



Where in the World is Deutsch Kazun?

Many Mennonites in California have family roots in the area surrounding a village in Poland that once was called "Deutsch Kazun" or sometimes "Deutsch Kasan." This village still exists, but is now named "Nowy Kazun." It is located about 20 kilometers northwest of Warsaw just off the major highway out of the city before it crosses the Vistula River.

The Mennonite community there dates back to 1776, but the Mennonite church records (really the Polish civil records maintained by the elder of the Mennonite church) date back to 1832. A number of volumes of these civil records have been microfilmed by the LDS Family History Library and are available at their library in Salt Lake City. The microfilm may be ordered at any local LDS Family History Center. Unfortunately, none of these microfilms are currently available at the Center for M.B. Studies in Fresno.

The most common family names contained in the church records are: Balzer, Bartel, Ewert, Janz, Kerber (Karber), Kliewer, Kopper, Penner, Schroeder, and Stobbe. Other names appear, but with less frequency.

Members of this church interacted regularly with members of the nearest Mennonite church located at Deutsch Wymyschle (today called Nowy Wimisle) and there were many inter-marriages between these two congregations. An extract of the Deutsch Wymyschle church records is available at the Center for Mennonite Brethren

Studies in Fresno, as a supplement to the Holmfield (Manitoba) Mennonite Brethren church records.

While most of the Deutsch Wymyschle church records are already in the GRANDMA database, the Deutsch Kazun records are only recently being entered. As a result, many of the records regarding Deutsch Kazun families do not appear in the latest available version of GRANDMA (GRANDMA 5). If you do not find information in GRANDMA regarding your Kazun roots, contact Alan Peters for further information on securing data. Otherwise, you will need to wait for the next version of GRANDMA to be released. Those who use the online version of GRANDMA will begin to see more and more information regarding Deutsch Kazun families as the data entry process proceeds.

The Mennonite church at Deutsch Kazun, like most of the Polish Mennonite congregations, suffered greatly during and after World War II. Because the membership was largely viewed as ethnic German, members were considered as "the enemy" during and after the war. Rudolf Bartel, a church elder, was shot in 1939, along with seven other members of the church. All other male members of the church were imprisoned until freed by the invading German army. The survivors fled to the West and today there are no Mennonites in the area.

The most recent church building was built in 1892, and has been visited by many tour groups since the war. A 2007 tour group reported that the church building, which had been used as a private residence in recent years, no longer existed.



*The Deutsch Kazun Church near Warsaw, Poland.
Photo credit: Peter J. Klassen.*