

# **Incidences in Mennonite Colonies: 1823-1826**

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The following are extracted from a report of accidents which occurred in the various foreign colonies in New Russia (South Russia, now Ukraine). The names of people and locations have been standardized to make them more easily recognizable.

p. 50 Jacob Thiessen

#902                      June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1823  
#836 in File[?]              24

Ministry of Internal Affairs  
Committee on Behalf of Foreign Settlers in the South of Russia  
Department 2  
June 27 1823  
#911  
Kishinev  
On a Fire in Schoeneberg Village

to the Director of the Ministry of Internal Affairs

Ekaterinoslav Office on Behalf of Foreign Settlers is reporting to the Committee that as a result of fires that occurred in **Schoeneberg** village of Chortitza district on March 12<sup>th</sup> this year 6 houses, 2 boys [illegible note], 17 horses, 52 cattle, and 31 sheep burned; on April 12<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup>, and May 8<sup>th</sup> each, one house burned. Investigation has shown that the first fire was accidentally started by Mennonite **Jacob Thiessen**, the causes of other fires are unknown. The Office, in collaboration with the Lower Local Court, has sent a deputy to properly investigate these fires.

Of all this the Committee on Behalf of Foreign Settlers in the South of Russia reports to Your Excellency.

Committee member [signature]

p. 61 Mennonite Rempel

#1202                    October 4<sup>th</sup>, 1823  
#1118 in File                6

Ministry of Internal Affairs  
Committee on Behalf of Foreign Settlers in the South of Russia  
Department 2  
September 9 1823  
#1234  
Kishinev  
On Drowned Colonist Rempel

to the Director of the Ministry of Internal Affairs

Ekaterinoslav Office on Behalf of Foreign Settlers is reporting to the Committee that Molochansk resident from **Halbstadt** village, who worked at Mennonite **Johann Klassen**'s factory (who is from Berdyansk district), drowned while swimming in the Molochnaya river. Although the local medical assistant, who works for the district foremen [okruzhnoy starshina] of both Molochansk offices, has used all the means for returning him to life, this was to no avail.

Of all this the Committee on Behalf of Foreign Settlers in the South of Russia reports to Your Excellency.

Committee member [signature]

p. 70 Burwalde Peter Barg

#1347                      November 14<sup>th</sup>, 1823  
in File                      [??]

Ministry of Internal Affairs  
Committee on Behalf of Foreign Settlers in the South of Russia  
Department 2

#1395

October 20 1823

Kishinev

On a Fire in the House of Mennonite Petr Barg

to the Director of the Ministry of Internal Affairs

Ekaterinoslav Office on Behalf of Foreign Settlers is reporting to the Committee on September 14<sup>th</sup>, this year, that on August 8<sup>th</sup> a fire happened in the house of **Burwalde** Mennonite **Peter Barg**. His house and all the property in it burned down. The office's investigation of the cause of the fire has shown that as Barg's wife was making breakfast, a strong gust of wind [lit. "whirlwind"] passed through the house, and it would seem that it carried a spark to the roof, as soon after that the house caught fire.

Of this incident the Committee on Behalf of Foreign Settlers in the South of Russia reports to Your Excellency.

Committee member [signature]

p. 77 Benjamin Penner

#76            January 16<sup>th</sup>, 1824  
#89 in File            17

Ministry of Internal Affairs  
Committee on Behalf of Foreign Settlers in the South of Russia  
Department 2  
December 21 1823  
#1739  
Kishinev  
On Drowned Mennonite Benjamin Penner

to the Director of the Ministry of Internal Affairs

Ekaterinoslav Office on Behalf of Foreign Settlers is reporting to the Committee that on September 23<sup>rd</sup>, this year, **Margenau** village Mennonite **Benjamin Penner** was drunk and having jumped into the Molochnaya river, drowned. Although the Molochansk District Office was notified of this, and two hours later Wirtemberg colonist Brummer pulled Penner's body out of the river, all the efforts employed by medical assistant Schults to return him to life were futile. As such, his body was buried [, and the Office] requested the Melitopolsk Local Court to investigate the incident as to whether there was some special cause of death of aforementioned Penner.

Of this incident the Committee on Behalf of Foreign Settlers in the South of Russia reports to Your Excellency.

Chairman lieutenant-general [signature]  
Committee member [signature]  
Committee member [signature]

p. 80 Rempel Neu-Osterwick

#758                      June 8<sup>th</sup>, 1824  
#614 in File[?]              9

Ministry of Internal Affairs  
Committee on Behalf of Foreign Settlers in the South of Russia  
Department 2

#569

May 14 1824

Kishinev

On a House that Burned Down in Neu-Osterwick Village

to the Director of the Ministry of Internal Affairs

Ekaterinoslav Office on Behalf of Foreign Settlers is reporting to the Committee on March 31<sup>st</sup> of this year that on November 23<sup>rd</sup> 1823, at night, a fire happened in the house of Mennonite widow **Rempel** in **Neu-Osterwick** village. As a result, that house and all the property, estimated to cost 3,036 rubles, burned down. Upon the investigation of this fire, it turned out that green hay that was stored on [above] the ceiling since fall of that year has composted, combusted, and caused that fire.

Of this incident the Committee on Behalf of Foreign Settlers in the South of Russia reports to Your Excellency.

Committee member [signature]

p. 91 Mennonite **Chortitza**

#1244                      September 9<sup>th</sup>, 1824  
#961 in File[?]              10

Ministry of Internal Affairs  
Committee on Behalf of Foreign Settlers in the South of Russia  
Department 2  
August 30 1824  
#1047  
Kishinev  
On Mennonite Homes and Mills Destroyed by a Storm

to the Director of the Ministry of Internal Affairs

Ekaterinoslav Office on Behalf of Foreign Settlers is reporting to the Committee that the storm that happened on July 16<sup>th</sup> this year has destroyed completely, or at least half destroyed, 96 Mennonite homes and 14 mills, causing a loss of 20 649 rubles.

Of this incident the Committee on Behalf of Foreign Settlers in the South of Russia reports to Your Excellency.

Chairman lieutenant-general [signature]  
Committee member [signature]

p. 92 Mennonite

#1473                                      November 5<sup>th</sup>, 1824  
#1135 in File[?]                              6

Ministry of Internal Affairs  
Committee on Behalf of Foreign Settlers in the South of Russia  
Department 2  
October 25 1824  
#1276  
Kishinev  
On Two Mennonites who Drowned in Radichev Village

to the Director of the Ministry of Internal Affairs

Ekaterinoslav Office on Behalf of Foreign Settlers is reporting to the Committee that on August 10<sup>th</sup>, this year, three young maidens from Radichev Mennonite [**Hutterite**] community boarded a boat that easily accommodates four persons and wanted to cross the Desna river on the way from **Radichev** to **Neudorf**, and as they were in the middle of the river, the accidentally capsized the boat while passing over the oars and drowned. Although the people who rushed to help them pulled them out of the river, only one of the maidens returned to life, while the other two did not, despite all the best efforts.

Although the circumstances of this incident were investigated by the Radichev Mennonite Office, following Your Excellency's orders from October 23<sup>rd</sup> 1823, Ekaterinoslav Office on Behalf of Foreign Settlers asked the Krovelets Lower Local Court to properly investigate the incident in the presence of the foremen ["starshina"] of the Radichev Office. The Radichev Office was sternly reminded that the Mennonites under it are officially prohibited from attempting to cross the Desna river on their own, without the help of experienced ferrymen, or [cross it] in general, under a threat of lawful penalty from the hands of said foremen.

Of this incident the Committee on Behalf of Foreign Settlers in the South of Russia reports to Your Excellency.



Chairman lieutenant-general [signature]  
Committee member [signature]

p. 102 Kronsgarten Franz Pauls;

#322                    March 4<sup>th</sup>, 1824  
#250 in File[?]            5

Ministry of Internal Affairs  
Committee on Behalf of Foreign Settlers in the South of Russia  
Department 2  
February 21 1825  
#142  
Kishinev  
On a Fire that Happened at the House of Mennonite Pauls

to the Director of the Ministry of Internal Affairs

Ekaterinoslav Office on Behalf of Foreign Settlers is reporting to the Committee that on October 22<sup>nd</sup> 1824, when **Kronsweide** Mennonite **Franz Pauls** was away from home with Collegiate Councillor Kusovnikov, whom Your Excellency sent to examine the pastoral industry [lit. "sheep establishments"], a fire happened at his house, destroying the house and all the property, the total cost of which was 2,774 rubles 50 kopeks. The fire happened because of his sons, each younger than 4 years old, who were playing in the stables with wood shavings and putting under them small embers that they took from the hearth in the house, while their mother was alone in the house, ironing clothes, and had a small fire going in the hearth for heating the iron. Ekaterinoslav Office has notified the Lower Local Court of the investigation of this incident.

Of this incident the Committee on Behalf of Foreign Settlers in the South of Russia reports to Your Excellency.

Committee member [signature]

p. 104 Kronsweide Heinrich Goertzen

#666                      April 26<sup>th</sup>, 1825  
#449 in File[?]              27

Ministry of Internal Affairs  
Committee on Behalf of Foreign Settlers in the South of Russia  
Department 2  
April 15 1825  
#456  
Kishinev  
On a Fire that Happened at the House of Mennonite Goertzen

to the Director of the Ministry of Internal Affairs

Ekaterinoslav Office on Behalf of Foreign Settlers is reporting to the Committee that on January 15<sup>th</sup>, this year, a fire happened at the house of Mennonite **Heinrich Goertzen**, destroying the house, attached buildings, several heads of cattle [Russian “skot” could refer to cows, sheep, or swine], and many items for a total cost of 594 rubles 25 kopeks. The Chortitza Office’s investigation of the cause of this fire has shown that Mennonite **Goertzen** was at that time away, and another Mennonite, **Abraham Ketler**, who is quite an elderly man, came to his house, stuffed his pipe [with tobacco], lit it, and went to the stables to look at the cow that Mennonite **Goertzen** bought that morning. The fire started soon after **Ketler** has left, which is why local Mennonites suppose that Kesler accidentally lit with his pipe the fodder stored there [in the stables] and started the fire. In regards to the investigation of this fire with the involvement of the Chortitza District Office the Office [on Behalf of Foreign Settlers] has reported to the Lower Local Court.

Of this incident the Committee on Behalf of Foreign Settlers in the South of Russia reports to Your Excellency.

Chairman lieutenant-general [signature]

p. 115 Elisabeththal, Schardua, Pordenau, Mariental, Rudnerweide,  
and Grossweide

#1825                      October 26<sup>th</sup>, 1825  
#1179 in File[?]              27

Ministry of Internal Affairs  
Committee on Behalf of Foreign Settlers in the South of Russia  
Department 2  
October 10 1825  
#1549  
Kishinev  
On Hail that Damaged the Crops, etc.

to the Director of the Ministry of Internal Affairs

Ekaterinoslav Office on Behalf of Foreign Settlers has reported to the  
Committee that on the night between July 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> the fields of  
six colonies of the Molochansk and Mennonite districts, namely:  
**Elisabeththal, Schardau, Pordenau, Mariental, Rudnerweide, and  
Grossweide**, were hit by heavy hail as big as a walnut, inflicting  
upon the residents losses in terms of spring crops estimated at about  
3,226 rubles 35 kopeks, and breaking windows valued at 316 rubles  
64 kopeks, totalling 3,542 rubles 99 kopeks.

Of this incident the Committee on Behalf of Foreign Settlers in the  
South of Russia reports to Your Excellency.

Chairman lieutenant-general [signature]  
Committee member [signature]

p. 119 Neu-Osterwick David Koop, David DeFehr

#28                      January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1826  
#24 in File[?]                      3

Ministry of Internal Affairs  
Committee on Behalf of Foreign Settlers in the South of Russia  
Department 2

December 19 1825

#1882

Kishinev

On a Fire that Happened at Neu-Osterwick village

to the Director of the Ministry of Internal Affairs

Ekaterinoslav Office on Behalf of Foreign Settlers has reported to the Committee that a fire broke out in **Neu-Osterwick** village of the Chortitza District on October 16<sup>th</sup>, this year. As a result, the homes of Mennonites **David Koop** and **David Defehr** and all the property kept there, with a total value of 3,333 rubles, were destroyed.

This fire happened in the house of Mennonite **Koop**, when he and his wife were away, visiting Chortitza village, and only an underage [female] worker was there. The Office has reported of the lawful investigation of this incident to the Local Court.

Of this incident the Committee on Behalf of Foreign Settlers in the South of Russia reports to Your Excellency.

Committee member [signature]

Committee member [signature]

p. 130 Jacob Olfert Fuerstenau

#1216                      June 17<sup>th</sup>, 1826  
#796 in File[?]            18

Ministry of Internal Affairs  
Committee on Behalf of Foreign Settlers in the South of Russia  
Department 2  
June 4 1826  
#1097  
Kishinev  
in addition to #585

to the Director of the Ministry of Internal Affairs

On March 26<sup>th</sup>, this year, Ekaterinoslav Office on Behalf of Foreign Settlers has reported to Your Excellency of **Fuerstenau** colonist **Jacob Olfert**, who was mad and took his own life.

Now the Ekaterinoslav Office reports that the investigation conducted by its workers and a member[?] of Melitopol Lower Local Court, as well as the uyezd investigator, has revealed that Olfert truly has hanged himself in his own room in his madness, and as the body was examined by the uyezd doctor and a member of zemstvo police, they have found a blue stripe around his neck, which confirms death by hanging, while no signs casting doubt on this were found.

Of this incident the Committee on Behalf of Foreign Settlers in the South of Russia reports to Your Excellency.

Chairman lieutenant-general [signature]  
Committee member [signature]  
Committee member [signature]

p. 137 Johan Loewen Rueckenau

#1763                      September 9<sup>th</sup>, 1826  
#1202 in File[?]        10

Ministry of Internal Affairs  
Committee on Behalf of Foreign Settlers in the South of Russia  
Department 2  
August 24 1826  
#1681  
Kishinev  
On Mennonite Loewen who Hanged Himself

to the Director of the Ministry of Internal Affairs

Ekaterinoslav Office on Behalf of Foreign Settlers has reported to the Committee that **Rueckenau** Mennonite **Johann Dyck**'s step-son **Johann Loewen** hanged himself for unknown reasons on July 7<sup>th</sup>, this year. The body was examined by an official from the Office and by a member of the Melitopol Local Court, when it was already in the coffin, in an open grave, but the body has already turned into rot due to heat. The investigation conducted afterwards has not revealed anybody to be the cause of Loewen's death, and one can assume that he has hanged himself due to a fit of hypochondria[sic!], which his relatives and neighbours did not notice due to their own simplicity.

Of this incident the Committee on Behalf of Foreign Settlers in the South of Russia reports to Your Excellency.

Chairman lieutenant-general [signature]  
Committee member [signature]  
Committee member [signature]

p. 142 Bernard Friesen Tiegenhagen

#2142                      October 29<sup>th</sup>, 1826  
#1419 in File[?]        30

Ministry of Internal Affairs  
Committee on Behalf of Foreign Settlers in the South of Russia  
Department 2

October 1[5] 1826

#202[3]

Kishinev

On a Fire that Happened at the House of Mennonite Friesen

to the Director of the Ministry of Internal Affairs

Ekaterinoslav Office on Behalf of Foreign Settlers has reported to the Commission that on August 28<sup>th</sup>, this year, at the home of Mennonite **Bernhard Friesen** in **Tiegenhagen** village a fire has started for unknown reasons. The fire has destroyed the house, the stables, the granary, and some items. After investigating the incident, the Office has contacted the Melitopol Local Court.

Of this incident the Committee on Behalf of Foreign Settlers in the South of Russia reports to Your Excellency.

Chairman lieutenant-general [signature]

Committee member [signature]



p. 146 Wilhelm Unrau Kronsweide

#133                    January 26<sup>th</sup>, 1827

#134 in File[?]        27

Ministry of Internal Affairs

Committee on Behalf of Foreign Settlers in the South of Russia

Department 2

January 14 1827

#111

Kishinev

On a Fire that Happened at the House of Mennonite Unrau

to the Director of the Ministry of Internal Affairs

Ekaterinoslav Office on Behalf of Foreign Settlers has reported to the Committee that on November 26<sup>th</sup>, last year, a fire happened at the house of Mennonite **Wilhelm Unrau** in **Kronsweide** village of the Chortitza district. As a result, the house stables, grain, fodder, and various tools for a total value of 732 rubles 5 kopeks were destroyed. This fire happened because of a furnace built in the entrance area [seni] of the house. The fire that leapt from the furnace first lit the straw that was nearby, and then the fire spread to the rest of the house, as was reported by the Chortitza District Office to Ekaterinoslav Local Court to act upon this information as appropriate.

Of this incident the Committee on Behalf of Foreign Settlers in the South of Russia reports to Your Excellency.

Chairman lieutenant-general [signature]

Committee member [signature]

p. 159 Molochna

#1149                      June 8<sup>th</sup>, 1827  
#760 in File[?]            9

Ministry of Internal Affairs  
Committee on Behalf of Foreign Settlers in the South of Russia  
Department 2  
May 27 1827  
#1002  
Kishinev

to the Director of the Ministry of Internal Affairs

Ekaterinoslav Office on Behalf of Foreign Settlers is reporting to the Committee on May 10<sup>th</sup>, this year, that as its senior member was notified of a disease discovered among the cattle in the colonies Kirshvald and Tigendorf of Mariupol District, as a result of which 5 animals have died in the former village and 107 in the latter, as well as of significant mortality that has been persistent for some time among the sheep of Molochansk **Mennonite** communal sheep enclosure, the Office has ordered veterinarian Kharakhanov to purchase appropriate medical materials in Ekaterinoslav with community funds and to immediately go to the Molochansk Mennonite and Mariupol Colonial districts, and to offer the means needed to cure and end the disease discovered among the cattle and sheep.

Of this event the Committee on Behalf of Foreign Settlers in the South of Russia reports to Your Excellency.

Chairman lieutenant-general [signature]  
Committee member [signature]  
Committee member [signature]

p. 181 Lichtfelde

#2624                      June 8<sup>th</sup>, 1827  
#1696 in File[?]        9

Ministry of Internal Affairs  
Committee on Behalf of Foreign Settlers in the South of Russia  
Department 2  
November 12 1827  
#2274  
Kishinev

to the Director of the Ministry of Internal Affairs

Ekaterinoslav Office on Behalf of Foreign Settlers has reported to the Committee that on September 21<sup>st</sup>, this year, a disease was discovered among cattle in **Lichfelde** village, Molochansk district. By October 4<sup>th</sup>, 28 heads of cattle have died from it and 32 are ill. The Office has instructed the Molochansk District Office to report back if the disease does not stop after employing the means already offered by veterinarian Kharakhanov, so that he can be sent there again.

Of this incident the Committee on Behalf of Foreign Settlers in the South of Russia reports to Your Excellency.

Chairman lieutenant-general [signature]  
Committee member [signature]

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Created 3 September 2023  
Formatting by Richard D. Thiessen

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