

Our Ancestors

The Ancestors of David A & Rosa M Voth Toews

By Arrel D Toews

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2025
toews

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This document is a direct continuation of [Our Mennonite Heritage and Early Family History](#), also on this website. It contains information on the ancestors of our family, the [David A and Rosa M Voth Toews Family](#). I have assembled this document mostly for myself and my immediate and extended family, but also hope others might be interested as well. I thought it the best way to learn what I should already know about our ancestors who have gone before us. Special thanks to my brother [Myron](#) for invaluable genealogical data, photos, and brotherly advice - this document would not be possible without his gracious help and advice. This is his work - and his family too!

Disclaimer: This is **NOT** an academic research document - I have included few formal references besides [weblinks](#) that are [underlined in purple](#). Many weblinks for people are to findagrave.com, but a listing of other useful links begins on page 48. A listing of useful books can be found in the previous document noted above. I will always appreciate suggestions for improvements, additions or needed corrections. I make no claims for accuracy but promise I have done my best!

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Arrel's Specific Ancestors

Perhaps a reasonable way to cover my "recent ancestors" is to start with myself (not officially an ancestor as of this writing, but maybe soon!) and work backwards into the past. **Arrel Dwayne Toews** (1; #s refer to pedigree chart on p 50) was born in St. Mary's Hospital Annex in **Enid OK** on **22 July 1948**, the second son of David Abraham and Rosa Marie Voth Toews. My older brother **Galen** came along about 3 years before I was born (26 November 1945; Colorado Springs CO), and my younger brother **Myron** about 3 years after me (15 May 1951; Enid OK). So yes, I was **caught in the middle!** But really, a **perfect place to be!** We all grew up on a farm about 1.5 miles W of **Kremlin OK** - to me, it was a busy farmstead with a very nice 2-story farmhouse; **a great place for me to grow up!** My father inherited our home-place from his father and mother's estate, and we also owned a "40" in the SW corner of the farm to the E, previously the domain of my Great-Grandfather, Heinrich J Buller (Uncle Henry G Toews, banker and owner of the Bank of Kremlin, had the remaining 120 acres of that farm). **Below, top, L/R**, Rosa, Galen, Myron, David & Arrel, ca 1957, and our home. **Middle**: Toews Brothers ca 1954 and Arrel's first birthday (cute!). **Bottom**: New farmstead along Kremlin blacktop and our new home, ca 1963. **Lots more about my family and growing up in another upcoming tome.**



Arrel's Parents



David Abraham Toews (2), my father, was born on 20 October 1916 on our family farm ~1.5 mi W of Kremlin, OK (NE/4-20-24N-6W), the youngest of six children (Clara, Henry, Peter Isaac, Jacob, & Anna - "Aunt Bush") and he passed from this earth at the age of 87 on 12 December 2003 in Enid, OK. His wife (my mother) **Rosa Marie (Voth) Toews (3)**, was born 15 September 1918 on the **Butler Place** (N across from our Houghtaling Farm) near Kremlin OK and she passed away in Enid OK on 25 February 1998 at age 79. Rosa and David were married on 3 August 1943 in the **North Enid Mennonite Brethren Church**. Mom said it was so hot on their wedding day that the candles drooped and almost fell out of the candelabra!



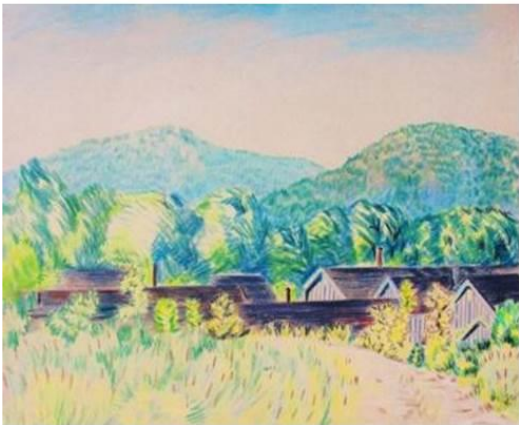
Deeply devout and genuinely true to his **Mennonite heritage, roots, and pacifist beliefs**, my father served in **Civilian Public Service Camp #5**, administered by the Mennonite Central Committee, near Colorado Springs, CO, as a **conscientious objector to military service** during World War II. He also spent time training to cook at **CPS Camp 4 near Grottoes, VA** under the tutelage of **Mary Emma Showalter**, the doyenne of Mennonite cooking and author of the iconic **Mennonite Community Cookbook**. Dad is front & center in both photos below. Mary Emma is middle row r and middle row l in the group photos below, respectively.



CPS Camp 5 - Colorado Springs, CO
(June 1941- May 1946)



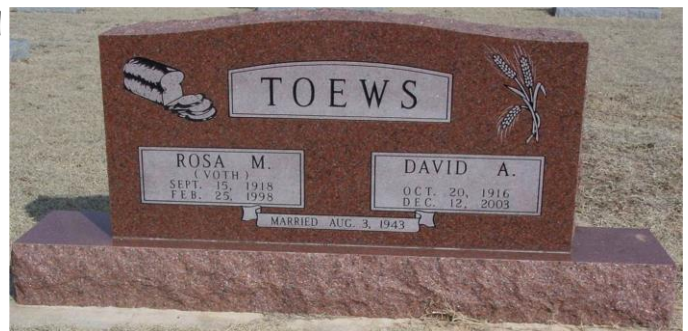
Civilian Public Service (CPS) camp at Grottoes, Va. with Mary Emma Showalter in the middle row, second row seated on the right. Credit: MCC Photograph Collection, Mennonite Church USA Archives-Garden



CPS Camp 4 - Grottoes, VA
June 1941- May 1946)



In 1945, Mom, Dad, and Galen moved back to our **family farm near Kremlin, OK** where they raised their three sons and lived for the remainder of their lives. We attended the **North Enid Mennonite Brethren Church** until it closed in 1960 as it "merged" with the Enid "City" MB Church, then the **Kremlin Community United Methodist Church**. **Rosa** and **David** are buried in the **North Enid MB cemetery**.



David Abraham Toews was the youngest of the six children of **George P and Anna Toews**:

Clara Elizabeth (Mrs. Peter H. Voth; Grandpa Jacob A Voth's brother); children are **Ernie** (wife Virgie), **Robert ("Bob"** - "My wife says I'm such a sorry bastard! And she's right!"; wife Carol), **Johnny** (wife Mary Ann), & **Dorothy** (husband Eugene Gray)



Henry George - (married to Elsie Marie Schmidt); daughters are **Gerry** (husband Delmer Reimer) and Lorene (**Rene**; husband Jim Pauls)

Jacob Ben (married to Anna Helen Bergen); **Richard "Dick"** (wife Ruth Ann) is their only son

Peter Isaac (married to Thelma Malter); **Curtis "Chip"** (wife Rosa) is their only son

Anna Rosella ("Aunt Bush") - a school teacher who died relatively young (27) of cancer.

Photo is at S side of our house;
L/R, Jake, Peter, Henry in back;
Anna & George P Toews in middle
David A (my Dad) & Anna (Bush).
Clara was presumably already
married and so not in the photo.
ca 1925



Another **George P and Anna Toews family** photo below, this one taken before my Dad, David A, was born. L/R: George P, Anna holding Jacob, Mary Neumann (Aunt Mary) & Clara; front: Henry and Peter I.

Mary Neumann was unofficially adopted and raised by the George & Anna Toews family.



Rosa Marie Voth Toews was the 2nd oldest of six children of **Jacob A and Elizabeth Voth**:
Menno (1917-1976; wife Martha Warkentin); children are **Patty** (married to Richard Koehn)
 and **Eugene "Gene"** (wife is Karen)

Rosa (1918-1998); my Mom and wife of my father, David A Toews

Anna (1921-2006; married to Jacob Regier); children are **Kathy** (married to Lyle Kleopfer)
 and **Jeanette** (married to Lyle Ratzlaff)

Jacob H (born 6 September 1924; lived one day;
 buried in **NEMB Cemetery**)



Tena Marie (1926-1996; lived with Gma & Gpa Voth
 her entire life)

Jacob Abraham, "Jr" (1928-2013; married to Beverly Hamm);

Steve (wife Shirley) and **Pamela Jane** (married to Dennis Schoenhals) are their children

Photo below is of **Jacob A and Elizabeth Voth family**: back, L/R, **David A & Rosa M Toews**
 (my parents), Jacob and Anna Regier, Menno and Martha Voth, Jacob A, Jr and Beverly
 Voth; front, Tena, Elizabeth and Jacob A Voth, Sr; taken @ Meadowlake Park, Enid, OK,
 July, 1963



Photo below taken for **Grandparents Jacob A and Elizabeth's 50th wedding anniversary** in 1966: back, L/R, Jacob & Anna Regier, Menno & Martha Voth, Beverly and Jacob A Voth, Jr, my Dad, David A Toews; front, L/R, Tena Voth, Elizabeth and Jacob A Voth, Sr, & my Mom, Rosa Toews.



Entire Jacob A Voth family portrait for their 50th wedding anniversary, 1966
Back, L/R, Jacob & Anna Regier, Galen, David A, & Rosa Toews, Menno & Martha Voth, Richard Koehn, Beverly & Jacob A Voth, Jr; middle, Myron & Arrel Toews, Eugene Voth; front, Jeanette & Kathy Regier, Tena, Elizabeth, & Jacob A Voth, Sr, Patty Koehn & daughter, Pamela and Steve Voth.

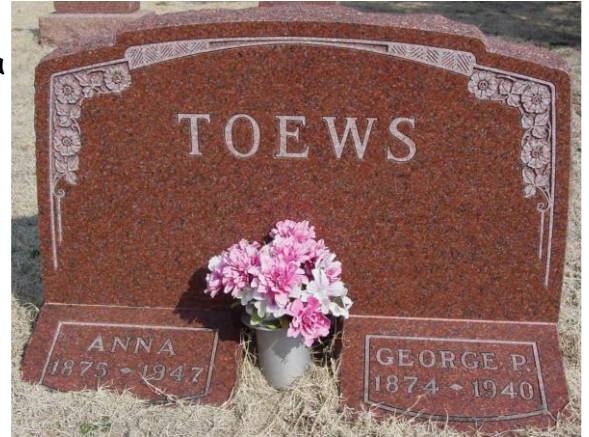


Arrel's Grandparents



Grandpa George (Gerhard) P Toews (4) was born 23 Nov 1874 in [Hierschau, Molotschna](#), South Russia. He immigrated to the US with his family when only 4 years old. On 28 Jan 1897, he married Grandma [Anna Buller](#) in Hampton, NE; then on 18 Nov 1903, he & his family moved to Kremlin, OK in a boxcar. He passed from this world on 22 July 1940 (Arrel's birthday!).

Grandma Anna Buller Toews (5) was born on 5 Apr 1875 in a railroad



immigrant house in Marion County KS, our [first American-born ancestor](#); she died near Kremlin OK on 25 November 1947. [George P](#) and [Anna](#) are both buried in the [North Enid Mennonite Brethren cemetery](#).

Photo below is of the [George P and Anna Toews](#) home-place 1.5 miles W of Kremlin, OK; also the home-place of [David A and Rosa M Toews](#), my parents and their three sons, Galen, [Arrel](#) & Myron.



Heizer Bros Studio
Enid, Okla.



Grandpa Jacob Albert Voth (6)

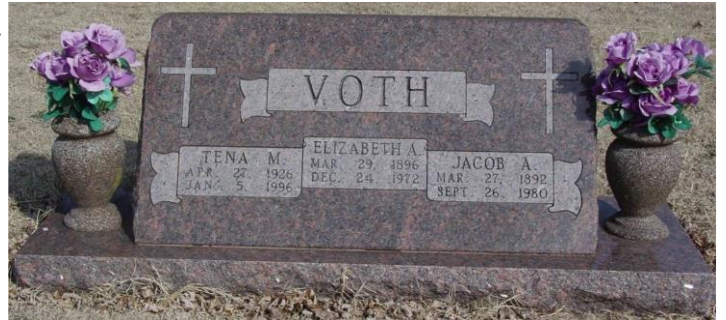
was born 27 March 1892 in Henderson NE. On 1 June 1916, he married **Elisabeth A Schmidt (7)** in the North Enid MB Church. They lived on the Voth home-place (where Beverly Voth now lives) for most all of their married life, finally moving to Enid OK for their later years. He died 26 September 1980 in Enid, OK.

Grandma Elisabeth Voth was born 29 March 1896 in Henderson NE,



and she died on 24 December 1972 in Enid OK.

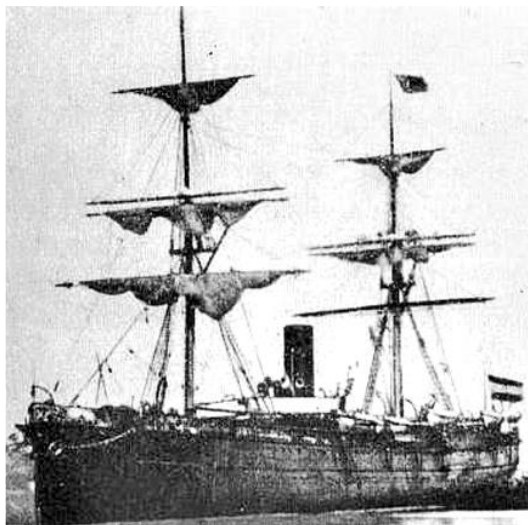
Jacob A and Elisabeth are both buried in the North Enid MB Cemetery. Their youngest daughter, Tena M. (born 27 April 1926; died 5 January 1996) is buried in the same plot.



Arrel's Great-Grandparents

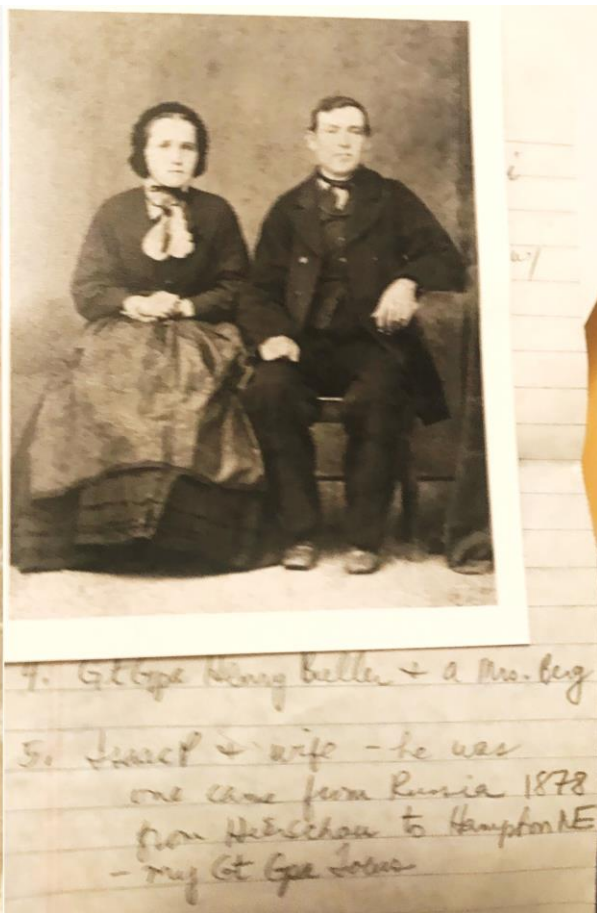
Note: All of our great-grandparents came to the US between 1874-79, all ending up near Henderson/Hampton NE, from where most eventually moved to the Kremlin/Enid OK area.

G-Grandpa Isaac Toews (8) was born 4 Feb 1844 in Landskrone, Molotschna, South Russia. He married Elisabeth Peters on 18 February 1872 in Landskrone. Isaac & his family, including my Grandpa George (Gerhard) P and his brother Isaak "Töws," immigrated to the United States in 1878 from Hierschau, Molotschna, bound for Sutton, NE. They left



Bremen, Germany on the Norddeutscher Lloyd Line's S/S Strassburg, arriving 2 July 1878 in NYC. The Isaac Toews family settled just S of Hampton NE and attended the Henderson MB Church. He died 16 Dec 1884 S of Hampton, NE, just 6 years after reaching the US - he is supposedly buried on a farm near Hampton NE (perhaps E/2-NW/4-4-10-5, Beaver Precinct, Hamilton Co NE); the Toews Brothers have searched this 80, but have not been able to locate any gravesite. We believe the photos below to be **Isaac P and Elisabeth Peters Toews** - the R panel includes a

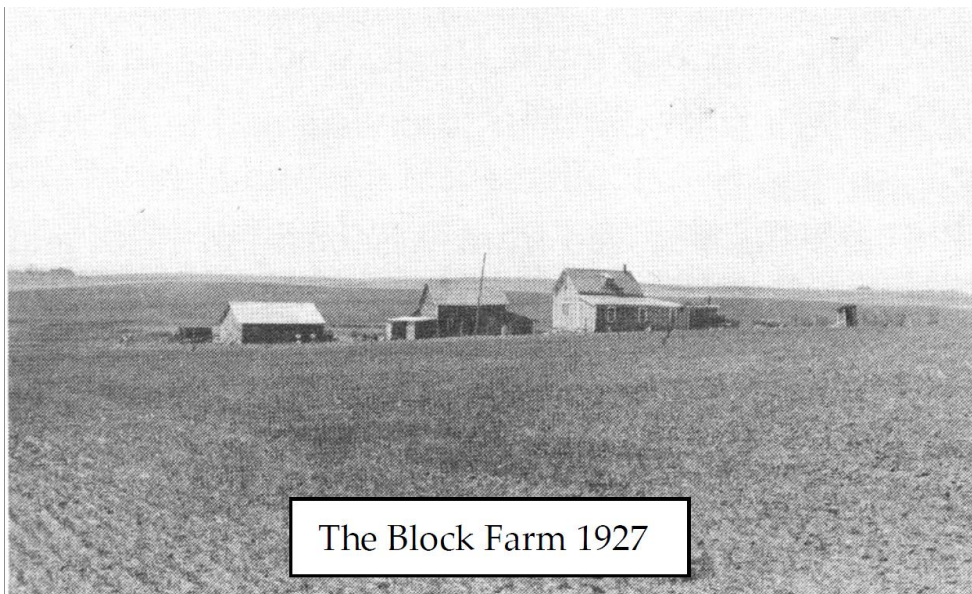
notation by Gerry Toews Reimer identifying this couple as being Isaac P Toews and wife.



G-Grandma Elisabeth Peters (9) was born on 11 May 1852 in **Landskrone**, Molotschna, South Russia. After G-Grandpa Isaac Toews died in 1884, she rather quickly married **Peter P Block**, an immigrant from Kicin, Poland, on 3 May 1885. My dad, David A Toews, always called her "**Grandma Block**" (R). They lived first on Isaac's farm near Hampton NE (see 1888 Beaver Precinct plat map on p 76), then moved to Alsen/Munich ND in 1897 before moving again in 1911 to Kelstern, Saskatchewan, Canada. **Kelstern** is 475 mi due W of Winnipeg MB and 200 mi due N of Wolf Point MT.



Photos below show Block Farm in 1927 (L) and **Elisabeth and Peter Block** in their poppy field/garden near Kelstern, 1925 (R).



Elisabeth died on 5 April 1937; she is buried in the **Elim MB Cemetery**, **Moose Jaw**, **Saskatchewan**, Canada. For more details and additional photos of the Elisabeth and Peter Block family, see the "**George P & Anna Toews Family**," available upon request.



Perhaps this is a good place to insert some additional information on the **9 siblings of our G-Grandfather Isaac Toews**. The photo collage below, painstakingly and meticulously documented and assembled by **Myron Toews**, shows the **10 children of GG-Grandparents Gerhard Isaac and Aganetha Warkentine Toews** (for additional details, see p 32). Numbers indicate birth order, with **1 oldest** and **10 youngest**. Siblings 5, 6, 8, 9 & 10, as well as their father Gerhard Isaac Toews, all immigrated to the US in the 1870-80s.

Note the numerous interrelationships with other "non-Toews" members of our family tree. This is completely typical of our Mennonite ancestors. Since they sought to "live apart from the world," this effectively meant all living together - and intermarrying amongst themselves in the Molotschna, S Russia Colony.

Children of Gerhard Isaac Toews



**GG-Grandparents
Gerhard Isaac Toews
Aganetha Warkentine**

1 = Agatha Toews
Married Jacob Born
Died at age 35 in S Russia
No photo
Second wife Helena Buller,
sister to our G-Gpa
Henry J Buller

2 = Gerhard
3 = Isaac
4 = Philip
All died young
1832-1835



5 = Gerhard Toews
Sara Wall, second wife
First wife Elizabeth Kroeker



6 = Isaac Toews
Elizabeth Peters
our G-Grandparents

7 = Cornelius Toews
Married Anna Schmidt
Stayed in S Russia
No photo

Parents of our G-Gma,
Anna Toews Voth
(Mrs Jacob J Voth)



8 = Aganetha Toews
John J. Buller

Brother to our G-Gpa
Henry J Buller



9 = Abraham Toews
Maria Peters
NOT sister to
G-Gma Elizabeth



10 = Katharina Toews
David S Ediger

A bit of information on **Isaak Toews' brother, Abraham** (both were sons of patriarch **Gerhard Isaak Toews**). Abraham was born on 5 June 1850 in Landskrone, Molotschna, S Russia. He married **Maria Peters** (born 1858) on 24 April 1879 in Landskrone, Molotschna, S Russia. They immigrated to the Henderson NE area, then moved to the Kremlin OK area. **Abraham** died 30 June 1918, and **Maria** in 1929 - they are both buried in the N Enid MB Cemetery.



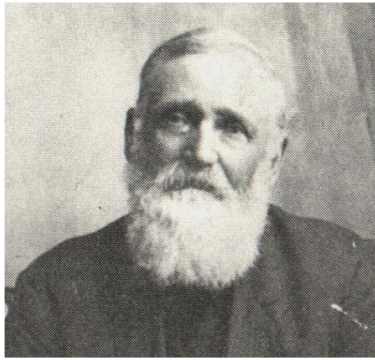
The ca 1908 photo below shows the **Abraham Toews family** (right panel has information on individual family members).

2nd from L at back is **Abraham "AA" Toews**, father of **William "Bill" Toews** and grandfather of **Dennis, Ellis, Eldon & Janice Toews**. **Abraham A** and wife **Agnes S Benke Toews** are both buried in the N Enid MB Cemetery. AA's other son was **Abe Toews**, married to **Gladys E Thesman Toews**. **Bill** and his wife **Helena Janzen Toews** are also buried in the N Enid MB Cemetery. **Gerhard (George; 3rd from L, back)** married our **Aunt Mary Neumann**.

Dennis Toews tells of his G-Grandfather Abraham Toews sending his 20-year-old son Abraham A alone on horseback S from the Henderson NE area to search for a suitable family farm or farms. AA decided upon a farm SSW of Kremlin (SW/4-32-24N-6W) - see photos below. On US-81, 2.5 miles S of the Midway, it is an **Oklahoma Centennial Farm**.



Another son of patriarch [Gerhard Isaac Toews](#) was [Gerhard Toews](#) - he was a brother of



both Isaac and Abraham. Gerhard was born in Blumenort, Molotschna, S Russia - his first wife was Elizabeth Kroeker. They were married in 1859 and had 5 children, including [Jacob J.](#) Elizabeth died in S Russia before 1870.



Gerhard then married [Sara Wall](#) in 1870 and they immigrated to the US in 1874 on the SS Teutonia (NY, NY).

Gerhard owned several farms in Beaver Township, Hamilton County NE. Gerhard is the G-Grandfather of [John Raymond Quiring](#), a Tabor College classmate of mine, currently living on a farm near Hampton, Hamilton County NE.

The ancestral line for John R Quiring follows.

[Jacob J Toews](#) - Jacob J and [Katharina Ediger Toews](#) are John's G-Grandparents.



[John P](#) and [Katharina Toews Quiring](#) - John R's Grandparents.



[Johann Quiring](#) - John (Johann) and [Bertha Dick Quiring](#) are the parents of John R Quiring.



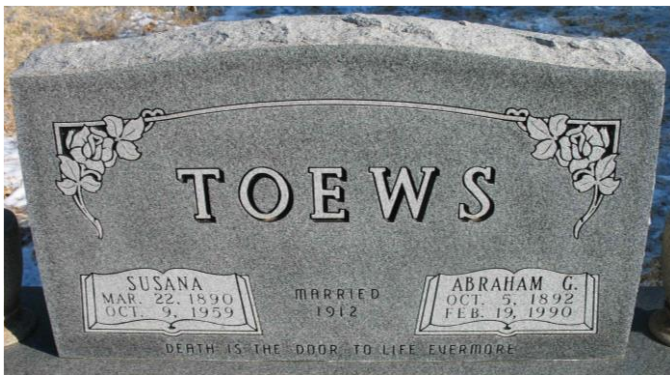
Photos below show [John R and Helen Wiebe Quiring](#) with Arrel & Kathy Toews during our visit to their farm near Hampton, Hamilton County NE on 25 September 2019 (r), and John and Arrel at Gerhard Isaac Toews' gravestone in the [Henderson MB Church Cemetery](#) near Henderson NE (l). John is an excellent historian, guide, and valuable fount of information with respect to our shared ancestors and heritage in NE. The [Beaver Valley Cemetery](#), where Kathy's GG-Grandfather [Gottfried \(Gottlieb\) Ferdinand Fadenrecht](#) is buried, is located on his farm. He creatively and lovingly maintains the Henderson MB Cemetery - note the clump of tall bluestem beside Gerhard Isaac's grave at l below. The Henderson/Hamilton County NE area was also the primary initial immigration site from S Russia in the 1870s for the [Voth](#), [Schmidt](#), and [Fadenrecht](#) families of Kathy's and my ancestral lines and John is equally knowledgeable about them as well.

John R Quiring and Arrel D Toews are [3rd cousins once removed](#) in the [Toews](#) family line, and not unexpectedly, also [4th cousins once removed](#) on the [Voth](#) side of my family - our common ancestor in that line is [Cornelius Cornelius Quiring](#).

For more detailed information, see the annotated [1888 Plat Map of Beaver Precinct, Hamilton County NE](#) on page 42.



In addition to [Gerhard](#)'s son Jacob J (John Quiring line), another son was [Abraham G "AG" Toews](#), paterfamilias of a large NEMB Church family, most all of whom we knew well. AG was a first cousin to our Gpa George P Toews. AG married [Susana Regier](#) in 1912, and later [Elizabeth Goertzen](#) in 1960. After moving from the Henderson NE area, AGs lived just W of NEMB Church, later also homeplace of son Joel and wife Anna Lula (photo below R). His children were Anna Ella, who went by [Ella](#) (husband [Frank Wiens](#)), George A "[Georgie](#)" (wife [Mabel](#) Wiebe), John "[Johnny R](#)" (wife [Sarah](#) Wiebe, sister to George's wife Mabel), Sarah Sophia "Sophie" (husband [Ruben Thesman](#)), [Joel](#) (wife [Anna Lula](#) Voth) and [Calvin](#) (wife [Bertha Ann](#) Thesman); Ruben, Anna Lula and Bertha Ann were all cousins of our mother Rosa. AG & Susana are buried in the NEMB Cemetery, Enid OK



The extended [AG & Susana Toews](#) family is shown below, ca [mid-1950s](#)



G-Grandpa Heinrich J. Buller (10) was born 9 Dec 1850 and **G-Grandma Sara Buller Buller (11)** on 25 Nov 1845, both in [Alexanderwohl](#), Molotschna, S Russia. They married on 30 Nov 1872 in Alexanderwohl. In 1874, led by Elder Jakob Buller, most of the [Alexanderwohl colony](#) immigrated *en masse* to the current [Alexanderwohl community](#) near [Goessel, Marion County KS](#). The Alexanderwohl colony was so named because of a solicitous chance encounter with [Tsar Alexander I](#) by a group of Prussian Mennonites migrating from W Prussia to S. Russia in 1821 - he stopped and visited with them, then "[wished them well](#)" - hence the name [Alexanderwohl](#)!

Originating in the [Flanders \(Flemish\) Province of Belgium](#) in the 16th century, this Mennonite community ([Old Flemish Mennonite Society of Groningen](#)) moved to the region of the [Vistula-Nogat River Delta of West Prussia](#) (near [Danzig](#) - now [Gdańsk, Poland](#)) in the 17th century (1600-1650). They were promised religious freedom and welcomed because of their farming abilities - they drained marshes, built prosperous farms, planted orchards, and established roads and canals; their Holland windmills beautified the countryside. Their success was viewed with envy by native West Prussians, and when strong militaristic trends began to develop, they sought a new home, migrating from [Przekhovka, Swetz](#) area near [Marienwerder, W Prussia](#) to the [Molotschna Colony](#) in [S Russia](#), again seeking freedom from religious intolerance and persecution. Establishing their new village of [Alexanderwohl](#) in [1821](#) as part of the Molotschna Colony, they were again very prosperous in their farming and associated endeavors for over 50 years; however, they then again felt led to leave their comfortable existence in S Russia when a 100-year-old immunity from established religious orthodoxy and mandatory military service, established by [Empress Catherine The Great \(Ekaterina II\)](#), was being threatened by [Tsar Alexander II](#). These same factors were responsible for the migration of many other Mennonites from S Russia to the US, including all of my ancestors.

On 31 July 1874, 303 adults and 172 children, led by Elder Jacob Buller, boarded the

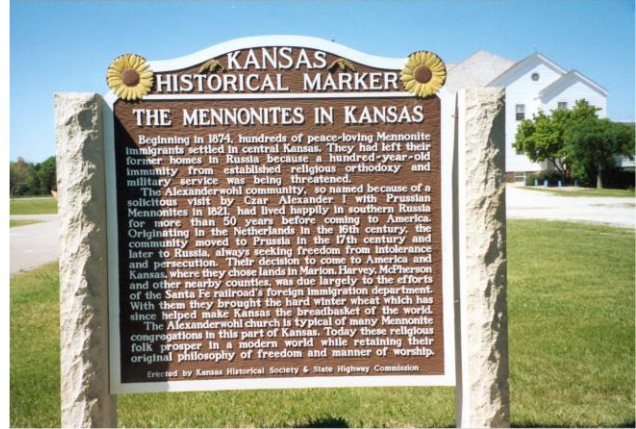
Hamburg America Line's [S/S Cimbria](#), from Hamburg/Harve, landing in New York harbor

on 27 August 1874. This included **G- Gparents Heinrich & Sara Buller Buller**.

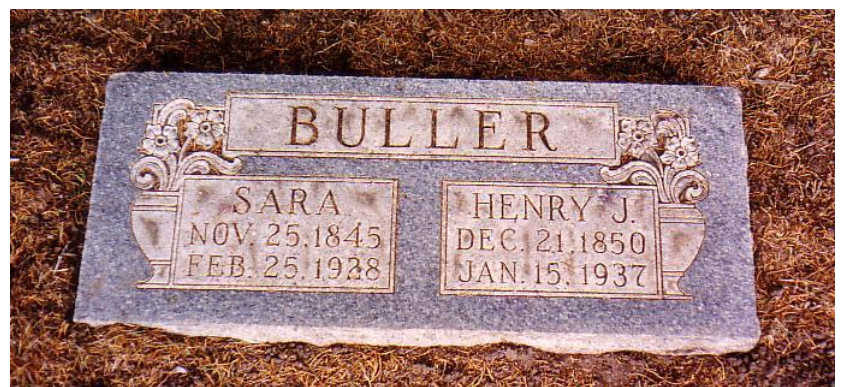
The colonists accepted an offer to purchase 100,000 acres of land from the [Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad](#) about 12 miles NNE of Newton, KS, near the current town of [Goessel](#), and established their new "[Neu](#)" [Alexanderwohl Colony](#) there.



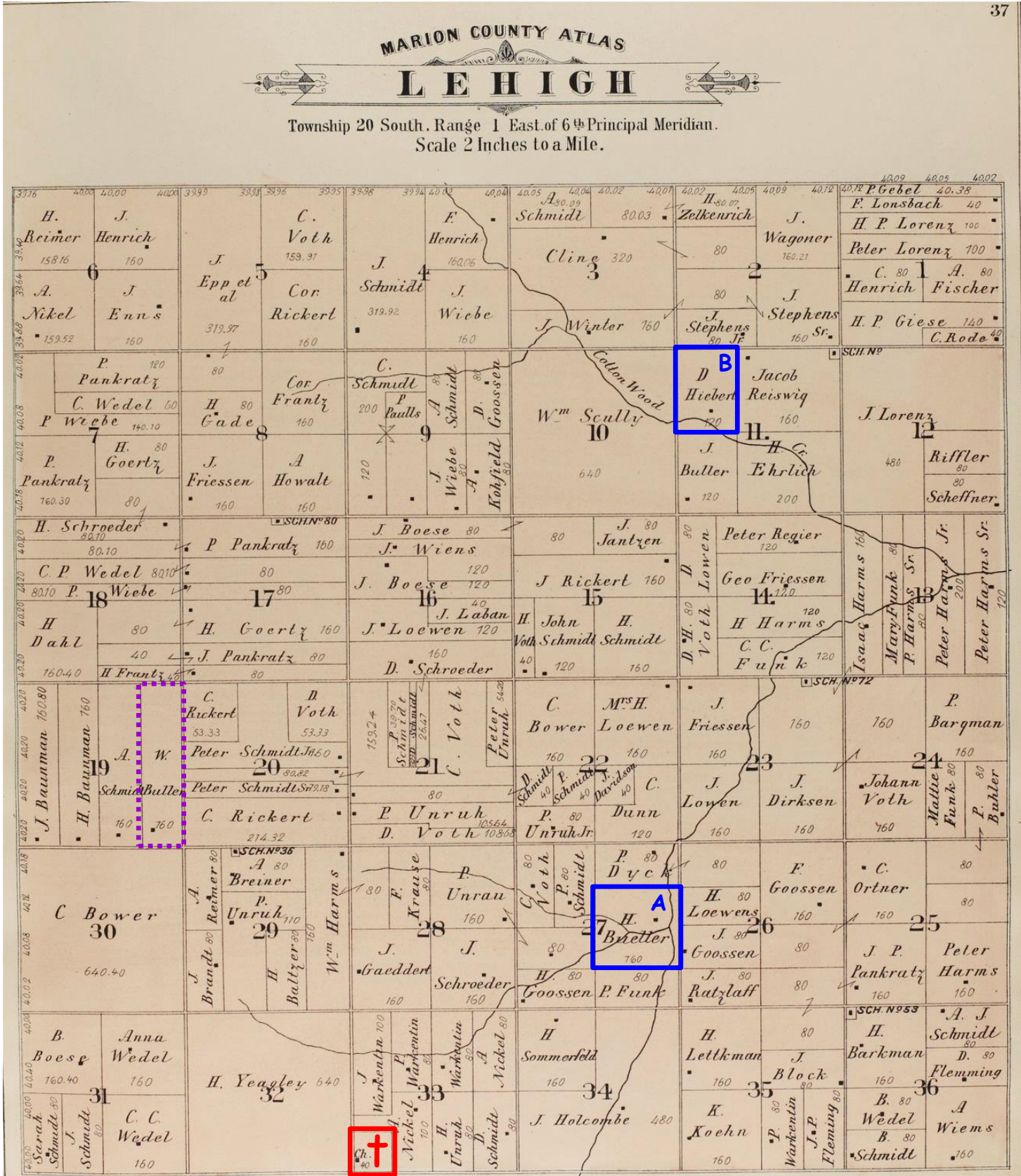
The photos below are of the current [Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church near Goessel, KS](#). The [Mennonite Heritage and Agricultural Museum](#) in nearby Goessel, KS is well worth a visit, as is the [Kauffman Museum](#) with its tallgrass prairie reconstruction in Newton, KS, across from the Bethel College campus. Both are rich in Mennonite memorabilia and information.



Heinrich (Henry) Buller and his wife Sara lived on 2 different farms in the [Alexanderwohl Colony near Goessel KS](#), moving to [Hamilton County, NE](#) in 1888, where our Toews grandparents met and eventually married (their families lived close to each other), then to near [Kremlin, OK](#) in 1902, where they lived in a "shack" on our "40" (SW/4-NW/4-21-24N-6W). Sara died on 25 Feb 1928 in her home near Kremlin OK. Heinrich Buller died on 15 January 1937 in the guest bedroom of our family farmhouse, where my Dad found him hanging from a window sashcord. [Henry](#) and [Sara](#) are both buried in the [North Enid Mennonite Brethren cemetery](#). Their six children: [Anna \(my Grandma Toews\)](#), Henry (1878), [Peter A \(1879; James Buller's GPA\)](#), Sara O (1880), John W (1882) & Jacob (1886).



The 1885 Lehigh Twp Marion County KS Plat Map below shows the two farms Heinrich and Sara Buller owned in the Alexanderwohl Colony, first in Section 27 (A), then in Section 11 (B). The Alexanderwohl MB Church is denoted in red at the bottom of this map. The farm of another Heinrich Buller in Section 19 is denoted with a purple dashed box.



Photos below show farms in the [Alexanderwohl, Molotschna, S Russia area](#) as they appeared during our 2008 Mennonite Heritage Tour (top panels) and [Heinrich Buller's Alexanderwohl, Marion County KS farms](#) (bottom panels; L first farm A, R second farm B; see map on previous page). My brother [Myron Toews](#) in lower photos - taken by his son [Alex Toews](#). Having visited both locations, it is easy to imagine why the Alexanderwohl Colony chose the Goessel KS area for their new home.



Photos below are of the [Alexanderwohl MB Church in Molotschna, S Russia](#). L: 1890 image from [GAMEO](#); R: [Ancestry.com](#).



Henry & Sara Buller are shown below by their "shack" on the "40" (L), and at an unknown location (R). Lower R photo shows **G-Grandma Sara** & daughter Sara **Buller** at their home.



Below:50th Wedding Anniversary of Heinrich and Sara Buller, with family on S porch of our Toews family home:
Heinrich & Sara at front; front R, **Anna & George P Toews** (Arrel's grandparents);
back, L of porch pillar, **Aunt Clara & Uncle Pete Voth**; back, R of pillar, **Peter Buller** (James Buller's Grandpa)



The panel of photographs show (top) **G-Grandpa Heinrich Buller** with his buggy and team (**Prince** and **Florry**) in front of their home on "The 40" - note woman in window at upper R; (middle) Heinrich J Buller with his hayrack and team (L) and Heinrich J and Sara Buller Buller (R); (bottom) Heinrich J Buller in front of an automobile (L; he never owned a car) and **Mr/Mrs PP Harms** and **Heinrich and Sara Buller** (R) The two wives are Buller sisters.



G-Grandpa Jacob J Voth (12) was born 18 Mar 1870 in Kleefeld Molotschna S Russia. He emigrated to the Henderson NE area with his parents and siblings in 1879. **G-Grandma Anna J. Toews (13)** was born 12 May 1871 in Landskrone Molotschna. She was an orphan and she and her brother **Cornelius C Toews** emigrated with the **Peter and Marg Guenther family**, arriving NYC on the Norddeutscher Lloyd **S/S Werra** 7 June 1884, then travelling with them to Henderson NE, where she was taken in by the **Peter Abrahams family** as maid and foster daughter. Jacob J married Anna Toews on 9 October 1890 in Henderson NE. This family moved to Kremlin OK in 1901.



R: **Jacob J Voth**

Jacob J died 15 Jun 1938 and Anna J 28 Mar 1943, both near Kremlin OK. **Jacob J** and **Anna J** are both buried in the **North Enid MB Cemetery**.



Above L: Jacob J, **Grandpa Jacob A** (back), Uncle Pete (married Clara Toews), Chris, Anna J, and Anna (married Jake Thesman). Above R: **Jacob J Voth family** a few years later in front of Voth home and summer-kitchen.

Jacob J/Jacob A Voth farmstead SW of Kremlin OK is shown below and on following page.



Note the cellar L of the windmill, bicycle and cistern in the top photo and old auto in the garage in middle panel.





The **Jacob J Voth family** and in-laws are shown above. From L: **Elizabeth (Schmidt) and Jacob A Voth (Arrel's grandparents)**, Anna and Jacob Thesman (Rita Sue's grandparents), Jacob J and Anna J Voth, Cornelius J (Uncle Chris) and Anna C Voth, Peter H and Clara Toews Voth (parents of Dorothy, Johnny, Bob & Ernie). Probably taken at Government Springs Park, Enid OK. **Photo below** shows the **Jacob J Voth family** on the "Voth Home-place" where Mom grew up and where Aunt Beverly Voth now lives (but not in that house!).



l/r; Cornelius
 Anna
 Anna J
 Peter
 Jacob J
Jacob A Voth

Another photo of the **Jacob J Voth family** with spouses is shown below, date unknown.

From L/R: Anna & Uncle Chris, Elizabeth & Jacob A, Jacob J & Anna J Voth, Peter & Clara Toews Voth and Jacob & Anna Voth Thesman.



Photo below is from **Jacob J Voth** funeral - (L/R): Anna J Voth, Anna & Jacob Thesman, Chris & Anna Voth, Clara & Pete Voth, Elizabeth & Jacob A Voth



The panel of photos below shows the funeral of **Jacob J Voth** at the **N Enid MB Church** in June 1938. My mother, **Rosa Voth Toews** is at L in the L photo, middle row, behind my **Aunt Clara (Mrs. Pete) Toews Voth**. Hearse and casket are at JJ/JA Voth homeplace.



G-Grandpa Abraham Heinrich Schmidt (14) was born 25 Jul 1850 in **Schardau**, Molotschna,

2657-P-58	
Family name SCHMIDT	Given name or names Abraham
Address North Enid, Oklahoma	
Certificate no. (or vol. and page)	Title and location of court Dist. Ct., Enid, Oklahoma
Country of birth or allegiance Russia	When born (or age) 6/23/50
Date and port of arrival in U. S. 6/20/76 New York	Date of naturalization 6/12/14
Names and addresses of witnesses	
Geo. J. Wise	Enid, Oklahoma
M. E. Shockley	" "
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, Immigration and Naturalization Service. FORM NO. 1-1P. 14-3202	

South Russia. He immigrated to the United States from the **Kuban Oblast of S Russia** (on the Black Sea E of the Crimean Peninsula), arriving in NYC at age 26 in 20 June 1876; he settled in York Co, NE (near Henderson). His ship of arrival is not well documented - perhaps it was the **S/S Wyoming** on which many fellow Mennonites arrived in NYC on that day but he is not listed on the passenger manifest. His

naturalization certificate is at R above. He married Katharina Nickel in 1877, but she died in 1880. He then married **Katharina Johann Regier (15)** on 22 Nov 1880 in Henderson, NE. She was born 19 October 1861 in **Hierschau**, Molotschna, but soon moved to the village of **Klippenfeld**, Molotschna with her parents. Katharina came to the US in 1879 with her family on the same ship voyage as **GG-Grandparents Jacob & Anna Voth** (see below). The Abraham H & Katharina Schmidt family later moved from York County, NE to near Enid, OK (on US-81 & the Old North Enid MB Church road, diagonally across from the Chisholm Trail Marker) in June 1900, but ~1918, they moved to the Reedley/Dinuba area, eventually finding home at 1151 M St, Reedley, CA. **Katharina** left this world on 4 September 1922 and **Abraham** on 10 October 1928, both in **Reedley, CA**, where they are buried. Top R photo has Marie Schmidt Hiebert (sister of Grandma Voth) & **Grandparents Voth** in back with Menno, Anna (Regier) and **my Mom, Rosa** with **G-Grand-parents Schmidt**.

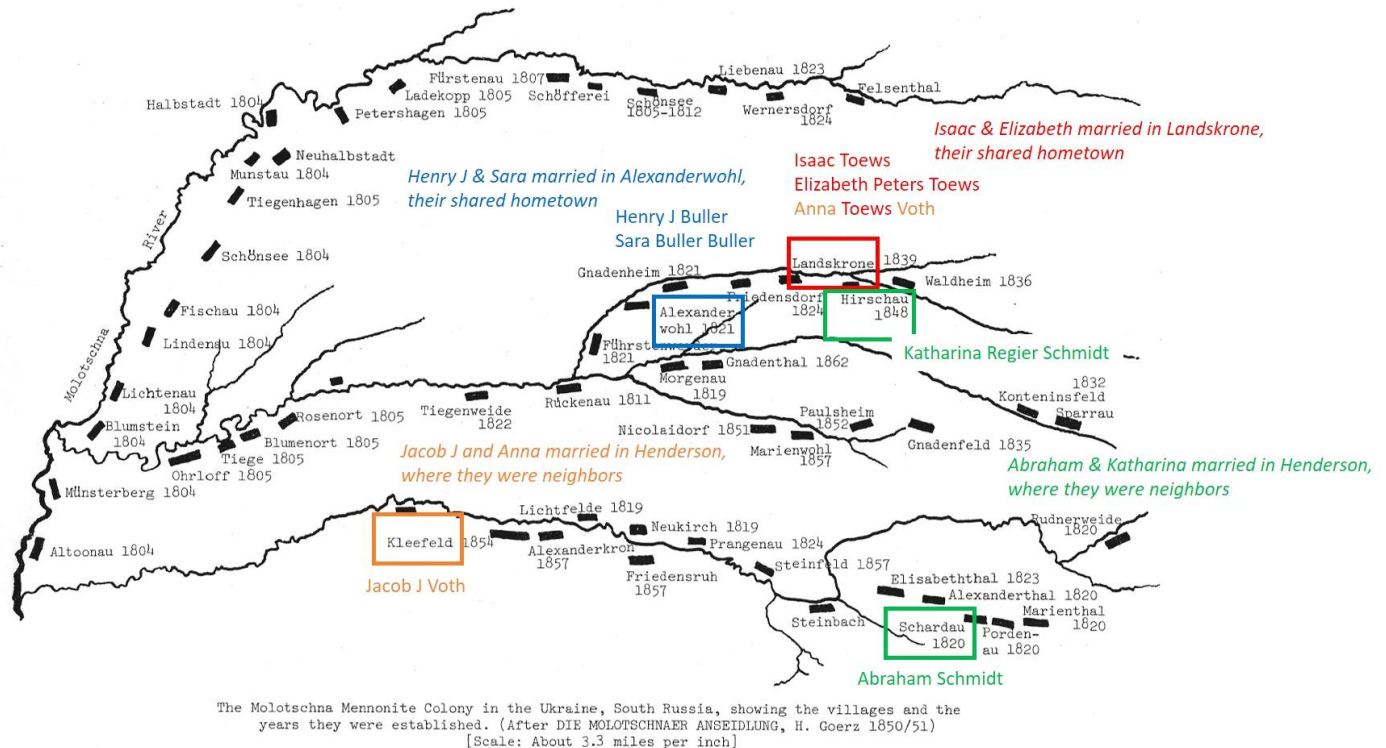


Lower L photo has Menno, **Mom**, **G-Grandparents Schmidt**, **Grandma Voth** & **Anna (Regier)** at Schmidt home in Reedley, CA, ca **1922**. Lower R photo has Abraham A Schmidt, **Grandma Elizabeth Schmidt Voth** in back, Menno, **Rosa** and **Anna** in front, in Reedley, CA ~ **1920s**.



Relationships of our Great-Grandparents

The very useful annotated map of the Molotschna Colony below, prepared by [Myron Toews](#), shows the relationships among our [four sets of Great-Grandparents](#). Birthplaces are shown in regular font, marriage sites in italics, with various families color-coded.



Isaac Toews and **Elizabeth Peters** were married in Landskrone, their shared village. **Henry J Buller** and **Sara Buller** were married in Alexanderwohl, their shared village, both villages in the Molotschna Colony of S Russia. **Jacob J Voth** was from Kleefeld and **Anna Toews** from Landskrone - they married in Henderson NE, where they were neighbors. **Abraham Schmidt** (Schardau) and **Katharina Regier** (Heirschau) grew up further apart in separate villages in the Molotschna Colony but were married in Henderson NE, where they were neighbors. Our Great-Grandma **Anna Voth** was a **Toews**, and she came from the same village as our other Toews ancestors (Landskrone).

The map of Beaver Township, Hamilton County NE on p 42 shows the location and proximity of our ancestor's farms in NE.

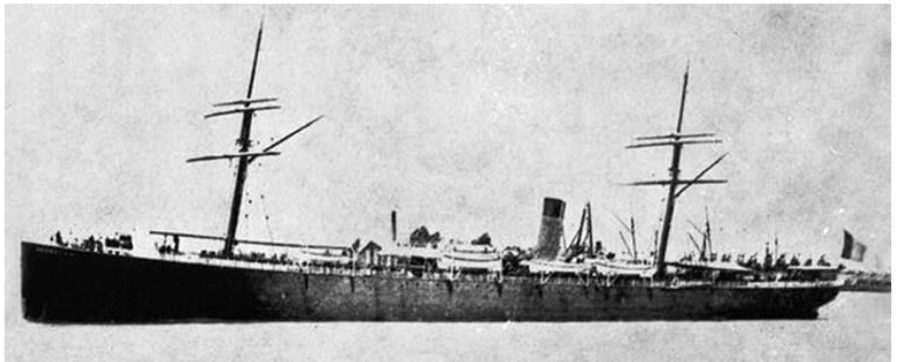
Arrel's Great-Great-GrandParents

I am including some information on my [Toews](#), [Buller](#), [Voth](#), and [Schmidt](#) **GG-Grandparents**, as well as others, but I do not have family photos or photos of gravestones for all of them. Those interested may wish to consult the "[Arrel Toews Ahnentafel](#)" (ask for it) for ancestors tracing back to the **early 1600s in Polish (W) Prussia and 1582 in Switzerland!**

GG-Grandpa Gerhard Isaac Toews (16) is the oldest of my Toews ancestors buried in the US. Born 28 September 1809 in S Russia, the 1835 Molotschna census lists him at [Blumenort](#) #25, home of his step-father, Abraham Abraham Konrad. He married [Aganetha](#)



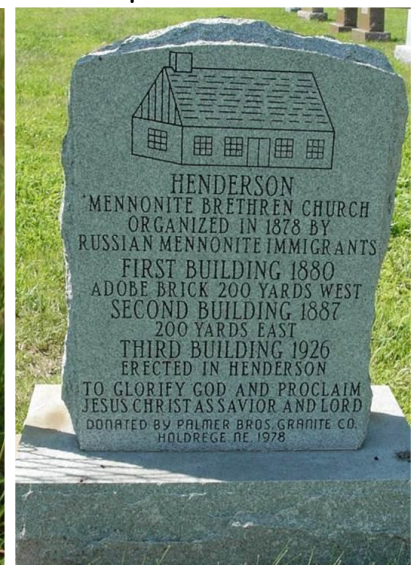
[Warkentin \(17\)](#) around 1829 and they moved to the Molotschna village of [Landskrone](#) in 1839. They had a prosperous "[wirtschaft](#)" outside the "[dorf](#)" of [Landskrone](#), with a large white stone house. Photo at L taken in S Russia.



They left Bremen (Antwerp?) bound to the US aboard the Red Star Line's [S.S. Nederland](#), with [son Abraham](#), but Aganetha died at sea, just prior to the ship's arrival in New York Harbor on 12 August 1882. As governmental immigrant regulations required immediate departure for the Henderson NE area, Gerhard Isaac was compelled to hire complete strangers to make burial arrangements for his beloved wife, and neither he nor any of his descendants have any knowledge of her burial place, date, or ceremony of interment.

[Gerhard Isaac Toews](#) left this world on 10 March 1890 near [Hampton NE](#) and he is buried in the [rural MB Cemetery](#) near [Henderson NE](#).

Note alternate dates on his gravestone.



Gerhard Isaac's father, **GGG-Grandpa Isaac Toews** was born ~1765 in **Royal (Polish; soon to be West) Prussia**, most likely in the village of **Blumenort**, and his mother, **GGG-Grandma Catharina Woelck Toews** in **Hochzeit, Danzig, West Prussia** on 3 July 1783. They were married in 1805 and are listed in the **1808 Blumenort, Molotschna, S Russia census**. **GG-Grandpa Gerhard Isaac** was born to them in 1809. Isaac died sometime before 1813 in Blumenort, Molotschna, S Russia; Catharina also died in Blumenort, Molotschna, date unknown. **Arrel's "Toews Family" line going back ends with this GGG-Grandpa Isaac Toews.**

GG-Grandfather Johann Aron Peters (18) was born 5 April 1809 in Landskrone Molotschna S Russia, and he died ~2 April 1890 in Hampton NE. On 11 September 1832, he married **GG-Grandmother Margaretha Loewen (19)**, born 23 February 1814 in Prussia. He purchased NE/4-12 of Beaver Precinct, Hamilton County NE for \$1200 - this farm is just N of the farm of Abraham Schmidt and $\frac{1}{2}$ mile N of the original Henderson MB Church and Cemetery. Johann and Margaretha Loewen Peters are the parents of **G-Grandmother Elizabeth Peters Toews Block**. **GGG-Grandpa Aron Johann Peters**, Johann Aron's father, born ~1781, came from Prussia to S Russia in 1809, settling at #9 Ruchenau Molotschna.

GG-Grandfather Jacob Jacob Buller (20) was born 12 Aug 1796 in Przechowka, Schwetz, Prussia. He later migrated to S Russia and lived in the village of Alexanderwohl, Molotschna. In the 1835 census, he is listed at Alexanderwohl #15, and is said to have come from Franzthal Molotschna in 1822. The entry for Franzthal #5 says he moved away from there in 1822. He married Helena Toews on 1 December 1835. He was previously married to Aganetha Reimer. **GG-Grandmother Helena Toews (21)** was born 23 December 1817 in Fischau Molotschna. Their son, our **G-Grandpa Heinrich J. Buller** was born to them on 9 Dec 1850 in Alexanderwohl, Molotschna. Jacob Jacob died 11 September 1869 and Helena Toews Buller on 29 June 1887, presumably both in Molotschna S Russia.

Jacob Jacob's parents (Arrel's Buller GGG-Grandparents) were (of course!) **Jacob Buller**, born 4 Sept 1731 in Deutsch Konopat, Schwetz, Prussia, and **Elscke Wedels**, born 2 April 1757 in Glugowko, Schwetz, Prussia. They were married 2 March 1783 in Przechowka, Schwetz, Prussia. Elscke died on 13 October 1809 in Przechowka, Schwetz, Prussia and Jacob on 10 June 1836 in Alexanderwohl Molotschna S Russia.

Parents of **G-Grandmother Sara Buller Buller** were **GG-Grandfather Heinrich Buller (22)**, born 18 April 1814 in Deutsch Konopat, Schwetz, Prussia, died 1857, and **GG-Grandmother Anna Schmidt (23)**, born 21 July 1819 in Glugowko, Schwetz, Prussia, died 28 December 1896. They married 18 November 1839, presumably in Alexanderwohl Molotschna S Russia, where daughter **Sara** was born in 1845.

In case anyone is not yet confused, **Arrel has 2 GG-Grandfather Bullers!**

The known line of our Buller family ends with **GGGGGG-Grandfather Heinrich Buller**, born ~1580 in Bruetisellen, Zurich, Switzerland. Heinrich died sometime after 1615 in Deutsch Konopat Schwetz Prussia.

GG-Grandpa Jacob Voth (24) was born 22 August 1837 in **Kleefeld** Molotschna S Russia, one of three sons of **GGG-Grandpa Heinrich "Henry" Voth** (2 daughters also).

At age 16, **Jakob** drove a four-horse bread wagon in the **Crimean War** (1853-1856). The four horses were killed, but he played dead and survived. He never saw his two brothers again (aged 19 and 20 at the time) and they were presumed killed in the war. **Anna Neufeld (25)** was born 2 April 1844 in **Liebenau**, Molotschna. At age 11, she is listed as a student at Lichtfelde School, Molotschna. On 8 November 1863, Jakob and Anna were married in S Russia - their presumptive **wedding photo** is shown at R [Note: perhaps this is **Jacob J & Anna J Voth wedding photo** instead]. Anna taught her husband to read and write, and he in turn taught children to read at their farmhouse, using the Bible as a textbook.



Their family, including Jacob (41), Anna (35), and sons Heinrich (12), **G-Grandpa Jacob J** (9), Gerhard (7), Abraham (4) and Peter (1) came to the US from Kleefeld, Molotschna via Antwerp, Belgium aboard the Red Star Line's **S. S. Switzerland**, arriving in Philadelphia 24 June 1879. Their destination was the Hamilton



S.S. SWITZERLAND, 1874 Red Star-American Line

County NE area where they arrived 4 July 1879 and lived near Beaver (between Henderson & Hampton) NE, attending the Henderson MB Church. Their first home was a sod house with sun-dried mud bricks used for the fireplace and beds made of barrel-stave hammocks with straw-tick

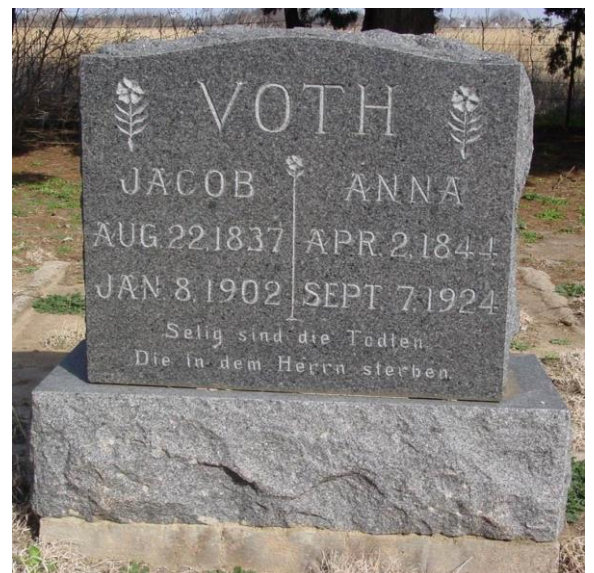
mattresses. They later moved to near Kremlin OK in 1901, where they farmed; Jacob also served as Sunday School Superintendent at the N Enid MB Church.

The **Jacob and Anna Voth family** are shown below in a photo believed taken in the Hamilton County NE area about 1892 - children shown are, in order of increasing age, **Katherine "Tina" (6)**, **Johann "John" (12)**, **Peter (14)**, **Abraham (18)**, **Gerhard "George" (20)**. **G-Grandpa Jacob J (22)** and brother **Henry (25)** were both already married by 1892, probably explaining their absence from this photo.



Note that **G-Grandma Katharina Johann Regier Schmidt** came to the US with her family, father Johann (40), mother Maria (31), **Katharina (17)**, sisters Anna (14) and Elisabeth (10), and brother Johann (0), on the same voyage of the **S.S. Switzerland** in 1879 as the **Jacob and Anna Neufeld Voth family** above.

Jacob died 8 Jan 1902 near Enid OK and **Anna** on 7 September 1924 in Hillsboro KS. They are buried together in the **North Enid MB cemetery** & birth and death dates are taken from their gravestone. **They are the oldest of our Voth ancestors buried in the US.**
"Blessed are the dead, that die in the Lord."



The photo below shows **GG-Grandma Anna Neufeld Voth** and her children, presumably after the death of her husband Jacob Voth in 1902. They are, back, L/R: Peter, Abe, Katharina (Tina), **G-Grandpa Jacob J**; front: Henry, **GG-Grandma Anna**, George, John.



The obituary and funeral photo for **Anna Neufeld Voth** is shown below:

Anna Both

Verwandten und Freunden hiermit die traurige Nachricht, daß es dem Herrn gefallen hat, unsere liebe Mutter und Großmutter

Anna Both
(geborene Neufeld)

zur ewigen Heimat einzuberufen. Sie wurde am 14. April, 1844, geboren und entschlief selig im Herrn am 7. September, 1924, 9 Uhr morgens. Die Beerdigung wird, so Gott will, Freitag, den 12. September, 2 Uhr nachmittags, von der M. V. Kirche zu Enid, Oklahoma, aus stattfinden, wozu jedermann eingeladen ist.

Die Hinterbliebenen.



Translation of the obituary on the previous page, courtesy of **Myron Toews**:

"Brethren and friends, here is the sad news, that God has decided to call to her Heavenly glory our mother and grandmother, Anna Voth, born Neufeld. She was born April 14, 1844, and went to her Father on September 7, 1924, at 9 in the morning. The burial, God willing, will take place Friday September 12 at 2 in the afternoon at the M.B. Church at Enid, Oklahoma, to which everyone is welcome (invited). [Signed by] Those Left Behind"

A few brief notes on the **children of GG-Grandparents Jacob and Anna Neufeld Voth**:



At left, **Jacob J & Anna J Voth (G-Grandparents) family** in OK in 1903: back, Anna E, Anna J, **Grandpa Jacob A**; front, Jacob J, Peter H, Cornelius J (Chris). They lived and farmed on the (later) Jacob A Voth homeplace. Similar photo bottom p 24.

Tina (Katharina) Voth married **Peter H Berg**, grandfather to **Al Berg** and **Karen Berg Neufeld**. Al and Karen are our 2nd cousins, once removed. PH taught school in Kremlin in 1909 and was editor of the MB Publishing House in Hillsboro KS from 1922-57.

George Voth lived near Kremlin OK - he was a long-time pastor of the N Enid MB Church. Father of John Voth, grandfather of Fritz Voth.

Henry Voth moved straight to OR from NE, several years before any other siblings left NE. He had a prune plum orchard.

Peter Voth had a general store in Kremlin OK and later owned Voth Grocery in Dallas OR.

Abe Voth was **Kate Turell's** father, and they later moved from Kremlin to near Dallas OR.

John Voth also moved to OR, where he was presumably a farmer.

In OR, all of the Voth Brothers lived in the **Salt Creek** community near **Dallas OR**.

GG-Grandpa Jacob Voth's sons ran the **Voth Brothers "Huber" Threshing Crew** in the Kremlin area - **Abraham J** was engineer, **Gerhard "George"** on the separator, **Johann "John" H** on the water wagon ("Water Monkey"), my G-Gpa **Jacob J** on the bundle wagon, **Peter J** on the coal wagon, shoveling coal into the engine, and daughter **Katie C "Tina" (nee Berg)** in the cook-shack; **Katherine E "Kate" Voth Turell**, Abraham's daughter, assisted with the cooking.

Photos of the "Voth Brothers" threshing crew are shown below (1903) - the 5 sons of Jacob Voth are identified in the lower photo: Kate Turell, daughter of son Abraham J and granddaughter of Jacob Voth, says they sold their threshing equipment in 1906 in order to buy a store in Kremlin.

NW/4-29-24N-6W is diagonally SE from the JAV homeplace, directly across US-81. The photo at right is either Menno or Rosa Voth and a hired man (or perhaps Peter H Voth) with shocks of wheat - years after the other photos.



Photo at R shows the **sons of GG-Grandparents Jacob & Anna Neufeld Voth** on Jacob J/Jacob A Voth homeplace.

L/R: John H, Peter J, George, **G-Grandpa Jacob J**, Henry Voth.
(date unknown)



Not much specific information is known about **GGG-Grandparents Voth: Heinrich Jacob Voth** was born in 1799, location unknown. About 1820, he married **Eva Funk** (born about 1806, location unknown) in S Russia. The 1835 Molotschna Census lists him at Mariental #18, home of Franz Johann Voth (perhaps a relative). They had three sons, including our **GG-Grandfather Jacob Voth**, and two daughters. Heinrich worked as a yardman in a brickyard in "Rurend Wide" S Russia. He died in 1846 and Eva in 1847, both in S Russia. Photo at R shows **Heinrich and Eva Funk Voth in S Russia**, date unknown. Photo provided by Debbie Thesman Wright, daughter of Mose and Leora Thesman and granddaughter of "Uncle Jake and Aunt Anna" Thesman (Anna Voth Thesman was our Grandpa Voth's sister). They lived on the Jacob Voth homeplace 1 mile S of the Jacob J/Jacob A Voth homeplace.



Heinrich's father was, of course, another **Jacob Voth** (only the name is known).
This GGG-Grandfather Jacob Voth is the oldest documented Voth relative of Arrel.

GG-Grandfather Cornelius Toews (26) was born about 1846 in Landskrone, Molotschna S Russia and he died before 1882. He married **GG-Grandmother Anna Schmidt (27)**, date unknown, and she died in 1874 in S Russia. They are the parents of **G-Grandmother Anna Toews Voth (Mrs Jacob J Voth)**. Cornelius Toews was a son (9th child) of our **GG-Grandfather Gerhard Isaac Toews** (see p 46). He and Anna stayed in S Russia.

GG-Grandfather Heinrich Schmidt (28) was born in 1793 in Germany. **GG-Grandmother Katherine Funk (29)** was born 22 June 1807 in Prussia. Heinrich died in 1863 in Schardau, Molotschna, S Russia. **Katherine Funk Schmidt** is listed at Schardau #11 in the 1858 Census, and as a widow in the Kuban Intent Document of 1864. She died February 1874 in Kuban Colony, S Russia. **Kuban Colony** was a S Russia Mennonite settlement in the N Caucasus on the Kuban River E of the Sea of Azov and NE of the Black Sea (see [map](#) at R). **This Heinrich Schmidt is the end of Arrel's known Schmidt family line.**



GG-Grandfather Johann Johann "JJ" Regier (30) was born 22 March 1839 in Ladekopp Molotschna S Russia. He died 8 July 1902 near Henderson NE, and rests in the Henderson MB Cemetery. **GG-Grandmother Katharina Franz Regier (31)** was born 18 January 1838 in Alexanderthal Molotschna S Russia, and she died 2 February 1875 at Klippenfeld Molotschna. The Johann Johann Regier family, including second wife **Maria Schellenberg Regier** and daughter **G-Grandmother Katharina Regier Schmidt (Mrs AH Schmidt)**, came to the US in 1879 on the S/S Switzerland, same ship passage as the Jacob & Anna Neufeld Voth family, landing in Philadelphia. They settled in the Henderson NE area.



Not in the direct Toews branch of our family tree, but there is an interesting **Cornelius Cornelius Toews** among our ancestors at the **GGGG-Grandparents** level, born 4 Oct 1766 in Ladekopperfeld, Prussia. He migrated from Tiegenhagen, Prussia to Lindenau, Molotschna, S Russia prior to 1808 and died in Lindenau on 14 Sep 1831. This Cornelius Toews family was one of the founding families of the **Kleine Gemeinde** ("Little Church;" see **GAMEO** link for details); all of their children were involved in the movement, and son Johan Toews was one of the first young people baptized into the KG in 1814. They contrasted with the remaining Molotschna Mennonites, "**die Grosse Gemeinde**" (**Big Church**). Among the practices they especially condemned were card-playing, smoking, drinking, higher education, musical instruments, mission work, and marrying one's sister-in-law! Obviously, a challenging lifestyle to follow. This splinter group later became organized in Canada as the Evangelical Mennonite Church, while the NE colony was assimilated into the Krimmer MB Church.

Arrel's earliest documented ancestors

Arrel's earliest documented ancestors include a **Heinrich Buller** (b ~1580, Breutisellen, Zurich, Switzerland), a **Hans Ratzlaff** (b 1630), a **Voht** (b 1586), a **Voth** (b 1611; Culm, Prussia), an **Andreas Pancratz** (b 1625, Culm, Prussia) and an **Ehrenst Schmidt** (b 1636; Deutsch Konopat, Schwetz, Prussia). These are mostly **9th G-Grandparents!**

Anyone interested in more details should consult the **Pedigree Chart for Arrel Dwayne Toews** or the **Arrel Dwayne Toews Ahnentafel**. Both, along with this and associated **Toews and Voth Family documents**, are **available upon request**.

Note: **Myron Toews** has digitized and edited the "**Genealogical Record of Descendants of Gerhard Isaac Toews**" notebook assembled by **Anna T Wiens** in the early 1970s. It is a valuable resource for genealogical research regarding our extended family. A .pdf version is available from **Myron Toews** upon request. I have Galen's actual copy.

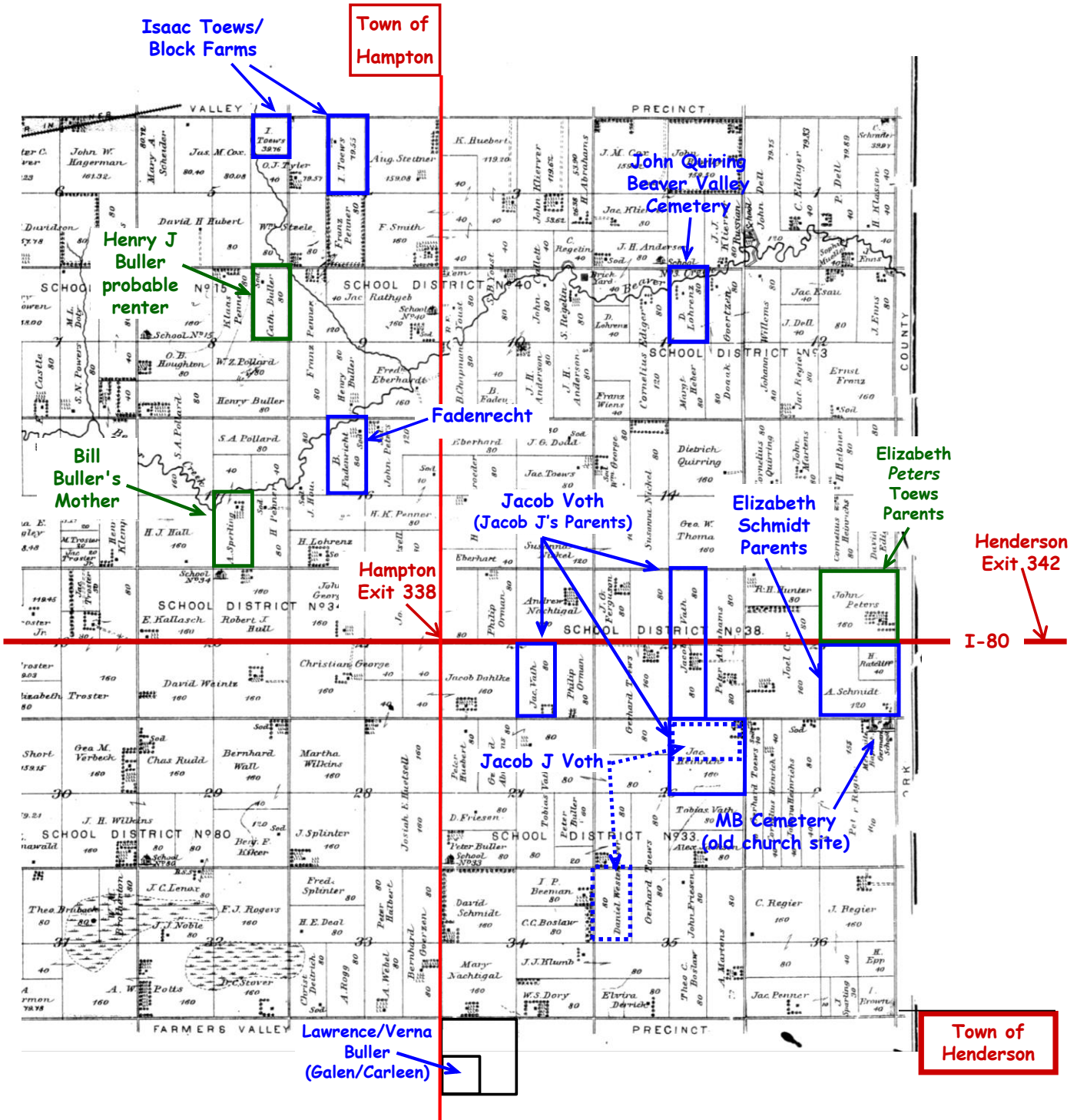
Many of our ancestors immigrated from S Russia to Beaver Precinct, Hamilton County NE in the 1870s. An 1888 Plat Map, annotated by Myron Toews, is shown below. The A Sperling denoted as "Bill Buller's Mother" below is the same man from whom George P Toews purchased our homeplace in Kremlin Twp, OK Territory in 1903 (see "George P and Anna Toews Family" on this website for details).

BEAVER PRECINCT

Hamilton County, Nebraska

Town 10 North Range 5 West. of the 6th Principal Meridian.

1888 Plat Map

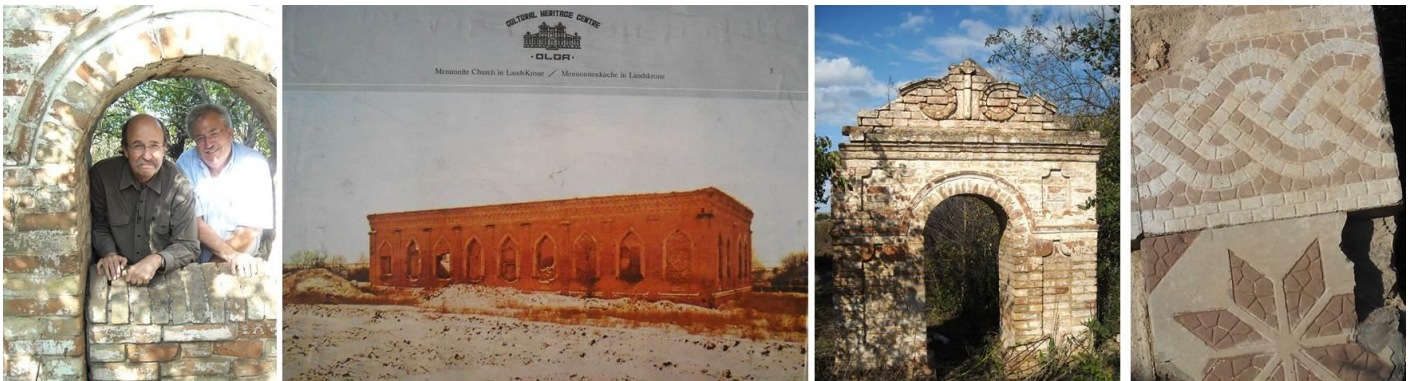


Molotschna, S Russia Villages of Our Ancestors

In 2008, Kathy and I were fortunate to be able to accompany Galen and Anita, first for a week in St. Petersburg, Russia, then on to the Ukraine (formerly S Russia) to visit the sites of the villages from which our ancestors immigrated, as part of the [Mennonite Heritage Cruise and Tour](#). We spent 4 days docked in Zaporozhe, with one full day of touring the [North Molotschna colonies](#) - not much remains, but we were able to find all the villages and also some structural remnants, even enough for some souvenirs (including dirt!). A very brief overview and collection of photos, mostly from that trip, are included below.

[Landskrone](#) was established in 1839 along the Begin-Tschokrak River and planned according to the requirement of [Johann Cornies](#) and the Agricultural Society, with 40 families coming from other Molotschna villages. Houses and the Mennonite church were constructed mostly of red clay bricks, leading to its informal name of the "red village." By 1869, there was a 3-room schoolhouse, over 5,500 fruit trees, 36 full farms, 8 half-farms, and 34 small farms, occupying 3,144 dessiatines (8,489 acres). The retreating German Army destroyed the village in 1943 and today nothing remains save some rubble from the church building (see floor tiles below, far R).

[Landskrone](#) was the home village of [GG-Grandparents Gerhard Isaac and Aganetha Warkentine Toews](#) prior to immigrating to the US and also the birthplace of both [G-Grandparents Isaac and Elisabeth Peters Toews](#). Arches photos are from [Hierschau](#).



[Alexanderwohl](#) was the home village of [G-Grandparents Heinrich J and Sara Buller Buller](#) - see their entry above for more information. Additional photos are shown below. The village school building, below center, is still in use today.



The panel below shows what remained of the **Molotschna Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church** when Galen, Anita, Kathy & I visited the **Ukraine** in 2008 as part of our **Mennonite Heritage Cruise**. The B/W photo shows the church as it appeared in 1890.



Hierschau was founded in 1848 with families from other Molotschna villages - it was designed and constructed on the left bank of the Begim-Tschokrak River as a "model village," (name means "look here") under rigid specifications set by **Ohrloff Agricultural Society** head, **Johann Cornies** (see the book "**Hierschau: An Example of Russian Mennonite Life**" by Heubert). The houses were all made of burned tile. Besides the very productive soil, Hierschau also owned clay pits and tile/brickyards, which contributed to the prosperity of the village. Plantings of fruit trees surrounded the regularly spaced farm buildings and yielded a considerable annual income, while the opposite side of the village had gardens and a grove of trees. Only a Mennonite gatepost still stands (see previous page).

Grandpa George (Gerhard) P Toews was born in Hierschau, and it was the home village from which he and his parents, our **G-Grandparents Isaac and Elisabeth Peters Toews**, left when they immigrated to the US in 1878. There never was a church in Hierschau. The photos below show farmsteads where Hierschau was formerly located.



Liebenau (GG-Grandmother Anna Neufeld Voth) was founded in 1823 on the S bank of the Tokmak River - It has quite a bit of preserved **Mennonite buildings** and **brick/tile gateposts and fences** (see below). The name means "**lovely meadow.**" A number of well-preserved houses have the hip-roofs introduced by Johann Cornies. Villagers suffered considerably during the Russian Revolution and Civil War, with several men shot by **Nestor Makhno's** anarchist bandits.



We did not visit the south Molotschna villages of **Kleefeld** (1854; no trace remains - birthplace of **GG-Grandpa Jacob and G-Grandpa Jacob J Voth**) nor **Schardau** (1820; again, almost nothing remains), birthplace of **G-Grandpa Abraham A Schmidt**).

A final note from our **Molotschna tour in 2008**: The first stop of our North Molotschna tour was the village of **Fuerstenau**, and Alan Peters, our guide, noted that there had been a **clay pit and tile/brick yard to the north**. At the next stop, **Schoenensee**, we viewed church ruins (the church has since been restored) and Alan Peters noted there were terra cotta roof tiles for the taking - for anyone foolish enough to lug them around in their luggage for 2 weeks! Of course Galen and I immediately headed for the tile pile, along with a single other tourist, an Enns from Canada. Scavenging through the tiles, we managed to find some with imprints on the back. With my rudimentary Russian knowledge, I managed to translate **Fabrickerweise** (village N of Fuerstenau) and "**& Enns**" but was stuck on the first word in the lower line until Alan Peters said "**That's Toews! Toews and Enns!**" Perhaps the most golden moment of our tour for me! I can help with the translations if anyone cares!



The other note concerns **Fuerstenau**, the first village on our North Molotschna tour - The central portion of a former Mennonite estate house is now used as a village "social club" or meeting house - the remaining portions of the house were scavenged during the formation of "collective farms" mandated by Josef Stalin following the Russian Revolution. The **Neufelds** were the owners of that former Mennonite estate house - so shown at right is **Kathy Neufeld Toews** in front of her "**Klub Neufeld!**"



Shown below are front and back views of the [Fuersteaau/Fabrickerweise terra cotta roof tile](#) Kathy and I collected on our [2008 Mennonite Heritage Tour](#).



Below is a similar roof tile collected by Myron Toews at the former [Alexanderwohl MB Church](#) in Ukraine during his Mennonite Heritage Tour in 2018.



Family Names

(web-links are mostly to [GAMEO](#))

Toews: The family name Toews and its many permutations (including [Töws](#)) was a common family name among [W Prussian Mennonites](#). The name is probably of [Dutch](#) origin, derived from [Matthew \(Mattheus\)](#), but it spent some early time in Germany as well. Variants of Mattheus are found repeatedly in earliest days of Anabaptism, including amongst the list of [martyrs \(Matthijss; 1564\)](#). Toews/Toeffs/Taews and other variants were found in [Tiegenhagen](#), [Ladekopp](#), [Rosenort](#), [Fürstenwerder](#), [Heubuden](#), [Elbing](#), and [Danzig](#) communities of [W Prussia](#) after 1530, when they began fleeing Holland and nearby countries. According to some genealogists, the [original Dutch name](#) was "van Toovs" that, when the family sought refuge in [Germany](#), became "Töws" and later, without the umlaut, "Toews." Arrel's [Great-Grandpa Isaac Toews](#) and his family, including [Grandpa Gerhard P](#), are listed as "Töws" on their [immigrant ship manifest](#) in 1878.

For a somewhat less charitable, not to mention less applicable, take on the origin of our family name, check out the [houseofnames.com entry](#): "The name Toews can be traced to the ancient Celtic culture of Wales. The surname Toews is derived from the Welsh word "[Tew](#)," which means [portly or plump](#) and was most likely the [nickname for a heavy-set person](#)." OK, well. . . . [Another source](#) says Toews means a [descendent of Matthew \(The Gift of God\)](#) - now that's more like it!

Buller: The relevant Buller surname may be of early medieval German origin, from the Middle High German "[bullen](#)", "to roar," which was a nickname for a man with a loud voice. This surname first appears in the Church Registers of early German States in the [16th Century](#). Buller ([Büller](#)) was a Mennonite family name in the [Old Flemish congregations](#) in [W Prussia](#), first mentioned at [Schönsee](#) (Sosnovka) in [1695](#). All members of this family immigrated to [Russia \(Molotschna settlement\)](#) in the first third of the 19th century, and subsequently to [Kansas](#) and [Nebraska](#), from where they have spread into other states. [Jacob Buller](#), elder of the [Alexanderwohl](#) congregation in S Russia and later at [Goessel](#), Kansas, was one of the 12 delegates sent to America in 1873 to prepare for the migration.

Voth: The family name [Voth](#) is probably of North German origin, from the Middle Low German "[vot](#)" or "[foot](#)." Hence, it was most probably a nickname for someone with some peculiarity or deformity of the foot, but perhaps also a topographic name for someone who lived at the foot of a hill. We will hope for the latter possibility! Voth (and its variations, including Vogt, Voet, Fogt, and yes, Foot!) is a Mennonite family name commonly found among the descendants of the [Prussian and S Russian Mennonites](#). It was found in [W Prussia](#) as early as [1630](#) and in Danzig by 1677. Mainly it is found in congregational records from

[Montau-Gruppe](#), [Schönsee](#), Jeziorka, [Tragheimerweide](#), and Danzig, W Prussia. It is not clear whether the Prussian Voth-Foth family descended from a Dutch-Flemish Voogt family, or from a Swiss Vogt family. It is doubtful that Vogt was a family name found among the early Swiss [Anabaptists](#), though Hans Vogt, of Villingen, canton of [Aargau](#), did attend the third Anabaptist disputation at Bern.

Schmidt: Schmidt is a common German occupational surname derived from the German word "Schmied" meaning "blacksmith" and/or "metalworker". This surname is the German equivalent of "Smith" in the English-speaking world. Schmidt is a common Mennonite name, particularly among those of Prussian and S Russian background. The name appears in the early [church records](#) of [Thiensdorf](#), Orloffelfelde, [Danzig](#), [Elbing](#), [Jeziorka](#), [Przechovka](#), [Konopat](#) and [Kazun](#) communities of W Prussia. The first records of the name in Prussia date back as early as 1586.

Useful & Interesting Web-links

Find A Grave: findagrave.com is a very impressive resource for finding gravesites and nice photos of gravestones and cemeteries. I have been amazed at how many ancestor's resting places and gravestones I was able to find with this simple search engine! In addition to the photos, there is a nice genealogical summary and sometimes relevant historical information as well. Some day we'll all be on this site - but not yet! Highly recommended by Arrel!

[GAMEO.org](http://gameo.org) - The [Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online](#) is an online encyclopedia of topics relating to [Mennonites](#) and [Anabaptism](#). The mission of the project is to provide free, reliable, English-language information on Anabaptist-related topics, and it quite useful as an online source of Mennonite history through the centuries and all over the world. Easily searchable and generally quite detailed, comprehensive, and up to date.

<https://www.kshs.org/p/kansas-historical-quarterly-the-migration-of-the-russian-germans-to-kansas/13242> - Kansas Historical Society exhaustive article on German-Russian Kansas Mennonites.

<https://mla.bethelks.edu/holdings/scans/leslie/?view=print> - Mennonite Library & Archives - Bethel College - reprints and original drawings of early KS Mennonites from "[Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper](#)" - nice drawings and interesting reading. Most drawings from Gnadenau Colony. Good narrative too!

[Welcome! - To a Story About Abraham Schmidt and Heinrich Thesman](#) - Schmidt relative [Kate Ashley's](#) blog about her Schmidt/Thesman ancestors. Kate has worked long and hard on this document and it shows! It is periodically updated and well worth a look.

<http://schmidt-thesman.blogspot.com/2011/03/chapter-8-move-to-freedom.html> -

Schmidt-Thesman Blogspot concerning Abraham A Schmidt's immigration to the US in 1876. See above - lots of additional chapters as well!

<http://bullertime.blogspot.com/2017/> - this is an incredibly detailed web-site about the Bullers - specifically the family of Cornelius (Chris) Buller and Malinda Franz - it covers much general Mennonite history from W Prussia and Molotschna/Chortitza in detail and includes nice pictures/diagrams/maps. It is worth looking at just for interesting reading - it looks almost like he is being paid to do this!

Maintained by Bob Buller (bob.buller@sbl-site.org)

<http://www.reidgen.com/familychart.php?personID=I14853&tree=ReidFamilyTree> - website with Gerhard Isaac Toews genealogy info.

<http://www.hendersonnebraska.com/play-in-henderson/history/> - a bit of Menno history about founding of Henderson in 1874 - has a photo of the Immigrant house too.

<http://www.krausehouse.ca/krause/Molotschna.htm> - Krause website about Molotschna with lots of data and information, plus back arrow gives many more "Krause" topics. Worth a look! Found completely by accident!

Finally and most importantly, **I am deeply indebted to my brother Myron Toews** for his invaluable help with genealogy, photos and their documentation, and so much more! I could not have assembled this work without his dedicated support, advice, and assistance. A joint effort from both of us. And after all, they are **his ancestors too!**

I encourage readers to avail themselves of the many **embedded web-links** (underlined in purple)

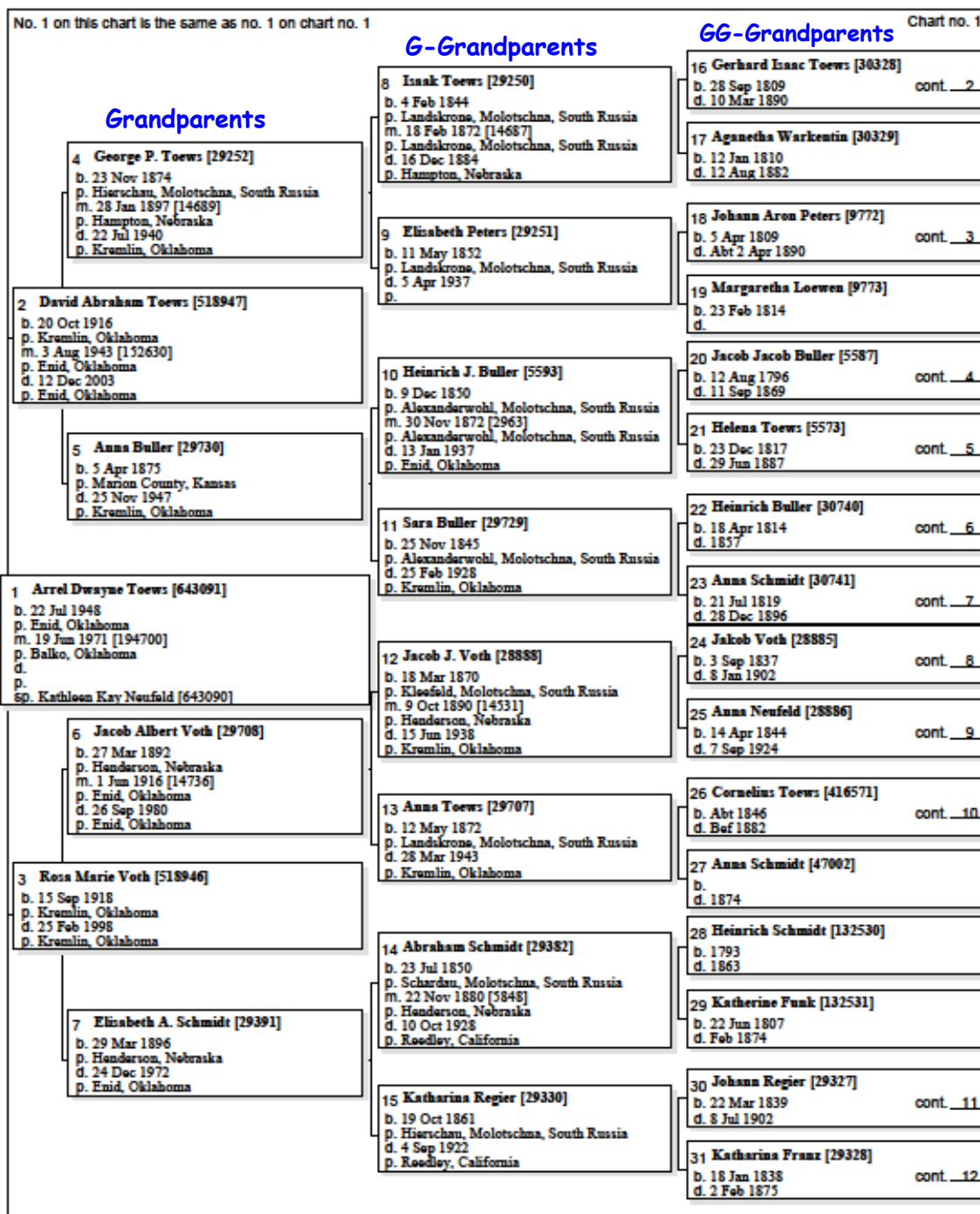
Arrel Toews
updated 29 June 2025
Carrboro, NC, USA

ARREL\WRITE\ARREL'S ANCESTORS\ANCESTORS OF DAVID A & ROSA M VOTH TOEWS.docx

I have appended the first page of my "GRANDMA" pedigree chart on the next page - it shows my family tree through my great-great-grandparents. The interested reader may need to zoom in for added clarity, but it does contain much genealogical information on a single page. Graciously provided by my brother **Myron Toews**

Numbers in the text (#) indicate ancestors' position on the pedigree chart below.

Pedigree Chart for Arrel Dwayne Toews



Two additional documents have been prepared and are also available on this website. They are supplements to this document and have considerably more information and many photos of the families of my maternal grandparents, Jacob A and Elizabeth Schmidt Voth, and my paternal grandparents George P and Anna Buller Toews. Notably, they each contain an exhaustive listing of their descendants, a valuable resource.

Coming to America - the Emigration of Our Ancestors Arrel Toews

Our [Toews/Voth/Buller/Schmidt ancestors](#) left their last European "homelands" in the [1870s-1880s](#) to emigrate to the US. Most, but not all, came from the [Molotschna Colony](#) of what was then [New S Russia \(currently Ukraine\)](#). After disposing of their farms and most of their material goods, they traveled by train to E European ports, with their steamer chests holding their most precious and essential belongings, including their [Turkish hard red winter wheat](#). Most entered the US at [New York City](#), but some entered at the port of [Philadelphia](#). Those entering at NYC were processed at the [Emigrant Landing Depot at Castle Garden](#), while those entering at Philadelphia went through the [Washington Avenue Immigrant Station](#) (see later section). From their arrival points, they traveled W by rail to their new homes on the prairies of either NE or KS. Rich farmlands, similar to those they had left in S Russia, were readily available in both states, in part because of new railroads extending to both areas where they settled. For much additional detail, see [Our Mennonite Heritage and Early Family History](#) and [The Ancestors of David and Rosa Toews](#) on our [ToewsVothKremlin.info](#) family website.

[Our specific ancestors' arrivals](#) are denoted below, to the best of our current knowledge, generally listed in order of their arrivals.

[G-Grandparents Heinrich J and Sara Buller Buller](#) were members of the Alexanderwohl village in the Molotschna S Russia colony. On 31 July 1874, virtually the entire village (303 adults and 172 children), led by Elder Jacob Buller, boarded the Hamburg-America Lines [S/S Cimbria](#), from Hamburg/Harve, landing in [New York](#) harbor on 27 August 1874. The colonists accepted an offer to purchase 100,000 acres of land from the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad about 12 miles NNE of Newton [KS](#), near the current town of Goessel, and established their "[Neu](#)" [Alexanderwohl Colony](#) there.

[G-Grandparents Isaac and Elizabeth Peters Toews](#) were members of the Heirschau village of the Molotschna S Russia Colony. Their family, including young [Grandfather Gerhard P Toews](#) (age 4), left Bremen, Germany on the Norddeutscher Lloyd Lines [S/S Strassburg](#), arriving 2 July 1878 in [NYC](#). They settled just S of Hampton NE.

[GG-Grandparents Gerhard Isaac and Aganetha Warkentin Toews](#) were members of the Landskrone Molotschna village. They left Bremen (Antwerp?) bound to the US aboard the Red Star Line's [S/S Nederland](#), with son [Abraham](#), but Aganetha died at sea, just prior to the ship's arrival in New York Harbor on 12 August 1882. Another son Isaac emigrated earlier - in 1878 - see above. They also settled near Hampton NE.

G-Grandmother Anna J. Toews Voth was an orphan, and she and her brother **Cornelius C Toews** emigrated from Landskrone Molotschna with the **Peter and Marg Guenther** family on the Norddeutscher Lloyd **S/S Werra**, arriving in NYC on 7 June 1884, then traveling to the Henderson NE area. We believe they were recorded as children of the Guenthers, along with their own six children. They traveled to Henderson NE, where Anna was taken in by the Peter Abrahams family as maid and foster daughter. Marg Guenther was a sister of our **G-Grandmother Elizabeth Peters Toews.**, so Anna and Cornelius were traveling in good (close family) company.

G-Grandfather Abraham A. Schmidt emigrated to the United States from the Kuban Oblast of S Russia (on the Black Sea E of the Crimean Peninsula), arriving, age 26, at NYC on 20 June 1876. He settled in York Co, NE (near Henderson). His ship of arrival is not well documented - perhaps it was the **S/S Wyoming** on which many fellow Mennonites arrived in NYC on that day, but his name is not on the passenger roster. He is known to have traveled with a group of Mennonites from Hamburg to Liverpool on the **S/S Fairy**, leaving Hamburg on 7 June 1876, but nothing later. Perhaps he signed on as a seaman on the S/S Wyoming for the journey and was thus not listed as a passenger?

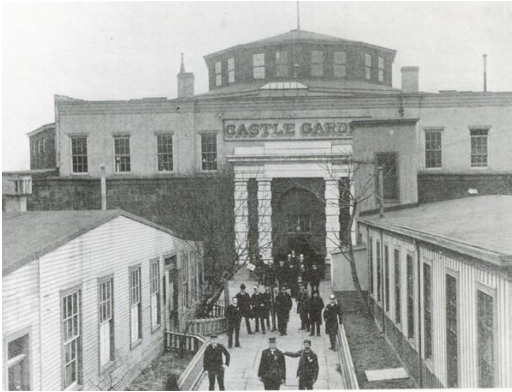
GG-Grandparents Jacob and Anna Neufeld Voth and their family, including **G-Grandfather Jacob J Voth** (age 9), came to the US from Kleefeld Molotschna via Antwerp, Belgium aboard the Red Star Line's **S/S Switzerland**, arriving in Philadelphia 24 June 1879. Their destination was the Hamilton County NE area, where they arrived 4 July 1879.

G-Grandmother Katharina Johann Regier Schmidt came from Klippenfeld Molotschna to the US with her family, including her father, our **GG-Grandfather Johann "JJ" Regier**, and stepmother **Maria Schellenberg Regier**, on the same voyage of the **S/S Switzerland to Philadelphia** in 1879 as the **Jacob and Anna Neufeld Voth family** above. [Katharina's mother died in Klippenfeld in 1875, and her father remarried before coming to America.]

US Emigration Facilities of our Ancestors

During the late 1700s and early 1800s, an estimated 5,000-6,000 people/year freely immigrated to the United States, traveling on dangerously overcrowded sailing ships and without adequate provisions for passengers' health and comfort. Starting in 1820, to ensure safer traveling conditions, ship captains were required to provide passenger lists to US customs officials. But this new rule did nothing to protect immigrants at the docks in New York City where many landed.

After weeks on board, the exhausted, seasick travelers were often met by thieves and others who preyed on the arrivals' ignorance about their new home. Many travelers were swindled, robbed, or herded toward undesirable jobs and accommodations.



In the 1850s, New York City and NY state officials pooled their efforts to create a more protective landing experience - the [Emigrant Landing Depot at Castle Garden](#) (photo at L above), located on the southern tip of Manhattan. It was America's first facility dedicated entirely to the welfare of emigrants coming to America.

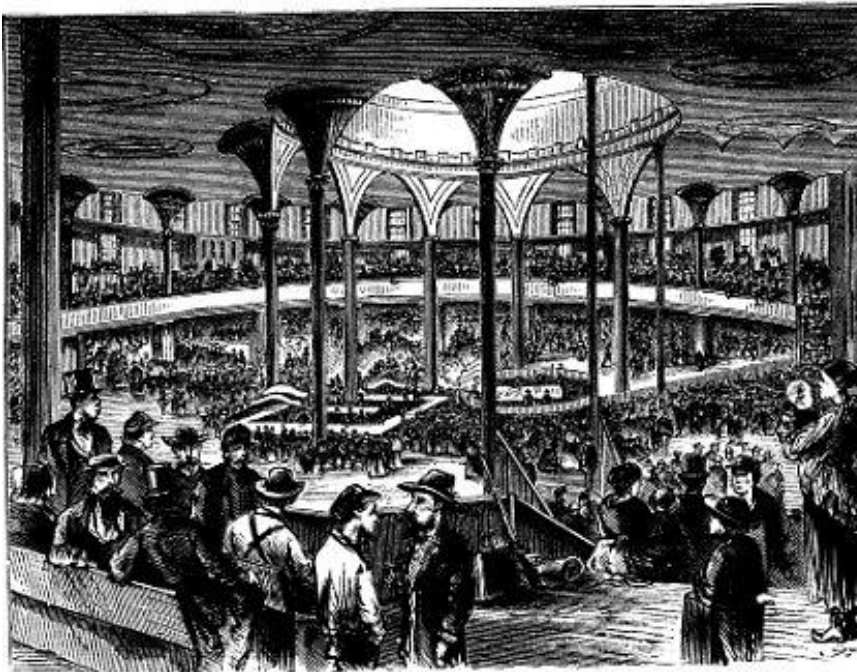
[Most all of our ancestors emigrating to the US passed through New York City](#), and thus were processed at [Castle Garden Emigrant Depot](#). The facility opened to the public on 3 August 1855, and closed on April 30th, 1890. Between 3 August 1855 and 31 December 1889, the last year for which data was recorded, fully 75% (8,280,917 of 10,956,910 US immigrants) passed through Castle Garden.

Castle Garden provided these new arrivals a safe place to buy railroad tickets, exchange money, contact relatives, rest, and even wash up before leaving. Though most of its original records were destroyed and little of the original facility remains, original stories and images of the facility have been preserved in newspapers and other media, including online. [The better-known [Ellis Island Immigration Center](#) opened in 1892 and replaced Castle Garden.]



New York Bay, Castle Garden
and the Statue of Liberty
Library of Congress

Additional period illustrations of [Castle Garden](#) are shown below:



INTERIOR OF CASTLE GARDEN.

View of the interior of Castle Garden
Harper's News Monthly, 1871



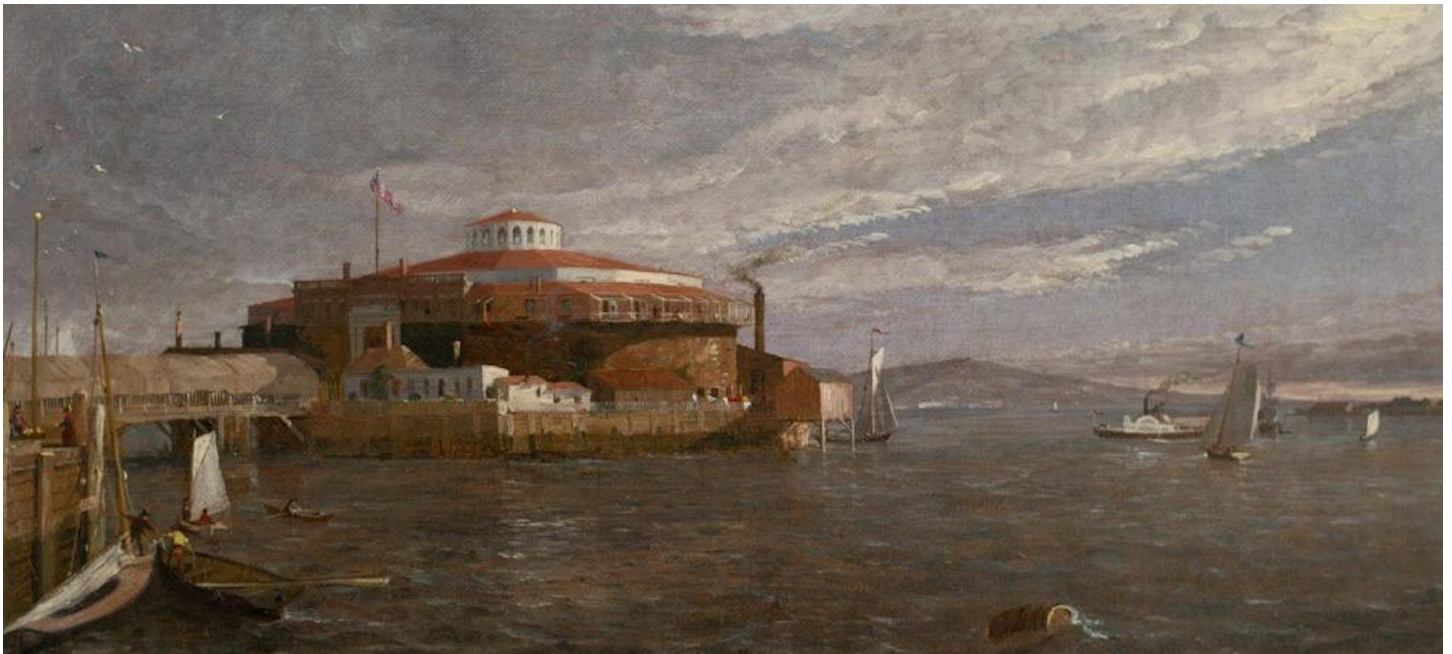
EMIGRANTS LEAVING CASTLE-GARDEN.

EMIGRATION—FROM FIRST TO LAST—SCENES AT CASTLE GARDEN

Immigrants leaving Castle Garden through the outer fence doors
Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, 1866

"Past him one sees the waving harvests which he is to sow and reap, the new cities he is to build, the new States of which his children are to be citizens. It is like the endless vibration of Niagara, or the beating of breakers on a beach at night, little heeded at first, but at last speaking to us part of the everlasting music of the world."

Harper's Weekly, May 27, 1882



Jasper Francis Cropsey (1823 - 1900) *A Sketch of Castle Garden*, 1851.

Originally a fort, Castle Garden was constructed between 1808 and 1811, and at that time wasn't even connected to the Island of Manhattan. By 1821, the US Army released the fort to New York City, having seen little military action. By 1855, land was filled in to connect Castle Garden to the S tip of Manhattan, and on August 1, 1855, Castle Clinton became the [Emigrant Landing Depot](#), New York State's first immigrant processing station. Until then, immigrants had sailed into the docks on the east side of Manhattan, but from 1855 through 1890, Castle Garden processed over 8 million immigrants. Castle Garden stopped processing immigrants in 1890, and two years later, the larger [Ellis Island](#) opened up. From there, Castle Garden had a long life as the New York City Aquarium from 1896 through 1941, and [today it still stands as a national monument](#).



"In the Land of Promise," 1884,
Charles Ulrich (National Gallery of Art)



Aerial view illustration of Manhattan, showing Castle Garden at its tip, c. 1880
Library of Congress, unidentified illustrator



A photograph of New York Harbor, Governor's Island, Staten Island, and Castle Garden, 1894
J.S. Johnston photograph collection, 1890-1899

Some of our other ancestors entered the US at [Philadelphia PA](#). The [Philadelphia Immigration Center](#) (1870-1930) aka [Washington Avenue Immigrant Station](#) was located at the end of Washington Avenue at [Pier 53](#) on the Delaware River, south of modern-day Penn's Landing waterfront district. The building opened in 1873 and was demolished in 1915.

In addition to the [American Line](#), [British White Star Line](#) and the [German Hamburg-American Line](#), it also served the Belgian [Red Star Line](#), whose ships included the [S/S Switzerland](#). The station was built by the [Pennsylvania Railroad](#) as part of its strategy to control trans-Atlantic and regional passenger service.

Between 1801 and 1895, ships first arrived at the [Lazaretto Maritime Quarantine Station](#) for the port of Philadelphia. The name Lazaretto was borrowed from the Italian name for

"pesthouse" or quarantine ground (the "other" biblical Lazarus was a beggar with leprosy). Incoming ships, cargo, sailors, and passengers were inspected and sometimes detained in order to prevent the entry of infectious disease into the city. Sick sailors



and passengers could be treated at the Lazaretto hospital. Once trans-Atlantic passengers cleared health inspection at Lazaretto, their ships proceeded up the Delaware River to a dock adjacent to Washington Avenue and its immigration station. There, customs agents and employees of the railroad ushered newcomers through a final inspection before proceeding to a ticket counter in a large lobby. Its lower level included a money exchange, comfort stations that offered a chance to clean up, and ticket booths for destinations along the Pennsylvania Railroad routes. [ExplorePAhistory](#) has some interesting additional information.

During its 42 years in operation from 1873 to 1915, the Washington Avenue Immigration Station was the point of entry for just over one million immigrants, comprising about 5% of the total number of immigrants to the United States during that time. Immigrants arriving



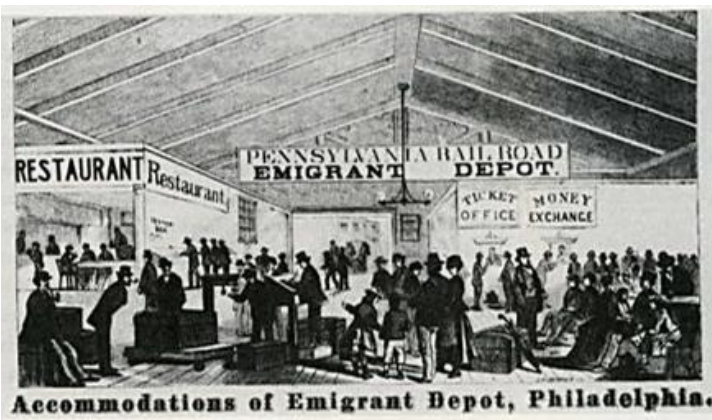
at the station were checked for various diseases and questioned about specific details of their origin before being allowed entry into the country. In some instances, unmarried women would not be allowed to enter; consequently, a designated area of the station became known as "the altar," due to its frequent impromptu wedding ceremonies.

Photo from PhillyHistory.org

Some additional illustrations are shown below:



International Navigation Company Immigration Station
(Washington Avenue Immigration Station)
Philadelphia PA, ca 1890
Historical Society of Pennsylvania



Interior of the Washington Avenue Immigration Station"
Independence Seaport Museum, Philadelphia

These two emigration stations in NYC and Philadelphia were the entry points not just for our ancestors, but for most all of the Mennonite emigrants entering the US in the 1870s and 1880s. I hope others have enjoyed learning a bit more about this emigration experience. After all, **we are ALL the descendants of immigrants**. I encourage readers to explore the [embedded weblinks](#). As always, special thanks to my brother **Myron** for invaluable assistance and wise advice. This is his work as well as mine. Please send any questions or suggestions to me at atoews@hotmail.com.

Arrel Toews
Carrboro NC

Addendum added 29 June 2025