

Additions and Corrections to Jacob J. Dyck: Am Trakt to America

Chapter 2: The Dyck and Wall Families

February, 2003, by D. Frederick Dyck

Regarding the origins of the family name Dyck. In March, 2001, I received a letter from Cornelius J. Dyck, my/our third cousin, in response to my questions about the origin of the Dyck name. Cornelius replied that he had never tried to trace the origin in many visits to the Netherlands but that it undoubtedly comes from the Dutch word "dijk" or "dijck" which is the same as the English word "dike" or "dyke." The use of the prefix "van" means of or from the dike. As there are numerous dikes in the Netherlands and Belgium it would be virtually impossible to pinpoint an exact location where the name first appeared, according to Cornelius. After 200 years in West Prussia, the mid-1700s, the name was Germanized with the spellings being Dück or Dueck, Dieck, and Dyck. It is important to keep all these various spellings in mind, especially when looking at old German, Russian, and Dutch records/letters/documents. As to pronunciation Cornelius deferred to Jack Thiessen of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, an expert in old Dutch and German names. Dyck would be "dick" originally with "dike" being an Anglicized pronunciation.

On page 32 of Am Trakt To America, (known throughout this text as ATTA), paragraph 2, there is reference to two elders of the Russian Mennonite colony of Chortitza, Gerhard and Isaak Dyck. Although these two men are not directly related to our family lineage there may be a common progenitor as yet unknown in West Prussia. With that idea in mind it may interest readers to see the December, 2002 issue of Preservings, No. 21. This article is titled "Ältester Isaak Dyck, 1847-1929, Servant of God" compiled by Delbert F. Plett, Steinbach, Manitoba, Canada. Mr. Plett is the editor of Preservings and the author of many books about Mennonite history. Preservings is published semi-annually in June and December and contains original and reprinted articles about Mennonite history, culture and biographies.

On page 54 of ATTA the widow Justine Dyck's story of her marriage to Cornelius Froese is told. The name of Justine's second husband is in error. The man's name was Jacob not Cornelius. This error was discovered after I received a copy of A Pilgrim People, Volume II, copyright 1994 by Rena and George Kroeker. This second volume contains many more excerpts from the diaries of Johannes Dietrich Dyck (1826-1898) that provide clarification of the name and insight into the relationship Justine had with her future husband. From the diary: December 24, 1886. "Yesterday the wife of Jacob Froese was buried; she died in child birth. Mama is wondering if J. Dyck, our sister-in-law, will marry this Froese, since she has had an intimate relationship with him for a long time. He has worn out my brother Jacob's shirts and clothes long ago, and according to rumor she has already given him Jacob's watch." January 20, 1887. "Mrs. J. Dyck celebrated her engagement to her lover, Jacob Froese." It is obvious that Johannes Dietrich did not approve of his sister-in-law's involvement with Jacob Froese. This may also explain why the Penner family took custody of the children Catherine, Peter, and Anna.

Another entry from Johannes Dietrich's diary gives an approximate date of death for Dietrich Dyck, older brother of Johannes and our grandfather Jakob. From the diary: February 20, 1886. "Dietrich is sick, one can say lying on his deathbed." On page 66 of ATTA, V.-1., Dietrich's birth date and place is shown as 3 August 1819, Poppau, West Prussia. From Johannes' diary it would be appropriate to add his death date as circa February, 1886. In my correspondence with Gustav Dyck of Baidt, Germany I asked Gustav if he knew of any of Dietrich's descendants living in Am Trakt in the 1920s-30s. Gustav replied that he did not know for certain because there were so many people with the Dyck name. A complete English translation of Johannes Dietrich's diaries has yet to be done. Should that ever be completed it would undoubtedly add a great deal to our knowledge of the Dyck family at Am Trakt, Russia.

In the spring of 2001 I wrote to Gustav Dyck and asked if he could provide me with the genealogy of his mother Maria nee Wall (1886-1974). As he always does Gustav complied with my request in detail. Included with the Wall family history was a brief biography of Gustav's father Johannes (1878-1921), mother Maria, their children and grandchildren. Much about the lives of these people is in *Sixty Years Of Silence* but this additional material adds details not published previously. These eight pages are reproduced exactly as Gustav wrote them.

Before finishing the manuscript for ATTA I tried, unsuccessfully, to make contact with the descendants of Maria Dyck, Jacob J. Dyck's sister born in 1876. I knew that the family settled in Saskatchewan, Canada but was unable to locate any information prior to the book being published. In January, 2001, I wrote to the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada and asked for assistance in tracing Maria's family. Alf Redekopp, director of the Centre, responded on February 26, 2001. Enclosed with his letter were copies from the Ebenfeld Mennonite Church Register of Gliddes, Saskatchewan, an obituary of Heinrich Dyck from the newspaper *Der Bote*, September 28, 1938, and two pages of records from the National Archives of Canada. These documents allow us to piece together the movements of the Heinrich and Maria Dyck family from Russia to Canada and fill in the gaps of the scant data about this family in ATTA. The obituary of Heinrich Dyck in the *Der Bote* newspaper contains much useful information and translation of the article, courtesy of Cornelius J. Dyck, follows:

"A belated obituary. All relatives, friends and those who knew him are herewith given the sad death notice that on Sunday, July 10 (1938) in Kindersley [Saskatchewan] hospital Heinrich Cornelius Dyck died after a brief and painful period of suffering. He was 66 years, 10 months and 26 days old. The funeral was held July 12. Elder Jacob B. Wiens, Herschel, preached the funeral sermon.

"Heinrich Cornelius Dyck was born August 15, 1871 in Halbstadt [Russia]. On May 17, 1898 he married the maiden Maria Dyck with whom he lived over 40 years.

"Eleven children were born to them, of whom six preceded their father in death. He leaves his mourning wife and five children, of whom the oldest son Heinrich Dyck and family live in Siberia. Widow Anna Friesen with her children lives in Rosthern, and Jakob Dycks, Glenbush were privileged to see their father in the casket and attend the funeral.

"From the village Ebenfeld of the Barnaul settlement in Siberia, the Dycks emigrated to Canada in 1926, entering Canada January 2' 1927. Uncle Dyck was later refused a passport in Russia, but was able to join them in Canada eight months later. By request, H. J. Wiebe, Kindersley, September 18, 1938."

The Barnaul Mennonite settlement referred to in Heinrich's obituary is where Jacob J. Dyck's mother and stepfather settled in 1904. It is likely that Heinrich and Maria Dyck settled in Barnaul at about the same time. For a map of the Barnaul settlement see page 59 of ATTA. From the Canadian immigration records provided by Alf Redekopp we learn that Maria arrived at Saint John, New Brunswick on January 2, 1927 with her children Jakob (b. 16 Sept. 1910), Katherine (b. 16 March 1916), and Cornelius (b. 15 May 1918). Maria's port of entry, New Brunswick, would suggest that she came to Canada via Europe, across the Atlantic. However, the ship's name Metagama of the Canadian Pacific Line may mean Maria came out of Asia. Heinrich was unable to accompany Maria, his visa had been denied by the Soviet Russian government, and he arrived at Port Alberni, British Columbia on July 9, 1927 aboard the ship Montclare of the Canadian Pacific Line. This certainly suggests that Heinrich came to Canada via Asia, most likely through Harbin, Manchuria.

Heinrich and Maria Dyck settled near the community of Glidden in west central Saskatchewan, Canada. Their life there was extremely hard. They had come from Russia with virtually nothing but the clothes on their backs. By 1945 the widow Maria had joined her son Jacob and wife Tina nee Krahn at Jacob's homestead near Glenbush, Saskatchewan. Jacob had moved to the Glenbush district in 1935. Daughter Katherine married Henry Loewen in 1940 and son Cornelius married on August 17, 1946 to Mary ?, maiden name unknown, and moved to Manitoba. After her son Cornelius married, Maria lived with daughter Katherine during the summer and spent winters in Saskatoon with her married daughter Anna Friesen (b. 1899) and husband Henry (b. 1897). Both Anna and Henry were born in Russia and married there in the 1920s. Whether they came to Canada with Maria Dyck or separately at a different time is not known. Maria Dyck died October 16, 1957 in Saskatoon and was buried in the General Conference Mennonite Cemetery at Glenbush, Saskatchewan, Canada.

In March, 2001 I received a letter from Henry Dyck of Glenbush, writing to me at the behest of Leonard Doell of the Saskatchewan Mennonite Historical Society. Henry wrote that he was a grandson of Heinrich and Maria Dyck, son of Jacob and Tina Dyck. Thus Henry is a second cousin to me and all of my Dyck related first cousins. Henry was born in 1936 and farmed the homestead established by his father Jacob in 1935. Henry wrote that the only surviving child of Heinrich and Maria Dyck was Katherine Loewen nee Dyck and that she lived in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Along with Gustav Dyck of Baidt, Germany, Katherine is the only surviving Dyck first cousin of my father's generation. Attempts to establish correspondence with Katherine were not successful although she did respond to letters from Gustav Dyck to say that she had no useful knowledge of her family's history. Further attempts to establish correspondence with Dyck family members in Canada have been unsuccessful up to this point. In his only letter Henry Dyck did send a genealogy chart that lists the descendants of Heinrich and Maria Dyck, nearly 100 names with years of birth. No doubt there is much more to be learned about Heinrich and Maria Dyck and their many descendants and it is my hope that in the future one of the many descendants will take an interest in sharing this story with the descendants of Jacob J. Dyck.