Mennonite Immigration from Jeziorka, West Prussia to Volhynia, Russia in 1803 and 1804

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Several years ago Adalbert Goertz posted “From Jeziorka, Prussia to Russia in 1804” (1). However, none of the families listed by Goertz can be found in the various immigration lists available in the books by Peter Rempel (2) or B. H. Unruh (3). It turns out that these families did not immigrate to the Molotschna or Chortitza colonies in South Russia, as one might assume. Rather, they moved to the Mennonite settlement in the Russian province of Volhynia. Since that time I have found two further lists of Jeziorka Mennonites applying for permission to immigrate to “Russland”, who I have identified as Volhynian immigrants.

A comparison of the families listed below with the 1789 list of Mennonite landowners in Jeziorka (1) indicate that at least 12 of the 20 Mennonite landowners in Jeziorka left for Volhynia in a space of less than 2 years. During the period 1816 to 1822 essentially the entire Mennonite population of Jeziorka moved to either the Molotschna colony (the majority) or Volhynia. Of the 23 landowners listed in 1823 only one (Peter Janz) appears to be Mennonite (4). The three groups took with them a total of 109 souls. This was well over one half of the total population of the village of Jeziorka. For more information on Jeziorka see GAMEO (5).

All of the families listed below can be found in the Przechowka Old-Flemish Mennonite church records (6). In all cases the church record entries for these families stop before 1804. These families are easily found in the GRANDMA database (7) and their numbers in that database are not provided below. The GM database does show that some of these people were recorded as living in Vollhynia. Unfortunately very few records from the Volhynian Mennonites are available (8). The majority of the Volhynian Mennonites immigrated to Kansas and Nebraska in the 1870s and 1880s. See the article in GAMEO for more information on this group (9).

The lists below only roughly follow the format of the original documents. It is important to note here that additional information on each family (such as how much land they owned) can be found in the originals. The “original” documents were actually hand-written copies sent to Berlin. The whereabouts of the true originals, which would include the signatures of those who knew how to sign, is unknown.
First group of 1 August 1803:

1. Peter Richert 43
   Eva Retzlaff 30
   Children:
   Anna 15
   Benjamin 9

2. Peter Schmidt 39
   Anna Koehn 36
   Children:
   Maria 11
   Helena 9
   Sara 6 weeks

3. Jacob Koehn 33
   Eva Richert 19
   Son:
   Andreas 1 ½

4. Peter Janz 54
   Eva Richert --
   Children:
   Peter 15
   Johann 10
   Tobias 4

[total number: 18]

Source: Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin, Germany. II. Hauptabteilung: General-Directorium, Abt. 9 Westpreussen und Netzedistrikt, Materien. Tit. 109 ad Nr.1,vol.2 and Nr.17 (p.55-57,126:Jeziorka emigrants,LDS Film #1056559,item 3).

Second group of 15 Sep 1803:

1. Peter Ratzlaff 39
   Anna Schmidt 41
   Children:
   Anna 15
   Andreas 12
   Maria 9
2. Andreas Koehn* 39
   Anna Ratzlaff 41
   Children:
   David 17
   Jacob 15
   Berend 11
   Anna 23
   Sara 21
   Maria 13
   Ewa 8

   Parents:
   Andreas Koehn* 60
   Anna Buller 70

3. Jacob Schmidt 33
   Maria Schmidt 37
   Children:
   Anna 9
   Peter 6
   Jacob 2

4. Andreas Schmidt 26

5. Samuel Schmidt 24
   Engaged to be married to:
   Maria Koehn 24

6. Peter Buller 31
   Anna Ratzlaff 30
   Children:
   Ewa 6
   Anna 5
   Peter 4
   Maria 1

7. George Buller 49
   Maria Koehn 49
   Children:
Jacob 18
David 15
Maria 12
Anna 10

8. Jacob **Foth** 44
Maria **Nachtigal** 42
Children:
Johann 15
Ewa 9

[total number 40]

Source: Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussicher Kulturbesitz, Berlin, Germany. II. Hauptabteilung: General-Directorium, Abt. 7B, file 4176.

**Third group of 18 February 1804:**

1. Heinrich **Ratzlaff** 36
Brother:
Andreas **Ratzlaff** 29

Father [of Heinrich and Andreas]:
Behrendt **Ratzlaff** 87**
Mother:
Anna **Buller** 68

Sister:
Elisabeth **Ratzlaff** 24

Niece “Schwestertochter”:
Anna **Schmidt** 16

Aunt “Vaterschwester”:
Catharina widow **Becker** 72
her daughter:
Sara 32
surviving child of her daughter “verstorbenen Tochter kind”:
Anna **Wedel** 17
2. Heinrich Schmidt 28
Eva Nachtigal 37
Children:
Sara 2
Andreas ¾

Mother-in-law:
Sara widow Nachtigal
born Schmidt 64
her son
Johann Nachtigal 24

3. Jacob Becker*** 35
Anna Nachtigal 36
Children:
Jacob 10
Peter 8½
Johann 7
Behrend 5
Maria 4
Anna 2
Andreas ¼

4. Peter Becker*** 52
Sara Nachtigal 55
Children:
Anna 21
Sara 18
Behrend 14
Peter 11
Cousin “Vaters Brudersohn”:
Peter Becker 32

5. Tobias Janz 32
Catharina 26

Father:
Johann Janz 60
Mother:
Maria b. Voth 62
Sister:
Anna Janz 28

6. Peter Ratzlaff 34
Anna Schmidt 34
Children:
Peter 7
Heinrich 1

7. Cornelius Janz 36
Step-mother:
Catharina b. Ratzlaff 54
Her children [Janz]:
Anna 26
Maria 23
Heinrich 21
Tobias 21
Andreas 17
Eva 13
Sara 11
David 9

[total number: 51]
The document states that this group was planning to travel to Volhynia.
Source: Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussicher Kulturbesitz, Berlin, Germany. II. Hauptabteilung: General-Directorium, Abt. 7B, file 4176.

* The original incorrectly gives the surname as Krahn.
** The original incorrectly gives his age as 57.
*** The original spelling is Baecker.
References:

(1)  http://www.mennonitegenealogy.com/russia/jez.htm

(2) Peter Rempel, Mennonite Migrations to Russia, 1788–1828 (Winnipeg, 2000).


(4) Some property records going back to the 1790s exist for Jeziorka in the Bydgoszcz archives in Poland. These files are found in Fond1881.

(5) See GAMEO article: http://gameo.org/index.php?title=Jeziorka_(Kuyavian-Pomeranian_Voivodeship,_Poland)

(6) For scans of the original church records see: http://mla.bethelks.edu/metadata/cong_15.php


(8) See: http://www.mennonitegenealogy.com/russia/