

# The ODYSSEY of Johannes Dietrich Dyck

by D. Frederick Dyck\*

The epic poet, Homer of Greece, composed his classic tale of the Trojan War, the Iliad, about 750 BC. Homer is also credited with composing the sequel to the Iliad known as the Odyssey. In the Odyssey, Homer tells the story of the King of Ithaca, Odysseus, who experienced ten years of trial and tribulation while attempting to return home to Ithaca after fighting in the Trojan War. Waiting for Odysseus in Ithaca was his faithful wife, Penelope, who experienced her own hardships during the ten years of Odysseus' wandering ordeal.

The ten-year odyssey of my great-great uncle, Johannes Dietrich Dyck, began in 1848 when he left his native West Prussia and traveled to America in search of his fortune. He returned to West Prussia in 1858 with California gold and a diary of his epic journey.

Playing the role of Penelope to Johannes' Odysseus was Helene Janzen. Before Johannes left for America, he and Helene were engaged to be married. Helene had anticipated a two-to-three-year wait for Johannes, but like Penelope, she remained faithful to Johannes as the years stretched on to a decade of separation.

Johannes Dietrich seemed destined for a life of wandering from an early age. He was born December 5, 1826, at Poppau, West Prussia, the third child of parents Dietrich "Dirk" Dyck and Agnete née Janzen.<sup>1</sup>

Johannes' early boyhood years would be the only time he lived at home for any length of time. His mother's death in 1836, when he was only ten years old, probably made him introspective (a common trait among diary keepers) and independent. This

is in keeping with a description of Johannes by his great-grandson, Cornelius J. Dyck, who wrote that Johannes was known as "... a quiet boy but was aggressive in both work and play."<sup>2</sup>

As required by German-Prussian law, Johannes attended school in the village of Fisherbabke just south of the Dyck family farm at Poppau in the north central coastal area of the Vistula Delta. Johannes' formal education ended at age twelve when he was apprenticed to a storekeeper in the village of Robach. Robach was located on the east side of the Nogat River about eighteen miles southeast of Poppau.

Most likely this decision to send Johannes to Robach was one in which he had very little, if any, role. The Dyck family farm at Poppau consisted of thirty-eight acres in 1838, probably enough land to provide a subsistent standard of living for the family and no future for Johannes. The family had once owned an additional sixty-three acres of land near the village of Glabitsch/Glabitz just west of Poppau. This land was lost to the family during the brutal French occupation of Prussia by Napoleon's forces. In 1806 Napoleon ordered a redistribution of Prussian land that cost the Dyck family two-thirds of their holdings.

Johannes served a mutually satisfactory, four-year apprenticeship at the general merchandise store owned by Frau Hamm of Robach. At age sixteen, Johannes was offered a position of management at the store with an annual salary equivalent to \$144. Johannes learned sound business practices here that would serve him well throughout his life. He also advanced his education by reading books loaned to him by the daughter of Frau Hamm. (Is it a possibility that Johannes read the works of Homer at

this time? It is tantalizing to speculate that he did and remembered Homer's line, "The past gives keys to the present.") During this period in his life, Johannes attended church services at Ellerwald Mennonite Church and it was here that he was baptized by Elder Jacob Kroeker in 1844.

Sometime after 1844, Johannes left the employment of Frau Hamm and worked at similar jobs in Marienburg and Caldove/Kalthof in the Vistula Delta. It was while working at Caldove that Johannes met his future wife, Helene Janzen. Helene's family lived in Gross Lesewitz, which was only five miles north of Caldove and Marienburg.

It is very possible that Helene met Johannes while he was working in a store where Helene's family shopped. It is easy to imagine the young store clerk, busy at his duties, suddenly glimpsing the young woman in the company of her parents. Quickly he makes himself available to help the young woman's parents, trying not to be too obvious in his glances at their daughter. After the necessary formalities had been observed, and arrangements for courtship made, Johannes had but a short distance to travel to call on Helene.

Johannes lived with his older brother, Dietrich Dyck, at Kaminke on the north bank of the Nogat River between Marienburg and Gross Lesewitz. Kaminke to Gross Lesewitz was a short three-mile walk for a young man in love.

In the winter of 1847-48, Johannes moved back to Poppau and was living with his father, stepmother,

<sup>1</sup> See family history at the end of this article.

<sup>2</sup> "In The California Gold Rush," by Cornelius J. Dyck, *Mennonite Life*, January 1956.

\*D. Frederick Dyck, 189066, Crossroads Correctional Center, 1115 East Pence Road, 5A-117, Cameron, MO 64429.

and six siblings. He undoubtedly helped with the farm work while living at home, but he had a sideline that was very unusual for the place and time, especially for Mennonites. Johannes was a hunter. Firearms were very expensive; few people in West Prussia could afford them, and private ownership of firearms was not a right in German Prussia. Who could possess firearms and under what conditions was strictly regulated. It must have been a rare privilege for a Mennonite like Johannes to own a rifle. Prussian game laws were also strict so it is doubtful that Johannes shot anything larger than rabbits and game birds. Small game hunting requires practice and quick reflexes, and to be successful Johannes had to be a very fast shot with the muzzle-loading, cap and ball rifles of the era.<sup>3</sup>

By the summer of 1848, Johannes Dietrich was once again looking for opportunities for employment away from the family farm. He learned that Johann Cornies, son of the agricultural and social reformer of the South Russian Mennonites, was looking for a traveling companion to accompany him back to Russia after he completed business in West Prussia. Cornies agreed to have Johannes as his traveling partner and Johannes made immediate arrangements to immigrate to Russia in eight days. Johannes' frantic planning was for naught. In the ensuing eight days, Cornies found a wife, got married, and went back to Russia without telling Johannes what had happened.

With his plans to go to Russia dashed, Johannes made a quick decision to go to America. This desire to leave West Prussia, the considered destination being thousands of miles away, may have been prompted by the adoption of universal military conscription in German Prussia in 1848. Johannes' prowess with a rifle quite likely put any exemption based on religious beliefs in jeopardy. Before he could leave Prussia, however, Johannes had to obtain consent to his plans from his fiancée, Helene Janzen.

Exactly when Johannes and Helene became engaged is not known,

but it is likely that it was sometime in 1847, before Johannes returned to his parents' home at Poppau. The impediment to an immediate marriage seems to have been money, or lack of it on Johannes' part. Helene agreed to Johannes' plan to be gone to America for two to three years after which he would either return to Prussia to live or possibly take Helene back to America as his wife. Many years later, in 1892, in Russia, Johannes recorded in his diary the farewell scene with Helene.

*On August 14, 1848, I said goodbye to her for the last time. We were at my brother Dietrich's home near Kaminke. I remember the days as though it were only a few years ago. But forty-four years have passed; my hair is white and she has passed from me almost five years ago.*

Johannes left West Prussia and traveled overland to the German city of Hamburg. While in Hamburg, Johannes met a young Saxon with the surname Berisch, who also planned to go to America. They agreed to travel together and booked passage on the American ship *Joseph Fish*. This was a small freight ship that held only fifty passengers. Johannes recorded that among the passengers were twenty-four "horse Jews" from Poland.<sup>4</sup>

The *Joseph Fish* sailed from Hamburg on August 31, 1848, heading for the English Channel and the Atlantic Ocean beyond. Upon rounding the northernmost tip of Denmark and entering the North Sea, the *Joseph Fish* encountered strong winds that developed into a violent storm that threatened the small ship with destruction. In an attempt to sail out of the storm, the ship's captain decided to sail north around Scotland and enter the Atlantic Ocean that way rather than through the English Channel. The ship never did outrun the storm but spent two harrowing weeks making the voyage around the dangerous rock-strewn coast of Scotland. One sailor was washed overboard and lost. The passengers in the ship's hold were tossed around with such force that one passenger suffered a broken leg. Everyone was afflicted with seasick-

ness. Storms continued to dog the ship after it reached the Atlantic Ocean making the entire voyage a nightmare for both passengers and crew. Finally, after two months at sea, the *Joseph Fish* anchored in New York harbor on November 2, 1848.

Johannes' friend Berisch had as his final destination the city of Chicago on the banks of Lake Michigan in Illinois. Johannes knew that relatives of his former employer, Frau Hamm of Robach, lived in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on the western side of Lake Michigan and this may have been his ultimate destination.

Two days after landing in New York, the two young Germans were on board a river steamer traveling north on the Hudson River to Albany, New York. Compared to the violent voyage of the *Joseph Fish*, this trip up the scenic Hudson River must have been a veritable pleasure cruise.

From Albany, the pair took a canal boat west to Buffalo, New York. From Buffalo, they continued west on a lake steamship the length of Lake Erie, then turned north up through Lake Huron to the Straits of Mackinac and into Lake Michigan. At the southern end of Lake Michigan, Johannes and Berisch reached the end of their journey together, the city of Chicago. The Great Lakes portion of the trip had taken five days.

Chicago was already a large city in the winter of 1848, having a population of approximately 200,000 people. Work for immigrants who

---

<sup>3</sup> That Johannes was a good shot is part of Dyck family lore. One hundred years after Johannes' death, my father, Herbert C. Dyck, repeated a story of Johannes' ability with a rifle that his father, Jacob J. Dyck (1881-1954), told him in the 1930s. One summer day, Herbert was watching a chicken hawk ride the thermal winds high above the Dyck farm in Kansas. His father, Jacob (Johannes Dietrich Dyck's nephew) looked up and told Herbert that Johannes Dietrich could have knocked that hawk out of the sky with one shot.

<sup>4</sup> One hundred fifty-four years after the fact, this could be construed as an anti-Semitic slur, but is more likely simply the vernacular of the day to describe the business of these Jews.

didn't speak English was hard to find. Johannes landed a menial job in a hotel/saloon where he worked as a part-time bartender and began to learn English. While working here, he heard stories of the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill near Sacramento, California.

When the ice melted on Lake Michigan in the spring of 1849, Johannes took a lake steamship to Milwaukee and met the sister of Frau Hamm of Robach, West Prussia. With the recommendation of these West Prussian friends, Johannes secured a job with the importing firm of the Fullton brothers with a starting salary of \$30.00 a month.

Johannes' job with the Fullton Company required that he spend much of his time supervising the unloading of cargo ships at Milwaukee's harbor. There are several small rivers that flow into Lake Michigan at Milwaukee and these rivers probably provided safe anchorage for lake freight ships during loading and unloading operations. It was near a bridge across one of these rivers that Johannes displayed a trait admired by people around the world—remarkable heroism.

Whether Johannes heard a scream or happened to look up at the bridge at precisely the right moment is not known. What he saw was a young girl falling off the bridge into the river thirty feet below. The girl plunged deep into the river and did not resurface. Johannes quickly removed his coat and boots while calculating the distance the current might carry the girl under the water. After choosing his spot, Johannes dove into the river. His estimate was good and he saw the girl in the murky water only ten feet away. Johannes swam this short distance and grabbed the girl, keeping her head above water while they waited for a small boat to rescue them. Once on shore, the girl was revived by a doctor. The next day the newspapers in Milwaukee heralded Johannes' amazing rescue with the headline: "Young German Risks Life To Save Drowning American Girl!" The day after this headline appeared, Johannes received a formal invitation to dine

with the president of the Fullton Company. In recognition of Johannes' valiant effort, and no doubt the favorable publicity his effort gained for the company, Johannes' salary was raised to \$45.00 per month.

Being a local hero and earning a very respectable salary was not enough for Johannes. He had promised his betrothed Helene in West Prussia that he would return in two to three years with enough money to buy their own farm. At \$45.00 per month, he would not reach his goal for many years; land in West Prussia was expensive.

In February 1850, Johannes succumbed to the gold fever that gripped the entire nation, and he made the decision to join the Gold Rush to California. The fastest and preferred route to the gold fields was to take a steamboat down the Mississippi River to the city of New Orleans. From New Orleans ships carried would-be miners southwest across the Gulf of Mexico to the Isthmus of Panama. After crossing this narrow strip of land that separated the Pacific Ocean from the Gulf of Mexico (the Panama Canal would not be completed until 1914), miners re-boarded ships sailing for San Francisco, California. Johannes did not have the \$250.00 required to take this route to California; he would have to travel overland through the plains and mountains, a distance of approximately 2,500 miles.

Johannes made the 500-mile first leg of the journey with a horse and small cart purchased in Milwaukee. He arrived outside of St. Joseph, Missouri, on March 14, 1850. St. Joseph was the jumping-off point for the famed Oregon Trail discovered by Robert Stuart in 1812-1813. Johannes sold his cart in St. Joseph and purchased two oxen for the price of eighty dollars. He never mentions that he purchased his own wagon so it seems logical to postulate that Johannes reached an agreement with a fellow traveler whereby Johannes' oxen would pull his partner's wagon. Johannes's traveling group consisted of twenty-one men, one woman, five

wagons, and a herd of saddle horses. While making preparations for their trip, Johannes' party heard horrible stories of massacres by the Pawnee Indians just west of St. Joseph. These stories came from traveling parties that had given up and returned from the Oregon Trail. Despite these stories, Johannes' group ferried across the Missouri River on March 19, 1850, and headed for the Platte River in Nebraska Territory.

While progress on the trail was excruciatingly slow, Johannes' party was fortunate in that they did not encounter any hostile Indians. Somewhere along the Platte River in Nebraska they came upon the blood-stained scene of a recent massacre where forty-four men had been killed. This scene filled the whole party with a sense of foreboding and they traveled in silence for many miles afterward.

On July 22, 1850, Johannes' group reached Fort Laramie in southeastern Wyoming, where Johannes met Louis Mellon, who made a life-long impression. Louis was a Canadian trapper who had spent the previous twenty-five years ranging the mountains in search of furs, avoiding civilization.

Johannes' command of English must have greatly improved by this time for he was able to strike up an immediate friendship with Mellon. Johannes was not pleased with the slow progress of the group he was traveling with and upon learning that Mellon was going to California, Johannes convinced the mountain man that they should travel together. Mellon agreed to Johannes' request and this pair of unlikely companions began planning the remainder of the trip to California.

Johannes sold his team of oxen and purchased a pack mule for \$120. He traded his Milwaukee horse for a better one and bought the provisions Mellon told Johannes he would need. Only one day out of Fort Laramie, Johannes and Mellon were joined on the trail by an Irishman named James McKenny who had three good horses and one pack mule. Johannes was not happy about acquiring a third man, but

the unwritten code of the frontier prohibited denying McKenny the safety of the group.

Louis Mellon set a fast pace after leaving Fort Laramie. The three men slept only when they absolutely had to. They existed on tea, rice, and meat from wild game they shot. Johannes' earlier hunting experiences in West Prussia paid big dividends now. Early in August 1850, the trio crossed the Rocky Mountains at the South Pass of the Oregon Trail. By mid-August, they were at Fort Bridger in the southwestern corner of Wyoming.<sup>5</sup>

In Fort Bridger, the men and their animals took a much-needed rest. They had made the last segment of the trip between Fort Laramie and Fort Bridger, the "Desert of Death," a distance of 137 miles in only thirty-seven hours.

During this respite at Fort Bridger Johannes met one of the legends of the American frontier, Christopher "Kit" Carson (1809-1868). Historical records corroborate Johannes' account of meeting Carson at this place and time. Carson was on a horse-trading trip from his home in New Mexico Territory. Apparently Louis Mellon recognized that good information about the trail to California could be had from Carson and sought his advice. It was not what Johannes wanted to hear but Carson knew the West and his advice was not to be ignored. Carson warned the men that they should not take the southern trail through Utah Territory this late in the season. They ran a good risk of being trapped in the Sierra Nevada Mountains by early winter storms that dropped snow measured in feet.

Carson advised the men to follow the northern route into Oregon and then turn south into California. Carson's directions were simple: Travel in the direction of the Green River Mountains that were visible from Fort Bridger; find the Bear River and follow it north until they were beyond the Thomas Fork. There they would cross the route that would lead them over the Cascade Mountains into the Oregon settlements. This simple set of instructions covered 1,000 miles

of rugged country inhabited by Indians that were not always eager to see white intruders. Undaunted, the three men—Louis Mellon, James McKenny, and Johannes Dietrich Dyck—set out for the Green River Mountains in the last days of August 1850.

Seven days after leaving Fort Bridger the men reached the Bear River in the southeastern corner of Idaho. Johannes recorded that the three days prior to reaching the Bear River were ridden through a cold rain that left the men exhausted, barely able to stay in their saddles.

On September 1, 1850, the men reached the small outpost of Fort Hall on the Snake River, a tributary of the Columbia River. At Fort Hall, they rested again and Johannes engaged in some horse trading with the native Snake Indians. He acquired a striking white horse that was to be his companion throughout the years he spent in California. Continuing on the trail across Idaho, the trio of men often saw as many as thirty graves a day. Cholera had broken out along the Oregon Trail and many pioneers' lives ended in an unmarked grave just short of their destination, Oregon.

The Malheur River in eastern Oregon was crossed during the second week of September 1850. Up to this point, Johannes and his two companions had managed to avoid trouble with the Indians whose land they crossed. Their luck ran out on September 12. Johannes wrote that they found three dead bodies along the trail that had been scalped and were still warm. Alert to possible danger, the three men rode only a short distance before they, too, were attacked. Discretion being the better part of valor, the three men outran their attackers. This would be the first time that Johannes' white horse saved his life.

At this juncture, Johannes' diary of his years in America stops. He did continue to keep a diary and he brought it back to West Prussia with him in 1858. However, as he lay ill and dying in Am Trakt, Russia, in 1898, he ordered his grandson, Johannes J. Dyck, to retrieve the California portion of his diary and

burn it before his eyes. Children and grandchildren of Johannes Dietrich said this part of his diary was written in English.

Because no one in Am Trakt could read English, Johannes ordered the California volume of his diary burned. This seems a dubious reason to burn one volume of several that Johannes had written by the time of his death. Speculation about other reasons Johannes had for burning this volume is natural, but any theories are little better than gossip.

Fortunately, Johannes' diaries for the years 1860-1898 are extant (now kept at the Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg, Canada) and they contain many references to his years in California which allow the story to continue.

Upon reaching the relative safety of the Oregon settlements, Johannes took the time to write a letter to his betrothed Helene in West Prussia. Helene's letter of response was saved by Johannes and carried back to West Prussia in 1858. This letter doubtless comforted Johannes during his lonely years in California. A translation of Helene's letter follows:

*Gross Lesewitz, West Prussia  
December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1851*

*My dearly beloved Johannes,*

*Already I was secretly hoping that instead of a letter you yourself would come, but the letter too was very very welcome, for not to hear from you, my beloved, for so long is the most terrible thing that could happen to me. I can feel with you, my dear Johannes, for I see from your letter that you have again not received mine. Since no further letter came from you I thought you might arrive any day. O how my heart trembled with every storm, how it quaked with fear when the hurricanes roared. Auntie would say it is so nice inside when the storm rages, but I felt*

---

<sup>5</sup> Fort Bridger was named after the famous mountain man and explorer James Bridger (1804-1881).

*the opposite for I thought you were on the high seas. Yes, you were right when you wrote that our lives are in the hand of God . . . that has often comforted me when anxiety and loneliness filled my breast. O my dear Johannes, I have suffered much, very much, for the last winter rumor spread that you had been murdered by Indians in a most horrible way. It was not possible for me to believe it, and yet I struggled between fear and hope. You can imagine then with what joy I received your letter from Oregon and pressed it to my heart.*

*My dear, thank you with all my heart for the birthday present, which I consider with fear and melancholy when I remember how many dangers you submitted yourself in order to get it for me.*

*And now I bid you a heartfelt farewell. I hope that these lines reach you in the best of health. O that God may keep you from all danger and bring you safely to the heart of your forever faithful loving Helene. . . . How often I have dreamed that you returned, but they were only dreams and reality is so far away. Again, a thousand times farewell.*

*Yours, even unto death  
Helene Janzen*

*P.S. I have written this hurriedly, I believe you are including some English in your letter, are you not?*

That Johannes was able to send Helene a letter with a return address where he expected to be able to receive her letter of response would indicate that he stayed in Oregon for a good length of time. It required months for a letter to travel from Oregon to West Prussia. Helene's letter was written in late December 1851. Johannes couldn't have received it in Oregon before the spring of 1852. Did he work at some job in Oregon from September 1850 to April or May 1852?

As eager as Johannes was to get to the California gold fields, this scenario is difficult to accept. An alternative, and more likely, possibility

is that Johannes had Helene send her letters to the San Francisco or Sacramento post office as general delivery. There Johannes could pick up letters when he was in one of those cities.

In the gold fields of northern California, Johannes joined thousands of other miners from around the world that had come seeking their fortunes in the gleaming yellow metal. Stories of failure far exceed those of success in finding gold in the amounts worth the backbreaking labor and danger inherent in these primitive mining operations. Johannes had no previous experience with mining nor did he have the capital needed for deep mining operations. His search for gold was probably done with pans in or near a stream. Johannes did acquire a partner and it may be that the two of them were able to set up a crude sluicing operation in addition to panning. Their small claim would have had to be registered and they would have had to defend it against would-be claim jumpers.

California during the Gold Rush was a rough and tumble place. There was no organized law enforcement agency outside of the major towns. How Johannes reconciled his Mennonite beliefs of nonresistance in the face of constant violence is not known. His diary of this period may have offered insight into this question.

Johannes and his mining partner were blessed with success and made plans to return east in 1853. They chose a return route that seems foolhardy and dangerous for men carrying raw gold, and for one who had a fiancée waiting in West Prussia. Johannes surely had enough money to take a ship back to the east coast of America. If he was trying to save money, he could have taken the Oregon Trail back to St. Joseph. It was a proven route and offered some safety because of the number of travelers that used it.

Instead, the two men struck out across the deserts of Arizona and New Mexico Territory. The only conceivable destination was Santa Fe, New Mexico. From there, Johannes could

take the Santa Fe Trail northeast through present-day Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas, to arrive at St. Joseph, Missouri. Johannes' meeting with Kit Carson at Fort Bridger in August 1850 may have prompted Johannes to try this route. Carson's headquarters were near Santa Fe and Johannes may have had a desire to see Carson again as well as see some new country.

With his background as a storekeeper in West Prussia and importing with the Fullton firm in Milwaukee, Johannes may have had an eye toward a future as a merchant on the Santa Fe Trail. Whatever reasons the two men had for attempting this route, the journey met with disaster in short order. Only two weeks into the trek, the men were attacked by Indians. Johannes' companion and the pack mule, loaded with gold, were quickly overtaken by the Indians. His companion was killed while Johannes escaped on his fleet white horse. This was the second time that the horse he had acquired in trade with the Snake Indians saved his life.

Johannes knew he could not continue on to Santa Fe alone and he had lost everything he had worked so hard for in the California gold fields. Saddened by the loss of his friend and most of his possessions, Johannes made the heartbreaking decision to return to California and try again. Years later, on January 28, 1888, at Am Trakt, Russia, Johannes made a diary entry that recalled this desperate time in his life.

*Yes, where is the time when I struggled with my fate and the untold dangers, dared my life in the mountains of California? Where is the time where I despaired of ever being able to return to her [Helene], where I, sick at heart, called her name in the mountains of the West and only echoes marked my words? O, when I think of those times, of how I suffered and struggles. . . ."*

Johannes' second foray into the gold fields of California was not immediately successful and he suffered yet another setback during the four years between 1853 and 1857.

One morning Johannes awoke to find that his new partner had been murdered in his sleep and their gold stolen. Johannes would eventually collect enough gold to enable him to return to West Prussia. Crossing America from west to east, he used the same route that bought him to California in 1850 and he arrived in West Prussia in the fall of 1858.

Johannes' reunion with his beloved Helene after ten years of mutual longing and loneliness was at once joyous and tearful. Thirty years later Johannes wrote in his diary:

*Such separation must be endured in order to be understood. We had promised to be true to one another, but in those days we little knew what pain and sorrow and what tears were waiting for us before we should again be reunited after ten years. And what a reunion! I remember our wedding day as though it were yesterday.*

Johannes Dietrich Dyck and Helene Janzen were married on May 5, 1859. Shortly after their wedding they traveled by horse-drawn wagon to the German Mennonite colony of Am Trakt, Russia. Johannes' brothers, Dietrich, Jakob, and Cornelius, had immigrated to Russia beginning in 1853. Helene's siblings, too, had immigrated to Am Trakt; her sister was married to Johannes' brother Dietrich.<sup>6</sup>

#### Family History of Dietrich Dyck

I. **Dietrich "Dirk" Dyck**, b. Oct. 9, 1796, Poppau, West Prussia; d. June 25, 1849, Steegenwerder, West Prussia

m. 1) **June 23, 1817, Agnete Janzen**, b. Jan. 16, 1796, Einlage an der Nogat, West Prussia; d. Dec. 26, 1836, Poppau, West Prussia

Children:

1. **Dietrich Dyck**, b. Aug. 3, 1819, Poppau, West Prussia; d. \_\_\_\_, Am Trakt, Russia

2. **Catherine Dyck**, b. July 28, 1824, Poppau, West Prussia; d. Aug. 7, 1892, Hauskampe, West Prussia
3. **Johannes Dietrich Dyck**, b. Dec. 5, 1826, Poppau, West Prussia; d. Nov. 11, 1898, Am Trakt, Russia
4. **Jakob Dyck**, b. May 5, 1832, Prussia; d. Apr. 4, 1882, Am Trakt, Russia
5. **Cornelius Dyck**, b. Aug. 23, 1835, Poppau, West Prussia; d. July 8, 1892, Woodland, Washington

Dietrich m. 2) Feb. 19, 1839, **Agnete**

**Janzen**, May 31, 1813-Nov. 15, 1869

Children:

1. **Agnete Dyck**, b. Feb. 10, 1841 Poppau, West Prussia
2. **Maria Dyck**, b. Sept. 11, 1846, Poppau West Prussia; d. Jan. 1, 1932, Tiegenhagen, Poland (West Prussia)
3. **Justine Dyck**, b. Oct. 6, 1848, Poppau, West Prussia

<sup>6</sup> For a list of the original settlers of Am Trakt see *Mennonite Family History*, April 1993, p. 75

## Early American Herb Recipes

**Beef Stew:** Take very good Beef, and slice it very thin; and beat it with the back of a Knife. Put it to the gravy of some meat, and some wine or strong broth, sweet-herbs a quantity, let it stew till it be very tender; season it to your liking; and varnish (garnish) your dish with Marygold-flowers or Barberries. - *The Closet Opened, 1669*

**Black Puddings:** Catch the blood as it runs from the hog; stir it continually till cold to prevent its coagulating; when cold thicken it with boiled rice or oatmeal, add leaf fat chopped small, pepper, salt, and any herbs that are liked; fill the skins and smoke them two or three days; they must be boiled before they are hung up, and prick them with a fork to keep them from bursting. - *Virginia Housewife, 1856*

**Bologna Sausages:** Take equal quantities of bacon, fat and lean, beef, veal,

pork, and beef suet; chop them small, season with pepper, salt, & c., sweet herbs, and sage rubbed fine. Have a well-washed intestine, fill, and prick it; boil gently for an hour, and lay on straw to dry. They may be smoked the same as hams. - *Practical Housewife, 1860*

**Calf's Feet, to Fry:** Having first boiled them till tender, cut them in two, and (having taken out the large bones) season the feet with pepper and salt, and dredge them well with flour. Strew some chopped parsley or sweet marjoram over them, and fry them of a light brown in lard or butter. Serve them up with parsley-sauce. - *Miss Leslie's Directions for Cookery, 1839*

**Herb Pie:** Pick two handfuls of parsley from the stems, half the quantity of spinach, two lettuces, some mustard and cress, a few leaves of borage, and a little mint. Wash and boil them a little,

then strain, press out the water and chop small; mix a batter of flour, two eggs well beaten, half a pint of milk and a pint of cream, and pour it upon the herbs. Cover it with a good crust, and bake it. - *Practical Housewife, 1860*

**Substitute for Soap:** (Burn ferns until they become) blewish, which being then layd by will dissolve into powder of itself like unto lime. (It was suggested that a few of these fern balls dissolved in water would be excellent for cleaning a whole basket of clothes). - *Parsdisi in Sole, 1629*

The above recipes are taken from *Early American Herb Recipes* by Alice Cooke Brown that sells for \$9.95. Copies may be ordered from Masthof Bookstore, 219 Mill Road, Morgantown, PA 19543-9516.