



To Children's Children (Psalm 103:17): A Generational Search

by Alan Peters

On January 6, 1860, eighteen men in South Russia issued a declaration establishing a new Mennonite denomination. In preparation for the Sesquicentennial Anniversary of the M.B. Church (2010), the Genealogical Project Committee of the CMHS is searching for living grandchildren of those eighteen founders.

Thus far the committee has identified two living grandchildren. Marie (Suderman) Hein, born September 11, 1899, in Isabella, Oklahoma, is the granddaughter of Jacob P. Becker. She is the daughter of Becker's daughter, Margaret (Becker) Suderman. Henry Hodel, of Santa Rosa, California, is also Becker's grandchild. Born May 10, 1911, in Orienta, Oklahoma, he is the son of Helena (Becker) Hodel.

Following are the eighteen founders along with their GRANDMA number, if known. Anyone with information on the founders or their descendants, please contact the Genealogical Project Committee. (See page 8 for contacts).



Johann Claassen (top) and Jacob Peter Becker (bottom), pictured with wife Margaretha Wiens Becker, were two of the original 18 founders of the Mennonite Brethren Church in South Russia in 1860. (Photos courtesy of the Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies.)

Jacob P. Becker (#2517), born 25 July 1828, Karolswalde, Volhynia. In 1860, he was registered in Rudnerweide, Molotschna. He was the first elected ministering teacher in the M.B. Church.

Johann Claassen (#12411), born 27 July 1820, Orloffersfelde, West Prussia. An early M.B. lay leader, he represented the interests of the church before the Tzarist government in St. Petersburg.

Abraham Cornelison (#16147), born 11 August 1826, Grossweide, Molotschna. As the school teacher in Elisabeththal, Molotschna in 1860, he wrote the document establishing the church. He migrated to Hillsboro, Kansas, where he was elder of the Ebenfeld M.B. Church.

Heinrich Huebert (#38547), born 26 November 1810, Muensterberg, Molotschna. He was the first elected elder of the M.B. Church. He died in Russia, but one son, Klaas Hiebert, migrated to the U.S.

Daniel Hoppe (#413729), born about 1823, Prussia. He migrated to Russia in 1854, and was registered in Schar dau, Molotschna in 1860.

Dietrich Klaassen (#3422), born about 1808 in Prussia. He was the older brother of Johann Claassen (founder), and registered in Mariental, Molotschna in 1860.

Franz Klaassen (#2311), birthdate unknown. He was the oldest of the founders, born before 1808. He was registered in Elisabeththal, Molotschna in 1860. As the oldest, he laid on hands at the ordination of the first church officials. He was the step-father of Abraham and Cornelius Wiens (other founders), and of Mrs. Jacob P. Becker (also a founder).

Martin Klassen (possibly #5605). There were a number of Martin Klassen in the

Molotschna Colony. The Martin Klassen (#5605), born 23 February 1822, is one possibility.

Isaak Koop (#56574), born 1818. He was registered in Elisabeththal, Molotschna in 1860.

Abraham Peters (possibly #62380), possibly born about 1810. He is registered at Ladekop, Molotschna in 1860, and was elected the first deacon of the M.B. Church.

Isaak Regehr (possibly #52811), possibly born 1830. He was registered at Pastwa, Molotschna in 1860. This is most likely Isaak Regier (#52811), the brother of Abraham Regier, an early member who married Jacob P. Becker's sister Maria.

Peter Stobbe (possibly #111491), born 14 December 1829, Schar dau, Molotschna. If correctly identified, he was registered in Ladekopp in 1860.

August Strauss. He was registered in Schar dau, Molotschna in 1860.

Andreas Voth. He was registered in Pastwa, Molotschna in 1860.

Jakob Wall. He was registered in Pastwa, Molotschna in 1860. There are a number of possible "Jakob Walls".

Abraham Wiens (#2306), born 26 April 1830, Elisabeththal, Molotschna. Step-son of Franz Klaassen, brother of Cornelius Wiens, brother-in-law of Jacob P. Becker (founders).

Abraham Wiens. This Abraham Wiens was registered in Lichtfelde, Molotschna in 1860.

Cornelius Wiens. (#2305), born 2 December 1827, Elisabeththal, Molotschna. He was the brother of Abraham Wiens (listed above). He migrated to the U.S. in 1878, and lived in Oklahoma.