

Updating and Revising Dyck and Wall Family Data in

Jacob J. Dyck: Am Trakt To America

by D. Frederick Dyck*

When I began collecting information and data prior to writing *Jacob J. Dyck: Am Trakt To America (ATTA)*, I relied on the best existing sources at that time, 1996-2000. This often included information that was researched and written, sometimes published, by other persons as well as oral history from older relatives.

Since the book was published in 2001, I have developed new contacts for information and have acquired access to, and copies of, original source materials unavailable before the book was written. The advent and rise of the Internet has been both a boon and a detriment to researching family history and genealogy. Information gleaned from the Internet must be verified by original source documentation.

One of the unforeseen benefits of the Internet is the rapid and far-reaching spread of *ATTA* in Germany and Russia. Many of the descendants of the German Mennonites who lived in the colony of Am Trakt, Russia, now live in Germany. They have formed an ad hoc network via the Internet for the exchange of family history, Czarist and Soviet-era documents and photographs. This also includes copies of *ATTA* that have found their way to Germany. Using a disc of *ATTA* and software that translates English into German, the book is now available in Germany via the Internet.

*D. Frederick Dyck, 189066, Western Missouri Corr. Ctr., 609 E. Pence Road, Cameron, MO 64429, co-authored *Jacob J. Dyck: Am Trakt to America, Sixty Years of Silence* with Alice Sitler Dyck. Published in two parts in 2001 on 390 pages, the first part gives the history and genealogy of the descendants of Jacob J. Dyck and Marie G. Harder. Jacob was born in 1881 in Russia and in 1907 left for Kansas. Claassen and Harder family history is also included. Part II tells what happened to those persons who remained in Russia—stories of contacts made after 60 years of silence; stories of slave labor camps; old photos of families, homes, and churches. Maps and graphs enhance the history of each family. There are even color photos of family heirlooms, some brought from West Prussia.

In Russia, descendants of the original Am Trakt settlers are mostly located in western Siberia in the villages of the old Mennonite colony of Barnaul. Many of these persons continue to speak Low German, a dialect of German now almost exclusive to Mennonites and Amish.

One of these Am Trakt descendants is my second cousin, once removed—Willi Frasc of Rodgau, Germany. Willi wrote to me after seeing a copy of *ATTA* shown to him by a friend in the spring of 2018. We confirmed our familial relationship with both having Justina *née* Wall (1855-1927?) as our common ancestor. Justina is my great-grandmother and Willi's great-great-grandmother. Justina was born at Mierauerwald, West Prussia, Germany, and moved to Am Trakt, Russia, with her family in 1860.

Willi was born in 1964 in the village of Alexanderkrone in the Barnaul Colony, Novosibirsk/Slavgorod region of Siberia, Russia. He moved to Germany in 1992 with his extended family after the fall of the Communist government and the break-up of the Soviet Union.

Since making our connection, Willi and I have shared a great deal of family history. He has been a treasure trove of old documents and photographs. The most important document that Willi found was housed in the Russian archives. It is a 110-page (5.5" x 7") journal written by our three great-grandfather Johann Wall (1793-1860).

Johann Wall was born at Broske, West Prussia, Germany, and died at Am Trakt, Russia. He was part of a deputation to Russia that negotiated a place for 100 West Prussian Mennonite families to settle in Russia. This settlement east of the Volga River in Samara Province was called Am Trakt. Its first village was Hahns-Au established in 1854.

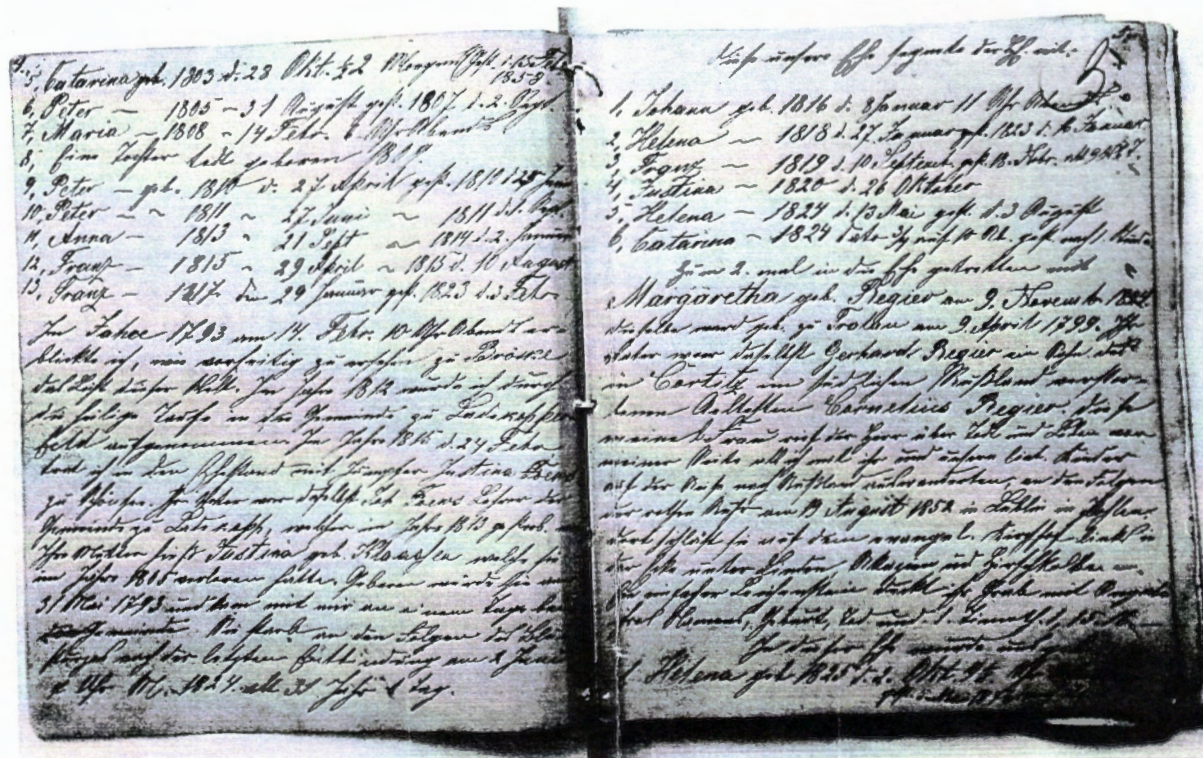
The beginning of Johann's journal has 26 pages of Wall genealogy that begins with his grandfather Johann Wall (1730-1793) and continues into the early twentieth

Geographisch-Administrative
KARTE
 des Autonomen Gebietes
 der Wolgadeutschen.

Pokrowsk (Kosakenstadt) a/Wolga



Rare map of the Autonomous Volga-German Republic in Russia (1920-1940). It is unknown why the circle is on the map.



Pages 4-5 of the Journal showing the genealogy of the Wall family of West Prussia.

century in a few instances. The continuation of the genealogy after 1860, the year of Johann's death, was done by his children and grandchildren.

Such a genealogical record for Am Trakt families is extremely rare. So far as is known at this time, there are no records that exist from the Koepental-Orloff Mennonite Church at Am Trakt. Mennonite church records are invaluable resources for genealogy research.

It is believed that the Koepental-Orloff Church records were taken by Am Trakt exiles to Siberia, whereabouts unknown today. The balance of Johann's journal contains a record of the West Prussian delegates' negotiations with the Czar's ministers. These delegates, in addition to Johann Wall, include Gerhard Penner, Claas Epp Sr., and David Hamm. The early years of settlement at Am Trakt are also part of the journal.

Willi Frase was able to secure a copy of this journal from Russian archives after first proving his family connection to the writer Johann Wall. Next were various fees that might be better described as bribes. After anxious months of waiting, Willi received his copy and a copy for me. These copies are in color and show off Johann Wall's beautiful Gothic German script handwriting.

Once the Johann Wall journal is translated into English and the genealogy is organized, I will be able to completely revamp the Wall family data in *Jacob J. Dyck: Am Trakt to America (ATTA)*. In the book, I wrote that I knew the least about the Wall family compared with my

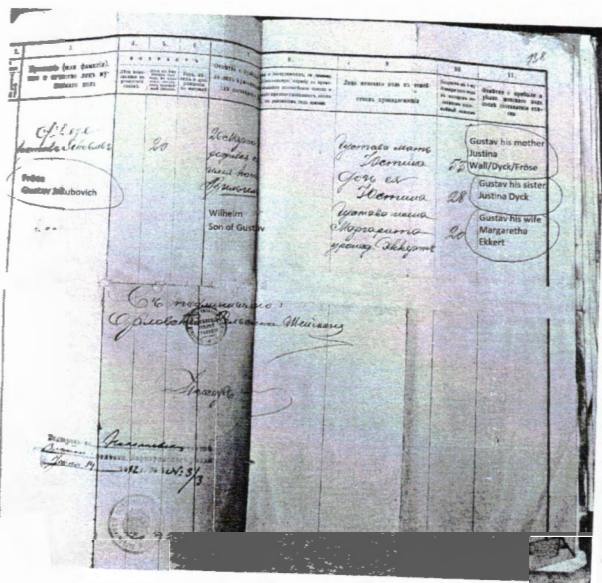
Dyck, Harber, and Claassen ancestors. That has now radically changed with the acquisition of Johann Wall's journal.

The revision of the Dyck Family lineage and data in *ATTA* was completed in August 2019 and is included in this article. I am pleased also to include rare photographs and copies of Czarist Russia registration records of the Dyck family in Barnaul, Siberia, and Russia, all courtesy of Willi Frase.

Through historian Henry Schapansky of British Columbia, Canada, I gained access to the Prussian Census Records for the years 1776 and 1789, and the Danzig Territory Census Records for the years 1771 and 1793. These records list Mennonite heads of household, names and numbers of children, and the landholdings in the Vistula Delta area of West Prussia.

Additionally, Henry has provided me with copies of the original records of Tiegenhagen Mennonite Church of West Prussia for 1795 to 1841. This is the Mennonite congregation of the Dyck ancestors of descendants of Jacob J. Dyck.

Access to these church records confirmed my suspicion that the early Dyck lineage and data that I used in *ATTA*, from unconfirmed sources, was incorrect. This suspicion began when I acquired copies of the books *A Pilgrim People*, Volumes I and II, edited by Cornelius J. and Wilma Dyck. These books are a family history of the descendants of Johannes D. Dyck (1826-1898), famous within the Dyck family for his exploits in the United



Russian register for 1908 of household of Gustav Froese, age 20 years. Living with Gustav are his mother, Justina Walll Dyck/Froese, age 53; his half-sister Justina, age 28; and his wife Margaretha Ekkert, age 20. Gustav and Margaretha have an infant son Wilhelm.

H) Correspondence between D. Frederick Dyck and Gustav J. Dyck (1913-2010), born Am Trakt, Russia; died Ravensburg, Germany.

I) Bundesarchiv, Aachen, Germany; German military records.

J) "Der Berg, Die Familienzeitung der Familie van Bergen," 1934-1941, edited by Fritz van Bergen. This typed and mimeographed periodical was available by subscription for a small fee in Germany. Articles by members of the van Bergen family; the considerable genealogy was compiled by Gustav Reimer. Hielke De Jong of Ontario, Canada, provided me with copies. "Der Berg" ended with the death of Fritz van Bergen killed in Russia, 1941, while serving with the German Army. A total of six volumes, 400 pages, are available on microfilm at the Mennonite Heritage Centre, Winnipeg. See also "Descendants of Gerhard van Bergen (1704-1771): Correcting Errors in the Chronicle 'Der Berg'" by D. Frederick Dyck in the July 2012 *Mennonite Family History*.

K) Czarist Russian (pre-1917) register records from the Barnaul settlement area of Siberia for the years 1907, 1908, and 1910.

L) *Mennonite Historian*, Vol. 43, No. 2, June 2017.

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The author's paternal grandfathers are listed in bold type.

1. Dirck/Dietrich Dyck, b. 1736, Poppau, West Prussia (W.P.); d. Aug. 26, 1814, age 78 years, Poppau, W.P.; m. Oelke/Ella *née* Suckau, Widow Toews, bef. 1764. Dirck was likely

m. more than once. The Danzig Census of 1771 shows Dirck owning farmland in the amount of 1 *Huben* (41.5 acres), 8 *Morgen* (2.116 acres x 8 = 16.928 acres), for a total of 58.428 acres. There is a strong likelihood that Dirck had more children than those who are known from reliable records. The following are the known and possible children.

1.1 Katherina Dyck, bapt. 1782 at Tiegenhagen Mennonite Church, W.P.; b. ca1764, Poppau, W.P.

1.2 Maria Dyck, bapt. 1796, Tiegenhagen Mennonite Church, W.P.; b. ca1778, Poppau, W.P.

Possible: Simon Dyck who is listed as living at Glabitsch near Poppau, W.P., in the 1793 Danzig Territory Census with one son and one daughter:

1) Dirk Dyck, b. Aug. 20, 1782; bapt. 1800 Tiegenhagen Mennonite Church, W.P.; m. June 2, 1808, Katherina Albrecht, b. May 7, 1778. Dirk went to Russia in 1809 and was living in Margenau, part of the Molotschna Mennonite Colony in the Ukraine region of Russia.

2) Katherina Dyck, bapt. 1804, Tiegenhagen Mennonite Church, W.P.

1.3 Anna Dyck, b. Mar. 2, 1792, Poppau, W. P.; bapt. 1810, Tiegenhagen Mennonite Church, W.P.; m. Aron Klassen.

1.4 Dirck/Dietrich Dyck, b. Oct. 9, 1796, Poppau, W.P.; bapt. June 26, 1814, Tiegenhagen Mennonite Church, W.P.; d. June 25, 1849, Poppau, W.P., of an apparent heart attack while working in his farm fields; m. 1) Oct. 23, 1817, Aganetha Janzen, Jan. 16, 1796-Dec. 26, 1836; dau. of Abraham Jantzen (1740-1808) and Catharina *née* Hamm (1756-1813), and granddaughter of Jacob Jantzen (1714-1776) and Catherina *née* Kroecker (1713-1767). Children:

1.4.1 Abraham Dyck, b. July 3, 1818, Poppau, W.P.; d. Aug. 31, 1819, Poppau, W.P.

1.4.2 Dirk/Dietrich Dyck, b. Aug. 3, 1819, Poppau, W.P.; d. Feb. 1886, Fresenheim, Am Trakt Mennonite Colony, Russia; m. _____ Janzen, (Aug. 1823-June 1911), d. Am Trakt, Russia. This _____ Janzen is the sister of Helena Janzen (1825-1887) who m. Dietrich's brother, Johann Dyck (1826-1898). Dietrich was living at Heubuden, W.P., when he went to the Am Trakt Colony in Russia, 1853-1855.

1.4.3 Aganetha Dyck [1], b. July 23, 1824, Poppau, W.P.; d. Jan. 18, 1828, Poppau, W.P.

1.4.4 Catherine Dyck, b. July 28, 1824, Poppau, W.P.; d. Aug. 7, 1892, Hauskampe, W.P.; m. Nov. 20, 1849, Jacob Dyck. Henry Schapansky opined that this is Jacob Dyck, b. May 22, 1807, Hauskampe by Steegen, W.P.; d. Dec. 19, 1882, Hauskampe, W.P.; son of Jacob Dyck, b. Nov. 18, 1743, W.P., and d. Apr. 9, 1820, Poppau, W.P. This has not been verified by records.

1.4.5 Johann Dyck, b. Dec. 5, 1826, Poppau, W.P., d. Nov. 11, 1898, Am Trakt, Russia; m. Helene Jantzen, b. Aug. 31, 1825, Huebudun, W.P.; d. Jan. 28, 1888, Am Trakt, Russia. The descendants of Johann Dyck and Helene *née* Jantzen can be found in *A Pilgrim People* (two volumes) edited by Cornelius J. and Wilma Dyck.

1.4.6 Aganetha Dyck [2], b. Aug. 2, 1829, Poppau, W.P.; d. June 12, 1832, Poppau, W.P.

1.4.7 **Jacob Dyck**, b. May 3, 1832, Poppau, W.P.; d. Apr. 4, 1882, Am Trakt, Russia; m. 1) Maria Siebert; m. 2) Feb. 23, 1871, Anna Wiebe Penner, widow with two children, b. Nov. 3, 1842; d. 1872, Am Trakt, Russia. She was first m. Feb. 24, 1863, to Peter Penner, b. June 10, 1839, Weisshof by Danzig, W.P. Children of Anna and Peter Penner: 1) Catharina Penner, b. May 24, 1867, Neuendorf by Danzig, W.P.; d. Jan. 22, 1929, Lysanderhoeh, Am Trakt, Russia; and 2) Peter Penner, b. Aug. 1, 1870, Lysanderhoeh, Am Trakt, Russia; d. Aug. 4, 1957, Reedly, Calif. Children of **Jacob Dyck** and Anna Wiebe Penner Dyck:

1.4.7.1 Anna Dyck, b. Dec. 22, 1871, Lysanderhoeh, Am Trakt, Russia; d. 1945, Berlin, Ger., during Allied bombing raid; m. Dec. 1891, to Peter Tgahrt, d. 1928, Calif. Children:

1.4.7.1.1 Daughter b. and d. bef. 1908

1.4.7.1.2 Bruno Tgahrt, b. Oct. 2, 1908; d. Aug. 1980, Hughsonville, Dutchess Co., N.Y.; m. 1) Gertrud Rassloff, b. Furstenfeldbruck, Goethestrasse 15. Two children who both d. in W.W. II. Bruno m. 2) Elizabeth Graham, d. 1969, Dutchess Co., N.Y. Additional information can be found in "Threads of a Life: Searching for Bruno Tgahrt" in the Oct. 2003 *MFH*.

Jacob Dyck m. 3) Sept. 26, 1873, Justine Wall, b. Feb. 1, 1855, Mierauerwald, W.P.; d. Siberia, Russia, ca1927-1930. Children:

1.4.7.2 Jacob Dyck [1], b. 1874, Am Trakt, Russia; d. 1874, Am Trakt, Russia.

1.4.7.3 Maria Dyck, b. Oct. 1, 1876, Lysanderhoeh, Am Trakt, Russia; d. Oct. 16, 1957, Sask., Canada; m. May 17, 1898, in Russia to Heinrich/Henry Kornelius Dyck, b. Aug. 15, 1871, Halbstadt, Russia; son of Kornelius Dyck and Anna *née* Weibe, d. July 10, 1938, Kindersley, Sask. Maria and Henry moved to Canada in 1927 by separate routes and reunited in Sask. In Feb. 2001, this author received a handwritten chart of three generations of the descendants of Henry and Maria Dyck from their grandson, Henry Dyck, b. 1936, of Glenbush/Rabbit Lake, Sask. It shows names and birth years only up to 1992. In July 2018, I received a batch of old photos from Willi Frase of Rodgau, Ger., and I was able to identify one photo as Heinrich and Maria Dyck and their three oldest children: Henry Dyck, b. 1897; Anna Dyck, b. 1899, and Jacob Dyck, b. 1910. Photo dates ca1913 in Siberia. The family had moved to the Barnaul Mennonite settlement, Siberia, Russia, in 1908.

1.4.7.4 Johannes Dyck, b. Feb. 27, 1878, Am Trakt, Russia; d. Dec. 1, 1921, Am Trakt, Russia; m. 1904, Am Trakt, Russia, Maria Wall, b. Mar. 1, 1886; d. Apr. 13, 1974, Siberia, Russia. Maria is the dau. of Johann Wall, b. Sept. 23, 1848, Ladekopp, W.P.; d. Aug. 10, 1917, Orloff, Am Trakt, Russia, and Katharina *née* Wall, b. Mar. 23, 1854, Pragenau, W.P.; d. Sept. 5, 1932, Orloff, Am Trakt, Russia. The descendants of Johannes Dyck and Maria *née* Wall can be found in *ATTA* by D. Frederick Dyck and Alice Sitler Dyck.



Left photo taken ca1913, Barnaul, Siberia, Russia (left to right): Henry Dyck, b. 1897; Maria (Dyck) Dyck, Oct. 1, 1876- Oct. 16, 1957, dau. of Jacob and Justina (Wall) Dyck; Anna Dyck b. 1899; Heinrich Dyck, Aug. 15, 1871-July 10, 1938, son of Kornelius and Anna (Wiebe) Dyck; and Jacob Dyck, b. 1910. This family went to Canada in 1927, although son Henry remained in Siberia. Right photo taken ca1920, Barnaul, Siberia, Russia (left to right in back): Justine (Dyck) Penner, b. Sept. 26, 1879, dau. of Jacob and Justine (Wall) Dyck; and Henry Penner who "disappeared" according to the Soviet government. The fate of Justine and pictured children is unknown.