possibly three survived beyond infancy [11]. Johann's last daughter was born in Autumn of 1839; Johann had died earlier in Spring of that year. For Sara the tragedy continued. The new baby, born in Autumn, died over the winter of 1839-1840.

One of the few surviving children of Johann and Sara was a son, Johann, born in 1826. There are no records describing his youth. However, church records show that he was married in 1849 to Maria de Veer (1830) [12].

Maria de Veer (1830) was the daughter of Isaac de Veer (1810-1889) and Margaretha Falk (1810-1863). Maria's grandparents were Jacob de Veer (1780-1823) and Maria Peters (1781). The story of Maria Peters (1781) and her family was the subject of Part 2 of this series about The Mennonite Settlers in Chortitza. Jacob de Veer (1780-1823) was a descendant of the venerable de Veer family whose ancestry can be traced to fifteenth century Amsterdam [13].

Johann (1826) and Maria (1830) established themselves in the Chortitza settlement, raising nine children. Two other children died in infancy. In 1875 they joined the "Old Colony" exodus of Mennonites from Ukraine to Canada, settling in the village of Osterwick in the West Reserve. They travelled with their children Maria (1856), Johann (1858), Isaac (1862), Jacob (1865), Katarina (1868), Helena (1870), and Heinrich (1873) [14]. One of the elder daughters, Margaretha (1854), moved to Canada in 1876, travelling with the Johann Hiebert family, for whom she worked as a servant. After arriving in Canada Margaretha married one of Hiebert's sons.

The eldest daughter, Sara (1852) was already married and living independently in 1875. Although she came to Canada in 1875 aboard the same ship that carried her parents, Sara was accompanied by her second husband, Johann Loewen (1852-1934), and her two children from her first marriage. The story of Johann and his family was the subject of Part 4 of this series about the Mennonite Settlers in Chortitza [15]. *[Johann Loewen and Sara Dyck are the author's second great grandparents.]*

The name given to the "Old Colony" migration stemmed from the circumstances of the Chortitza settlement being the first, or old, settlement of Mennonites in Ukraine. The phrase "old colony" gives the impression the people were "old fashioned", or perhaps highly conservative. They were

not "old fashioned": they adopted new technologies and new farming methods and were current in economic affairs. However, they were socially conservative, in that they guarded jealously their independence from the Russian government and any demands to assimilate socially or culturally. While the Mennonite community was happy to integrate economically, and they were particularly successful in economic terms, they were intent on maintaining their language, religion, educational system and their exemption from military service. When these elements of their culture were threatened, many Chortitza Mennonites reacted by seeking new opportunities in Canada.

#### Source Notes

[1] Glenn H. Penner's article describing the earliest settlers in Chortitza contains an entry related to Jacob, who moved to the village of Chortitza. See this document at [https://www.mennonitegenealogy.com/russia/First\\_Mennonite\\_Settlers\\_in\\_Chortitza.pdf](https://www.mennonitegenealogy.com/russia/First_Mennonite_Settlers_in_Chortitza.pdf).

[2] The marriage record found in the Tiegenhagen Church marriage list indicates his village of origin. This can be found at [https://mennonitegenealogy.com/churchregisters/Oestliche\\_preussische\\_Provinzen\\_und\\_Polen\\_\(Teil\)/Digitalisate/Mennonitische\\_Kirchenbuecher/Tiegenhagen/\(Petershagen\)\\_-1780-1831\\_-KB.PE.01/Weierhof/20-21.jpg](https://mennonitegenealogy.com/churchregisters/Oestliche_preussische_Provinzen_und_Polen_(Teil)/Digitalisate/Mennonitische_Kirchenbuecher/Tiegenhagen/(Petershagen)_-1780-1831_-KB.PE.01/Weierhof/20-21.jpg).

Jacob's trade is mentioned in a census taken in 1814. This record can be seen at [https://mennonitegenealogy.com/russia/Chortitza\\_Mennonite\\_Settlement\\_Census\\_October\\_1814.pdf](https://mennonitegenealogy.com/russia/Chortitza_Mennonite_Settlement_Census_October_1814.pdf).

The abundance of census records in the early years of the Chortitza settlement provide much of the information related to farming assets and events described in this narrative. These materials can be found at <https://mennonitegenealogy.com>.

[3] Glenn H. Penner has posted a comprehensive transcription of this census at [https://www.mennonitegenealogy.com/prussia/1776\\_West\\_Prussia\\_Census.pdf](https://www.mennonitegenealogy.com/prussia/1776_West_Prussia_Census.pdf).

Henry Schapansky documented the relationship between Jacob and his father in his book *Mennonite Migrations (and the Old Colony)*, published by Schapansky in 2006, p. 336.

[4] See source reference [3] for the same data sources.

[5] The marriage date is taken from the marriage source cited in [2] above.

[6] See the Gameo entry providing a brief history of Tiegenhagen at [https://gameo.org/index.php?title=Tiegenhagen\\_\(Pomeranian\\_Voivodeship,\\_Poland\)](https://gameo.org/index.php?title=Tiegenhagen_(Pomeranian_Voivodeship,_Poland)). (Penner, Horst and Richard D. Thiessen. "Tiegenhagen (Pomeranian Voivodeship, Poland)." *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online*. April 2013. Web. 28 Oct 2024.)

[7] Glenn H. Penner's work on the earliest settlers shows that there was one child in the family when they first moved to Ukraine; thereafter census records indicate this was son Jacob.

[8] See the Genealogical Registry and Database of Mennonite Ancestry at <https://www.grandmaonline.org/>, #196348.

[9] See the Genealogical Registry and Database of Mennonite Ancestry at <https://www.grandmaonline.org/>, #528342.

[10] See Henry Schapansky, p. 661; Peter Rempel, Mennonite Migration to Russia 1788-1828, Winnipeg, Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, 2000, p. 97; Karl Stumpp, The Emigration from Germany to Russia in the Years 1763-1862, Lincoln Nebraska, American Historical Society of Germans from Russia, 1997, p. 874.

[11] The information in this paragraph is taken from the Genealogical Registry and Database of Mennonite Ancestry as cited in [9] above.

[12] See Reinlander Gemeinde Buch 1880-1903, edited by John Dyck and William Harms, Winnipeg, Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, 1994, p. 265.

[13] See Barry Teichroeb, Part 2 – Johann Peters and Maria Bergen at <https://www.mooserrungenealogy.com/chortitza/articles/part-2-johann-peters-and-maria-bergen/>.

[14] See the passenger list records in Bergthal Gemeinde Buch, edited by John Dyck, Steinbach, Hanover Steinbach Historical Society Inc., 1993, pp. 291, 293, 313 for details about all the family members.

[15] See Barry Teichroeb, Part 4 – Heinrich Loewen at <https://www.mooserrungenealogy.com/chortitza/articles/part-4-heinrich-loewen/>.