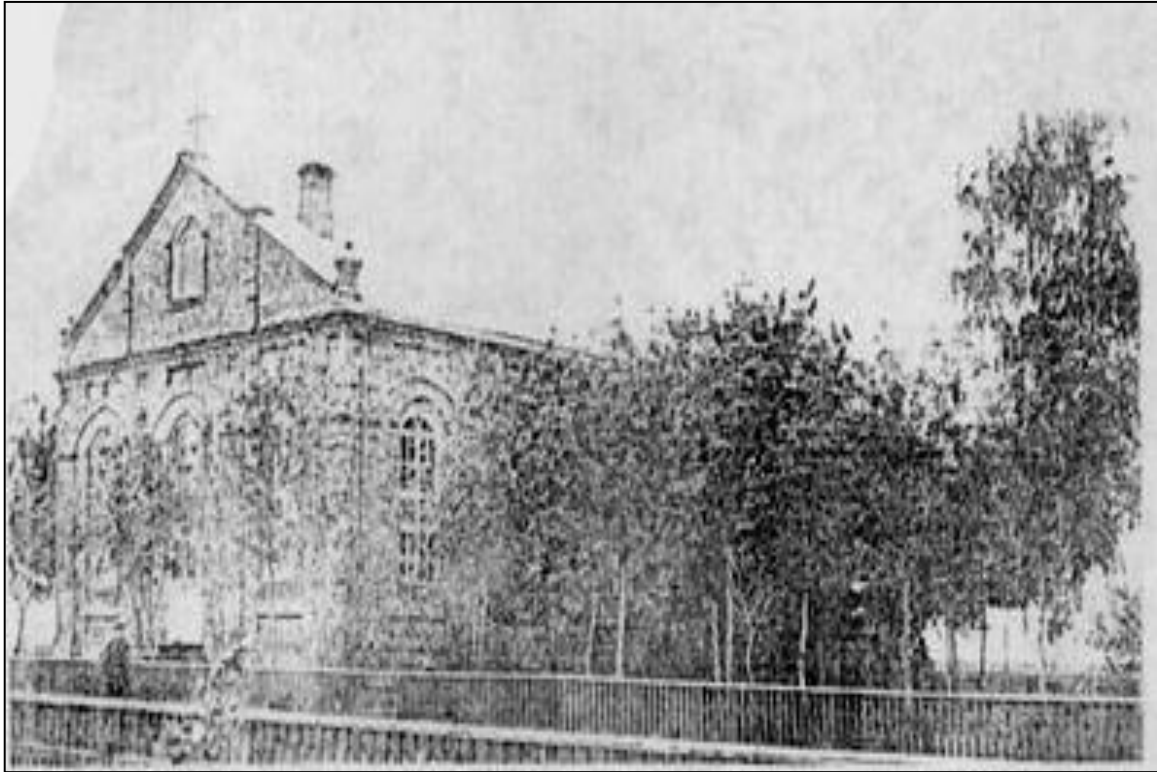


## Later Dyck History

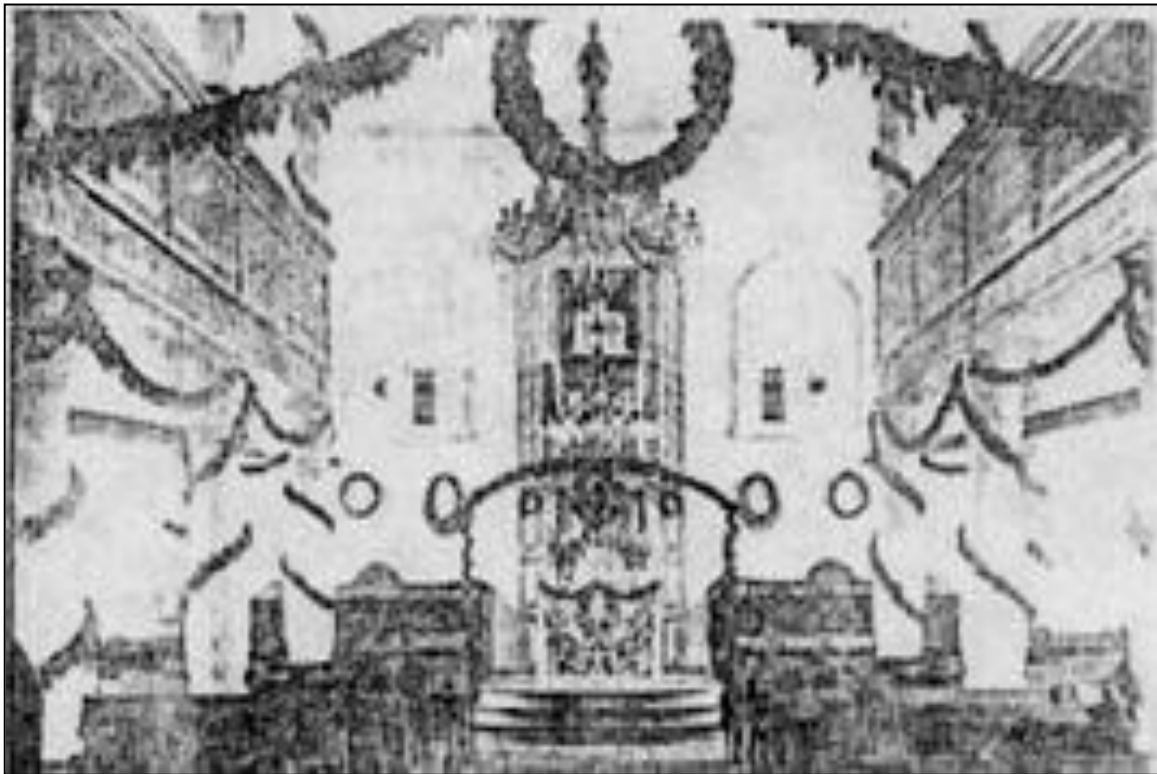
After Jacob (IV) and Justine were married they moved to the Ostenfeld community in Am Trakt. Ostenfeld was a little east of Lysanderhoeh with Orloff in between them. It may be that the Penner family of Jacob's second wife Anna reclaimed the home he lived in after his marriage to Justine Wall. The three children of Anna Penner Dyck, Catharine, Peter, and Jacob's daughter Anna, were the heirs to this property and they continued to live with Jacob and Justine. But it appears that the Penner family was not entirely pleased with Jacob's marriage to Justine and the reclaiming of the Penner home was but the first action they took to show their displeasure.

In Ostenfeld Jacob and Justine's first son, Jacob, was born in 1874. He was stillborn but no date of birth or death is known. Their second child, a daughter Maria, was born October 1, 1876. Maria was followed by Johannes, born February 27, 1878, and Justine born September 26, 1879. On August 17, (August 4 by the Russian calendar) 1881, the first set of twins recorded in our family history was born to Jacob (IV) and Justine. Their names were Jacob (V) and Johanna. Jacob (V) would have the middle name (patronymic) of Jacobovich as required by Russian law to distinguish him as the son of a man named Jacob. Jacob Jacobovich is our direct descendant father and grandfather and will hereafter be referred to as Jacob J. Dyck in this book.

Jacob Dyck (IV) and his brothers Dietrich, Johannes Dietrich, and Cornelius appear to have been moderately prosperous farmers in the Am Trakt colony, and well-respected men. Certainly this was the case of Johannes Dietrich. Johannes settled in Fresenheim with his wife Helene in 1860. Fresenheim was in the northwestern end of the Am Trakt colony and Johannes' farm there eventually totaled 129 acres. In the winter of 1865 Johannes was elected Oberschultz of the Am Trakt colony. Oberschultz would be the equivalent of the office of mayor, or chief administrator. Such a position in the colony was honorary in the sense that it was not a paying job, nor a full-time one. But it was very important to the German Mennonites of Am Trakt. Johannes' responsibilities included maintaining the order of the colony, the administration of justice, and acting as a go between with the Russian government. In this latter capacity Johannes proved exceptionally capable, benefiting both his colony and the government of the Russian Czar. In recognition of this exceptional service the Russian government



Above: The Koeppental-Orloff Mennonite Church at Am Trakt. Jacob J. Dyck was baptized here in 1898. The church was destroyed after the Russian Revolution. Below: Interior of the Koeppental-Orloff Mennonite Church. Photos: Aaron Klassen, *In The Fullness Of Time*.



decorated Johannes on three separate occasions. The medals awarded to him were inscribed, "For Faithful Service," and "For Service to the Czar and the Fatherland." Johannes held the post of Oberschultz for 18 years, from 1866 to 1884.

Entries from Johannes Dietrich's diary show that there was much interaction between him and his brothers and their families. On December 22, 1879, Johannes recorded that Jacob (IV) had stopped by on his way home from making a purchase of building supplies to start a business in Ostenfeld. What this business was is not recorded, but most likely it was farm related. Johannes had started his own flourmill in Fresenheim and it may be that Jacob was doing the same in Ostenfeld.

In March of 1882 typhoid fever came to the Am Trakt settlements and struck the family of Jacob Dyck (IV). Jacob's stepchildren, Catherine and Peter Penner, and his own daughter, Maria, five years old, contracted the disease. Jacob moved the infected children from the main house to one of the farm's outbuildings to try to prevent the spread of the fever to the rest of the family. There Jacob remained and cared for the sick children while Justine tended the rest of the family in the house. Almost inevitably, Jacob contracted the disease himself. On March 23, 1882, Jacob's brothers Johannes Dietrich and Dietrich visited him as recorded in Johannes', diary:

23 Mar 1882 - Drove to Jakob Dyck's. Dietrich Dyck drove along. Almost impossible to drive, such a bad road. We found Bro. Jakob still very sick, although it was said he is somewhat better it seemed to me he was deathly sick. Peter was already up but Kaete and Maria lay ill with the same sickness, typhoid fever.

2 Apr 1882 - I and Dietrich Dyck drove again to Jakob Dyck and found him very ill.

4 Apr 1882 - P. Janzen brought the news that Brother Jakob Dyck had died at 6 a.m. today, I immediately sent a letter off to health officials.

9 Apr 1882 - Mama, Johannes and I attended Brother Jakob Dyck's funeral.

Jacob's stepchildren, Catherine and Peter Penner, and his daughter Maria survived. They owed their lives to their devoted and loving father Jacob.

Jacob's death left his wife, Justine, a young widow of 27 years of age with eight children to care for. At this time, when she needed help the most, it seems as though her family, and that of her

husband, were neglectful of their duty. The two Penner children, Catherine and Peter, along with Jacob's daughter Anna, were taken by their Penner relatives soon after Jacob's death. This may have lessened the immediate worry of Justine on how to care for so many children, but was not done in a spirit of caring by the Penner family. Once they had the children the Penners were perfectly willing to let Justine and her Dyck children fend for themselves.

Justine's decision to marry Cornelius Froese a few years after the death of Jacob Dyck (IV) was met with almost unanimous disapproval by the families of Justine's children and stepchildren. But they may have been partly to blame. Surely Justine's plight was known to all of them and they knew that without their help she would have to do whatever she saw as necessary to provide for the children. Still, Cornelius Froese seems a poor choice as Justine's rescuer. He was known to be crude and rough in manner, a poor farmer and provider for his own children. Unlike the beloved Johann Siebert, Justine's own stepfather, Cornelius Froese was intensely disliked by his Dyck stepchildren; Maria, Johannes, Justine, Jacob Jacobovich, and Johanna. The fact that he was responsible for the Dyck home burning to the ground didn't endear him to anyone. One version of this story says that Froese knocked over a kerosene lamp while drinking after the rest of the family had gone to bed. Another that he started the fire by careless smoking, again while drinking.

Cornelius Froese was also a bully who physically abused his stepchildren. On one occasion Froese went too far. Jacob J. Dyck was about ten years old at the time, his brother Johannes 14 or 15. They were in the barn tending to the horses late one evening; Jacob was holding a lantern so that Johannes could remove harnesses. Cornelius Froese came into the barn reeking of alcohol. He became impatient with the progress of the two boys and took over Johannes' job. When he didn't think that Jacob was holding the lantern right, Cornelius struck Jacob in the head, sending him sprawling to the barn floor. Johannes helped Jacob to his feet and then turned his attention on his stepfather. Johannes grabbed the older man by his jacket and shoved him hard up against the barn wall. In no uncertain terms Johannes told Cornelius Froese that if he ever struck Jacob, or any other of the children again, he would kill Froese. This whole sordid story of the widow Justine and her children shows that even Mennonites and their families were not immune to their own failings and shortcomings. All the faith in the world is worth nothing unless it is put to everyday, practical use.

After the burning of their home in Lindenau, the result of Cornelius Froese's carelessness, the family moved into a home purchased in Koepental. Here, Jacob Jacobovich and his siblings attended Kreisschul, the local district school. Their teacher was a Russian woman, but they received their religious instruction from



Anna Dyck Tjahrt (1872-1945) and her husband Peter Tjahrt ( -1924). Anna was Jacob J. Dyck's half sister, her mother was Anna Penner. Jacob lived with Anna and Peter Tjahrt during his early teen years in Am Trakt. Peter Tjahrt died in Canada while traveling in North America visiting relatives. Anna Dyck Tjahrt died in Berlin, Germany during an Allied bombing raid at the close of World War II. Photo *circa* 1910, Saratov, Russia. Photo: Authors' collection.

Elder Johann Quiring of the Koeppental-Orloff Mennonite Church. Probably because Cornelius Froese owned land in Lindenau, the house in Koeppental was taken down and rebuilt in Lindenau. Jacob Jacobovich finished his formal education at about this time, 1895-1896, and went to live with his older half sister, Anna Dyck Tjarht, in Ostenfeld. Anna had married Peter Tjarht a couple of years before and the couple lived on the farm they bought from Cornelius Dyck in the Am Trakt settlement. Cornelius Dyck was Anna and Jacob J. Dyck's uncle. He had immigrated to Woodland in the state of Washington, U.S.A., in 1890.

Cornelius Dyck's brother, Johannes Dietrich, had always longed to return to America. Indeed, it was his first choice as a place to settle after he returned to West Prussia in 1858 from the gold fields of California. But his wife Helene would have no part of America after having heard Johannes' tales of Indians and the Wild West. Johannes' stories of his ten years in America probably influenced his brother Cornelius' decision to go to the American Northwest. Improvements in mail systems allowed Cornelius in Washington to keep in close contact with his brother Johannes Dietrich in Am Trakt, Russia. Johannes Dietrich was amazed at the changes that had taken place in America in the 40 years from 1850 to 1890.

In route to Washington, the Cornelius Dyck family spent some time in the Mennonite communities of Kansas. They may have considered settling in Kansas because Cornelius' son Dietrich filed a Declaration of Intention to become a citizen of the United States in Marion County, Kansas, on July 18, 1890. Eventually the family settled in Cowlitz County, Washington, near the community of Woodland. At this time, 1890, the family consisted of father Cornelius, born August 23, 1835, mother Cornelia nee Pauls, born May 4, 1842, and sons Dietrich and Cornelius Jr., born August 24, 1867, and February 13, 1873, respectively. Two daughters were born and died in Am Trakt, Russia. They are Cornelia, born December 24, 1865, died July 9, 1866, and Helene, born July 29, 1869, died August 17, 1874. The son Cornelius Jr. was mentally handicapped and was placed in a Washington State Hospital after the death of his mother Cornelia on March 21, 1913. Cornelius Sr. had died on July 8, 1893, only three years after the family arrived in Washington. Johannes Dietrich in Am Trakt, Russia, recorded receiving word of his brother's death in his diary:

29 July 1893-Received a letter from Dietrich Dyck (this is the diarist's nephew, not his brother of the same name) from the state of Washington USA with the news of his father, my brother Cornelius had died of a heart attack on 8 July. Dietrich found him in the field just exactly like my brother Cornelius had found our father in 1849 in the field. Besides

our two half sisters who are still alive, I am the last of five right siblings who are still living. Also my evening inclines toward the sunset. (Johannes Dietrich had three half sisters: Agnete, Maria, and Justine. It is not known which two of these three were still living in 1893.)

Back in Woodland, Washington, Cornelius Dyck Jr. died April 3, 1926. The sole surviving member of the family, Dietrich, never married. He had sold the family's farm and equipment to pay for his mother's medical care before she died of cancer. After that, Dietrich worked as a farm laborer in the Woodland, Washington area. He died April 2, 1943. Dietrich left behind only two watch fobs, a stamp box, and the Dyck family Bible. This Bible is now in the possession of the Cowlitz County Historical Society Museum. The entire family is buried together in the Independent Order of Odd Fellows Cemetery near Woodland, Washington. There are no markers on the graves.

While living with his half-sister Anna and brother-in-law Peter Tjarht, Jacob J. Dyck maintained close contact with his mother, Justine, his brother Johannes, and his sisters Maria, Justine, and Johanna. Johannes Dietrich Dyck's home seems to have been the place where the family could gather without the despised stepfather, Cornelius Froese. Johannes Dietrich made note of one such occasion in his diary:

25 December 1895-In the afternoon all the children except Mariechen with their children here. The tree was lit and the children received their little gifts and yet general Christmas joy prevails. Jakob Dyck's Jacob and Titchen were also here. (Jakob Dyck's Jacob would be Jacob Jacobovich and Titchen his mother Justine, who was always referred to as "Wall's Titchen.")

On May 25, 1898, at the age of 17, Jacob Jacobovich was baptized upon confession of faith by Johann Quiring at the Koepental-Orloff Mennonite Church in Am Trakt. Soon after his baptism Jacob journeyed to Kazakhstan near the Terguv-Tergive River with his stepfather Cornelius Froese. Cornelius had entered into a rental agreement with the owner of a large tract of land. This agreement also included management of many farm workers and herders. The exact size of this parcel of land is unknown, but it must have been vast. Jacob said it covered "13 gueter" (estates), that to cover the 60 miles across the farm required changing horses several times. Plowing the soil required five yoke of oxen and three people per plow. They used 12 of these plowing teams at a time. Herders tended 7,000 head of sheep. The Russian landowner furnished the plows and threshing machines for harvesting the

wheat. Half of the income of the farm went to the landowner. Jacob and Cornelius remained in Kazakhstan for three years, until 1901. One of Jacob's most vivid recollections from this time was of the gleaners that came from across the border in Turkestan. It was customary to leave a small amount of grain for these gleaners and Jacob remembered them as the most beautiful women he would ever see.

During Jacob's absence from Am Trakt his beloved uncle Johannes Dietrich Dyck died. Final entries from Johannes' diary chronicle his last days:

October 30, 1898: Saturday and Sunday I did not feel well. I drove a distance on the Trakt, but I was so cold even though I had my fur coat on.

November 3, 1898: Tuesday Elder Quiring and B. Epp were here to witness my last will and testament. Mariachen stayed here.

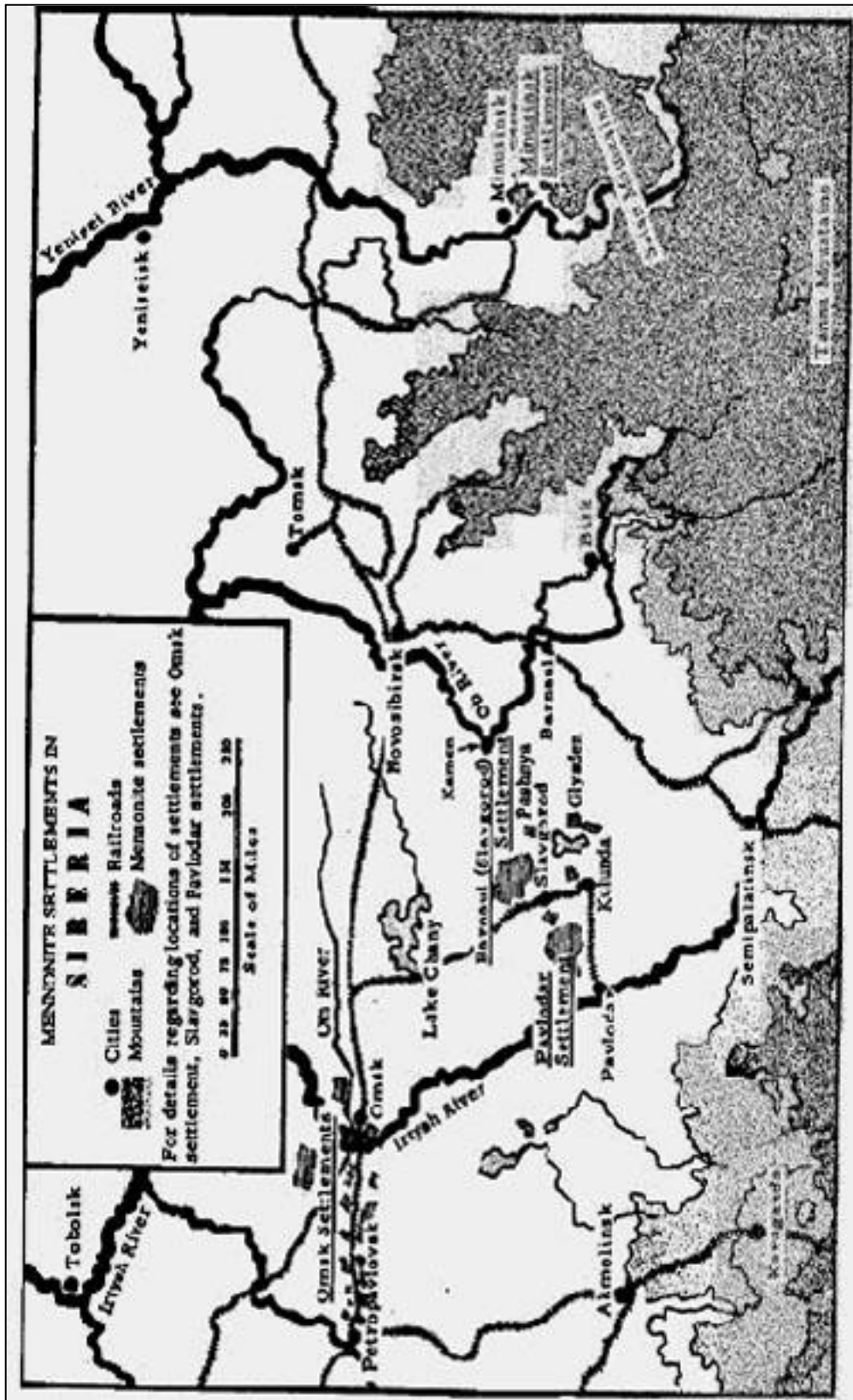
November 7, 1898: This morning I felt bad. None of the children have come yet today.

On November 11, 1898, Johannes Dietrich Dyck's remarkable life ended. In the span of his 72 years he had been a storekeeper and merchant in West Prussia; adventurer, frontiersman and gold miner in the California Gold Rush of 1849, farmer and Oberschultz of Am Trakt, Russia.

Johannes' death undoubtedly meant more to Jacob Jacobovich than that of his own father when Jacob was less than a year old. Upon returning to Am Trakt from Kazakhstan, Jacob found work on the farm of Johann Bergmann at Hohendorf in the Am Trakt settlement and remained there for the next two years, until 1903.

Jacob's older brother Johannes, nicknamed "Krolljer" (Curly) because of his blond, curly hair, married Maria Wall in 1904. Maria was born March 1, 1886, at Am Trakt, and would die April 13, 1974, in Siberia, Russia. Jacob spent a lot of time with his older brother and their sibling love would endure as a legacy through subsequent generations of their children. Having employment with Johann Bergmann, and being able to enjoy the company of his brother Johannes and wife Maria, it is surprising that Jacob left Am Trakt and traveled to the Siberian Mennonite settlement of Barnaul in 1904.

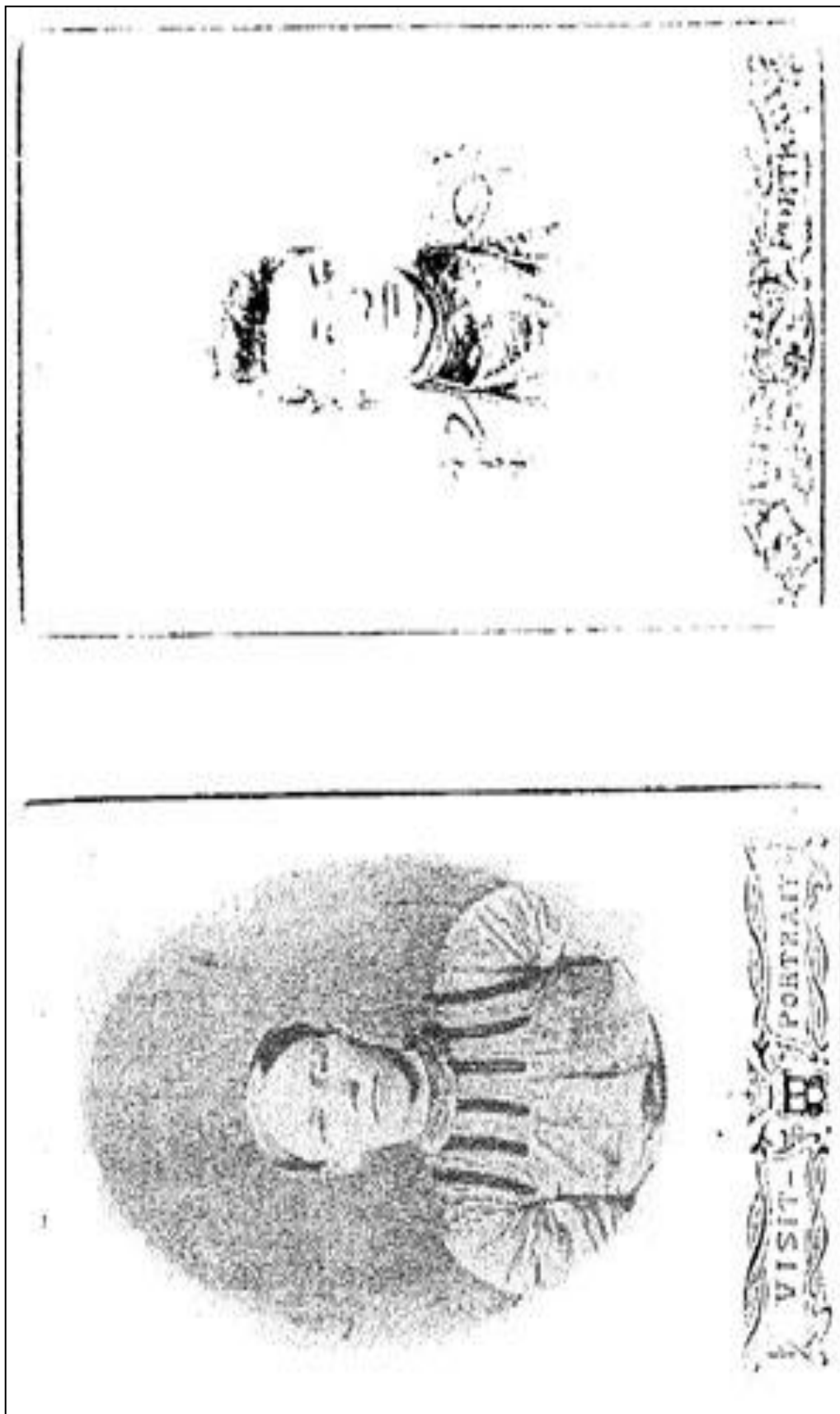
Jacob's mother, Justine Wall Dyck Froese, had gone to Barnaul with her husband, Cornelius Froese, and their two children; Gustav born in 1889, and Wilhelm, born in 1891. Other of their children probably accompanied them, but just which ones are not



**Map 8**  
 Mennonite Settlements in Siberia  
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Johannes Dyck (1878-1921) and his wife Maria nee Wall (1886-1974). Johannes was Jacob J. Dyck's older brother and the father of "Mimi", Jacob's beloved niece. Photo *circa* 1904-05, Saratov, Russia. Photo: Authors' collection.



Sisters of Jacob J. Dyck. Left: Jacob's twin sister, Johanna Dyck Froese (1881-1970). Johanna immigrated to Brazil in 1930 with her husband Jacob Froese and adopted son Cornelius. Right: Justine Dyck Penner (1879-19--). Justine remained in Russia. Her fate is unknown. Photos: *circa* 1900, Authors' collection.

known for certain. Barnaul-Slavgorod would be the largest Mennonite settlement in Siberia established in the pre-1917 Revolution period. By 1925 this settlement numbered 58 Mennonite villages with a combined population of 13,173. Cornelius Froese was probably enticed by the offer of farmland available to homesteaders in the Barnaul settlement. An uneasy truce must have continued between Cornelius Froese and Jacob Jacobovich because Jacob stayed with his mother and stepfather for two years. Froese probably grudgingly valued Jacob's labor while creating a farm and home on the Siberian Steppe. Jacob's motivation was to aid his mother and the two young children, Gustav and Wilhelm, Jacob's half brothers. The rigors of farming in Siberia were difficult under the best of circumstances. The intense cold and vastness of Siberia is the subject of much great Russian literature. Siberia is a psychological experience as much as it is a physical one. For Jacob Jacobovich this was epitomized by a trip he made in the winter of 1905-1906. After loading a sled with wheat from the previous spring's harvest he set off for the market in Semipalatinsk (Semey) some 90 miles to the south of Barnaul. Leading the horse-drawn sled along frozen riverbeds whenever possible to avoid the bitter wind, Jacob endured temperatures of -50 F. Great care had to be exercised in order to protect himself and the horses. Even if they were able to travel 15 miles a day, which is doubtful, the round trip would have required two weeks' exposure to brutally cold weather.

Jacob J. Dyck returned to Am Trakt from Barnaul the same way he went, on the then-new Trans-Siberian Railroad, in May of 1906. His half-brother Gustav would have been 17 years old, and Jacob probably felt Gustav was old enough to help his father and mother on the Siberian farm. The younger half-brother, Wilhelm, died in 1906 at the age of 15 after being thrown from a horse. Whether he died before Jacob's departure isn't known. Also not known is whether Justine was aware of Jacob's plans to go to America. If she were, the goodbyes would have been especially tearful for Justine knowing that she probably would never again see her loving, protective son Jacob.

Arriving back in Am Trakt Jacob found that his brother Johannes was the proud father of a baby girl, Maria, nicknamed "Mimi," born in 1905. Jacob adored his niece and would make a special request in 1951 that a newborn granddaughter be named Maria Louisa as a namesake for Mimi. Jacob stayed with his brother Johannes for the remainder of 1906 and tried to convince Johannes to accompany him to America. Jacob and Johannes' older stepbrother, Peter Penner, and a friend, Edward Esau, had already emigrated to the Emmaus Mennonite community near rural Whitewater, Kansas. Letters from Peter and Edward in America encouraged the Dyck brothers to come and join them. Jacob

Jacobovich was footloose and fancy free, so to speak, and eager to go. Not so with Johannes. He had a wife and daughter, and was already engaged in farming at Am Trakt. His wife's family was also at Am Trakt. Then too, there was their mother in Barnaul, Siberia. Who would look out for her if they both went to America? In the end Jacob decided to go alone. The day before he left he carried little Maria in his arms all day, loathe to leave his precious niece.

Early in 1907 Jacob J. Dyck traveled overland from Am Trakt to Riga, Latvia. There he stayed with Mennonite families for a time hoping that his brother Johannes would change his mind and come with his wife and daughter. They must have had a predetermined cutoff date that passed before Jacob sailed from the port city of Libau (Liepaja), Latvia, on February 27, 1907. From Latvia, Jacob sailed to Hull, England. Disembarking at Hull the immigrants bound for America were literally herded into cattle cars for a train trip to the port of Liverpool, England. This inhumane experience left Jacob with an intense dislike for the English that lasted to his dying day. From Liverpool, Jacob crossed the Atlantic Ocean aboard the ship *Nordland* and arrived in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on April 19, 1907. In his pocket he had a train ticket to Newton, Kansas, and less than \$5.00 in U.S. currency.



Jacob Jacobovich Dyck (1881-1954). This photograph was taken in Newton, Kansas soon after Jacob's arrival in the United States in 1907. Photo: Authors' collection.