

The Mennonite Settlers in Chortitza

Part 8 – Origins: Cornelius Krahn and Helena Redekop

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Introduction

Cornelius Krahn (ca 1827-) and Helena Redekop (1822-1878) were second generation settlers of the Chortitza Mennonite Colony established in 1789 on the bank of the Dnieper River in southern Ukraine. While Helena's father, David Redekop (1789-1862), immigrated from Prussia when he was a young child, Helena's mother, Katharina Wieler (1793-1879) was born in the village of Rosenthal in the Chortitza settlement. Cornelius' father was likely Cornelius Krahn (1797-) but this family connection, based on circumstantial evidence, is uncertain. I will outline the evidence below. *[Cornelius and Helena are third great grandparents of the author. Their daughter, Maria Krahn (1848-1916) became the wife of Johann Fast (1852-1920). Maria and Johann are the second great grandparents of the author. Johann's ancestry is the subject of Part 9 of this series.]*

Cornelius Krahn (1797-)

Cornelius was born in the village of Rosenthal to Johann Krahn (1763-1809) and Anna Andres (1764-1831). Johann and Anna settled in the village of Rosenthal, having emigrated in 1795 from the village of Walldorf in Prussia. Johann was a bricklayer. Johann's father, also named Johann (ca 1736-1784) lived in the village of Neustadterwald according to the 1776 Census of Mennonites in Prussia [1].

Cornelius spent his childhood in Rosenthal. After Cornelius's father died in 1809 his mother held on to the family farm until late 1811. In October of that year the status of her family was landless [2]. In May 1813 Cornelius became a servant at a homestead in Rosenthal working for Bernard Kauenhoven, who had substantial herds of cattle and sheep. By September 1813 he had moved to the village of Neu Osterwick to work for Heinrich Funk. In 1814 his mother married a tailor, Isaac Penner, who lived and worked in the village of Chortitza. Anna and her remaining children moved to Chortitza. In 1815 Cornelius rejoined his family who were now living in Chortitza. In 1816 he once again moved out, this time to work for Heinrich Unger, a blacksmith in Einlage. While the 1816 census records list Cornelius living in Einlage, the List of Household Heads for 1816 records two heads of the homestead at Chortitza where his mother lived with her new husband. Isaac Penner is one household head listed with his children from his previous marriage. Cornelius is the other household head, listed with his mother and siblings [3].

Thirty years pass during which there is a gap in formal records. Then in 1847 the record of householders lists Cornelius (1797-) in Rosenthal [4]. The events leading to this are unknown.

What is known is that in 1816 Cornelius' older brother Jacob had a farm in Rosenthal. Jacob does not appear in the 1847 list. In 1847 Cornelius is the only Krahn who owns a farm in Rosenthal. There may have been a point in the intervening years when Cornelius took over the farm from Jacob, but this is purely speculative.

The "Genealogical Registry and Database of Mennonite Ancestry" contains additional information about Cornelius [5]. The Database lists a wife, Anna Rempel, twenty years younger than Cornelius and seven children born in Rosenthal with detailed birth records. It also lists two additional sons, Jacob and Cornelius, neither of whom have birthdate information. It is unusual to see an age gap of two decades between spouses except in cases of second marriages. This observation coupled with the ambiguity around the births of Jacob and Cornelius suggests that these two boys were the offspring of a first marriage for which no detailed birth records exist.

Cornelius Krahn (ca 1827-)

The data cited above demonstrates that Cornelius Krahn (1797-) lived in Rosenthal through the 1840s and had a son named Cornelius who lived in Rosenthal. Other records show that Cornelius Krahn (ca 1827-) married Helena Redekop (1822-1878) in Rosenthal in 1847 [6] and they had children in Rosenthal [7]. The circumstances suggest that Cornelius Krahn (ca 1827-) is the son of Cornelius Krahn (1797-).

Helena Redekop (1822-1878)

Helena's paternal grandparents were Wilhelm Redekop (1754-1818) and Maria Rempel (1758-). They emigrated from Lackendorf, Prussia to the new Mennonite settlement of Chortitza in 1795, establishing a homestead in the village of Rosenthal [8]. Wilhelm's parents were probably David Redekop (1717-1798), originally from the Danzig area, and Anna Berg (1720-), originally from Lackendorf [9]. In 1776 the Census of Mennonites in Prussia lists David and Anna as renters in Lackendorf where David worked as a laborer. They were not well off.

Helena's maternal grandparents were Nicholas Wieler (1760-1810) and Anna Janzen (1761-1822). They emigrated from Rehwalde, Prussia to the Chortitza settlement in 1789, homesteading in the village of Rosenthal [10]. Nicholas' father was Heinrich Wieler (about 1741-), who was living in the village of Haberhorst at the time of the 1776 Census of Mennonites in Prussia. In 1776 Heinrich was a member of the Tiegenhagen Flemish Mennonite congregation. It is possible that he was married to Elisabeth Berends (about 1741-) based on records listing a married couple with these names in the Tiegenhagen congregation at this time [11]. Anna Janzen was a daughter of Cornelius Janzen (ca 1737-1781), a resident of Rosenort, Prussia in 1776 and later a resident of Klein Holstein [12].

Helena was first married in 1843 to Johann Rempel. With Johan she had a daughter, Katharina, in 1846. The next year Johann died. Helena married once again, this time in 1847 to Cornelius Krahn. With Cornelius she had at least two daughters, Maria in 1848 and Helena in 1851.

Maria Krahn (1848-1916)

Maria Krahn was the daughter of Cornelius Krahn (ca 1827-) and Helena Redekop (1822-1878). She was born in the village of Rosenthal in 1848. She was still living in the same village when she married Johann Fast (1852-1920), also from Rosenthal. They remained in Rosenthal until the 1890s when they emigrated to Canada.

Source Notes

[1] Henry Schapansky, *Mennonite Migrations and The Old Colony, Russia* (Rosenort, Henry Schapansky, 2006), pp. 560-561. The 1776 Census is found at https://mgr.mennonitegenealogy.com/prussia/1776_West_Prussia_Census.pdf.

[2] The Chortitza Census records referenced in this article can be reviewed at <https://mgr.mennonitegenealogy.com/russia/>.

[3] The 1816 List of Household Heads is found at https://mgr.mennonitegenealogy.com/russia/Chortitza_Household_Heads_1816.pdf.

[4] The 1847 List of Householders is found at https://mgr.mennonitegenealogy.com/russia/Chortitza_1847.htm.

[5] The Grandma Database is located at <https://grandmaonline.org>. Cornelius Krahn (1797-) is #189693.

[6] Johann Rempel, *Familienchronik des Johann Jacob Rempel* (Gruenfeld, Johann Rempel, 1921), p. 26.

[7] The Chortitza Family Register lists one of their daughters and states that her place of birth was Rosenthal. See https://mgr.mennonitegenealogy.com/russia/Chortitza_Family_Registers.pdf, Book 2, p. 96.

[8] Karl Stumpp, *The Emigration from Germany To Russia in the Years 1763 – 1862* (Lincoln, Nebraska, American Historical Society of Germans from Russia, 1973), p. 193.

[9] Schapansky, p. 571 and Grandma Database #266163 and #266164.

[10] Stumpp, p. 202.

[11] Danzig Family Book Vol. 1, Frame 120, https://mgr.mennonitegenealogy.com/prussia/Danzig_Family_Book_1.pdf.

[12] Anna Janzen's father is mentioned in the record of her marriage in 1781 in the Elbing Church records https://mgr.mennonitegenealogy.com/prussia/Elbing-Elterwald_Marriages_1779-1795.htm.