

The Johann Wall Journal
Translated by Henry Schapansky
Translator's comments in square brackets []

[Title page— added by someone other than the writer of the journal]

Family register

Along with something from the life of
Johann Wall

Previously resident at Schönsee near Tiegenhoff in West Prussia from 1815-1852. Now at
Hahnsau near Saratov on the Volga.

Man that is born of woman, is of few days, and full of trouble. Hiob. 14.1. [Job 14.1]

It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment. Hebrews 9.27

Lord, teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

Psalm 90.12.

The Lord Jesus said: I am the resurrection, and the life. And whosoever liveth and
believeth in me shall never die. From John 11. 25-26.

I Tim. 1, 15.16

[I Timothy, chapter 1, 15-16]

This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance that Jesus Christ came into this world to save sinners, of whom I am the chief.

Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, in that Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

My dear father Johann Wall was born at Bröske near Neuteich on the 20th of February 1765. His father was Johann Wall of the same place, but who was born on another property lost through his death in 1776 [his death is listed as 5.7.1777 in the Ladekop church records]. His mother was Helena v. Bergen who died in April [1793], who saw me when I was 2 months old. He was elected *Lehrer* [minister] in the *Gemeinde* [congregation] in 1798. He died on the 15th of March, 1831 and achieved the age of 66 years, 24 days.

My mother Helena (née) Klassen was born at Neuteicherfelde on the 22nd of June, 1772. Her father was Abraham Klassen who died in 1778. Her mother was Katherina Wiens who died in the year 1804. She [Helena Wall, née Klassen] was called from this world by the Lord in 1846 on the 8th of December at 2 p. m. at the age of 74 years, 5 months 15 days.

The Lord blessed the union with [the following]

1. Johann b. 14.2.1793, d. 10.12.1860 [date of death added later]
2. Catherina b. 27.7.1794, d. 25.10.1794
3. Catherina b. 6.9.1795, d. 8.11.1795
4. Helena b. & d. 18.1.1801, at 2 o'clock in the evening
5. Katherina b. 28.10.1803 at 2 ½ o'clock in the morning, d. 13.2.1858
6. Peter b. 31.8.1805, d. 2.9.1807
7. Maria b. 14.2.1808 at 6 a.m.
8. A daughter stillborn 1809
9. Peter b. 27.4.1810, d. 25.6.1810
10. Peter b. 27.6.1811, d. 1.9.1811
11. Anna b. 21.9.1813, d. 2.1.1814
12. Franz b. 29.4.1815, d. 10.8.1815
13. Franz b. 29.1.1817, d. 3.2.1823

In the year 1793, 13th of February at 10 in the evening, I saw the light of this world as can be seen above, at Bröske. In the year 1812 I was accepted into the Ladekoperfelder *Gemeinde* through holy baptism. In the year 1815, on the 24th of February, I entered the bonds of matrimony with Justina Toews from Schönsee. Her father, also from the same place, was Johann Toews, *Lehrer* of the *Gemeinde* at Ladekop. Her mother was Helena (née) Klassen, whom she lost in 1805. She was born 31.5.1793 and joined the *Gemeinde* on the same day as I did. She died as a result of a burst blood vessel on June the 1st 1824, at 4 a.m., aged 31 years, 1 day, following the last childbirth.

The Lord blessed this marriage with:

1. Johann b. 8.1.1816, at 11 in the evening
2. Helena b. 27.1.1818, d. 16.1.1823

3. Franz b. 10.9.1819, d. 18.11.[1819], aged 9 weeks
4. Justina b. 26.10.1820
5. Helena b. 13.5.1824, d. 3.8.[1824]
6. Katherina b. 1824 dito, d. ¾ at 10 p.m.

I entered the bonds of matrimony for the 2nd time with Magaretha (née) Regier on the 9th of November 1824. The same was born at Trahlau on April 9, 1799. Her father of the same place, was Gerhard Regier, a son of the *Ältester* Cornelius Regier who died at Chortitza in southern Russia. She, my dear wife was taken from my side by the lord over life and death at the time when she and I, with our dear children, undertook the voyage to Russia, as a result of the *roten Ruhr* [a form of dysentery], on 19.8.1852 in Lubin in Poland. There she sleeps in the evangelic [Lutheran] graveyard, in the left corner, under linden akazia and maple trees. A single gravestone marks her grave with information regarding her name, [date of] birth and death and I Timothy 1, 15. 16.

In this marriage was born to us

1. Helena b. 2. 10. 1825 at 11 p.m., d.5.5.1876
2. Gerhard b. 6th of July at 2 ½ o'clock in the morning, 1827, d. 23.5.1831
3. Cornelius b. 9th of March, 1829 at ½ past noon
4. Peter b. 21st April at 10 in the evening, 1830, d. 24.6.1832
5. Margaretha b. 10.7.1832 at 10 in the evening, d.15.7.1832
6. A stillborn son 11.2.1823
7. Gerhard b. 18.5.1835 at 12 in the evening
8. Jacob b. 9.6.1836 at 5 a.m.
9. Anna b. 17.11.1837 at 3 ½ o'clock in the morning, d. 1.7.1838
10. Hermann b. 7.4.1839 at 10 p.m. d. 1st May [same year]
11. Maria b. 20.3.1841 at 5 p.m.
12. Elisabeth b. 9.6.1842 at 2 o'clock in the afternoon

The data written above are in the "new style" [Gregorian calendar]
 Further dates in the continuations of life histories are in the "old style"
 [Russian/Roman calendar]

Johann Wall in Mierauerwald

This, my son was born 8.1.1816. The same was united in marriage with Helena Wiens 5.8.1841, who was born 16.8.1816. This marriage was blessed by the Lord with the following children:

- Helena b. 5.6.1842, d. 19.8.1843
- Helena b. 4.9.1843, d. 2.12.1843
- Johann b. 12.11.1844, d. 24.11.1844
- Peter b. 13.11.1845, d. 16.12.1859
- Johann b. 9.8.1847
- Hermann b. 12.2.1849, d. 20.2.1849

The mother of these children died 25.5.1849 at 9 o'clock in the evening. He entered the bonds of matrimony for the 2nd time with the sister of the deceased, Catherina Wiens, b. 1.4.1827, on the 8th of November, 1849. To them was born

Cornelius b. 23.8.1850, d. 12.11.1850

Julius b. 15.2.1852

Anna b. 23.7.1853

Justina b. 1.2.1855

Helena b. 9.8.1856, d. [1859] 25.11.

Cornelius b. 2.5.1858, d. 8.9.1861

My dear son Johann with his family came here to Hansau on 12/24 Sept. 1860, and on the following day, namely Sept. 25, n.s. at 1 ½ [1:30] o'clock in the morning, went to the joy of his Lord, as a result of an attack of cholera?. His surviving wife was delivered of a stillborn daughter on the 14th of October, n.s.

Justina

This, my daughter, was born on 20.10.1820. Entered the state of matrimony on 20.10.1852 with the single man Peter Kopper, born at Niedergruppe near Graudenz on 1.11.1828. The Lord blessed this marriage with:

Johann b. 11.8.1856 (23.8)

Peter b. 8.8.1859 (20.8)

Gerhard b. 10.8.1860 (22.8)

On 20.7.1875, the Lord took her husband Peter Kopper from this earth, after lengthy severe suffering. He reached the age of 46 years, 8 months and 20 days. See following, Justina Kopper, née Wall.

Helena

This, my daughter was born 2.10.1825 and entered the state of matrimony with the widower Cornelius Janzen, who was born 10.1.1825 n.st. [new style], on the 26th of May, 1857. The Lord blessed this marriage with

1. Johann b. 25.2.1858 (7.3.) (author of the Janzen portion of the journal)

2. Helena B. 9. 11.1859 (21.11)

3. Jacob b. 31.8.1861(12.9), d. 2.7.1880 (14.7)

4. Maria b. 21.7.1863 (2.8), d. 26.7.1864 (7.8)

5. Justina b. 15.5.1865 (27.5), d. 11.6.1866 (23.6)

6. Cornelius b. 6.12.1869 (18.12), d. 28.2.1872(old style)

On the 5th of May, 1876, the Lord also took this his dear lamb into his kingdom. She was survived by 2 sons.

May her ashes rest in peace.

The father Cornelius Janzen entered the state of matrimony with the widow Maria Jantz (née Horn), on the 8th of July, 1876, who was born 3.11.1847 (3.11), d. 28.2.1880

The Lord blessed this marriage with

1. Sara b. 24.5.1877

2. Heinrich b. 9.7.1878
3. Maria b. 25.10.1879, d. 25.5.1881

Yet another time, my father Cornelius Janzen entered the state of matrimony with the single maiden Maria Penner, born on the 2nd of July 1849 (14.7.) at Niederausmaß in the Kulmer lowlands, on the 18th of November, 1880 (30.11).

The Lord blessed this marriage with
Jacob b. 29.11.1881

My father's (Cornelius Janzen) father was Jacob Janzen b. 18.10.1797, whose father was Peter Janzen, whose wife, my grandfather's mother was Sara Janzen, née Martens. My grandfather's wife, my grandmother, was Helena Janzen, née Pauls, b. 21.7.1792. They entered the state of matrimony on 5.11.1818 and the Lord blessed this marriage with

1. Maria b. 26.11.1820
2. Helena b. 14.8.1819, d. 17.8 [1819—note: order reversed per original]
3. Jacob b. 23.11.1822, d. 20.5.1835
4. Cornelius b. 10.1.1825
5. Anna b. 24.3.1827, d. 27.3. the same year
6. Sara b. 16.5.1829, d. 19. 5, the same year

On 11.11.1743, my great-great-grandfather, Peter Janzen was born. On 21.12.1747 [1738] my great-great-grandmother, Nelke [Kornelia] Quiring, was born. On 13.3.1766, my great-great-grandfather entered the state of matrimony. The Lord blessed this marriage with

1. Peter b. 15.3.1767
2. Cornelius b. 4.12.1769
3. Heinrich , stillborn
4. Catherina b. 16.9.1773
5. Heinrich b. 25.8.1775
6. Leonard b. 26.12.1777, d. 9.7.1848
7. Cornelia b. 30.12.1781 [20.12.1780]

On the 13th of December, 1783, it pleased the lord over life and death to [take away] my dear great-great-grandmother (Cornelia, Heinrich Quiring's daughter) [who died-note: the sentence is incompletely written in the original]. They had lived together for 16 years. Afterwards, 1785, my great-great-grandfather entered the state of matrimony for the 2nd time with the maiden Catherina, Franz Froese's daughter from the Elbinger Roßgarten.

My great-grandfather Peter Janzen entered the state of matrimony with Sara Martens, and to them was born:

1. Cornelius
2. Peter
3. Jacob b. 18.11.1797, d. 21.3.1876
4. Sara
5. Anna
Catherina

Maria [Helena crossed out]

My aunt entered the state of matrimony with Peter Janzen

The Lord blessed this marriage with

1. Peter
2. Maria
3. Helena
4. Anna
5. Jacob
6. Cornelius
7. Catherina

My father Cornelius Janzen, as you see on page 13, was born 10.1.1825. Earlier, he worked with carpenters. Later, he learned the clock-making trade from his [great] uncle Leonard Janzen. He himself built a clock.

He entered the state of marriage, for the 1st time with the widow Sara Stobbe née Albrecht, on 23.2.1846. There were no children from this marriage. The widow's children [were] 1. Sara and 2. Cornelius. My father's 1st wife died 22.8.1856. My father married for the 2nd time here in Russia. On 27.5.1855 he travelled from Prussia and on the 29th of September o.s., he arrived here at Koeppenthal.

On my father's side, my grandmother was, as mentioned, Helena Janzen, née Pauls. Her father was David Pauls in Hohenwald, his wife's maiden name was Penner [Pauls], and from this marriage were born 3 children, David, Claas, and Helena, my grandmother. His wife died, and David Pauls, 1794 [21.7.1796], married again... [balance of this page unreadable].

Great uncle Peter Pauls in Hahnsau.

Cornelius [Wall] (d. 17.11.1907)

This, my son was born 9.3.1829. The same went to Prussia in the autumn and entered the bonds of matrimony with Anna Epp of Broeskerfelde on 17.2.1857, who was born ... [no entry], and returned home in August of the same year. The Lord blessed this marriage with

1. Elisabeth b. 18.12.1857 (30.12)
2. Cornelius b. 26.3.1859 (4.4)d. 20.3.1860 (1.4)
3. Cornelius b. 31.10.1860 (12.11)
4. Johann b. 22.2.1862 o.s.
5. Anna b. 6.1864, d. 1.11.1864
6. Hermann b. 27.12.1865 o.s.
7. Jacob b. 27.12.1865, stillborn
8. Margaretha b. [blank], d [blank]
9. David b. 2. 1869, d.
10. Renate
11. a daughter, stillborn
12. Anna d.
13. Gerhard d.

Elisabeth Wall married the *Lehrer* Wilhelm Penner of Lysanderhöhe on 28.12.1876

Gerhard (d. 20.6.1878)

This son was born 18.5.1835 (6.5) who married Margaretha Hamm on 23.2.1861 (11.2), who was born on the 2nd of January 1838, [or] 21st of December 1839 [note: these dates should be reversed, to 2.1.1839, 21.12.1838]. This marriage was blessed with

1. Margaretha b. 20.2.1862 (8.2)
2. Johann b. 27.8.1863 (8.9), d. 11th October (23rd) at 5 o'clock in the morning, the same year
3. Gerhard b. 1.12.1864 (13.12), d. 1.3.1865 (13.3)
4. Johann b. 30.3.1866, d. 28.8.1867 o.s.
5. Gerhard b. 19.1.1868, d. 6.2.1868 (18.2)
6. Anna b. 19.1.1869, d. 9.2. the same year
7. Cornelius b. 17.2.1870, d. 21.2. the same year
8. Maria b. 2.4.1871
9. Gerhard b. 10.4.1872, d. 2 10. the same year
10. Helena b. 3.2.1874, d. 1.3. [the same year?]

[Marginal note to page 22—] where both dates are not written, one can then assume ... [unreadable]

11. Elise [Elisabeth] b. 15.3.1875
12. Jacob b. 23.4.1876, d. 6.6. the same year
13. Anna b. 26.4.1877, at 11 o'clock in the morning

Elisabeth

This daughter was born 16.8.1842 (4.8). The same married the single man Franz Epp, who was born 2.8.1841 (22.7) in Lindenauerfelde in West Prussia, on 25.2.1863 (7.[3]) o.s.

This marriage was blessed with

1. Elise Margaretha b. 22.12.1864 at 3;30 a.m.
2. Anna b. 26.1.1867
3. Margaretha b. 5.9.1868, d. 12.12. [no date]
4. Justina b. 7.2.1870
5. Minna b. 3.2.1871, d. 30.6.1872
6. Maria b. 8.5.1872
7. Helena b. 11.6.1873, stillborn
8. Emilie b. 16.9.1874, d. 12.10. the same year
9. Johannes b. 13.11.1875
10. Cornelius b. 17.5.1877, d. 19.8. the same year
11. Franz b. 6.6.1878, stillborn
12. Helena b. 12.7. [no year given]
13. Agnethe [Note—new handwriting]
14. Ida
15. Anna b. 30.8.1884

Elise Margaretha Epp married Peter Hamm in the year 1882 on the 18th of August. The Lord blessed this marriage with

1. Franz b. 17.7.1885

2. Jacob b. 18.8., d. 1.2. (1886/1887?)
3. Peter b. 4.12.1888
4. Martha b. 5.12.1891, d. 1892
5. Maria b. in October, died
6. Frieda b. 18th January, died
7. Elise died
8. Johannes b. 20.3., died in August
9. Hermann b. 23.8.1900
10. Arthur b. 12.1., died in October of the same year

Franz married Anna Tgarth [Tjahr] on 24.10.1906.

Peter married Anna Funk on 16.4.1914

Elisabeth Epp, née Wall

Mother died 31.8.1884. Father Franz Epp d. 29.6.1913. Magaretha Epp married Gerhard Kopper on 28.9.1886. From this marriage there were 4 children.

1. Justina, died
2. Johann, died
3. Stillborn
4. Elise Margaretha d. 3.1.1895

Justina Epp married Jacob Hamm in the year 1888, the 7th of February. Their children are

1. Maria, died
2. Hermann, died
3. Justina b. 10.7.
4. Franz, died
5. Elisabeth b. 4.11.
6. Maria, died
7. Jacob
8. Anna
9. Helena
10. Johannes
11. David

... her soul revives and lives on, through the results created by the example of her love, even though she was not in a position to express this in the written word [this seems to refer to a preceding song or poem-see below]. Only in the third verse, where it is written "I remain in quiet calmness", this I cannot always say, as my fleshly nature shies away from pain and trouble. So that on my pilgrimage on this earth, I often came to despair, but (the Lord be forever praised and thanked) never came to give up.

Then the thought came to me, that I should recount and describe the true love of my saviour, for the sake of my children. So that, after my demise, they might remember my reconciliation and how the Lord so mercifully, drew their father to Him, from his early youth. So that more and more, they will be encouraged to let themselves be surrounded by and drawn to His sharing of love. So today was I once again inspired by the 3rd verse of this song [a reference

to something preceding], to recount how the Lord has ever again so loved me and drawn me to Him out of sheer goodness. Even earlier I had put down in writing, something of this sort, in the years 1821-1831, in as much as I occasionally wrote something in the form of a diary, but which I later stopped doing.

My son in Prussia had kept these booklets. That which I propose to recount here now, so the Lord gives me the grace to do so, will, in the main, when one compares this with the former, be the same. Nevertheless, I have, through the grace of the Lord, later become better acquainted with the variations of a diseased heart, and have arrived at the conviction that through the grace of God, man who deems himself to be an awful, damned person, with no good within, can stop and realize that, even in his heart he is not really so poor, rather can trust in this a weak confession of sin. Even in the expression of humility, pride can be buried, so that a person may look down on those who have not yet seen the light of the gospel. There is a difference between a modest and a true belief, but which only the spirit of the God can teach us. If we ourselves do not fail to hear the beckoning voice of our shepherd correctly in making ourselves truly small and poor, the Lord God, who does not want the death of a sinner, leaves us the way on which He leads us from our early youth onwards, losing no opportunity, as it says in a song, in daily endeavours to raise and purify our souls. I wish and hope that I will in eternity not cease to laud and praise Him, since the patience, love and friendship of my God, which He has shown me, I would be unable to express there. May the Lord allow me, here in the land of the shadow of death, to write down some weak witness to his merciful love. And should it please Him after my death, when one or another of my children, seeing how the Lord God loved their father, will by these means be inspired again to throw themselves into His arms with more love and trust, then will my wish be fulfilled.

Something from my life history

As noted in the family register in the front of this booklet, I was born in the year 1793, the 14th of February, new style, as of today, 62 years. My father was also born at Broeske near Neuteich, on the same property [as I], and lost his father when he was 14 years old, and later, when his brother married, he carried on the farm [Actually his half-brother].

In the year 1792, the date is not given [actually 12.4.1792], my father married the daughter of the then already deceased Abraham Klassen of Neuteichsdorferfeld, named Helena. My mother had a [full] brother named Julius [1770-1800], whom I did not meet, but who died unmarried; a sister named Maria [1765-1813] who was older, and stayed on the property and whose husband was Peter Willms, who died in the year 1807, partly as a result of anxiety due to the plundering of the French [troops]. My aunt married again, with a young man, Hermann Regier, but had no further children excepting the 3 daughters named Catherina, Maria, and Helena of the 1st marriage, if the latter, who has a Lutheran husband still lives. My mother had a half-brother Johann Klassen [b. 1745: moved to Altona, Moloschna — whose net worth was assessed at 8,000 Thalers in 1804, a wealthy man], who emigrated to the Molotschna in the year 1804. Of this marriage, I am the eldest of 10 children, most of whom died in infancy. As I was the only grandson of my grandmother, I spent many days with her, as she dearly loved me, but not with the weakness which grandparents have of overlooking the bad behaviour of their grandchildren with false love. Earlier, she was reputed to have been a very lively person. In her 2nd marriage she encountered many sorrows, because of which she

became very depressed. She, my grandmother, at whose place I often slept, taught me the prayer: fear God, dear child, the Lord God sees and knows everything. Amen. And in eternity, I will thank my grandmother, or rather much more the Lord, for allowing me to learn this prayer by her efforts. This prayer laid a foundation in me, which I have never lost. Wherever I went and wherever I was and whatever I did, this song came to mind. As my grandmother often found spiritual songs for me, and brought me to a fear of God. This left me with a lifelong impression. Later, when I began to read, I eagerly read bible stories and sometimes I had to read these to my grandmother. Since my father only had few books which only had religious material of an old fashioned nature [*von alten Schrot und Korn*], I was thus protected from corrupting writings. Had I had the chance, as is the case in many houses, into which flood of novels poured from time to time, who knows what kind of impression would have been made on me. Nevertheless, as I became acquainted with these in my later years, I was repulsed by this kind of literature, even though, on the other hand, to my non-spiritual nature, they were enticing and attractive. The schools were in a low state, that is, in the countryside. So I only learned reading, writing, and arithmetic in a mechanical manner. In the school, we were taught in the morning and in the afternoon. From memory, morning and evening prayers, which, in my first school year, in my childish simplicity, I used when it happened that I had a request which I wished God to fulfill, even though not expressed in those words. Until later, when I expressed my wishes to God in my own words. One morning, as I returned from the fields, and I still recall the place, the very real thought came to me — you must pray every morning and evening, and from that time, I found lonely places, such as in the hay barn, behind the shed in the rear, and so forth. When I had committed a sin, as I am very prone to thoughtlessness and sin, I did not then know how to console myself. And although I well knew the prayer “the blood and justice of Christ, these are my jewels and my best apparel” [a well-known German line — *Christi Blut und Gerechtigkeit, das ist mein Schmuck und Ehrenkleit*], the use of this fine and clear source against sin and uncleanness was not then known to me. Often, when I was already out of school, when I was alone and reflected on the condition of my soul, I wept bitterly. Once when I was ploughing in the field, I broke down in a flood of tears, unable to control myself, in that I concluded that, after my death, I would be counted as one of the damned, and in that I already had an unsteady character. And I also had no one in whom I wished to confide, so I lamented this condition as best as I could, to my heavenly father, the savior of souls who was to me worthy of all praise. But I did not also know of the loving heart towards stubborn sinners prepared to repent. With all this, I was considered to be a respectable youth, even though, in my own eyes, I was less than that. Also, I was considered, in our circles, to be more learned than my contemporaries, even though I had learned nothing of good writing, grammar, and so forth. My parents, continuously but not in a severe manner, strove to make me be industrious, and as I had a weak constitution, and as at times the work was truly hard, I thus often wished to be stronger. As I have a sensitive nature, even a sharp warning or correction from my father or my mother hurt very much. I can only recall one time in my childhood that I received a slap across the ears, when out of pure mischievousness I pushed the babysitter with my elder sister from a chair, so that the latter cried a lot. My parents had a method of raising their children, which was to direct them so that they would not need to be punished and then they prayed more for us and set us an example, rather than punishing us with a lot of words. Nevertheless, they admonished us for the least mistake or failing. Whenever my parents visited relatives or

neighbours, I was alone at home, or when I had no visitors on a Sunday, I read the bible, of Satan's golden jewels, and noted the songs and lines which applied to the state of my own heart. And I had some blessed hours, so that I knew nothing of boredom. And therewith felt such an urge in me, that I wanted to be a *Lehrer* in our *Gemeinde*. When I was about 9 years old, the servant in the barns said to me "Mr. Johann, when you grow up, you should not be a minister, you will find it hard and you will have to live a pious life". I thought, not saying anything, you will yet be such. With all this, I was careless and found pleasure in company singing worldly songs, for which I felt a prick of conscience. However, as the Lord in his indescribable foresight, from my early youth, had surrounded me with pillars of love, and sought to draw me to himself, so, on the other hand, the wiles of the Evil One were very busy to bring about my fall. Once, when I was in Danzig at the Artushoff (Jünkerhoff) I saw a painting which showed the progress of the Christian towards the heavenly Jerusalem and at the bottom or in the middle, the seat of justice was portrayed, something like that in the Lutheran church. I then observed, at the side, the devil aiming at the pious pilgrim with a loaded bow and arrow. Then the very real thought came to me, that such an arrow was also aimed at my soul. Thus it is written in Ephesians 6:10-17. Even as a boy of 12 years old, I became acquainted by chance with the sin, about which Rapf in his Warnings, warns as the most dangerous of the enemies of youth. Oh, Oh! This sin plagued me with many deep wounds, and is the reason that I often, as mentioned above, wept bitterly. At the beginning, I did not feel any uneasiness in my conscience, and didn't know to explain this to myself, but afterwards I learned with experience that sin is sweet at first, but afterwards tasted bitter as gall. I often felt a prick of conscience, I fought, I pleaded, but all in vain, and although the sin did not fully take possession of me, so I was not able to fully conquer it, so that I now have to say, Lord, remember not the sins of my youth, nor my trespasses, but remember me with the great mercy from your goodness. Had I had a trusted friend and advisor, or had a book such as mentioned, by Rapf, such would have been desirable to me. All mothers and grandmothers should keep their children away from coffee and spicy food, whereby the aging process begins too soon. Unknowingly, mine did not do so. But the Lord knows how to free us from everything, if we are truly serious in this. Although the Lord protected me from an emergence of sin, and, as mentioned, I was deemed to be an irreproachable youth, I felt the seed of every sin within my heart, so that it was very important to me that I should be pious and god-fearing .

In the year 1812, I came to the *Gemeinde*, and was received into the same through Christian baptism. It was important to the then still living *Ältester* Peter Regier to direct and lead the youth to be baptized and the members of the *Gemeinde* away from the encourager of sin. Nevertheless, it is in no man's power to open the eyes and unlock the heart of someone. His admonitions were valued and dear to me. And I loved him as all Christian minded men of my time. My father-in-law, the father of my first wife, in particular, was a fine example of piety. As I had abandoned several of the Mennonite articles of faith, I thus rather kept away from one and the same, to the duties of living, which the word of God prescribes as important and holy. I recognized my sinful heart and held to the righteousness of God, but still I could not see deeply into the immensity of the merciful love of God, which is in Jesus Christ. I stood between Jesus and the gospel, withal praying: Lord let me repent, so I became repentant. Baptism made a blessed impression on me, and although the merit of my saviour was not truly part of me, I found in all stumbles and falls, big and small, a greater love and yearning for Him, with which I

felt blessed hours, appreciating, as in a great outpouring, the forgiveness of sin. Nevertheless, I had to again live through times when no little star of consolation shone, and it seemed to me as though the Lord's mercy was closed to me in contempt.

In September, 1814, I told my parents, one evening, that I had an inclination to get married, and asked them what they thought of this. Thereupon my father answered "all ready?" When he heard that I wanted to ask for the hand of Justina Toews, surviving daughter of Johann Toews of Schoensee, he had no objections, and so things got underway. Her father had died the year previously, nonetheless, thing remained as before until February, 1815. For a longer time, I had prayed to the Lord than if he should send me a wife, that she should be such a one who was pious and god-fearing, so that I would not depart from Him, and this request was graciously heard. On February 24, 1815, my bride and I were married by the *Lehrer* Bernhard Epp from Schoensee. And we lived fortunately and peacefully. Here, in my new situation, I had the opportunity and free time to pursue my wishes further. Here I found several books of my father-in-law, among which some were from the Brethern [*Brüdergemeinde*] and more of the same ilk. With all this, I prayed that the Lord might only allow me those writings, which would be of a blessing to me in a believing life. Now there arrived the new theological writings which fought and eradicated the wide-spread unbelief. In particular the "grey man" of Stilling, [and] missionary news which I eagerly seized, above all others and with which I could understand some of the country descriptions as well as well as presenting a somewhat clearer picture of the world's churchly and religious circumstances. Waltherdorf's songs in which Christ alone is so clearly expressed, were especially of blessing to me, so that it became more clearer to me, as the apostle says: there is no salvation and also no other name given to men, wherein they can be blessed, than the name of Jesus.

Up until the spring of 1817, I and my dear wife, together with her 2 brothers, Franz and Johann, worked her parent's farm. Her only half-brother Isaac had died not long before our wedding. Now her brother Franz got married and the value of the inheritance divided. Then they wanted us to buy the property. We agreed, we would be owing a lot, but on the day the transaction was closed, namely on my birthday, February 14, 1817, a beggar stood before our door and sang "God lives and does not die, that is my consolation and hope", etc. And then the very real thought came to me, with this, God's support, may it be done. In the presence of several good friends, we concluded the transaction, giving 9,333 *Thalers*, 10 silver *Groschen*, for the yard [home] with 2 *Huffen*, 22 ½ *Morgen* Kulmisch [a system of land measurement in Huben/huffen and Morgen—named after the city of Kulm/Culm] with very poor rear buildings and half of the live and non-living inventory, for which we together had 5,000 *Thalers*. The Lord showed us here also that He had not abandoned us, he who in things trusts in Him.

Now we constructed our own hearth, and worked our farm. My wife's younger brother, later my double brother-in-law, as he married my sister Catarina, stayed with us. In later years bought the property cheaply, at that time prices were not high so we could not put anything aside and went deeper into debt. Money was almost nowhere to be found, since the results of the war in 1807 and the French [army] passage of 1811-1812 where the latter was driven back by the Russians, were still severely felt throughout the whole region. With that many of our cattle died. In one year 3 horses and some cows, so that by and by we lost almost everything and we had to buy additional stock. But with all that we lived happily and at peace, sharing sorrow and joy, up to the year 1822.

The blessings which the Lord allowed us in our marriage, but which in part, He took away again, are noted in the front in the family register. We rejoiced in our 2 children, and prayed to the Lord that he might bring them up for heaven. Sometime we said to each other "such troubles the Lord has allowed to come upon us, but also much good". When my dear wife had a stroke, so that she was could not leave the room for 40 weeks, and was often very near death, so the water rose up to our souls. Then we learned to pray, that the Lord give us strength. When at last the Lord helped with many sided aid, I again had no money to pay Messieurs doctor and apothecary, as the grain prices were still low, barley at 8 and rye at 12 silver Groschen a *Scheffel*. I agreed to 6-7 and found no one to lend me money, until my neighbour offered me more than I wanted. Similar experiences I have often had.

When my wife, in May of 1824 was again confined and was delivered of twins and medical help was no longer of use. On June 2 (new style), as a result of the stroke, after I had to read to her the song "my saviour receives the children", and she, with an emotional soul cried out, "I a poor sinner, but the Lord on the mount of olives", to her Lord the friend, in faith, upon Him, who redeems the godless. Now I remained alone in the world with my 2 children, Johann and Justina. Then it so appeared to me as a heavy blow, but the Lord helped to bear it. Some months had passed after this hard loss, and after the pain had gone and I reflected on my circumstances and situation, I thought of getting married a 2nd time, and of seeking a helpmate. Now [how] to choose one. I thought of here and there, but nowhere did I find in my heart the right accord, since the main requirement, which I wished to find in the sought for person was principally a fear of God. There where I hoped to find this, I was naturally turned down because of very small weaknesses and errors. Now it was necessary to begin again and pray to the Lord. At twilight in the fields, I often went and fell on my knees before God and watered the ground with tears, and prayed that He would choose in my stead, and not to let me make a mistake. And behold, indescribably mercifully, He heard me. One afternoon, my dear father comes to me, and as he goes away, and I accompanied him, he asks me in which direction my eyes were directed. And I said I did not know. Then he made me aware of a girl whom I actually did not know, only that I had seen her once as a young girl 7 years previously. And immediately it came to me, she is the right one, this is the one the Lord has directed to you. Even that month, Regier, with the maiden Margaretha Regier from Trahlau, where her siblings farmed together, made the proposal for me. I received agreement on all sides, so that on November 19 were celebrated our engagement and were blessed in marriage on December 7, 1824 by the then young *Lehrer* Jacob Klassen, who is also my dear colleague here in the ministry in Russia. Now the Lord had brought me again a life's companion, for me, one no better could be found nor wished. She was unusually energetic and thrifty but without avarice, doing good to the poor and those in need, hospitable and friendly to everyone. Withal, she felt her sinful damnation and found forgiveness of the same in the blood of our saviour who died for us. Her unpreparedness often brought forth heavy sighs. I also did this in the presence of my dear wife, which later oppressed me, but which may the Lord not reckon against us. I lived happy years with her. I was still deeply sunk in debt, and I would have to pay out my brother-in-law, Johann Toews, who soon afterwards married my sister Catherina, his capital [from the inheritance], since he also wanted to start his own farm. He never reproached me, but I saw the how much he needed the money, so the 1,600 *Thalers* which my Margaretha had brought [into the marriage] would account for something of this, but it was not nearly enough. I did not know

how I should payout my brother-in law, when my neighbour, Johann Suckau, offered me money, which he had received unexpectedly. My dear children, I bring this to your attention, so that you can see how the dear Lord fatherly cared for your father.

Our children, particularly those of the first marriage, were growing up, and the schools were almost without exception so formed that Christian parents had reservations about trusting their children to the teachers, in that religion of reason was taught in the place of the gospels. That brought a certain young Mr. Conventz from Marienburg who belonged to the Heubuden *Gemeinde*, and who had been in England and also visited the Brethren [*Brüdergemeinde*], as well as others from the Heubuden *Gemeinde*, such as the *Lehrer* David Epp and Abraham Sudermann, and yet others, to the idea and then the conclusion that a school for Mennonite children should be built, wherein others also took part. In which I also decided to take part. Permission was sought from the government in Danzig in 1827, and a house near Rudloffershufen near Marienburg was leased. And we found a certain Friedrich Wilhelm Lange then at the state school at Graudenz, an outstanding talented teacher, who took over the school, and who because of his outstanding gifts and abilities by which he wished to unite the evangelical truths re salvation, soon found general approval. I also sent my son there. Some strong spoken and written expressions by our teacher, concerning a nationalist sermon heard by him, preached by a minister from another congregation at Heubuden, which was supported by the words of the holy scriptures, but which were not applied in the correct manner, were the reason that the school at Rudloffershufen came into such disrepute that division between friends was created. He who now still remained as a participant of the school or let his child attend, was seen as having broken with the Mennonite world, particularly as Lange was a Lutheran. At this time, the missionary societies in Germany began to blossom more and more, even in Danzig, one was brought into being. We, the participants of the school, assembled for this purpose, held missionary meetings and annual celebrations, which embittered the opponents of the school more and more. Through this, I became more and more acquainted with Christian preachers to whom the gospels were a heart-felt experience, and in their presence learned to appreciate that which was a rich benefit for my poor soul. I shall never forget them. In what concerned the school, it survived until the spring of 1837, that is almost 10 years, when enemies of the school, whose names we never learned, turned over the lease of the house to a poor man, with the promise of renewal?, very cheaply. We were not really united among ourselves, the founder of the school, Mr. Conventz, went to the joy of his Lord soon after the founding. David Epp, one of the strongest coworkers, wanted the teacher to fully resign, and then begin the school anew. I proposed that a circular be sent to our friends and well-wishers to ask for support. Some 700 *Thalers* were collected for this purpose. But where to build, and where to buy? At last, we agreed, in Broeske or Broeskerfeld. My dear brother-in-law, Johann Toews, who had bought my parents property, turned over the use of the land for the building of a school house. And so we came to have our [school]house which was a blessing to many, both young and old. On June 24, 1836, the same was consecrated. Mr. Roller was appointed teacher, whose work and prayer was richly blessed by the Lord. In the same autumn, after the school had been founded, we gathered to form a second missionary aid group, which joined the Danzig society. In the year 1831, March 15, my dear father died, and to fill his vacant position, an election for *Lehrer* was held on April 15. And the majority of votes fell upon me. From this time on, with great weakness, but also with the strength of grace, I preached the

gospel of the Lord. The development and writing of sermons happened in various ways. Often I used the sermons of others. I was never at ease in preaching without a [written] plan, although I dearly wished that the Lord would develop this in me. When Sunday approached and I was not finished with my sermon, my heart was pressured, and in my sorrow I fell before my Lord and prayed inwardly. Every time He heard me, even sometimes just only on Sunday morning. In later years, I had many bad headaches and nervous weaknesses, so that, as I had a supply of [already prepared] sermons, I had to use the sermons on an alternative basis, which completely wiped out the idea of being an industrious *Lehrer* of the *Gemeinde*. But I also had made the observation that one and the same sermon could be a blessing and taken in by some. From this time onwards, church attendance became more regular, whereas earlier it was at times very poor, so that the 2 or 3 listeners went home without a service.

For several years, a dead orthodoxy had become acceptable in our *Gemeinden*. On the other hand, for some time, nationalistic lectures had begun to take place here and there, to which B. Hermans handbook, German official persuasiveness, and more similar works from the last half of the prior century and the turn of the present century lent a hand. These lectures were heard and judged with joy by the generation growing up, and began to find an entry into modern Christendom. A Christendom without the Christ who was crucified for us, as presented in the hours of the services by outstanding [skilful] oratory.

As, in the course of my office, I became acquainted with many other brethren also holding [ministerial] office, indeed, even from all the *Gemeinden* in Prussia, I experienced many blessed hours with the same, and ever closer were forged the bonds of love among those who knew only the crucified Jesus Christ. And I feel now, here in Russia, no lack or loss, except the heartfelt brotherly intercourse with them, concerning that which is of worth to oneself.

Once I had a dream, the content of which was: that nothing was worth anything without the smallest part. Namely, I saw a wall built of larger and small stones, I marveled at the small stones, they spoke to me, why do you marvel at us, look at the big stones, but they [the big stones] said "yes indeed, but without you the wall could not exist". This was indeed only a dream, but for me a "*Noto Bene*". Some days previously, I had looked upon my dear brother with contempt in a certain context. This was discussed namely by the apostle in Corinthians I, chapter 12, but this was never so real as in this dream. May all believers, all those who are members of the body of Christ, even if they wear a uniform and belong to a religious group, whatever it be, not judge or even indeed condemn without love. Even if they cannot agree on confusing articles of faith, so let everyone keep their conviction without judging others in a loveless manner.

From the years of my youth, I had a constant attraction to Russia, which became stronger over the years. In the year 1804, my mother's half-brother Johann Klassen moved to the Molotschna along with many others. And over time I had a lively interchange of letters, and since that time became acquainted with Russia. My attraction to Russia grew stronger, so that in the years 1838-1839-1840, almost no day, even sometimes no hours passed, in which these thoughts left me. So that I often pleaded with the Lord to take away these thoughts, or, if it be His will, to show me the way and the route. I can remember that once I was walking on my land where 10 beautiful cows were moving up to the edge of the clover, nearby the horses lay deep in clover, in the nearby fields, the ears of the wonderful grain were stirring, between these fields stood the water in the ditches where the cattle drank, and as I was busy with inner

thoughts of Russia, I once thought: what more do you want, what's the matter with you? You will not find this in Russia, that I knew, and you are now almost free of all debts. Johann Cornies from the Molotschna, whose memory will not easily be forgotten, wrote to the *Ältesten* of the *Werder* that if deputies came to Russia and met with the ministry, then the doors of immigration would be opened anew. Thereupon, I travelled to all the *Ältesten* in the *Werder*, to ask them to help me promote this matter. They were not opposed to this but were not so much in favour, that something was done. Later, according to my requests, several persons from some of the *Gemeinden* came with data on their net worth, information which Mr. Cornies wanted. This I wrote to him along with an attachment for the ministry. This too did not succeed. The right time had not yet arrived. In the year 1847, I received the news that Cornies had died. I thought then, who will now take up our affair. But if it is God's will, he will find the way and means.

The year 1848 will remain historically noteworthy. Which for some brought a renewed motivation to move to Russia, in that the new constitution threatened our *Gemeinden*. Nevertheless, it remained only a wish, until May 23, 1850, where at Gerhard Penner's, the current *Ältester*, at Koselitzki, the *Ältesten* and *Lehrer* from the collective *Gemeinden* met because of problems with other *Gemeinden*, and where talks regarding a deputation to Russia would also be held. When the matter was brought forward, the same was generally acknowledged as my responsibility, with the aid of those men wanting to travel there. It was thought that there should be some who would move there if the result was one that was desired. And as at the time no one would make a decision re this, I and Claus Epp [senior] of Fürstenwerder were chosen for this. Money for the trip was to be the concern of those present.

Both of us, it was up to us, how and where we proceeded in our search, and as we wanted firstly to go to the Molotschna, we received letters of recommendation from *Ältester* Peter Froese in the name of the collected *Gemeinden*, which were to be presented to the chairman Phillip Wiebe, son-in-law of the deceased Johann Cornies. My dear wife, who was never against Russia, always said, when I spoke of over there, it is still too early, said, as I was about to travel to this meeting: dear husband, I would like it very much, if, when it comes to travelling, that someone else would undertake it, however, if no one else can be found, then travel in the name of the Lord. When I returned home with this news, she was quite happy. When the matter was discussed there, I spoke to the assembly: Dear brothers, if our mission is to be a blessed one and our search to have a blessed outcome, the Lord God must give his grace and blessing, and therefore I beg you messieurs, that you present this matter to the Lord in your prayers. Which they also promised to do.

Brother Claas Epp, whose character is in many respects the same as mine, in that however, with him, understanding and a firm will ruled everything, and he did not easily let go of an idea already formed. So that sometimes I had to beg for patience and mildness. [His] sole motivation was the emigration to Russia, and [the thought that] a storm in western Europe would break out, which would force the Mennonites to either take part or to leave with a small group. I, on the contrary, sometimes asked myself the question: if the king could assure us of leaving us another 100 years in respect of our religious freedom and, as well that the agricultural and economic relationships would be exactly as we desired, then an exodus would be very small. Because space for expansion was too confined and our young people would be

unable to marry. Whether or not the year 1848 also contributed to my decision, I will not contradict, above all, as said before, I felt an urge to go to Russia which I cannot explain.

Now Claas Epp and I travelled to the regional council in Marienburg, getting travel-passes in which the purpose of our trip was declared. Days later, we went to Danzig, and when we showed our passes to his excellency General Hankel, and asked for permission for our trip, he simply said no, with the observation that there was no more land in Russia for Mennonites, and that especially no travel-passes would be available for us, except in the case where there was an inheritance [in Russia] or to conclude other important business. Now it appeared that this affair was closed for us. Epp told me that he would take a droschke [a vehicle] to drive to St. Albrecht to visit his school comrade, and then we should drive home. I said I would look for the accountant [Kalkulator] Rindfleisch [a family name, = beef], with whom I had become acquainted at a missionary festival, and through whom the Riesen family got their travel-passes. He was very friendly and asked what brought me to see him. I showed him the passes and told him how things had gone with us. Why didn't you come to me first he said. Come around 4 o'clock to such and such a place. I will have spoken to a man there and let you know how things went. When we met at the designated place, he said: you must cancel these passes and get others where you only state that you want to visit friends in the Molotschna, whose names you must put down. And that was really the case. Then you have to get a certificate that you have no political connections or have taken part in any such, and that you should bring to me. Now we went again on another morning to Marienburg where we got everything and a day later to Danzig and by special envoy received the signed passes. And so no difficulties stood in our way of our trip. Now we would have made haste, but then [other] difficulties stood in our way, since the travelling carriage wasn't ready yet, we wanted to travel with another visitor, and it had to be good enough for this. The day of our departure only made an appearance on June 25. At about 6 o'clock I took leave of my loved ones. The last word of scripture we read was: throw your problems upon the Lord, He will look after you. My travelling companions, Claas Epp and the young Martin Klassen, our current schoolteacher, who was allowed to come as a helper, drove by. My beloved wife accompanied me to Marienburg to where my son Cornelius brought us. At Kolduwe [Koldau] we were at D. Rempels and met there the missionary Gützlaf on his way through, and whose picture I have, and had breakfast with him. Between 10-11 o'clock he preached in the [St.] George church on [the text] John 3, 1-15 on the rebirth and commented thereupon as appropriate, and then he went over to his Chinese and said how necessary workers [in the mission field] were over there [in China]. After the sermon, the carriage arrived with post horses. In front of the church were many dear friends and brethren, also from our region, to hear this remarkable man. We took leave, I from my beloved dear Margaretha and Cornelius, with many blessings, and then further on to Stuhm, Marienwerder, and to Graudenz for the night. The next day we arrived at the border city of Gollup [Gollup-Dobrzyn], and how astonished we were when we met the family Riesen here. The meeting was very pleasant on both sides. At that time, it was very difficult to cross the border, and handwritten paper and books were not allowed over the border. So we left the books in the care of the mayor [Mr. Bürgermeister]. Then we proceeded in pleasant company, and almost every day, we figured out when we should arrive in the Molotschna.

But all our calculations went for nought, as first one, then the other carriage needed to be repaired. The axle on our carriage broke twice. We had forgotten to say: As God wills and as

we live. On July 17 we arrived at Ekaterinoslav and came to [Heinrich] Thiessen's, who gave us a friendly welcome. On the 20th we arrived at Chortitza, where we drove to the old honourable *Ältester* Jacob Dyck's. Near him lived the district school teacher Heinrich Franz, one of the first students from our former school at Rudloffershufen [and who was later dismissed because of harsh treatment of his students]. On the 22nd, we drove to the graveyard and I found the grave of my wife's grandfather, and read on the stone epitaph, which the *Gemeinde* had just made, the following:

Here lie the remains of the honourable *Ältester* Cornelius Regier. He was born in the year 1746 at Heubuden in West Prussia. In the year 1794, called to south Russia regarding *Gemeinde* difficulties of his brothers in faith, and died on the 16th of the same year. Hiob [Job] 19: 25-27. On the back is written:

God has taken you away from strife and unrest
And transported you, according to your heart's desire, to his kingdom of peace
You have now truly blessedly escaped all want
Which often wounds our poor souls
You have completed you day's work in true faith
Which was required here, following the advice of God
Thus you were sent to Tabor, as we believe, where you will look upon God forever
With the heavenly host

Several sensations pierced my soul in this place. Coming back from there, we stopped at the building where the Privilegium of the Mennonites of his imperial majesty the emperor Paul rests in an airtight vault, where we looked at it. On the 27th, we went further by post [by means of post horses] to the Molotschna and on the 26th of July arrived at Orloff. The chairman of the [Agricultural] Association, Mr. Phillip Wiebe, gave us a friendly welcome. Since my cousin Johann Klassen, whom I had not seen since 1804, lived close by him, I took up my quarters with him. Particulars I will pass over, and will only observe that, as it now came out, the reason the Lord had so directed us that we should not have come here earlier, [was that] we would then have travelled to Odessa with the chairman to see the director, Baron v. Rusen [Rosen], regarding our affair. Now the news came that the same would appear in Ekaterinoslav in about 14 days, where we would be able to speak with him. And so we used the time to visit friends, but before this time had elapsed, his Excellency the state councillor and knight v Koeppen, who had arrived in the old colony, had heard from the chairman the news that Prussian Mennonite deputies had come, wishing to obtain land. And he told him not to let us travel further. Now experienced men told us, your affair is now settled. That is the man who can and will help you. On August 6, towards evening, his Excellency Tasharak came to the place of Johann Cornies, son of the then already deceased [Cornies], where we were even then visiting. After he had drunk tea with the chairman and Cornies, the others went out, and Epp and I went into his room, after having been greeted and received with friendly goodwill, we had to sit down on the sofa, and then he asked us what was our desire. At first our wishes were directed to what we heard of; that in the Crimea, the estate Tchoti was available for purchase, and whether we would be able to obtain permission for this. Thereupon he said, among other things: My dear sirs, if your endeavour to get permission to immigrate to Russia now is approved, then you should regard this as a [special] favour, since in the previous year, 200 families from Württemberg asked to immigrate and the ministry replied, in a few words: No! Russia wants no more immigrants. However, travel to the Crimea, look over the estate, and speak with the Germans you meet there. Investigate everything, so that you will not afterwards find yourselves disappointed. Because it is no little thing, to leave your homeland. You will find there, in one of the colonies, the old senior mayor

[Oberschulze] Günther, who is the intendant of the estate in agricultural relations, and doctor Betling in Simpfersopol, who has the overall intendency of the estate. I will gladly help you in everything, and if I should know of any man who can do more for you, I will draw your attention to him. Come to Simpfersopol on the 8th of September, as I will be arriving there then, and then we will discuss the matter further. In this conversation, one forgot that one was speaking with such a highly placed man. Later, going here and there, yet other questions were posed. He invited us to really try the grapes on his estate, which lay on the south coast, when we should come to the Crimea. On August 11 I spent the night at my in-law [Schwager], Jacob Warkentin, the Ältester who was deposed by the officials, and whose wife was my oldest niece [Susanna Klassen, b. 1778, daughter of the Johann Klassen who went to Russia in 1804, as already noted]. There, I heard and read of the strife in the *Gemeinde* over there and which was not yet resolved. On August the 18th, Claas Epp met with the college-member [not a school] and councillor Bode from Petersburg at D. Cornies'. He had advised us not to go to that hot and dry climate, but rather to the Volga, there was still very much land. That gave us the first idea to go to the Volga, but which was, as also at a later time, put aside. But from that time I couldn't get rid of it. With that, the time had come for us to go to the Crimea, and so we three drove there, with a hired driver and our carriage on August the 26th. On the 27th, old style, we were to be there. We found the old *Oberschulze* Günther in Zürichthal and drove from there to the 31 Werst distant estate Tschotti, where we stayed two nights. Here, the *Oberschulze* showed me the song "oh, what are we without Jesus, etc., etc.," in the song book lying on the table, with the remark: that is a beautiful song. And we were not strangers, though strangers. We visited and examined the estate in every direction. It comprises 7,887 Dessatines, whereof 300 are irrigated, and again as many which could be irrigated. The Karase flows straight through the same. Now we went via Karaubasar to Simpfersopol to take up quarters at Mr. Bakarius' in the "Golden Eagle" and to await his Excellency. We received his Excellency and the state councillor von Sterven and Muhlhausen, who live in the Salgier, and to whom we were also recommended by "father" Koeppen. They welcomed us in a very friendly manner, and hoped we would buy Tschotti. On September 8, we were in the church. The first song: Praise the Lord, our to the almighty king, etc. filled me with praise and thankfulness to the Lord, [and moved me] to tears. Pastor Kylius preached on Luke 19, 42-48. In the evening, the same visited us in our quarters. Finally on Sept. 10, His Excellency came and apologized for his lengthy absence. As it had been agreed upon, we gave him a written account of our search, and he promised to do everything possible for us. He gave us a written paper for his gardener, his estate lay on the south coast, and hoped that we would visit his vineyard and would eagerly eat the grapes, which then also happened. On the eleventh of Sept. 6:30 we drove off, at about 12 we arrived at the highest point, and then we descended so steeply for 2 ½ hours, so that for a few minutes I forgot my homesickness. On the 13th we did indeed eat the grapes which were given in such a friendly manner. And on the 14th, we stayed the night at Mr. Günther's and then on to Simpfersopol where we took our passes, and from there to the Molotschna. Here we paid yet some visits and then drove away on Sept 30 from Halbstadt, stopped at Chortitza, and arrived at the border on Nov. 5 with our own horses (newly purchased). As we entered the inn at Gollup, we again heard representations on politics. On the 9th of November, I arrived at my dear brother-in-law David Epp's. On the 10th of November, it was a Sunday, towards noon, I entered the room, having walked into the house from the rear, where my dear, dear wife was sitting at the table and reading. That was a welcome—but even better will it be once up there, where there will be no separation. At this time, in January, 1857—so long has this lain unfulfilled, now that I have long since buried my dear Margaretha, and now that she enjoys that in which she had so long believed,—at this time I remember very vividly that welcome. She hung on my neck, and I on hers, and my beloved children, one after the other did the same. We thanked the Lord for all his gracious protection and direction, how He led us with certainty up to this point and made everything so well. To Him be praise and thanks forever! Now things at home went along in the habitual manner. The further business relative to our immigration to Russia was now conducted via writing. In

this, the ministry, through "father" Koeppen, whom I gladly name thus, offered us three [possible] places for land: in the *Gouvernements* [provinces] of Vitebsk, Samara and Orenburg, and we decided for the Samara [option]. "Father" Koeppen wanted us to come to Petersburg, this could be concluded in the imperial council?, which [otherwise] would now require a long time. And so we decided to travel there in the autumn of 1851. We also already had the passes, when my wife became seriously ill. The Lord did not want me to travel. Now I had to find a partner for Claas Epp to replace me, and after many searches, I found the young Isaac Klassen from Gross Lichtenau. These [two] wanted to go there by post [ie. with post horses] after the autumn. They completed everything there, and returned with the conditions: that we could seek out crown land in the government [province], of Samara in the districts of Nikolajevsk and NovoUspensk, and in case such land was not what we wanted, we could privately buy other land. This was announced in all the *Gemeinden*, namely that any Mennonite who paid into the Russian consulate at Danzig the sum of 350 *Thalers* could come into or leave the country. At the beginning, there were few who wanted to go. Claas Epp, myself, and my cousin Franz Wall, let it be known that we wished to sell our land. Also M. Hamm, Orloff. We were joined by a few from the *Klein Werder*. On the 26th of January, we transferred our land to the purchaser, P. Dyck, and received 13,700 *Thalers*. And the inventory was sold later. Not that my wife was [only] in agreement, rather it was her will and urging. Now things were prepared, and later, leave was taken of so many friends and relatives bound in the Lord and in love, until such time as we would find ourselves together before the throne of the Lamb, with whose blood we were saved. Claas Epp wanted to travel together with Hamm, and we with Franz Wall, so that not too many of us would be together regarding purchase of feed.

When at last, the day, the 29th, appeared, and everything was ready for the departure, I first took the little booklet, [and] the triple lines, in hand. I looked for the verses designated for this day and read: be comforted and courageous, fear not and be not dismayed, the Lord God, even my God, will be with you and not take away his hand nor abandon you, until you have finished all the work for the service of the house of the Lord. Chronicles I: 29, 20 [actually this is from Chronicles I: 28, 20]. I will go in the strength of the Lord and will remember only your righteousness. Psalm 71, 16. Dear brethren, rejoice in the Lord. Philippians 3, 1. What I experienced in the reading of these verses, only the Lord knows. I sank before Him and asked Him to be with us with his grace and guide and lead us. At about 1 o'clock, the horses were harnessed. I gathered all of my family together in the room. I thanked the Lord for all the happiness and good events enjoyed in this house openly and aloud, as well as for the tears and pain that had been so beneficial for my heart [soul]. We begged for His further blessing, for the new inhabitants, and for his protection on our trip. After we said farewell, we drove off and came to Koselitzki for the night where we stayed the night at the dear *Ältester* Gerhard Penner's, and where still many friends dropped in. On the 30th of July, early in the morning, my dear son Johann came there, who lives in Marienwerder, with his wife. They, as well as some others, accompanied us to Marienburg where this separation also took place with many tears. And though it was indeed hard to leave these loved ones, yet we felt very well, my dear wife and I. In the Graudenz area, we stopped for a couple of days, and took leave of our dear brothers and sisters. On August the 5th, we crossed the border. Just 4 weeks before our departure, our dear daughter Margaretha died, which I forgot to mention, in the bloom of life, on the 15th of June. We would have gladly keep this girl, so full of hope, with us, but the Lord, in whom, she believed, whom she loved, had foreseen another voyage for her. Now our trip went well from place to place, and as Franz Wall, despite our agreement, had hurried forward, we were alone with our 3 wagons. My dear wife found herself quite well with the rapid progress, going into and out of the wagons without remaining still. Went considerable distances on foot, and with the girls picked forest flowers, and helped to quickly prepare the meals at our rest stops. In the towns she sometimes bought cherries, she was a great lover of them. On the 8th, we were in Drobin, where, since it was Sunday, we rested. Here, she and I wrote to Prussia. Here, one of our horses went lame. On the 11th of August, she experienced diarrhea, which changed to dysentery [the "*roten Ruhr*"], which became ever stronger. On

the 14th, we wanted very much get to Lubin, but we came to Kurhoff, a small town of 3 ½ thousand inhabitants, the greater part of whom are Jews. We drove to the hotel "Warschau" [Warsaw] where there were respectable quarters, according to Polish standards. My wife then said: look, my dear husband, how the Lord looks after me. I looked for a doctor, he came quickly, but spoke Polish. He ordered medicine and Klestier of Kraftmehl. I sent a young surgeon to [help] the doctor. Gladly would we have been in Lubin where I knew a doctor, a Kônigsberger by birth, since here in Kurhoff, in addition, there was cholera. But our ways are not God's ways, and his thoughts are not ours. We were very anxious. It cost me many tears and much pleading. No verse of consolation could come to me. I warned the children that prayer was needed. I begged the Lord that He should show us the healing purpose of this His chastisement, for which He had let this suffering come to us. From deeply within, I begged the Lord for the preservation of the life of my deeply beloved wife, but although I could recognise the truth of this, I could not accustom myself to: Thy will be done! I took out from the small filing box which my unforgettable brother-in-law Johann Toews gave to me as a remembrance, a page and read: We wander in faith, and not by sight. Corinthians 2: 5; 7. One may desire good things but one must not be disturbed if things don't go as one wills, as being strongly motivated by selfishness. Pure love remains quiet and even in sorrow is still. I felt this truth deeply and asked the Lord [for help] to surrender myself to His will. On the 16th it appeared that my dear wife was somewhat better and, as we really wanted to go further, and as our carriage had been comfortably arranged, we drove on and came to Lublin at 6 [o'clock] and stayed at the inn [Gasthof] at Skibilski. Now I looked for the military doctor Schlegel, with whom I was previously acquainted, but all was in vain. At about 10:30 in the evening, the Lord took away his precious lamb. She had fought to the end and won, and I remained with my 7 children who were with me, alone, a widower in a strange land. Much compassion was shown to me. I went to the [local] pastor and asked if we could leave the corpse in the church, and when he spoke with the doctor regarding this, he permitted this. With the help of Miss Aganetha, [?] Epp's daughter, and my children, dressed in white [we took her there] in a wagon. So we were able to place her in front of the altar. On the red cloth of the altar were the words, sewn in gold [thread]: God was in Christ, and reconciled as though by himself with the world. Sorrow, inner peace and worship came over me, when I [read] these words which were placed in front of my wife. Now the grave was prepared. On the 21st, I sent my servant Abraham Albrecht and 2 horses to get the funeral carriage and there, without my having wished it, the carriage and horses were draped in black cloth, even the driver had a black coat. We went into the church, the pastor strode without request before the altar, said a prayer, and read the 15th chapter of Corinthians 1. Then slowly, we went to the graveyard, which lies to the side on the north. By the coffin the pastor spoke on the words: Blessed are those who die in the Lord. He compared life to a journey, and related this to our trip. He admonished us to stand on guard and to prayer, comforted me and my children, and threw some earth onto the coffin with the words: Dust you are and shall return to dust. There my Margaretha rests, with whom I so happily lived for almost 28 years, under linden, acacia, oak and maple trees, surrounded by magnificent gravestones, and at her feet Mrs. Sophie Wilhelm Lange, a wife of the former missionary. The graveyard is surrounded by a massive wall. I ordered a simple gravestone, with Miss. Aganetha's [?] help, and the inscription:

Here rest Mararetha Wall, née Regier, born the 9th of April, 1799, [died] on the 19th of August, 1852, on the journey from Schönsee near Tiegenhof in West Prussia to the Molotschna.

1. Timothy 15, 16

This monument was ordered from Professor Wagner, as he later wrote me, and as other travellers passing through had also seen. The dear deceased had told her children: I would gladly travel with you, but so be it as God wills. Once, in Lublin, She said: Before the Lord I have no fear? [words are unreadable]. Another time, Christ's blood and justice, those are my jewels and dress of honour. May her ashes rest in peace. On the 20th, C Epp's younger son became ill, so that we hurried to get to Ostrog to our brethren [fellow Mennonites]. We arrived on the 24th, at 7 O'clock in the evening, at Carolswalde at

Ältester Benjamin Doerk's [Regier crossed off] and on the 30th, at about 9 o'clock, this sick person was also a corpse. On the 31st, this 7 ½ year old little lamb was buried in the Mennonite graveyard there. The *Gemeinde* here appears to be in needy circumstances. Probably, too much use is made of brandy. On the 3rd of September, my Cornelius became seriously ill. On the 5th, we came to Michalin, where, since it was Sunday, I hurried off to church. The brethren gave us a friendly welcome. It got better with Cornelius. Now I became seriously ill, but soon got better. Now we proceeded without any special breaks, so that we arrived at Chortitza at 2 o'clock on the 18th of September. On the 22nd, we reached Steinbach at Peter and Claas Schmidt's place. As the latter had written to me, I could live in his adjoining? house. Now, with the help of the Lord, our journey was, for the time being, at an end, and we went in to these exceptionally welcoming brothers and sisters.

Because it was recommended that we drive to the Crimea, since "father" Koeppen and his family from Petersburg were there on the south coast, Claas Epp, David Hamm, and the young Daniel Schmidt from Steinbach, I and my Cornelius drove there again on the 18th of October with our own horses. We were at "father" Koeppen's on the 15th, and were received with great condescension and friendliness. We had to stay 2 nights at his place. After everything concerning the search for and selection of land had been discussed, and we once again enjoyed the wonderful grapes, we returned and came to Orloff on the 26th. And we learned that my cousin, Franz Wall, who had to stay behind due to illness, was dead. The same was buried on the 29th of October. As the time of year was now advanced, the journey to the Volga to look for land, was put aside until the spring. I and my children had very suitable quarters and we could not forget how graciously the Lord had blessed us in these circumstances. We felt ourselves right at home. In between, we received a document from Petersburg in relation to our affairs. it was addressed to C Epp, who arranged and directed the matter, so that I only had to undersign my name, which up to then, I was glad to do.

On May 2nd, 1853, we journeyed, in God's name, to the Volga. C. Epp, with my current beloved fellow minister, David Hamm, came to us. We took with us a young person named Jacob Wiens, who spoke Russian well, to be our translator. Now we went to Berdjansk, to where my son Cornelius brought us. From there [we went] via Rostov, NovoSchask, over the Donetz and over the Don to Tzarizin [Volgograd] on the Volga, From here we made a detour to Sarepta. We liked it there and stayed 3 days. Here we were joined by the chairman [of the Agricultural Union — Molotschna] Philip Wiebe and his brother, as he wanted to be helpful in examining the land. On May the 18th we arrived at Saratov. On the 19th, we waited on his Excellency, the real lord, State Councillor von Froese. He welcomed us with great friendship. He told us that he had expected us for a long time. He wished that we would look for land in the NovoUsensk district, nevertheless, he hoped and desired that he would advise us in such a manner, that we would not complain about him, when he lay in his grave. On the 24th we were in Katerinenstadt. In Marienthal, his Excellency, the senior councillor, along with the surveyor, followed us, and now we drove through the crown lands. And on May the 31st, we returned to the crown farm. On June the 3rd, we drove through the Salt Track and in Waremburg, stopped [?] at Mr. Leonardt's, and his Excellency at Conrad Müller's. From here, we went on to Katherinenstadt [where] we stayed for the Ascension holidays. Here we heard both pastors, and I was so moved by pastor Thomas, it did my heart good. On the 12th we came to Samara. On the 13th, we waited on Mr. Kajemter [?] on the Palate. It appeared that we should not see the last land proposed by the ministry, but when Epp showed the Collegien Ralf P... [sic.] a document from Petersburg, everything was arranged. On the 15th we were in the village of Barma, and there land was inspected on the 15th and 16th. This was the primary planned goal of our trip and it is 500 Werst above Saratov. C Epp, from the beginning of this trip, was really firmly decided that no other land should be taken, because we had so many reports that it was very good and rich in water. As for me, I thought it important to see everything and then to decide, which was also the opinion of Mr. Wiebe. As we drove through that land, I prayed to the Lord, with tears in my eyes, as I have done for years, that he should chose for us, or rather much more, to direct our voices and

the authorities who had to decide, that which was best for us and our descendants. When we had looked over everything, C. Epp said: we want to take the land which the higher authorities preferred to give, nevertheless, we should elect [the land] between here and the Salt Track, and that the first [choice] would be located among the Russians, and would therefore make the administration more difficult. We asked the senior Councillor to drive through the Salt Track again with us, for which he gave us the former district head Mr. Gottlieb Rothairnel from Orlovskoi. When this had been done, Epp prepared a document for Petersburg, and we began our return journey. On the 7th, we looked over the heavy stallions at the Orlov stud farm. One of the stall cleaners said: the one costs 3,000 silver rubles, the other 18,000. On the 11th, we entered Charkov, where I heard the preaching of Mr. Landese [?]. Nothing is happier on a journey than to hear the truth from such a faithful young man. I also visited some acquaintances, and yet [other] acquaintances. On the 17th, with the help of the Lord, I was again with my dear children in Steinbach. Then I also wrote in my notebook: since, with the help of the Lord, I have happily completed this journey, if I should write down all the experiences of grace and displays of the love of my God, the booklet would be too full. There above, before his throne, to which blessing may He take and lead me, there I will speak my own praise and thankfulness. It was sometimes hard indeed, for my body as well as soul so that withal, I carried on further in a depressed state. But the Psalms were often of comfort and encouragement to me, when without them my spirit was inclined to a heaviness of heart. My heart was overjoyed, when I met with believing souls. Wherever the Lord shall lead us and wherever I also lay my body down, that remains in His hands. My dear Lord, lead me and my children, as well as our small group immigrating from Prussia, according to your direction. Let you be glorified in us, and grant us all a true belief in you, and finally accept our praise. Amen.

Now Claas Epp and his family made preparations for moving to the Volga after the autumn. But now it was also time for our small group, which had been spread out over the Molotschna, to organize our churchly relationships. Now an election for *Lehrer* [minister] among us was held by Bernhard Fast in the church at Orloff. And on August the 2nd, brother David Hamm was elected to office with 28 votes, one vote went to Claas Epp, and one to my son Cornelius. A total then, of 30 votes. As the matter was of some urgency, an election for *Ältester* [elder] was held on August the 9th, in which 1 vote went to David Hamm, and 26 to me. I had not thought of this when I was elected *Lehrer*. And also not later. On the 30th, I was confirmed in office by B. Fast. Therewith, the first train went to the Volga, which my younger colleague David Hamm joined. I stayed the winter in the Molotschna. In the Molotschna, as in Prussia, there was much left to be desired of our people, and not the least among us [the immigrating group]. Often, as the Lord indeed knows, I shed tears regarding our people. Often in Prussia, but especially in the Molotschna, I felt the wish and asked the Lord, that He might designate from among our people, men, driven by His spirit, to work for the blessing of our people, and that He might fill more and more with His spirit, those, in Prussia as in the Molotschna, whom He has called and sent out. So that the *Gemeinden* can be built up, and the remains of the dead might be brought to life. And when I thought and think of all the troubles among us, and then I look at myself and our small group, then I sink for shame and humility and cry out to my God and saviour: have mercy on us and be gracious to us sinners.

Should I write down all the experiences in the Molotschna and on our journey, as above all on my life's journey, many booklets would be produced. In addition, it also is my object here [only] to draw some sketches from my life and show how wisely the Lord has led me and how many times He has come to me soon in love and sorrow, to draw my heart, inclined to sin and filled with sin, to Him. Much, very much, yes almost the greater part, remains for the great beyond, where I will praise and thank Him in eternity for all His faithful love with which He has ever loved me.

Now then the Lord had placed me as the watchman over our little group of emigrants and immigrants. Those of our group who remained in the Molotschna, were scattered in different villages. Those who had gone on to the Volga, resided in Pirolnaja for the winter and looked after building timber for them and for us, about which they advised us and about much else. In the spring, those of us who

for them and for us, about which they advised us and about much else. In the spring, those of us who had stayed in the Molotschna, gathered now at time to discuss our setting off. I lived with my children in Steinbach where the friendly welcome remained up to our departure. Sunday, the 6TH of June, 1854, in the shed of P. Schmidt in Steinbach, which he had set up, and where there were 3 threshing floors next to each other, I held my departing sermon. Otherwise, the services were held in the school. A great throng of listeners had found their way there, in the nice weather. The Lord gave me the grace and blessing for the proclaiming of His word. In the afternoon, brother Janzen from Schardau gave a sermon. We had true blessed hours. We took leave of many dear brothers, until we would meet again before the throne of the Lord. Departing was difficult, but also easy, since true love never separates, even when one lives separated from one another.

On the 7th of June, after a tearful farewell, we set off, my brother-in-law Janzen, who with my sister and family had come to the Molotschna in the previous autumn, and Peter Peters from the Klein Werder. In total there were 11 wagons including ours. The trip proceeded slowly, since we had 11 steers, 13 cows, and 2 bulls, which we took along with us from there. But on this trip, the Lord in His wisdom, again sent us a heavy cross to bear. My youngest son Jacob, already at Reinkau?, began to suffer from a sickness which I had not known up to now. Joy, sadness, anger were the symptoms which alternated in an increasing measure in him. This sickness became ever worse, so that at times he became quite deranged. Often, it was so with him that we had to tie him down. His bowel movements were difficult. Then I felt as though, as they care to say, the water came up to my soul, as in the spa. [see a prior use of this simile, page 81 of original]. There only remained the true prophecy of the Lord as a comfort, and when I with trembling, believing hand could grasp the same. Words such as the following were a comfort to me:

Don't give up, in trouble and paths of sorrow
When gold is in the furnace, melting is near
The most beloved children, the Lord blesses the most
The way to heaven is the path through Golgatha
So I know even that God loves me
Even if He seems so far away
So I know yet how well He means
And even did my errors exceed
The hairs on my head, the grains of sand on the shore.
I even then know He forgives
The sins which my heart regrets
The father will not take me from His heart
That is now my comfort and light
He cannot hate those who are suffering
He cannot abandon those who search for Him
He punishes us because He loves us
He still remains our father, although saddened
...and so forth...

[note — no attempt has been made to rhyme the above lines as in the original]

My dear son Jacob, should you later once read this, think how wonderful ways of the Lord are in which He leads us, and hold fast to our dear Lord. So we arrived here at last, on the 22nd of July, at about 6 in the evening. The stall of Claas Epp was the only building to be seen here. The others had only tents? and sod huts [*semljansky*]. Now the purpose of our journey was fulfilled and I now had to oversee the office which was laid upon me by the Lord. I often then asked myself: who are you? Has not the Lord not

chosen the most difficult for you? Why has He not placed someone more talented in your position? But it was the good will of the Lord, and so I will ask no more, rather pray Him that I should be faithful in the lot entrusted to me. The rest is His affair. It is easy for Him to care for the weak and lowest. For several years now, the unspoken sighs of my heart are concentrated in the prayer: May the Lord take away from me that keeps me away from Him, and to give me through His grace, that which will bring me ever closer to Him. It is also this prayer which I daily bear in my heart for my *Gemeinde*, as also for my children. When I think of my life's path and all the sorrows and joys which I have experienced, I must then acknowledge:

The Lord has made all things good
And thought out all and everything
All honour be to God

On my 66th birthday, the 3rd/14th February, 1858.

[Poem— no attempt at rhyming, as per original, has been made]

[marginal note] For my children, in-laws, and grandchildren

That I might find the pearl
That my spirit lacks
That nothing should hold and bind me
In this poor world.
That every thing? I might overcome
That you have placed before me
Until Jesus without sin
Presents us to the Father.
That I have accepted
As the lodestar of my life.
Thus I leave the ignorant
Who gladly play games
And are not [re]born
Although Salem? shines before
So nothing even is lost
Of my sighs before the Lord
May my years
In the land above
Shield me here below
From the death of my spirit
You, whom the wonderful
Seek and find with wonder.
Speak: Even today will I
Discover His treasure.
Lord, help me to find this pearl
Which my spirit lacks
Henceforth let me not be bound
In this wicked world
Help me to overcome all
That you have placed before me
In my departure from sin
Into the heavenly host.

[after A. Knagg]

Three years have quickly flown by since I wrote the first lines of this booklet. The Lord who has from my childhood on led me so surely and in all situations of my life kept me safely, is, with His grace, every morning new to me. With His grace, much has been fought and won, and achieved. Happy and sad experiences have I had in my office, and the load is heavy upon my heart when I think that I will once have a reckoning to make regarding my husbandry. I know and feel how untalented I am for this. Yes, and to express this, I will make use of a stranger's words, which I recently had read, of a preacher in Odessa, in the "Sabbath Bell" of A.W. Krummacher, which are as though spoken entirely from my own heart. It is written:

Lord Jesus! Why have you entrusted me with such a high office? I feel myself unworthy of this, too bad. Oh, forgive my sins! Many will discover many faults in me. I know a great number of them, and how many more will you, my dear saviour see in me. Oh! Forgive them! Have I ever spoken that which was not a witness to your glory, may that be damned. Take away from me, as from a servant, all that which I might ever have said which was not in accordance with your word and truth.

These words I spoke to those dear brethren, my kindred spirits, with full conviction. When I acknowledge and feel my inability, the words that the Lord spoke to Paul then comfort me: Be content with my grace, because my strength is powerful to the weak. I rejoice that the Lord also enables the least [of us] to say this, and that it is he alone from whom every talent comes. Therefore the daily sighs of my heart contains the prayer: May the Lord remove from us all that which keeps us away from Him, and mercifully grant us that which draws us to Him, so that all worldliness may fall away from us, and that He might, with His grace, glorify himself through our *Gemeinde* and our settlement. As a particular grace, I must praise the fact that He has placed at my side three hard-working, dear brethren in office.

In my household situation, much has changed in three years, in which particularly, belongs the fact that three of my children have married, and in this regard, I am remaining more and more alone. From my native country comes one notice after another [saying] that this one or that one of my dear brethren has been called away from his lifework. And this fills me with a yearning, although I, the Lord be eternally thanked, have things very well here, and that nothing is lacking as for my bodily needs, for something better and more eternal. So that withal I wish to be freed and with Christ. Nevertheless, I would want to stay here sometime longer, should it please the Lord, and contribute something to His honour and to the building of our *Gemeinde*. I lay that which is necessary, if the Lord still calls me, in His hands.

What lies especially close to my heart is the earnest wish that my dear children might walk in the path of truth and that the Lord may graciously hear my prayer for this, which is proclaimed in the songs no. 140 and no. 142 in the Berliner songbook of 1846. Yes

My dear children

Here I will write this down and ask and admonish you, hold fast to the word of God and to prayer. Give yourselves up completely to your faithful saviour who loved us to His death and still loves us. He will, if you are sincerely in earnest, lead you here in this world, through everything happily. Do not oppose the witness of His spirit. In every small affair or situation, hurry to the footstool of Jesus Christ with a believing confidence, and let nothing make you shun His love. Love one another and forgive one another should complaints arise among you. Bless the Lord in earthly matters, so long as you are not attached to them. Should it please the Lord to send you trouble and sorrow in any manner, do not give up and do not displace your trust, which is a great harm, since His arm is strong and He can help us in every situation, even in such as seems impossible to men. Should the Lord present you with children, discipline and admonish them to adhere to the Lord, so that they follow the ways of the Lord, and do that which is right. I can think of no greater joy for you than that all should sometime find themselves at the right hand of the saviour. So that I could say: Lord here I am and the children that you have given me.

[Poem— no attempt has been made to rhyme as per the original]

May I once see standing at your right hand

My dear ones

That would be my supreme joy

My blessedness raise

What a sight! O my Jesus!

Should I find them all there

That they and I may honour you

In singing Hallelujah.

May none be left behind

O how I yearn for that

Save, o my Saviour, save

My loved ones, please do

But you will gladly save them

None should go astray

You will see that all are fortunate

Since that is your earnest will

That everyman only come

He who comes will be accepted

Yes, you accept sinners!

O I cannot cease

While a breath remains in me

To pray for mine own

O, that none will be missing!

Children, step-children, grandchildren

And whoever else is related to me

You my God, know who they are

O that yet my daily pleas

May not be in vain

Might I these deep wishes

See become fulfilled

What a thing for us will this be

To hold fast to you in eternity

And united jubilation

Would then rise up

When I think of such supreme joy

Oh, my heart then lives within me

And then my soul rejoices

O may I soon be with you!

From Christian Augustus Decker's "Saying of the heart"

I cannot easily find a more kindred spirit than this.

Throughout his poems, he has spoken that which, to me, puts into words and rhymes that which is close to my heart.

That which is a particular joy to me, is the rebirth of the Christian church in general and in particular instances, of which the various Christian newsletters give reports. Even our little fellowship has happiness of having one, since 1854, the "Mennonitischen Blätter" [the Mennonite pages]. It is a [i.e. as small as] mustard seed, but if the Lord send His grace and blessing, through this, much that is positive may be achieved for our *Gemeinde*. Our *Gemeinden* also need to be warned and freed from the

earlier nationalism and from the dead local "correct" faith without conviction. In our *Gemeinden*, a lamentable thoughtlessness has arisen. May yet more and more a gathering together and a unity take place among those who know that it is the Lord alone from whom the breath of a life giving spirit must come so that we stand united before Him, so that He might pour His spirit upon our people. And that He might prepare and send forth among us workers filled with His spirit.

1858, the 27th of October. For some weeks a heavy load has lain on my heart. Necessity requires that a church [building] should be built. Almost all of the *Gemeinde* are agreed in this, but the majority wish to have this in the middle of the church district, and also due to lesser costs, in Koeppenthal, and again some are entirely for Hahnsau here, on the former gegrojarkterten? square. This has caused conflict to arise, which is troubling. In addition, because of other circumstances between certain brethren, misunderstandings have arisen, which are hard to resolve. With that it happens that our more conscientious people cannot see why I cannot resolve to oppose our deputies, and yet I cannot see what fruitful results this would have achieved. On the contrary, I feel much more that this would have been damaging.

With all this, my dear saviour, I come to you, and leave all this upon your true, loving heart. You are indeed the lord master, yes, the supreme master, of your *Gemeinde*, and even when many of us wander in error and through blindness of their hearts, have not tasted and experienced in their hearts, the love you have for them, may you then draw them, and indeed all of us, gladly to you. And let them taste and partake of your grace, which you have earned for us through your bitter suffering and death. But you know, my dear saviour, of my weakness and clumsiness in leading and directing this, your *Gemeinde*, according to your wisdom. I am lacking in wisdom, determination, and speaking ability. In addition, I do not have enough love, patience, and mildness. How could it have pleased you to place me in this position. O my dear saviour, I would so gladly, yes so gladly, obey your will and benevolence, but not conceal my daily sighs and circumstances. Much, much have I delayed, and many things done in haste and done wrong. To whom should I go in this my need, as to you. To whom should I lament, except to you, who best understands what lies upon my heart. Who else can help except you. Thus I flee to you and pray that you might have mercy on us and with mercy accept my, and our, little household. And to lead us in all things according to your good will and for the best to us. Have you not from the beginning of our immigration been so gracious to us. Yes, exceeding all expectations you have rewarded us, which in was begged of you in a quiet place. May you be thanked! Thanks for this, your great grace and mercy. But now show this grace to us again, that you will lead and direct us with your eyes, so bad as we are, and where so much decay and sinfulness can to be found among us. You know of the temptations that beset us. You know how almost everyone searches for his own good, and not for that which comes from you. You know how we by nature are subject to death. But yet all this cannot hinder you further from lifting us out of the error, into which many fall without asking for you, through your true shepherd's care. O have mercy, have mercy on us and our settlement, in earthly, and especially in spiritual things. Save those who let themselves be saved and even should there be infection and temptation among many. Also gather a small group from among us in your praise and reward for your bitter pain. Let all temptations and trials which in your wisdom you have allowed to come to us, thereby serve to draw us nearer to you. O, my faithful merciful one, who has from childhood onwards led and directed me, you who often did not ignore my prayers and pleas, rather so often helped through my prayer and pleas, hear also this my plea, for the sake of your love, which I bring before you not because of my righteousness, rather because of your great mercy. You have not turned anyone away, who has come to you, as you have wandered on earth, and because you will even now not turn away anyone who comes to you. O hear thus the plea of your lowly servant and do not give up our little group to the caprice of the enemy [i.e. the devil]. Rather allow all trials to so conclude, that we can bear them, and that every conflict may result in a victory. Take these circumstances, which now fill us with worry, to

such a conclusion that through this we grow in spirituality. Be our judge, leader, and director in this affair, and grant that it may be our earnest endeavour to build a little temple in our hearts. But help us also to find a place and to build a house in brotherly love, where praise shall ring out and your holy gospel may be proclaimed. God the father, who has created us, God the son, who has saved us, and God the Holy Ghost, who makes us sacred and favours us with outspoken lamentations. You our threefold God, hear this plea, for the sake of your love of us sinners, and do not ignore the lament of this your servant who relies on you. Your most holy name be praised and glorified in all eternity. Amen, hallelujah. Amen.

On the same day, at a different hour.

Yet something else, my dear God and saviour! You know this, that we, in general, are not happy with our deputy Claas Epp, and not without reason. You know of my position regarding him, and deeply feel the responsibility to openly, with love and mildness, but also with a sacred seriousness, approach him. But you also know that he rejects the least remark in respect of his injustice, and that he holds his opinion as correct. O my faithful saviour, I do not know or understand how to do this, you know of my bewilderment, and thus I pray and plead that you will tell him that which I should say to him, but which I cannot. If you cannot convince him, I do not know who else can. Show him mercy, and open his eyes, so that he may lie down at your feet as a poor sinner, and be so overpowered with your love, that he and we will praise your grace. Have you not also shed your blood for him? Love him as you would anyone else. As far as I am concerned, do not take away anything of his worth. That injustice which he has done me, and still does, do not reckon against him. Let also, in as much as the tension in our *Gemeinde* grows ever stronger in regard to him, the brethren follow my council and forgive him, so that to our greater good, you may direct him, so that then we can move on. O may it soon come to this, that we can lead our lives in peace and quiet with all the blessing and glory of God, since that is good and shows good-will to us. Help us in this, and lead Claas Epp in this as well. Lord our God and saviour I lay us and him against the loving heart of Jesus, and pray, plea and sigh that you might make all, all well again, for the love of you.

11th of September, 1859. Since the time I began to write down here the above, still many difficult battles and many conflicts remain and therefore much to lament and struggle with and pray about. In that which concerns me, as difficult as often setbacks were to me, they were healing and useful to me. Since I have a diseased heart by nature, and have much in need of improvement, so the dear Lord cannot do otherwise, according to His great mercy, than to throw me into troubles from time to time. And so I hope again that this year's failed harvest, as a result of which many have fallen into need and difficult circumstances, may also serve to this purpose. Yes, my dear Lord, whatever you bring to us, whomever you bless, and whomever you strike down, serve to draw us closer to you, and that you achieve your purpose with us, so that we be and remain yours forever. Amen.

20th of September, 1859. As I have reasons to honour and praise the Lord for His mercy every day, so have I also today, when the newly-elected *Lehrer* of our *Gemeinde*, Johann Epp gave his introductory sermon. How I rejoiced when he preached of the crucified Jesus Christ. May the spirit of God more and more fulfill him and us. I with all my brethren in office preach the saviour sent here because of our sins. O, how like an inexpressible grace to know this and to experience in our hearts that in our saviour we have one to make us blessed. And so, as this young person said, it is not man who is reconciled to God, but the offended God who has reconciled himself with man or the world! If the Lord grants this my young brother in office continued life without sin and with grace, then I can in this respect, lay myself down with joy, that the *Gemeinde* is well looked after. May the Lord give us all the grace and strength to watch and pray, so that we do not fall into decay and temptation, and that the devil may not in any wise bring any of us to the fall. Because his weapons are of great strength and cunning, which nothing on earth can equal.

10th of January, 1860. I have experienced blessed days. On the 6th of this month, my dear brother in office, Christian Hamm preached at the celebration of the Epiphany according to the appropriate gospel, wherein he pointed out the necessity of spreading the gospel among the heathen, and the Lord will not let this strong witness to the truth be without blessing. Today, the first Sunday after the celebration, when my dear brother in office Horn preached on the raising of children, with the relevant gospel reference, I heartily rejoiced. May the Lord more and more equip my brethren in office, so that a truly great number of souls can be won for the Lord. May He keep the more talented in humility and send the less talented more grace, so that he might show true faithfulness. As far as I am concerned, I stand in great weakness in my office with much fear and trembling, and see and feel daily how many mistakes I make, and how far away I am to what I should be. In this respect, my consolation is that the Lord will bless the thing, and that His word is not tied to men nor to shining talents. His name be praised in all eternity. Amen.

Today in the afternoon we had our first missionary study hour, in the school at Hahnsau. The Lord be praised who has given us the grace and willingness to begin this work. May He bless it, and spread this further among our descendants. When I think back on how like a mustard seed [i.e. small] this endeavour was in Danzig in the year 1825, and how slowly the building of this [project] developed, then I now rejoice. In the Werder also, where earlier, people delayed, they have missionary study hours for this purpose. Nonetheless, this high goal, among those that call themselves Christians, is not attended to by the very greater majority, and those that are in favour of this, as to the number of souls, this is as a drop of water in a bucket. O my dear children, step-children, and grand-children, pray the Lord for the real importance to you [of this matter], and that He make it clear in your heart that which He expects from you here at the foot of the cross. Ask Him that the blood of His reconciliation not be lost or shed in vain, rather that you might be a recompense for His suffering. And whenever this highest of gifts and grace is partaken [by you], help in the work to bring the gospel to distant peoples. Yes, pray deeply from your heart, thy kingdom come, and give of your wealth from the heart, he who has much should give richly and with a faithful heart. It is especially important to give in faith, do not think of that which you bring before the Lord and His affairs is lost, He can return this twofold and tenfold and will do so if He deems it good and for [your] well-being. He however who gives thinking the Lord will return it twofold, has an illegitimate intention. He should keep his Rubles and Kopecks in his pocket, since God loves one who gives with joy. He who however believes in the Lord Jesus from the heart, his belief will not remain unfruitful.

The 21st of October, 1860. That the Lord's ways are not our ways and that His thoughts are not ours, I have, together with my dear ones, again experienced with deep humility in the previous month. In this summer, my oldest son Johann, who up to then still lived in Prussia in Mierauerwalde, wished to immigrate to us here with his dear wife and family. On the 28th of June, old style, he and his loved ones, along with 2 [other] families from there, set off on the journey here. We looked forward to his arrival, and calculated the time when he might arrive, but when 8 weeks passed by, we feared that an illness or other obstacle on the way might have arisen. We prayed the Lord to protect and direct the travellers. And in particular, I requested the Lord to treat us, according to his goodwill, I so that all might be for the best to us, after the arrival of my children. I had planned that my son should take over my farm, and I only wished to keep a small room for myself. On the 7th of September, I received a letter from him from Trames?, saying that his dear wife was seriously ill, and also her little children already earlier had been sick, which delayed the trip. On the 12th of September, he arrived cheerfully and in good health, they had buried their little son Kornelius. After 8 years, it was a joyful reunion! We thanked the Lord for His goodwill, in bringing us together, but there is so much that we will only be able to learn when we are there above, as to why things occurred as they did. On the other morning he had an attack of cholera, and at 1 ½ o'clock in the afternoon, he went to his rest, amidst the laments and prayers of those standing by. He prayed earlier that the Lord might cancel his sins. That was a heavy blow to us, to my

fatherly heart, and especially to his dear wife. The Lord, may He be praised and thanked, strengthened us mightily through this loss, though also depressed, even to bear this with patience. In the morning of September the 16th, he was buried in my grave, the grave which I had sometimes said should be mine. The corpse was not changed in the least, which otherwise is the case with this sickness. The coffin and suit were as usual, the fact that we brought him so soon to his resting place, we did to avoid blame. In the afternoon, 22 families came together, and my dear brother in office, D. Hamm held the burial service. Let the Lord admonish us in this event to wakefulness and prayer, and so remain blessed. That is my prayer and plea in all joyful and sad experiences that the Lord permits, in His wisdom, to come to me and my dear loved ones. And so I may hope confidently, that He will carry out everything better in the future, even if it may be otherwise than I would wish. He has never overlooked anything, which may come to a good end. My dear daughter-in-law says that her husband called out to her several times, on the trip, and particularly when she lay so seriously ill, the verse: God knows all the ways, and He lacks not the means. His doings are pure blessings, His path is pure light, no one can hinder His work, His labours may not rest, when He tells anything to His children, that will He accomplish.

Here ends the diary [journal] of my blessed deceased grandfather, Johann Wall. He went home to the joy of his Lord on the 10th of December, 1860, to there pursue his wish to praise and thank the Lord in eternity. May his ashes rest in peace. He was buried in the churchyard at Hahnsau.

Part II
Of our family since 1878
residing in
Koeppenthal
[written by Johann Janzen (b. 1858)]

He will clean and purify the children of Levi, as gold and silver. Mat. 3,3 [? biblical reference is not clear]

Do not give up in pain and paths of sorrow
When gold is in the furnace, melting is near
The Lord will purify the children He loves best
The way to heaven is over Golgotha
My purifier, take me away, make me more faithful through trials
And many with me too! Happy he who reaches the goal at last.

December 5, 1879. As I have not entered anything in this book, I will at least write the following. It was not forbidden to me to entrust my thoughts to this book, and thus it has been so long until I thought to write down the events of October the 31st, 1879. In the early hours of October the 31st, 1879, about one o'clock, a man broke into the house, through the window, of Kornelius Froese, living here, just as he and his wife were sleeping in the middle room. Awoken, they leaped out of bed, and ran to the big room [i.e. the best, the living room]. The wife was first struck several times by the murderer near the door and the closet which stood in the big room. At last he caught her in the watch house. Then Froese arrived and held him tightly, but the murderer was a younger, stronger fellow, who freed himself. He hacked Froese several times in the chin, cut off his ear, in brief, gave him as well as his wife, several wounds. Then a son arrived, the younger, and sprang before him. Then the murderer sprang at him and hacked away at him in many places. Just as he hacked at Jacob, the other son, Kornelius, came there with a light, saw that someone was beating his brother, but with what, he could not see as the light went out at the door. Then he ran, lit a lamp together with the maid, but then the murderer approached him, they ran out of the room, and held the door of the little room shut. Then the murderer, who had done all that in the

dark until then, lit a light, and went to see if all were dead. They feared he [the murderer] would come at them from the back, left the door free, ran out and held the hall door shut which led from the rear house to the hall. This was torn open by the murderer, as the belt to which they held gave way. There they both stood, Kornelius ran to the neighbour Tjarth, the maid remained standing and cried out: O, Lord Jesus, Feodor! Then he gave her a blow which almost separated the top of her head from the chin and throat. Then he ran after Kornelius, who had already been seen by Tjarth, who broke a window and called for help urgently. But until someone came out, the latter ran after Kornelius in the yard and threw an axe at him, hitting him once in the chest and once in the back. Then Tjart ran to Penner's place and to the tailor Janzen's, who came to us and awakened us. It was frightful how they lay there in blood. Mrs. Froese was even that night taken in to Tjarth's. We thought that she would not live to morning. The doctor also thought she would only live for two days at the most. And she still lives, through the grace of God, as well as Kornelius. The murderer was taken by two Setniki behind Djakovky, five days after this attack. He had thought there was much money, but took nothing because he feared Kornelius would call out to people there. He also thought that someone would recognize him, which was not the case. But other things led to his being suspected. The blows were all hacked with the left hand, and they knew Feodor was left-handed, since he had served at their place the previous winter, along with two other men in the brickyard. Many had also seen him with the axe, which he had stolen from Bestvater. In addition, he also had thrown away a tin flask, smelling of brandy, which, as it came to light on the same day, he, Feodor, had had filled in the tavern? in Weskresensky. He admitted everything. The hearing was held at our place.

He was only 19 years old and his name was Feodor Alexandrova Tremjakov. He was in Djakovky in the same quarter as the local *Setnik*, and as it was told to the latter, what type of person it was [that was wanted], he already recognized him, and as there was a reward announced of 23 Rubles for those who captured him, this helped to motivate him. This man and another then grabbed him. So it must have occurred, according to the wonderful direction of God, that he did not escape the arm of justice. To describe everything further in detail would take us too far way. Then the verse occurred to me, which I soon thereafter read in my remembrance case/book:

His council is wonderful
God directs in joy and pain
And intends, o man, your good
Each time than from the heart
His dark path of blessing
Appears as a manifold wonder
And thus He leads you
On in the most majestic way

His council is wonderful
He will rule as a saviour
The child should go not alone
The father will lead him
The child easily overlooks this
Thus is led by the father's hand
He can overlook nothing
That leads to the fatherland

On the 12th of December, 1879, I began my service in Margenthau [Margenau??] as assistant district secretary [*Kreisschreibergehilfe*]. In January, I received news from home that my brother [step-brother] Johann and my mother were seriously ill. At last, on the 21st of February, I decided to drive

home. On the 22nd of February, I arrived home. but what a picture I saw. Johann could hardly walk and mother lay in bed. She had Schleim fever. At noon on the 20th, a nervous fever also had set in. From Monday the 25th of February to February the 28th, she was delirious. In the morning, between 7 and 8 o'clock, the Lord freed her from her suffering.

May her ashes rest in peace.

On Thursday, the 19th of June, 1880, my dear brother Jacob came home to Margenthau in the morning, for a visit, together with J. Tjarth, and M. Ekkert, and J. Thiessen. Holy Communion [*Abendmahl*] was to take place on June the 22nd. That was the reason he came home, and complained somewhat regard a headache. On the 22nd, we went to attend Holy Communion, but he couldn't remain in church until the service ended. He complained about pains in his head and feet. In the afternoon he laid down and died, after 10 days of deep suffering, but which he bore patiently, and much prayer to his saviour, who also died for him on the cross. In the evening of July 1st, he ate some fruit soup, which tasted rather good. On the whole, he felt better. He had strong nose bleeding, after which the heat in his head let up. At about 4 o'clock in the morning, Martin Ekkert went home. Namely, he had watched the night with Jacob and he already saw that things were going downhill with my brother Jacob, and awoke me. I went to Kopper's and brought our cousin Gerhard, who had always been very close to him. At 5 o'clock in the morning, on July 2/14, without a particular struggle, he passed away quietly, and we confidently hope, in a blessed state. Saturday, the 5th of July, his earthly remains were buried. Cornelius Wall and Gerhard Kopper [and families] were not present, as they had already moved to Taschkent [Central Asia].