

Gleanings from the 1835 Molotschna Census: Herman Friesen

By Henry Fast

Among the North American immigrants of the 1870s we find a number of families who seem to have lost their ancestral link in the Mennonite family tree. One of these was Heinrich Delesky Friesen (1827-1877) who settled in the Hochstadt district of the East Reserve in 1877. According to letters in the *Mennonitische Rundschau*, Heinrich had been a painter and dyer of cotton cloth in a number of villages in the Molotschna Colony and may never have been the owner of a farm in Russia. His early death in 1877 also contributed to the slow economic growth of the remaining family members. (see Jacob S. Friesen - *Preservings*, July, 1993)

Heinrich's sons, Gerhard, Heinrich and Jacob were prolific correspondents to the MR and showed a keen interest in the extended Friesen family. On numerous occasions they inquire as to the health and whereabouts of their uncles, Herman, Johann and Jacob and their families who remained in Russia. They were even aware of their father's uncle, Gerhard Friesen, who lived in Grossweide. Yet in spite of all these letters, they never mention their own grandfather's name.

It was, however, the Friesen brothers' casual mention of their uncles in the MR letters that helped to identify the family in the 1835 Census. The records of the Schoenau village lists a Herman Herman Friesen (lot #31) who had immigrated to Russia in 1816. The family is listed as follows:

Name	Age (1835)
Herman Herman Friesen	Died in 1828
Son Herman	18
Son Johan	16
Son Jacob	14
Son Heinrich (1827-1877)	8
Daughter Maria	12
Brother Johann Herman Friesen	Died in 1829

The Census, however, makes no mention of Herman Herman Friesen's wife Maria (Delesky). This is strange, since in a letter to the MR, May 10, 1893, H.S. Friesen writes that his grandmother, nee Delesky, died in February 1877. Did she remarry after her husband's death in 1828 and leave her young family to fend for themselves? This would seem very unusual. Maybe, someone can offer an explanation for the omission of Maria's name from the Census list.

In 1818, three of Herman Herman Friesen's brothers arrived in Russia and a year

later settled in the village of Margenau, on lot # 37. The family unit is listed as follows:

Name	Age (1835)
Jacob Herman Friesen	27
Mother Helena	61
Wife Sara	25
Daughter Anna	3
Daughter Helena	1
Durk Herman Friesen	25
Wife Helena	24
Daughter Helena	1/2
Gerhard Herman Friesen	21
Wife Helena	24

Gerhard Herman Friesen died on November 5, 1893 in Grossweide at the age of 81 years, 2 months. (MR, Jan. 17, 1894)

It seems that only Heinrich Delesky Friesen of this family clan immigrated to North America. I would appreciate any further information on this family.

Update on Vollwerk Cemetery

By Linda Buhler

The Peters Memorial Committee has once again had their ambitious goal thwarted as this year's heavy rains hampered efforts to complete Phase II of their restoration project at the Vollwerk Cemetery in Mitchell.

Despite wet soil conditions which made the physical work at the site an impossibility, the committee has nevertheless continued with their vision. This included the delivery of the monument which is to be erected at the gravesite of Oberschulze Jakob Peters. The selection of a concrete marker was made following the advise of the Heritage Grants Advisory Council to choose a monument in keeping with the nature of the historic markers already present at the Cemetery (in particular those of the Oberschulze's two sons). The monument which stands close to six feet tall is complete with an 18" x 24" bronze plaque honoring this humble Mennonite leader.

The grant from Heritage Grants Advisory Council for Phase II of this project has already been approved. This, together with donated funds, will cover any further restoration of existing historic tombstones, continued restoration of the cemetery site, the erection of a fence and/or the planting of evergreens around the perimeter, and subsequent landscaping.

Once conditions improve, cement piers will be poured to provide a proper base for the concrete monument. The Hanover Municipality will be providing an approach on the east side of the cemetery (from

Reichenbach Road) making it more accessible once it is officially declared and listed as a Historical Site.

The Committee is further planning an identification marker for the Vollwerk Cemetery which would include a list of all known graves (marked and unmarked). This will be made possible through its fund-raising efforts and its subsequent generous financial support which the Committee wishes to recognize.

Dedication and official unveiling of the Oberschulze Monument and a large Peters family reunion is tentatively slated for next summer.



The gravesite of Oberschulze Jakob Peters (1813-1884). (Photo courtesy Mrs. Tina Peters, Chairperson of the Committee)

Children of Heinrich D. Friesen



Left to right: Jacob S. Friesen, Mrs. Isaac R. Loewen, nee Elizabeth S. Friesen, Winkler, Gerhard S. Friesen, grandfather of Archie Penner. Photo taken in Virden, Manitoba, at the farm of Gerhard S. Friesen approximately 1920. (Photo courtesy Mrs. Gertrude Friesen, Steinbach, Manitoba)