

# **Martin Klaassen (1820–1881) Diary**

November 1852—June 1870  
August 1880—October 1881

Translated  
by

Esther C. (Klaassen) Bergen

Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1993  
Revised at Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, 2011

At the Klaassen family celebration in 1993 Esther C. (Klaassen) Bergen produced this wonderful translation of Martin Klaassen's dairy. She shared the electronic text with me and encouraged me to make it available to others. Here it is!

In preparation for the 2011 Klaassen celebration I asked my son Donald V. Wiebe, a great-great grandson of Martin, to place the text on his web site <http://ketiltrout.net/klaassen/> along with some other Klaassen items. Please feel free to download the Dairy and print copies if needed. Please always acknowledge the translation work of Esther Bergen. The introductory pages of the Dairy in this edition are somewhat modified from that of 1993 but the Dairy text is unchanged except for some typo corrections. Four of the maps are from: William Schroeder and Helmut T. Huebert: *Mennonite Historical Atlas*, Winnipeg, Manitoba: Springfield Publishers, 1990

I have added some annotations to Esther's translation of Martin's Diary to clarify some words and events. I would be very pleased to note others. If you have comments, corrections or other insights, please sent them to me at: [victor.wiebe@usask.ca](mailto:victor.wiebe@usask.ca) or better give them to me in person.

The original diary is held in the Mennonite Heritage Centre, Winnipeg, Manitoba. It was written in ink in a large account book with pages about 26 x 39 cm. Martin Klaassen wrote with a clear steady hand in Gothic German or as it is technically termed in "Kurrentschrift." The part of the diary written on the trip to Central Asia was not written as clearly and some seems to be in pencil. Perhaps the traveling conditions limited the writing skills of Martin. Reading Martin's handwriting took Esther Bergen some time to gain familiarity with it but she enjoined a good understanding of German and was a very competent translator.



2011

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## **Annotator's Introduction**

1. A few footnotes have been added to the diary to offer more information to a number of terms, usually place or personal names.
2. Text Notes. I have also added a few notes in the text. These are in square [] brackets. If I have guessed at an explanation or idea I usually follow these with a question mark, i.e. after the word Ortega on page 26 I have added [Ostrog ?] to indicate that the place name is probably spelled Ostrog and not Ortega.
3. Spelling of some place names is a bit erratic or troublesome. One source of difficulties is that the transliteration from Russian Cyrillic into English differs from the transliteration into German. For example on page 48 mentions the city of "Cherson" which in Russian Cyrillic is: "Херсон". The German transliteration is: "Kherson" but in English it is: "Cherson." The table below gives the Cyrillic letters for which there is a difference in transliterating into English or German. The original diary of course used German transliteration but in this English language translation these place names have not been consistently transliterated into proper English. If the reader has difficulty with one reading a different spelling using alternative transliterations should be tried. Readers also have to be cautioned that many place names were changed over the years. The Soviet Union changed many Imperial Russian names. The fall of the Soviet Union and the rebirth of Russia and the emergence of many independent states have contributed to frequent name changes. Ukraine's emergence in particular as an independent nation has also renamed many old places. These changes are still going on.

Cyrillic	Latin Transliteration	
Russian	German	English
В в	W w	V v
Г г	G g	G g
Е е	Je je	Ye ye (also E e)
Ё ё	Jo jo	Yo yo (also E e)
Ж ж	Sch sch	Zh zh
З з	S s	Z z
Й й	J j	Y y
С с	S s	S s
Х х	Ch ch	Kh kh
Ц ц	C c	Ts ts
Ч ч	Tsch tsch	Ch ch
Ш ш	Sch sch	Sh sh
Щ щ	Schtsch schtsch	Shch shch
ь	(-) and j	(-) and y
Ю ю	Ju ju	Yu yu
Я я	Ja ja	Ya ya

4. Background information on people, places and themes are found in the [GAMEO online encyclopedia](#). Please first check there if more information is desired.

5. **Trakt:** In Mennonite literature, this settlement is properly referred to “Am Trakt.” In this diary it is given as: “Trakt” or “The Trakt.” It was located on the salt road, which in German was “am Salztrakt,” in the Russian province of Samara and about 60 km southeast of the Russian city of Saratov, which is on the mighty Volga River.
6. There are a number of place names that cannot be located. This is either through misnaming, spelling errors or the consequence of name changes as noted above. However, the Soviet Union, in order to control people, relocated millions of its citizens with the consequence that a multitude of places have just disappeared.

Victor G. Wiebe  
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan  
July 2011

## ***Introduction***

The diary of Martin Klaassen, written November 1852–June 1870, and August 1880–October 1881, has miraculously been preserved and passed on by his children and grandchildren. It has travelled by horse and wagon from West Prussia to the Molotschna settlement (1853), then to the “Trakt” settlement in Russia (1854). From there again by horse and wagon and camel caravan, to Central Asia (The Great Trek), 1880); back to Russia by horse and wagon, caravan and boat (1884–85); then across the ocean by ship to the United States of America (1884–85). In the U.S.A. it travelled from Nebraska to Oklahoma, again by horse and wagon (1894); then to Canada by train, first to Saskatchewan, then to Manitoba in 1918.

This diary was passed on to Martin Klaassen's oldest son, Michael Klaassen, finally to Michael Klaassen's oldest daughter, Helena (Klaassen) Dalke, then to Helena's daughter Erna (Dalke) Petkau. Erna Petkau gave it to Esther (Klaassen) Bergen (youngest daughter of Michael Klaassen) to be placed in the Archives at the Mennonite Heritage Centre, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Martin Klaassen's diary was transcribed from the original Gothic German (1989–91), then translated into English (1991–92) by his granddaughter Esther C. (Klaassen) Bergen. The English copy is somewhat shorter.

A few remarks about the diary itself. Martin Klaassen began this diary right after he came back to Prussia from a two-year trip to Russia in November 1852. There have been a few periods where he skipped for several weeks, and for the last months of 1870 he wrote very little. From June of 1870 to August 1880 we have no record of any diary. The fact that he wrote a book during this time may have kept him too busy, or else it was somewhere lost along the way. [The book was *Geschichte der wehrlosen taufgesinnten Gemeinden von den Zeiten der Apostel bis auf die Gegenwart* (Danzig, 1873). This was the first book emphasising non-resistance written by a Mennonite since the Reformation]

There are several paragraphs written in Greek letters and two written in a self-made Cryptogram. Since the contents of these paragraphs are very personal, one can assume that he did not want just anyone to read them. However, this particular granddaughter of his was very curious, so went to great lengths in deciphering all of them. The Greek was not difficult after realizing that the words were German, written in Greek letters. The Cryptogram was more like a puzzle that had to be unscrambled. (See enclosed page). (When I meet him some day, I will make amends!)

Grandfather also knew a bit of French, which is evident when he uses appropriate words in that language: Some of them are: plaisir, cours, jeune, comptoir, maleur, ferme etc. Then there are Russian words, expressions and a few sentences. I received help in translating these. In some cases I have written in the English equivalent. There were also many names of villages and towns in his move from Prussia to Russia, from the Molotschna to “Am Trakt”, and from there to Central Asia. Some of these villages may not be in existence any more. Sometimes they were hard to decipher.

As seen from his diary, Martin Klaassen was a man with many diverse interests. The fact that he was not interested in farming caused him many struggles before his move to Russia. During his 8-month stay at the Molotschna Colony, he worked in the village office, as secretary and accountant. When he moved to the “Trakt” settlement at the Volga, his first work was as

surveyor, measuring the land for the settlers in various villages. He was also somewhat of an architect and carpenter, helping to plan and build various buildings.

When he was asked to teach at “The Trakt” he felt an inward fulfilment, and gave himself to the task wholeheartedly. This is evident by the many preparations he made throughout his teaching career. He wrote his own textbooks and lessons in subjects as: Russian History in German; Russian History in the Russian language; World History in German; Church History; Russian Grammar; German Grammar; An atlas for Nature Study; Astronomy, with a chart of the stars and planets; made his own globe; he taught the Russian language to adults. He also loved music. He led the church choir, taught singing in harmony, sang solos. He enjoyed visiting the sick. Above all he enjoyed writing. The many reflections and long prayers in his diary show this. He also wrote poetry. One notebook, #5, has been preserved, which means he must have written five or more altogether. His many descriptions of the great outdoors shows that he was a lover of Nature. He was interested in botany, making many trips into the ravine to look for wild flowers and plants. He also took field trips with his students. He was an artist. He drew portraits in pencil, sketched plans for villages, wrote many funeral letters with the appropriate artistic borders. A booklet of 49 pencil drawings of the Holy Land has been preserved—beautifully sketched. The latter has been placed in the archives. He painted a scene of the village of Tiegenhagen, W. Prussia, in color—(9”x14”), which hung in our living room as long as I can remember. Copies of it are available.

The reader of this diary is deeply impressed by Martin Klaassen's devotion to his Lord, his Christian faith, as well as his conviction regarding the principles of non-resistance and peace. At various occasions he was a mediator emphasizing peaceful ways of settling a dispute.

Through Martin Klaassen's diary we feel that we learn to know him as a person. He bares his soul, reveals his way of thinking, and shares his faith and his inner convictions, as well as his longing to serve. May this diary be a blessing to all who read it.

Esther C. Bergen  
Winnipeg, Manitoba



## ***Martin and Marie (Hamm) Klaassen***

A few words may be in place regarding the life of Martin Klaassen. He was born in Schoensee, West Prussia 15 April 1820, the oldest son of Jacob and Helena (Hamm) Klaassen. By 1853 many Mennonites from Prussia had already settled in Russia. At this time Martin Klaassen felt that his future vocation would also be realized in that land, and that Russia with it: promise of religious freedom<sup>1</sup> was a place where he could practise his faith according to his convictions. He left his home in 1853 and travelled with a group of settlers, arriving in the Molotschna Colony by horses and wagons a month later. After spending the winter there, he and others moved to "Am Trakt", the newest settlement in the Samara region, at the Volga. He secured a position as teacher in the village of Hahnsau where he taught for 5 years, later in Koeppenthal<sup>2</sup> for 20 years, Martin Klaassen was a very capable and dedicated teacher, but also active in church as songleader and writer (poetry, songs and articles). In the late 60's the Mennonite Colonies in Russia asked him to research and write a book on the history of the "Peace Position" from Apostolic times to the 19th Century. This book was published in 1873 and used by the schools. See title page below.

In 1855 Martin Klaassen married his cousin, Maria Hamm, daughter of Michael and Helena (Klaassen) Hamm. Seven children were born from this union: Jacobus (1856–65); Michael (1858–59); Michael (1860–1934); Maria (1862–81); Helena (1864–65); Jacob (1867–1948); Helena (1876–1935). In 1880, after 25 years of teaching, Martin Klaassen and family joined the "Great Trek" to Central Asia. He died of typhoid fever in Bukhara on Nov. 25, 1881. Since the group was forced to leave the area suddenly at the time of his death, a shallow grave was hurriedly dug with a covered bed frame to serve as a coffin for Martin Klaassen's body. In 1884 Maria (Mrs. Martin) Klaassen joined a group of emigrants in the move to Nebraska, U.S.A. accompanied by her son Jacob and daughter Helena. In 1885 her son Michael and wife Margaret followed.

\*\*\*\*\*

Maria Hamm, the daughter of Michael and Helena (Klaassen) Hamm, was born at the family estate, Orloff, West Prussia on 9 October 1829. Maria's great, great-grandfather, Martin Hamm (1690–1750) a Swedish military officer, made his home in Orloff, Prussia in 1715. Maria's father, grandfather, and great-grandfather were all named Michael. They all lived in Orloff and were engaged in the family brewery business. In 1852 Maria's parents and family moved to Russia, finally settling at "Am Trakt" in 1854. There she married Martin Klaassen in 1855. We see from the Hamm and Klaassen genealogy that Martin Hamm (1690–1750) was the great-great-grandfather of both Maria Hamm and Martin Klaassen. From the Klaassen side they share a common grandfather, Dirk Klaassen (1765–1843), father of Maria's mother and of Martin's father.

More personal stories are found in the *Klaassen Family Register* book. This book was written by Jacob Klaassen (1793–1879) and son Martin (1820–1881) and translated by great-grandson of Jacob Klaassen, Henry T. Klaassen, Rosthern, Saskatchewan. These stories of faith can serve as examples to us as descendants. It is hoped that the following register of the Martin Klaassen family will succeed in binding us all together in our common heritage, knowing that we can learn much from the faith experiences of our forebears.

- 1 The freedom sought by the Klaassens and other immigrants to Russia at this time was freedom from military service which the Prussian government was strongly pressuring the Mennonites to perform.
- 2 Koeppenthal is the spelling used in the Dairy but GAMEO uses the spelling: Köppental.

July 1854

Donnerstag 17

... in der ...

Donnerstag 18

... in der ...

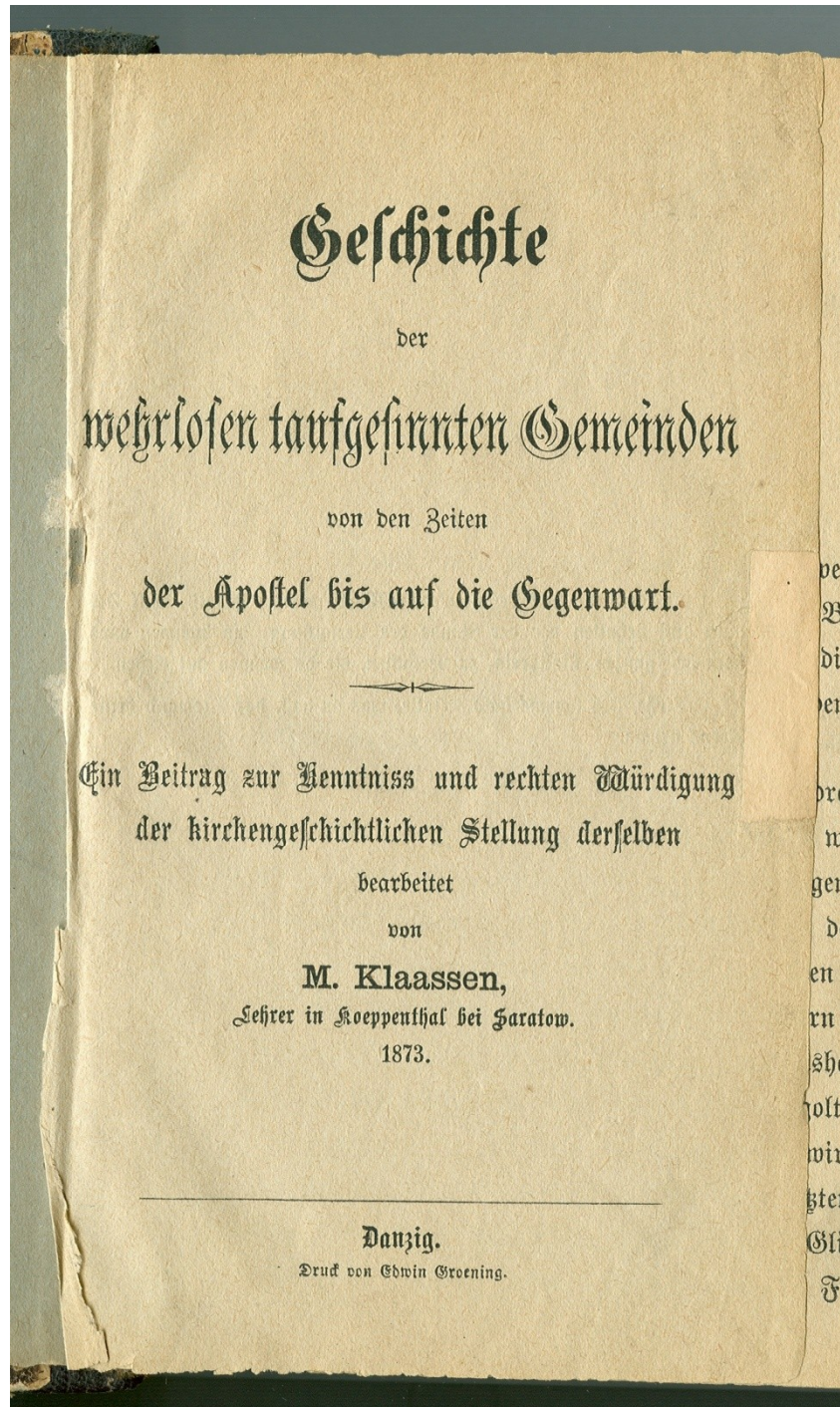
Freitag 19

... in der ...

Freitag 20

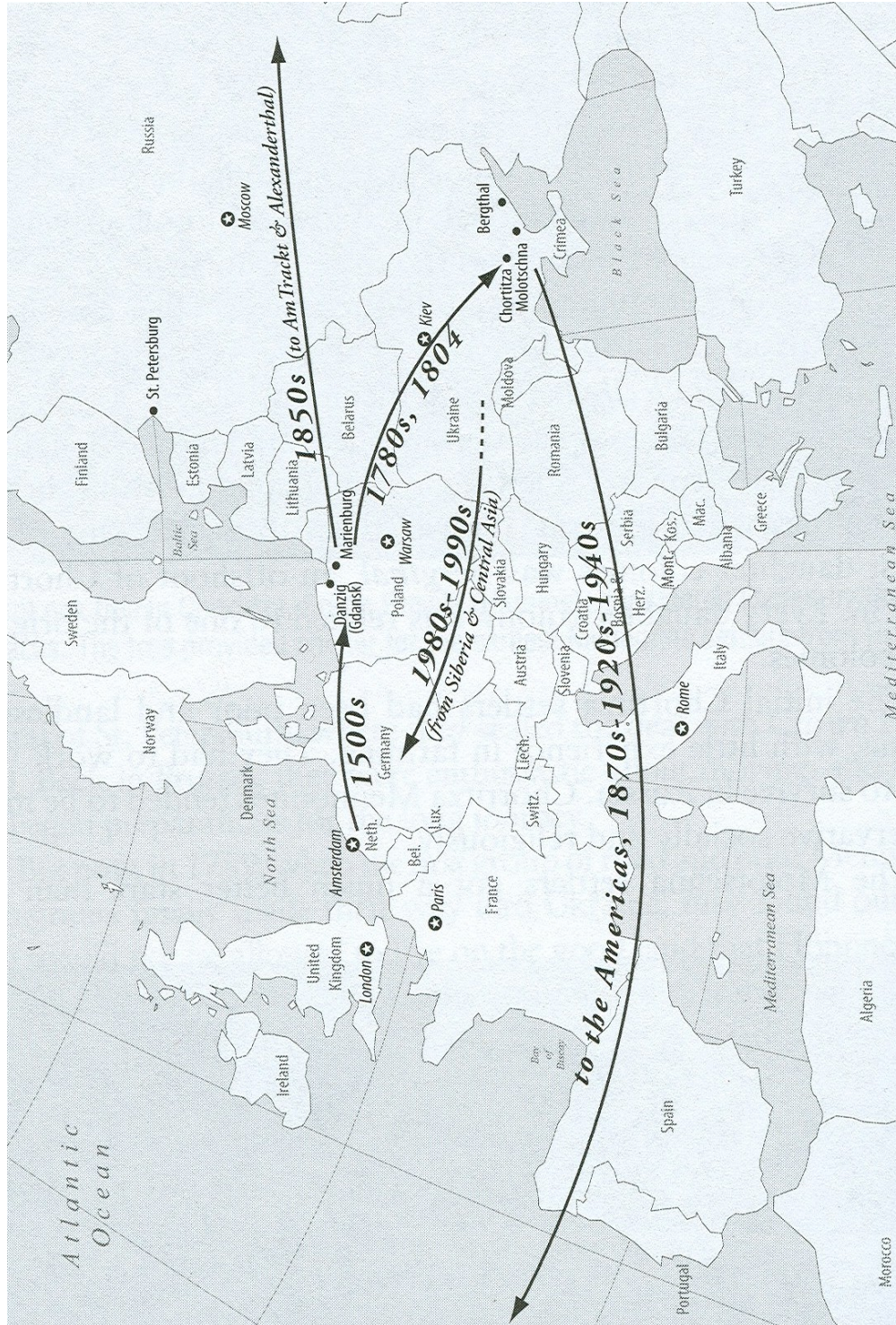
... in der ...

Sample page showing July 1854 of the Martin Klaassen Dairy.



Title Page of Martin Klaassen's book: *Geschichte der wehrlosen taufgesinnten Gemeinden von den Zeiten der Apostel bis auf die Gegenwart* (Danzig, 1873)

# The Spread of the Dutch–Russian Mennonites (Map)



## ***Historical Background of the “Klaassen” Family***

According to available records, our “Klaassen” family history dates back almost to the Reformation and the beginnings of the Anabaptist movement. Widespread persecution throughout Europe in the mid-sixteenth century drove many people to find refuge in other regions and countries. One of the dangerous areas was Holland, where Menno Simons was working in his native land.

During the years 1540–43 the Vistula River repeatedly broke through the dikes in the Danzig marshlands (known as “Werders”). The extensive flooded area was at that time under the control of Poland. In 1562 Dutch immigrants—mainly Mennonites—were invited to settle in this 10,000 acre flooded territory. It was hoped that their labours would result in the restoration of the land to its former productivity. The Dutch people were well-known for their skill in building dams and windmills, and in draining marshlands. In 1565 the settlers began to arrive in the general area of the Marienburg Werder.

In the course of time villages were established, including: Fuerstenwerder, Tiegenhagen, Orloffelfelde, Ladekopp, Rosenort, Schoensee, Petershaagenfeld, Schoenberg etc. Our first-known “Klaassen” ancestor Behrend Klaassen was born in the village of Schoensee in 1598. Later records show that Hans Klaassen was born in Petershaagenfeld in 1658, David Klaassen in Schoenberg in 1700 etc. Finally, the last of our Klaassen lineage known to be born on Prussian soil was Martin Klaassen, born in 1820, whose family register follows in this book. The Marienburg Werder, home to the extended Klaassen family for many generations, passed into Prussian hands in 1772.

The first settlers (arriving in this area in the 1560's) were granted religious freedom, including conditional exemption from military service. This privilege largely remained in effect until the 1850's. Our Klaassen forebears lived in the Marienburg marshlands, building dikes and draining ditches to reclaim the land. They were successful in growing grain for export, planting orchards, raising cattle and horses, and becoming skilled artisans. However some of the Klaassens also followed educational pursuits and became school teachers, ministers and church leaders.

In the late 1700's Prussia no longer granted military exemption. The effect of this change gradually came to be felt also among the Mennonite settlers in the Marienburg Werder. Beginning in 1789, the Mennonites were invited by the Czarina, Katherine the Great of Russia to settle in the areas later known as Chortiza, Molotschna and “Am Trakt”. The offer included the promise of religious freedom which to our forebears was very important. Grandfather Martin Klaassen was among those who settled at “Am Trakt”.

## ***The Background of a Mennonite Family—Hamm***

by Horst Penner (*Mennonite Life*, July 1948)

The Anabaptist movement took root early among the nobility of West Frisia in the Ommelands of Groningen. Ideas of the Reformation found an especially well-prepared soil in the monastery of Unna near Groningen. The learned clergy of this foundation studied the humanists with enthusiasm, and discussed their writings. Thus, conceptions of primitive Christianity accompanied by Anabaptist tendencies found entrance with the nobility of the Ommelands.

As in other cases, religious discussion and consequent upheaval was experienced also in the renowned family of the nobility, de Mepsche op den Ham. This family possessed extensive landed property in the Ommelands and owned a castle on the Ham, near Groningen.

A certain Johann de Mepsche op den Ham was a partisan of the Duke of Alba and was made governor of Groningen by the King of Spain. He was a lawyer, had studied at Bologna, and was a staunch Catholic. Being an adherent of the Spanish cause, he even attacked his own relatives and the other members of the gentry of Groningen. To satisfy his ambition he strove to establish a career through unrestricted service in the interest of Spain.

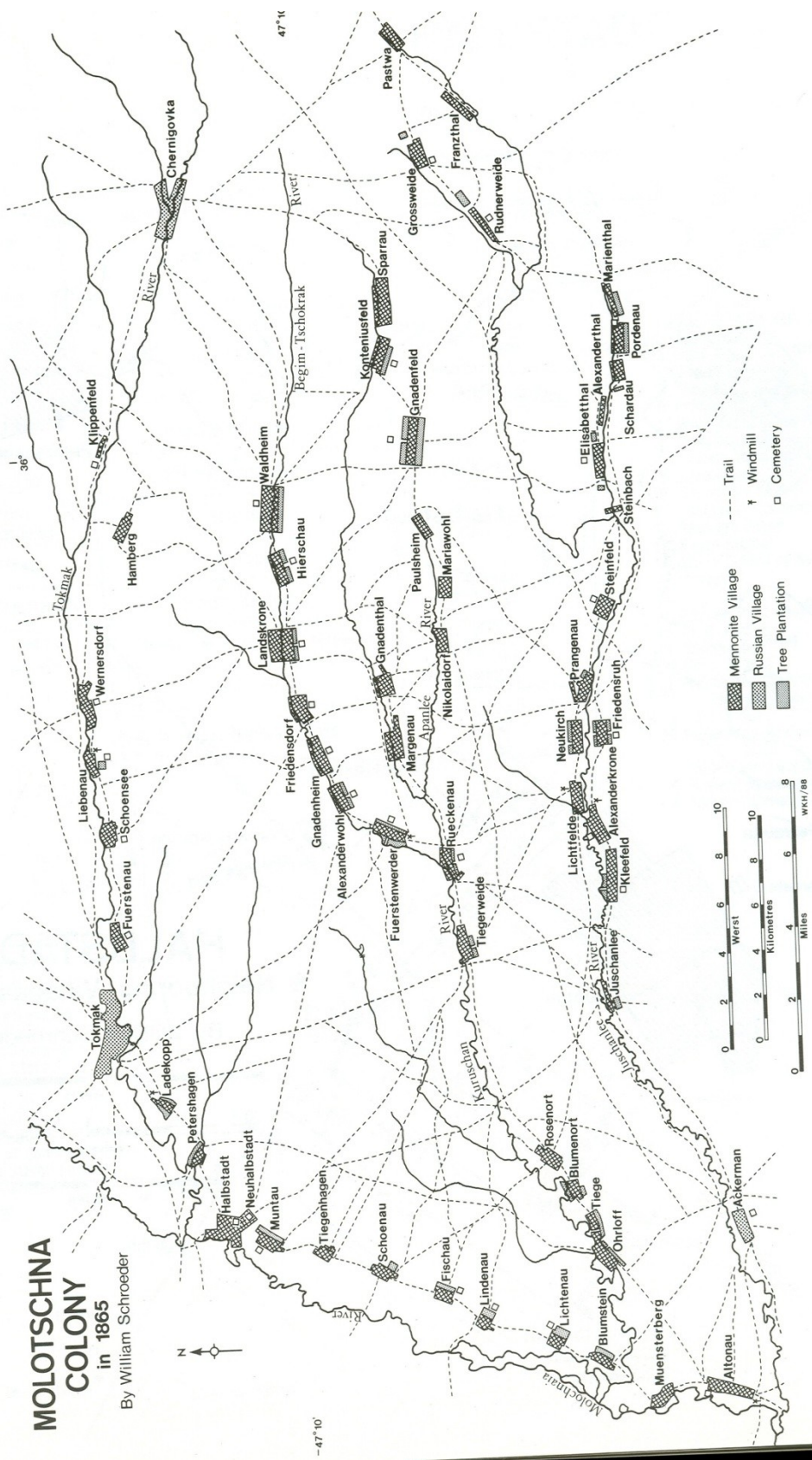
Quite a different position was taken by a relative of his (probably his uncle), Johann de Mepsche op den Ham, the actual senior of the family. He was the owner of the castle, op den Ham, and also held seat in the provincial diet. As he did not want to follow the church which claimed that it alone could offer salvation, the Spanish governor deprived him of his mandate. He was threatened with confiscation of his estates.

At that time, in the beginning of the 1580's, Johann, who had become a Mennonite, fled to Danzig and there joined the congregation of the Mennonites Anabaptists). His estates were appropriated by his relatives who were also Protestants but had not exposed themselves as much. It is not known whether Johann was accompanied by other relatives, children, etc. According to the statements by Abel Eppens, Johann died of a plague at Danzig in 1588.

It is not improbable that he is the ancestor of the Mennonite family Ham(m). The first bearer of this name mentioned in the record Urban Ham, signed a lease involving Orlofffelde with a number other Dutch Mennonites in 1601. Anna von Mortangen, at that time owner of the estate of Tiegenhof, leased the 2,315 acres situated in the fields of the village Orloff to the Dutch. One may certainly suppose that Johann Mepsche op den Ham, or his descendants, since dropped their title of nobility and have called themselves only after their native place, the Ham, near Groningen. The convictions of the Mennonites rejecting all outward splendour and titles corroborates this opinion. In both cases the name Ham is spelled with only one "m", contrary the later custom. However, only two events—the death of Johann Ham of the plague at Danzig in 1588, and the lease signed by Urban Ham in 1601—are proved by documents. It must be presumed that the records involving this family have all been destroyed so that the gap of information now existing will perhaps never be filled.



**MOLOTSCHNA COLONY**  
in 1865  
By William Schroeder



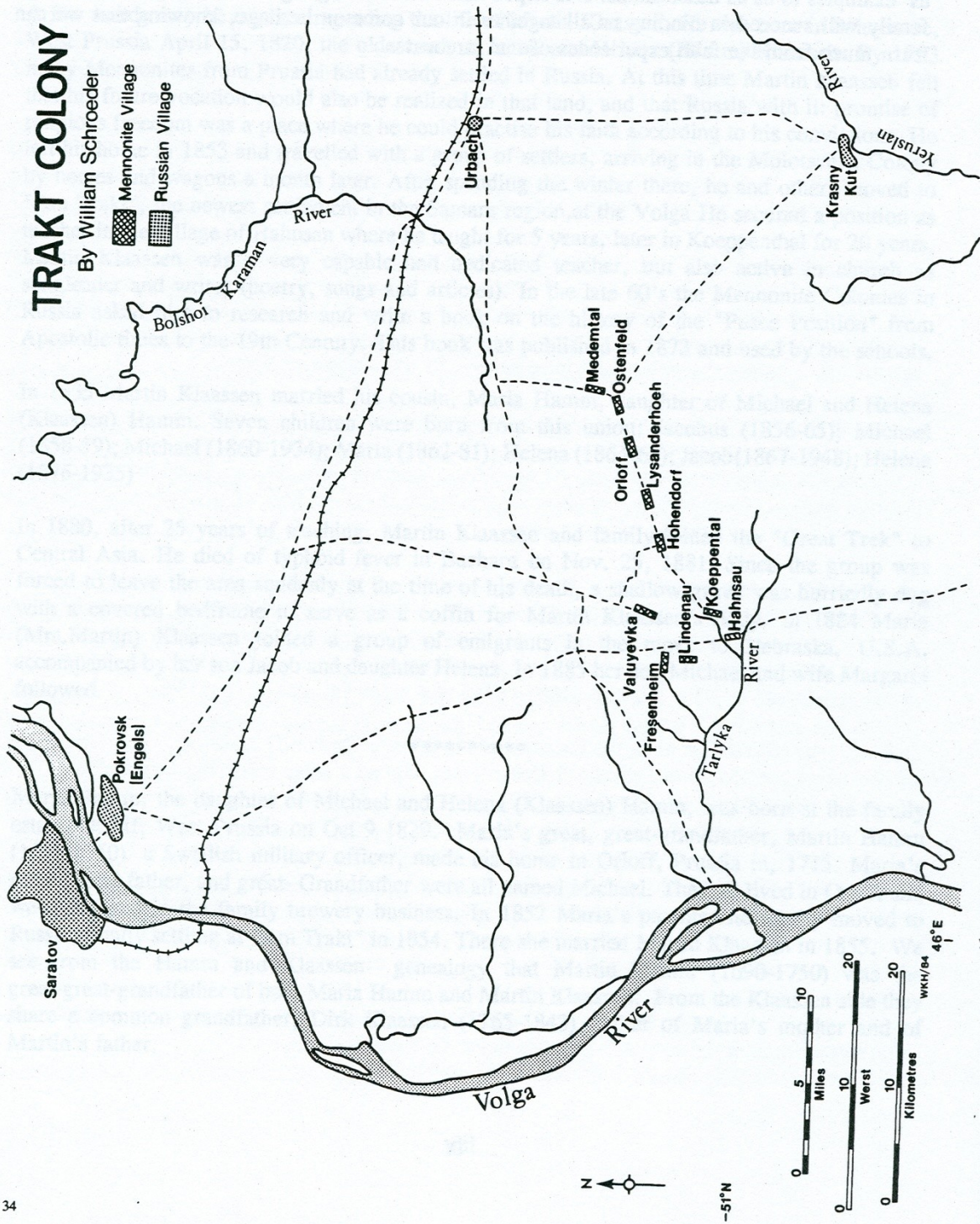




# TRAKT COLONY

By William Schroeder

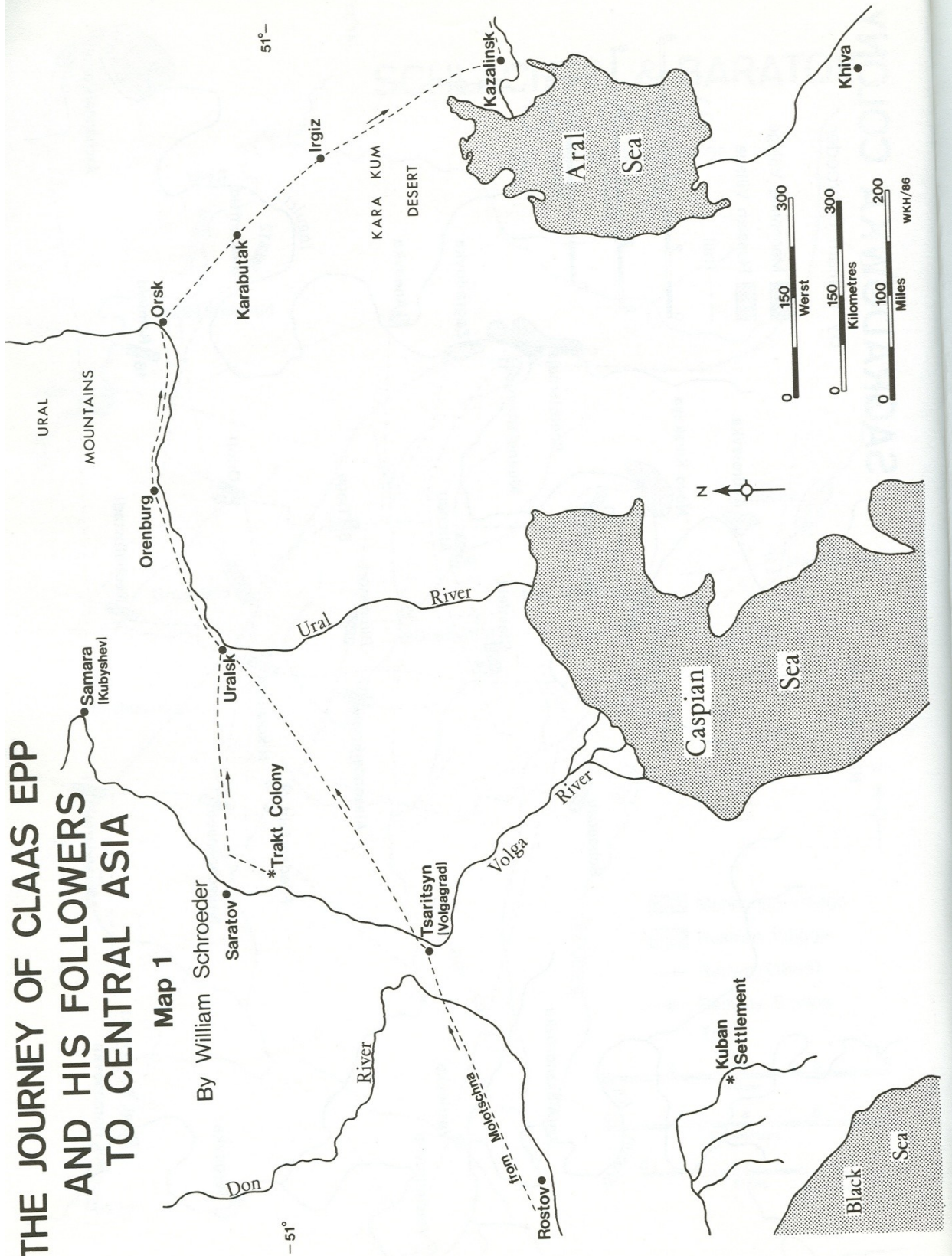
- Mennonite Village
- Russian Village



# THE JOURNEY OF CLAAS EPP AND HIS FOLLOWERS TO CENTRAL ASIA

Map 1

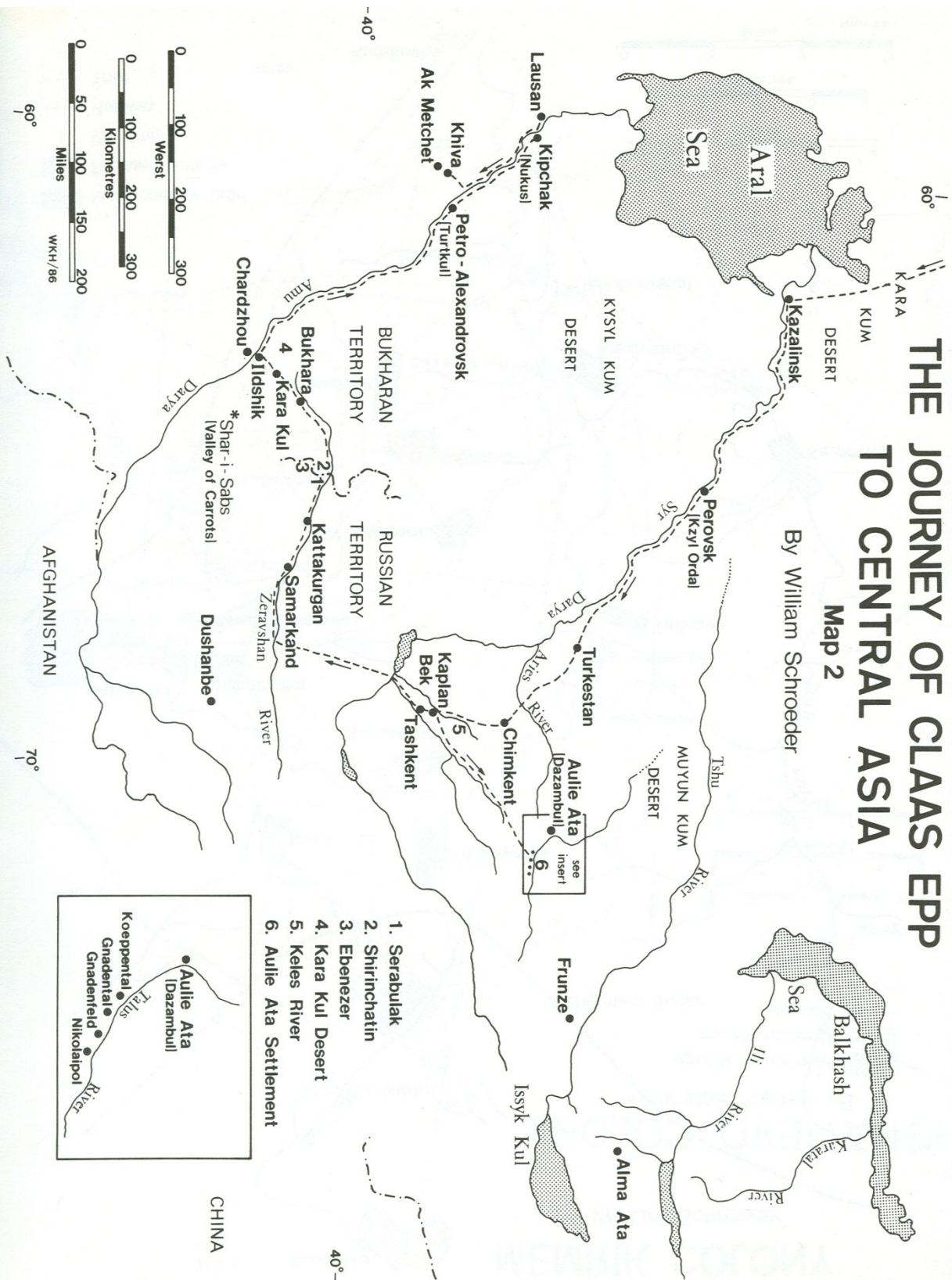
By William Schroeder



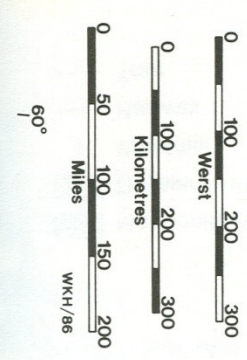
# THE JOURNEY OF CLAAS EPP TO CENTRAL ASIA

Map 2

By William Schroeder



1. Serabulak
2. Shirinchatin
3. Ebenezer
4. Kara Kul Desert
5. Keles River
6. Aulie Ata Settlement



# Diary and Journal of Martin Klaassen (1820–1881)

## West Prussia November 1852-June 1870

### 1852

#### November 1852

- Nov. 19. At 1:30 p.m. I arrived safe and sound at my parental home at Tiegenhagen, from my trip to Russia.<sup>3</sup> I had arrived at Tiegenhoff the previous evening, and spent the night there. Early next morning I had walked from Tiegenhoff to Peter Warkentins, Plattenhoff, from where Peter W. took me home. My loved ones bade me a hearty welcome, especially my mother, as well as brother Dietrich. My arrival had been known since early morning, so Uncle and Aunt Schulz were also at our house to welcome me. Later, Heinrich Loepps, Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Hamm, Mr. Hakker, Abr. Wiebe, Barbara Sack and Brommer also came to greet me.
20. Upon the wish of my cousin Renate, I had promised Aunt Schulz yesterday that I would visit her. However, since Mrs. Froese of Orloff came over, only my mother went to Schulzes, whereas I promised to go in the evening, and also spend the night. And so it happened. The joy of being in the midst of my cousins again was a happy occasion. Some of the Hamm family also came, as well as Peter Wiens.
21. After spending the night at Schulzes, I went to Martin Schulzes for dinner and to Abr. Wiebes for coffee. The weather was cloudy and gloomy.
22. I had promised to come to the place (the "Reihe") today where they were butchering hogs, which I did. Here I met Cornelius Hamm and several other friends and acquaintances.
23. I went to Regehrs for a visit, accompanied by my parents.
24. As promised I rode horseback to Ladekopp to Dietrich Hamm I; but stopped by at Peter Ennses in Orloff. At Hamms they were butchering hogs. Upon invitation of my cousin Helene Hamm (wife of cousin Dietrich Hamm II) I went to stay the night with them.
25. For dinner I again returned to D.H.I, since Uncle Froese, Hinterfeld, had promised to be there. I spent the night here and next morning rode
26. to Broecknerfeld to Joh. Toews, where I met Uncle Froese, Joh. Klaassen, Abr. Janzen, Joh. Sack, and Uncle Cornel. Neufeld, at which time I had to report about Russia and the new immigrants there. For night I again returned to D.H.I.
27. Immediately after breakfast I set out on my return journey—stopping 1 ½ hours at Froeses, and for the noon meal at Peter Ennses, Orloff. From there I finally arrived home. There was heavy frost in the morning.
28. I rode to church in the forenoon. Many guests came to our house for the afternoon. Again cloudy, dull weather.
29. Hogs were butchered at Hamms in Petersburg. I accepted their invitation to have dinner there.
30. Already before noon my dear cousins, Renate and Marie Schulz came for a visit.

#### December 1852

1. I went to Baerwalde by horseback to see my relatives, who wanted me to visit them as well as uncle Aaron Klaassen. I stayed overnight, and from there travelled with cousin Johann
2. to Fuerstenwerder to the Corn. Klaassens. Here I spent the night.

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3 As a single young man Martin Klaassen traveled to Russia to scout out land for settlement. This trip took two years and during it he learned the Russian language.

3. Next morning I went to the Froeses, from where I began “retour” for the time being to the Abr. Wiebes, where I spent the third night, riding homewards the next morning. The weather during these days was cloudy, but mild. Today the skies are clearing. At Ladekopp, as at the Froeses I found many changes. Uncle Hamm, as also Uncle Toews, have seen changes, the former in spiritual, the latter in material blessings, since I saw them last. Dietrich Hamm has undertaken the paternal estate; his sister Helene is married and has moved to her brother's former estate. At Toewses, Annchen is married (a Peter Toews of Ladekopp). Thus changes take place in one way or the other; there is no stability in this world.

In the following days until Christmas I made various visits in the neighbourhood. Almost till Christmas we had dirty rain, a bit of frost, so that on the first holiday it was frozen and dry. However, by evening it was thawing again. We had walked to Plattenhoff.

29. Towards evening cousin D. Hamm I stopped by to invite me to go with him to the New Year's Eve at Neukirch. On that day the Somnambulist<sup>4</sup> Wilhelmine Lange was to speak for the last time; and that at 3 various times: 8 a.m., 12 midday, and 4 p.m. Since this appearance, which during my time in Russia had been repeated, and had gained general interest, I became eager to attend, especially since it was to be the last time. So the following day

30. I rode to D. Hamms I, spent the night there and rode to Neukirch in company with Hamm early the next morning.

31. Soon we arrived at the home of the S—t [Somnambulist]. She was already in the midst of her speech, as we could hear from outside. When we entered the room, she was quoting the verse: “There is one God and one mediator between God and man, namely, the man Christ Jesus.” After 8 she closed this serious oration. At the end, she requested the medication which she had received after one of her discourses the day before, and drank it in a half-sitting position. The old Mr. Lange held her in his arms while she drank. In a weak voice she remarked as to what they were giving her to drink, and how bitter it tasted. After a few light convulsive attacks she woke up and left her bed. At the end of her previous speech, she had also said that she would give her next discourse at 12 o'clock. In the meantime, we passed the time outside, and came back to the house about 11 o'clock.

At quarter to 12 the S—t entered the room. She rubbed her hands as if shaking with fever. When Hamm asked her whether she did not feel well, she responded: “Yes, and after that I always feel so restless that I hardly know what to do.” She sat down on a chair beside the bed, and the same convulsions came over her. She was immediately placed on her bed,—already in an unconscious condition. She lay motionless, except for a minute of few light twitchings, after which she began her second discourse with a beautiful and noble accent, in the words: “In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen. Our help comes from the Lord, who has made heaven and earth.” The subject of her talk was mostly that of God's wonderful guidance of the children of Israel in the old covenant. As examples she used the various events pertaining to this in the Scriptures. The discourse was 1½ hours long. In closing she made the remark that if those present so wished, she would continue with the third discourse after ½ an hour of respite. Since Hamm and I were the only ones who had come from farther away, we expressed the wish that she would do so. The company which consisted of 8 persons attending her first discourse had now grown to too many more for the second. However, they all stayed together for the third talk.

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4 Somnambulist is one who sleepwalks and rarely also may perform activities that are usually performed during a state of full consciousness. Sleeping preaching sometimes called trance preaching was a 19th and early 20th century occurrence, though rare, it was seen in a number of different evangelical denominations in both Europe and American including Mennonite and Amish congregations.

After the S—t had suffered a few strong convulsions; she began her third and last discourse at 5 p.m., with the words of the Christmas message: “Glory to God in the Highest, Peace on earth, and goodwill to all mankind”. As background she used the gospel story of Advent, pointing to the future Advent of the Lord, which she felt was near at hand. As proof of the certainty of her prophecies or reasons for the same, she cited signs which had already appeared on the sun, moon and stars. At the end she prayed the Lord's Prayer, giving a suitable commentary on each of the 7 petitions. Then she emphasized that she very definitely and irrevocably would never again proclaim the Word of God to us. As her closing words, she pronounced the usual blessing on the large group that had gathered, and was silent. We did not wait for her awakening, since evening was upon us and we needed to be on our way home. The last discourse had taken two hours.

This event was, in fact, a special appearance. Outwardly the S—t lay fully dressed on her back on the bed, her head slightly bent backwards into the pillow. In between her talks, when she wasn't gripped by convulsions, her appearance was corpse-like. Not a muscle moved. Her speech had a strong, pleasant and solemn ring to it. Her facial expression—a mirror of her inner feelings, which were expressed in beautiful words. A blissful facade illumined her countenance whenever she touched on things which filled her soul with rapture; her voice was then soft and lovely. On the contrary her whole being expressed a solemn gravity, her voice a serious admonition, and her gesticulations showed deep indignation. Except for her hands, which skilfully gesticulated, no part of her body moved during her s—tic condition.

Now whether that which the S—ts speak is a direct revelation from God, or mere phantasy based on a deeply religious spirit by which the soul is conditioned to express itself in words—is the great bone of contention. What this S—t spoke was, in fact, from the pure and clear fountain of Truth, taken from the Word of God, and could be a blessing to many. It didn't fail to impress me, though I am not one of those who in the full sense of the word believe in the S—t; but rather in S—ism. In this case I like to say: Where God's Word is proclaimed loudly and clearly, one should take it to heart, from whatever source, or from whom it may come; but one should not negate the customary worship services. This is and shall be my principle. Experience will prove whether it is right.

Arriving back in Ladekopp, I spent the night again at D. Hamms II, and rode home on Saturday.

## 1853

### January 1853

1. I arrived home in the forenoon on New Years' Day. The weather was mild, the road terrible. “Thank the Lord, for He is good, and His mercy endures forever”.
2. Sunday I went to church in the morning. Warkentin preached. My sister went to Schulzes, where I also went towards evening.
4. Slight frost. In the forenoon I was in Tiegenhoff.
5. I had agreed with cousin Martin Schulz to ride to P. Regier, Mirau, today. However, because of the frozen roads, I did not go.
6. Some frost. However, the Tiede is still open. After dinner I went to Wiebes at Petershagen, re: Church accounts. In the afternoon the parent together with our deacon, went to H. Loepps. Towards evening Hamm, Petershagen came to see us.
8. Yesterday, as today a bit more frost and clear. The wind, south. In the p.m. brother Dietrich, sister and I went to Petershagen to the Hamms. We travelled over the Tiede, which,

however, because of the high winds froze up very roughly. Mariechen Hamm, Ledekopp, was there. With hearty amusement we read "B.H. Kaiserzettel".

9. Sunday. Preparatory sermon. Brother Jacob and I went to Peter Klaassen, P.Hagen in the p.m. All day there was frozen rain and a cold wind.
10. Weather—thawing and cloudy. We received boxes in the a.m. In the afternoon cousin Barbara Schulz was here. Yesterday and today our dear mother is bedridden with a head-cold. (Schnupfen)
11. Thawing, snow flurries. Towards evening I went to Adrians to speak to Joh. Wecker. Our dear mother feels better already, thanks to the Lord.
12. Rain during the night. P.m. brother Dietrich and I went to Plattenhoff to Warkentins. A heavy shower on the way. The evening very pleasant.
13. Cousin N. Schulz, his son Joh. and I rode to Mirau to Regiers. On the way home we had rain. It was nice weather in the evening, but the roads were terribly bad.
14. Today the annual settlement with the Peterhagener church account took place. At noon, cloudy with a good rain; p.m. snowfall.
16. Sunday. There was communion in our church. May it have been a blessing to each church member. Weather dry frost, quiet, but a bit cold. In the evening Jacob Hamms and Abr. Wiebes, P-hagen were here.
17. Weather like yesterday. Today the Jacob Schulz farmyard in Tiegerfeld was sold to Joh. Behrandrijan for 19,200 Thaler. Father went to Fuerstenwerder, and sister accompanied by B. and Maria Schulz, and Helena Hamm to Ladekopp.
18. Frost and a strong east wind. Cousin Renate Schulz came to our house for a visit this morning. Towards evening cousin M. Schulz arrived to accompany Leni Klaassen home. In the evening father, as well as sister came home.
20. Yesterday brother Dietrich and I went to Ungers. Today Uncle Hamm, Warkentin, Loepps and Abr. V'ses were here; the latter across country by sleigh.
21. Today we had an overdose of guests. They were Warkentins, Duecks from Plattendorf, Peter Wiens and sister, Peter Schulz (cousin) with sister Helene, Joh. and Martin Hamm with their sister, and finally Peter and Dietrich Toews from Fuerstenwerder.
22. After dinner the two Toews left. Brother D. and I accompanied them to the Land ditch and then also went to Hamms. There was quite a lot of snow.
23. Sunday. I was in the Catholic Church today. GE Pastor Linke had a powerful sermon about the parable of the workers in the vineyard. Jacob and Michael Regier were here.
24. I wrote to Johann Wiebe, Russia, about the servant arrangements, which I am to send him. Since yesterday mild weather.
25. Year-market (Jahrmarkt) in Tiegenhoff. I had gone there with my pack on my back. It was very muddy already. On our way back brother Dietrich and I stopped at Plattenhoff for coffee.

### **April 1853**

(January 25 to April 24, not available)

24. ....in my inner being I look towards the new settlement as my home, and this because of very special reasons. Brother Jacob would move there rather today than tomorrow; but perhaps his hopes are too high for this undertaking; and I? My conviction too speaks for the move to the new country; but more so to the eternal. O God! How will my fate turn before I reach the Haven of Rest? What trials and tests, what struggles wait for me here on earth? To you alone it is known. You alone know my heart with all its inclinations, all its weaknesses, all its short comings. You alone can see through its very depth, more clearly than I, weak sighted fool that I am. You know the longing, which since my childhood have



filled my heart; you measure its height, its depth. "O lead me, my Lord and my God, and see whether I am on the wrong path, and lead me in ways everlasting." Ps. 139:24. Amen.

25. Today pleasant, clear weather; Wind S. East. We have planted willow trees. Father went to D. Hamm, I, Ladekopp, in the afternoon. On May 11 there will be a "Missionsfest" in Tiegenhoff (May everybody hear this!). The honourable Superintendent Nerhelmann seems to be a servant, chosen and equipped by God for this important day. May the Lord richly bless his ministry.
26. Today is my dear mother's birthday. Again I am privileged to celebrate it at home, and am happy with the others to find the Dear One in good health and well, having left behind her 60th year. Her life's evening has begun; may it be a happy one free from sorrow and sadness. May she be filled with hope for a better world as she draws near to life's goal. For this, dear Saviour, fill her with the blessings of your Spirit. Amen.

The weather was pleasant; we began to plough the fields on the range, namely, the stubble field. However, because of the swampy soil, we had to discontinue. Therefore we began to work on the road-field, framing it for barley. Because of the high stand of water here, and lack of wind, we have not been able to begin the actual grinding; everything seems to be very late this year. However, some villages are farther behind than we, since they have even more water. About coffee time brother D. and I walked to Wiebes, P-Hagen.

27. Today is my birthday. To be able to celebrate it in the presence of my dear family is a wonderful joy and privilege, you, my heavenly Father have granted me. How many demonstrations of your loving kindness have I experienced in the past year, especially on my long journey home! Your grace has accomplished it all. Have I also during this period of time grown in my spiritual life? To you alone this is known. O Father! Lead me on an even pathway to my goal, through Jesus Christ.

After Coffee (Vesper) sister and I went to Hamms, P-hagen, where little Dietrich is still very sick. Hamm and I went to the Steam mill, where we met a company of Tiegenhagners. In the evening, after I came home a bundle of letters was waiting for me from my friend Doerksen in Russia. I deemed them to be a very lovely Birthday present. Many of these contained very interesting information.

The windmills mostly stand immovable. Wind is from the N. East. Towards evening there was a soft rain.

28. Some rain at night. In the afternoon brother D. sowed 2M. [Morgen] barley on the front piece. The weather is mild and warm, but there is no wind at all to grind the grain; besides the water is still very high.
29. Today the barley has been ordered. The weather is pleasant, too little wind to grind. Cousin Barbara Schulz is here for a visit, as well as Uncle Aaron Klaassen, who came after Vesper and stayed for night. In Reinland Mr. Heinrich Penner, who committed suicide, was buried. Besides Mr. Penner there have been two other persons who chose to end their life by suicide: a Mr. Wunderlich, from Waltekeberge, the other from Krebsfeld; a similar incident was mentioned by Doerksen.
30. Pleasant, warm weather. 2½ Morgen<sup>5</sup> barley have been sown. The last piece is still water-logged. The grass is beginning to green, though there is still much water. Should there be another few years of weather like this in spring; the need for steam watermills would surely be more pressing. Rye is growing fast; the gooseberry leaves have sprouted; the leaves on the chestnut trees are ready to burst open; spring is unfolding its charm, and yet it seems I

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5 A Morgen (M) was a measure of land area. Its size varied greatly from German state to state and from country to country. In Holland it was about 2 acres but in Prussia it was about 2/3 acre or exactly 0.255322 hectares (ha). The word "Morgen" is German for "morning." Its original size was measured as the amount of land a farmer could cultivate in one morning.

cannot really perceive all this as well as I had hoped, after my long absence from home. The new experiences which my heart has made seem like a heavy weight within. They are proof of how easily a person is prone to give in, when he is attacked in his weaker moments. Oh, there are times when the soul's wings are—so to speak—paralyzed, and the strength to lift itself up to the throne of grace is lacking. There are dark hours of the night, when no friendly, comforting star shines; and if it is there, the soul cannot cast its glance upwards to take in its rays of hope. However, I hope that things will slowly change, and that finally a blessing will burst forth. May God grant this through Jesus Christ. Amen.

In the afternoon Uncle Klaassen rode home. Before evening Mother went to Aunt Schulz. Brother Jacob rode to Heubuden for business matters, and is just arriving home.

### May 1853

1. Sunday. I was in church in the forenoon. Warkentin preached about the Gospel of Mark 4:26 etc. In the p.m. we had visitors: Hamms, Regiers, Corn. Wienses and Abr. Wiebes with their young people; towards evening also Hamm, P-hagen. It has been cloudy all day, wind N. East. As the wind, so the water moves back and forth. Today there was very little action. Since Tuesday they have siphoned through at Rothabude. A sprinkling of rain after Vesper.
2. Today we are ploughing on the range again, but, have again come to an end. In the morning dull and humid weather. Our parents were at Hamms, Tiegenhagen today.
3. Wedding day of our cousin, B. Dueck, which took place in her parents-in-law's house. Because of the high water in the Muensel, and the poor roads, our family did not go to the wedding, but brother Jacob and I, in company with neighbours, Peter Schulz and Joh. and Aaron Hamm, rode there on horseback. It was lovely summer weather, later foggy and cool. In the evening, a few of the lords and ladies from farther away, had a demonstration of the phenomenon which is called "Tischruecken" (Table-turning). This was held in the front part of the dining room. It was naturally very comical in its presentation, but ended more comically and without success. Since it was night and the roads in places under water,
4. We only left about 4 a.m. this morning, brother and I arriving home about 7:30 a.m. After Vesper we sowed some oats on the range, and harrowed it. All day it was cool, cloudy weather. Towards evening some neighbours went to Schulzes, concerning the building of a Steam waterworks Mill for our villages. About half of the influential neighbours endorsed such a project, especially because of this year's unusual and unfavourable drainage conditions. There has been quite a bit of opposition from the less well-to-do neighbours, as well as from others who are obstinately against this project. Nevertheless, steps will be taken to go ahead with 6 representatives chosen to get the project going.
5. Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ. The weather today is gloomy, overcast and rainy; my spirit, instead of being lifted up feels downcast, and not capable of adjusting my activities in harmony with the spirit of the day. However, the thought that the Lord of the Heavens has gone to "prepare a place" gives us assurance. Yes:

From this vain and troubled world,  
You to heav'n are lifted, Lord,  
To your kingdom glorious.  
There the hosts of seraphim,  
Praise and serve you, heav'nly King,  
For your reign victorious.  
When in judgment you appear,  
Lord, may we with joy draw near.  
Receive us, as your own,  
And heirs before your throne. Amen.

6. Some of us went to the funeral of the widow Zacharias. Among other things that evening, many persons took part in the experiment of “Tischruecken<sup>6</sup>” in which 3 or 4 formed the chain. It was done with a white porcelain plate. The results were not always the same; but I was still convinced of the reliability of the matter, so much so that cousin Peter Schulz, Justina Klingenberg and I formed a chain and tried the experiment. In 3 minutes, on the average, the plate began to move from left to right. It is quite an unusual phenomenon.

We arrived home about 12 o'clock. The weather was intermittently cool and then warmer. At noon I received a writing from F. Doerksen.

7. South wind, and some rain in the evening. The “Tiege” unusually high, no grinding today. It seems not one drop of water has drained off, in spite of the fact that there is some grass showing in places. After Vesper I went to Hamms, P-hagen, where my dear aunt from Ladekopp is visiting. Petershagen has finished grinding 8 days ago, then Fuerstenau and Schlepptau.

8. Sunday. I went to church in the morning, where this year's annual Confirmation of Faith took place. Oh, how important this pre-examination is, and how little emphasis is placed on it in later life! When will it ever be better, so that the kingdom of God can come to us? In the afternoon I went to Schulzes, P-hagen, accompanied by sister. It was a pleasant day. When I came home I found letters from Russia, from cousin D. Hamm and friend Harder. Enjoyable letters.

9. In the morning we ploughed the barley field on the range. It began to rain but cleared up soon.

10. Today we ploughed on the range again. Some rain, but cleared later, and dried up noticeably. The sails of the windmills turned vigorously.

11. The mills began to work enthusiastically, but later there was hardly any wind. We harrowed the barley, after seeding it in the forenoon. After dinner I went to Schulzes, since Peter Regehrs from Mirau were there. Today for the first time and in proper fashion, the Mission Fest was held. Father took part in the session, but the attendance was only average, with 13 ministers present. The main presentation was made by Reverend Quiring of Ladekopp; the report, by the Reverend Nerselmann. May the Lord prosper this work to the glory of His name, and the salvation of many millions! Amen.

12. We ploughed the last rye stubble field on the range. Early in the morning already it began to rain, and kept on until Vesper. After Vesper it cleared up. I went to Tiegenhoff on business. The mills turned well. The hope of a halfway good seeding time dwindles for most of those in the lower-lying areas, since there is lack of wind and continuous high water, which has become less by only a few inches in the last while. In our fields the water is still not gone from the hollow places, and strangely the areas where there was no water are drying so slowly, that it has not been possible to plough any of these. Some villages are even set back with losing some of their winter grains. Should all this not demonstrate the need to build steam watermills, especially since we see what a tremendous difference it makes in Petershagen? Yes, shouldn't we realize that these signs may come from a higher Hand, interested in the wellbeing and progress of humanity, and give wisdom to work towards such projects? One would like to believe this were so. In general there is also lack of feed for the cattle, and many will see the need to send their cattle out to pasture.

13. The weather is clear with a strong north wind. The windmills' sails are turning “per force”; unfortunately the water is still very high. Seeding is out of the question. In the evening the

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6 Tischruecken is a type of séance. In Klaassen's description the four participants sit at the table, each places one hand, for example the left hand, on the on their neighbour's shoulder to make the chain, and their right hand on the plate. In time the plate moves. Today we know this movement as the “ideomotor effect” caused by the participant's unconscious muscular response for the plate to move. This form of Spiritualism was very popular in Europe in the 1840–50s with middle and upper class people.

windmills all but quit. Towards evening mother and I went to Hamms, P.hagen [Petershagen], where she had been since morning because of Peter's illness. They had expected his passing hourly, but I found him still alive, though already in a condition which left no doubt that his end was near. Since yesterday evening he had been stricken with paralysis which affected all of his right side, while his left side was constantly in motion, resembling "St. Vitus Dance".<sup>7</sup> It was a pitiful sight to find him suffering so much.

14. According to the wish of the family, both mother and I stayed at Peter's bedside all night. At first the continual motions of his left arm and leg intermittently stopped, and by midnight completely ceased. His rasping breath became louder, but at daybreak became weaker until at 5 a.m. it was evident that death's angel, the friendly messenger, awaited the signal from above. At 6 o'clock his breathing stopped, and the soul of this tender boy left his body—as we hope—to be in the arms of the great friend of children; and which, after a short span of life and a long, hard struggle with death, to partake in joys eternal. This was the second deathbed at which I witnessed the last breath of the departing soul. And how different was the last struggle of each. In the case of Uncle Schulz there was a slow ebbing away of strength and disappearing of signs of life; with his breath slowly fading away. Here, the strong resistance of a young person, which again and again seemed to bolster new strength to live, as if to assert his right to live, which prolonged the bitter struggle until finally succumbing to the powers of death.

O God! When and how will I end my last struggle? I do not know, but you O Father, know when and how I will die. O grant that I may not fear death, and that my end may be blessed! Amen.

A cold, strong wind again today, but clear weather. The water a little lower. The windmills are put into action. We are putting in the last pea-seeds into the rye stubble.

15. **Sunday** First day of **Pentecost**. I went to church. Father preached a sermon based on Acts 4:31–33; "The miracles of the Spirit." 1. How they were manifested in the Apostles; 2. How they were demonstrated by the Church; 3. How we can hope to be partakers of the same workings of the Spirit. After dinner our guests were Aunt Schulz and Barbara. The sails of the windmills are turning hard; weather clear.
16. Second day of Pentecost. The young people were baptized in our church. O that the vows that the candidates gave before receiving holy baptism, may also be kept, never to be broken! But how quickly these are broken; how little thought is given to their importance! O Father may the Spirit of your Son, which was already promised to the apostles and poured out on them, also fill the new members today, so that their life may be empowered to faithful and acceptable service to you! Amen.

It is utterly amazing how the manifold complexities of our personal circumstances can determine the situation in which each person finds himself. Our experiences during the recent past prove very clearly that it is very difficult to extricate oneself from one's difficulties, especially when the sense of purpose is merely artificial. Though my outward situation is such that I might fall into sin, I would call this other than a happy one; yet I cannot but confess that with reference to my special personal situation, my future is as dark as it ever can be. I hear a voice in me that encourages me clearly to do my part in service for the general well-being of humanity; in fact, I feel a definite calling to do so. I feel a desire for a sphere of activity corresponding to my strength and ability in which I could fulfill my vocation. But how will I find such a place? Or where can I look for one? In Russia! I hear the Lord's

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7 Saint Vitus Dance is more properly known as Sydenham's chorea. It is a disease characterized by rapid, uncoordinated jerking movements affecting primarily the face, feet and hands. It results from childhood infection often in patients with acute rheumatic fever and occurring up to 6 months after the acute infection. Most patients are children under age 18. It normally does not cause death.

voice saying, In Russia!! Yes, In Russia! I have no doubt that there would be a place for a person like me. But how to get there, so that mind and heart and, above all, my conscience can affirm this with Yea and Amen? That is the most difficult question, which will determine all my future decisions. This is the night which darkens the path to my profession. No friendly ray of light or star of hope breaks through this complete darkness. And what is it that so obscures my course? They are circumstances which are beyond my control. My intellect tells me: "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you." Why do I not follow this voice, which makes such implicit demands of obedience? Because: 1. another equally strong voice calls: Filial duty has its rights! 2. In manifold ways the heart rebels when the mind expresses itself in these matters. Yes, of course filial duty has its rights, but the poor heart? The heart alone shall give in and be silent, no matter how difficult it is, no matter whether it almost breaks.

If one considers how the circumstances have unfolded in the last several years with regards to establishing one's own home here, so that only the very rich among us have that opportunity; in addition, when we evaluate the guarantees which the present government has promised with respect to our freedom from military service; then insight and reason tell us to look eastward. There we may hope to find a new sanctuary opening up to protect our existence as a people, as well as to safeguard our religious freedoms. But insight and reason are not enough for everyone to overcome all the difficulties which come with such an endeavour; especially for those who under certain foregone circumstances feel themselves tied to the homeland.

This, in our household, is the case with regards to my father, mother and myself, more than with the other members. Father's reservations deal more with the idea of habits and customs; he would no doubt be able to make a change fairly easily, since he is still strong and healthy. Mother, however, who always has had a weaker nerve-system, would probably need to muster all her strength to face the inevitable. The great change of circumstances, but above all the separation from her aged siblings, would at this time in life make this great ordeal almost impossible. She hopes that she may not need to experience this, and who can blame her? Consequently, she speaks of this idea unwillingly; and no one, I hope, would try to persuade her to something that would cause her heart such unspeakable sorrow, before absolute necessity warrants it.

And I? With no one in our family are insight and inclination so extremely opposite as with me. My innermost conviction says: Russia is the land of your future destiny; there you will be able to work according to your strength for the good of humanity, for the honour of God; therefore you must not stay here.

Kriptographie. (Cryptogram)

a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r
K	E	0	3	r	y	ξ	η	λ	ν	μ	ς	τ	ϑ	ϕ	ρ	σ	ω
s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z.										
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Handwritten text in a cursive script, likely a cryptogram or a reference to a specific text.

P. 76 "Gott geleite dich auf deinem ferneren Lebenswege, liebe Renate, und führe uns einst wieder zusammen im Reiche der ewigen Wonne."

English p. 50.

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Handwritten text in a cursive script, likely a cryptogram or a reference to a specific text.

P. 66 "Der Zeitraum des Jahres, den ich in diesen Tagen beschliesse, beweist dies zur Genüge."

English, p. 45

\* "But my heart does not want to hear this. The experiences of the recent past have cast shackles around its very core, whose removal would leave wounds never to be healed. It is possible that another heart would break as a result". [This passage, as a few others, was written by Martin Klaassen, in Greek letters, possibly so that they could not be read by just anyone].

These then, as well as my mother, are the obstacles which stand in the way for me to follow the call to go east. But what possibilities present them here in my home country? In one word: **None**: hopelessness in every respect. But I hope that with God I can bear my fate, be it what it may, for I know it is in His hands. May He grant me joy to say: "Not my will, but yours be done". Yes, Father, my heart is open to you with all its inclinations, weaknesses and fallibilities. You alone can lead and reign, according to your Goodwill. Oh, I beseech you for Christ's sake: "Lord, cover all that's gone before; Guide and direct what lies before."

17. As a result of the cold weather of the past several days, the vegetation has suffered somewhat. The winter growth is sprouting, but the grass growth is halted completely. The mills help very little. Today we ploughed a few plots behind the garden on the range. It will be impossible to work the whole field for a long time. The weather today is like yesterday: a strong, cold northwest wind. The mills are going fairly well. By now our deputation to Russia will have begun their journey to the Volga, for surveying the area.

\* **O my Renate!** Who knows how soon our hour will come, when we will forever separate, Oh! Never to see each other again! May God then give us strength to trust His wise guidance, steadfastly to overcome the pain of separation. May He grant us the joy to say with all our heart: "Not my will, but Thine be done. I will drink the cup, nevertheless! Amen!" (In Greek letters)

18. This morning we sowed and harrowed the piece of meadow that we had ploughed yesterday. After coffee (Vesper) I went back to Tiegenhoff stopping at Hamms in Plattenhoff. # "There I found my cousin M. Sch. who was returning home from her visit with a friend, who had accompanied her home." (This # was written in the Russian language.)

19. Today Hamms' Peter was buried. Sister and I helped in the forenoon.

20. In the forenoon we worked on the range. In the afternoon brother Jacob and I hauled a load of wood from Tiegenhoff. Cousin Renate and Marie Schulz were here.

21. Weather partly clear; wind, north. The mills are turning vigorously. With respect to my future, as far as my decision is concerned, I have tentatively decided today, if the Lord wills, to remain in my present circumstances until spring of 1855. Then I hope to make my way to the Volga, which I feel is the future place of my destiny. Whether the Lord will say Yes, and Amen to this, the circumstances will determine. May Your Grace, O God, keep me, and may your Holy Spirit not depart from me. Amen.

22. In the morning cousin Maria Hamm, accompanied by Barbara and Renate Schulz, stopped by on her way to F. Hamm, Petershagen for the post-funeral gathering. Since the Catholic Church youth here were to be consecrated today, B. and R. Schulz and I decided to attend this ceremony. The candidates for confirmation were accompanied to the altar by the ringing of bells and music. The Chaplain gave the official message. His theme was: "Who are these highly favored? They are #1. Children; #2. They are our children." The dedicatory message was delivered by the most reverend Pastor Lieke, before the altar. After this he gave the communion to the candidates, following their visit to the confessional yesterday.

After dinner cousins B. and R. Schulz went home, and we later went to the post-funeral gathering. In the evening I spoke to my parents about the decision I had made yesterday, to emigrate. They not only heartily endorsed this, but also find it quite acceptable with regards to myself, and the particular circumstances in which I find myself. So I will no doubt,

perhaps forever, say farewell to my homeland; say farewell to all that is so dear to me; say farewell to my **Dearest**, whom in a certain way I call **my own**, but yet, who cannot be my own; yes, say farewell \* “to my dearly beloved Renate. O God! Is it possible! What wonderful hours we have spent together. Only today, how intimately she hung on my arm, during the service in the Catholic Church! What feelings she expressed when she returned my life story! Oh, she calls me her own, and yet it is the Lord's will that we be separated forever! O God, your ways are beyond our understanding, and our mind cannot fathom them. This is only possible through faith.”\* [in Greek letters]. O Father, give me strength to overcome even the greatest difficulties which my heart may experience, should your counsel bring about the inevitable. Oh, I dare not ask you to grant the deepest desires of my heart, since they would probably be directly contrary to the paths on which you plan to lead me to my destination. Humbly I bow under your wise guidance, and beseech you to grant me strength to will and fulfill that which your wisdom has destined for my vocation.

What else I would pray for: Oh! You know better than I in my weakness can utter before you. Be near the **One**, whom your hand has led, as well as me, in wondrous ways. O Father, I repeat my request: “Oh! Cover all that's gone before; Guide in whatever **lies** before”. Oh, I confess my transgressions, and ask you for a contrite, penitent heart, that I may make amends in honesty and integrity for that in which I have transgressed, yes, gravely transgressed; that I may with a completely \* “**reconciled heart, part from my loved ones**” (in Greek letters) and in the future be comforted by your blessings. Hear me O God! Hear me! For Jesus Christ, your Son, my Lord and Saviour's Sake, Amen.

### August 1853

9. In the afternoon sister and I went to Orlofferreihe to Froeses. We stayed for supper and returned home at 10 p.m. Good weather. Today the first barley was tied in bundles.
10. This morning I packed all my belongings to be sent along tomorrow for the actual packing. In the afternoon I went to Plattenhoff und from there towards evening to Schulzes. Today, for the last time I talked to my Renate in an intimate way; in fact she broached the subject. Her attitude with regards to my imminent departure, as also her inner feelings, is to be admired. It is evident that the Lord gives strength in weakness. That which 2 months ago seemed impossible to her, she now bears willingly. She is fully yielded to the will of her heavenly Father, and resolved to face in faith and trust in God, whatever He ordains. O heavenly Father! I thank you for the faithfulness, with which you have sustained and stood by this sorely afflicted soul in times of severe trials. I praise you for the grace which you allow her to experience at this time, filling her with strength and joy to be resigned to the paths you are leading her, which at the present, are Oh, so strange! I thank you for the blessings, which her soul, through the fullness of your grace, through the unsearchable richness of your word, has drawn. O faithful God and Father! Be near to her soul in days to come! Lead and guide her day by day on the path of salvation, which leads to life. Refresh her with that which only you in your abundance can give. Yes, let all that, which you ordain, redound to her wellbeing and blessing. O Father, it is your will, that I, the true friend of her heart, part from her. Your ways were not our ways; this we are truly experiencing. That your ways are higher than our ways: as the heavens are higher than the earth, we believe firmly. Therefore, in the future we confidently believe and trust your guidance, and worship you in humility, knowing that you will lead us according to your counsel, which will be well for our souls.

O Father, wherever we go,  
Grant us to know:  
Someday our end will blessed be.



Amen, in Jesus' Name, Amen!

11. Father and I went to Janzens, Hinterfeld, with my belongings, where they were packed together with the others'. All day the weather was cold and windy, though sunny as yesterday. I came home again that evening.
12. In the morning I went to Tiegenhoff, where for the last time I attended the Mutual Fire Insurance meeting. After Vesper I visited Corn. Wiens, where I met Aunt Schulz and P. Schulz. All day it was cool and windy.
13. Before noon I went to Tiegenhoff again with my maps. In the afternoon my mother and I visited with Hamms, Tiegenhagen, where we also met Van Niessen. Since this morning we have a beautiful, cloudless day. In the evening I talked to my sister until 11.30 p.m.
14. Brother Diedrich went with me to Froeses at Orloffereihe, from where I left for Danzig, accompanied by David Froese, Franz Dueck and Corn. Janzen. I had been heartily invited by Jacob Froese to take this trip to attend the production of "French Equestrian Performers", which I had never in my life seen. We left at 1:30 and arrived in Danzig at 5:30. In order to be there on time to see the performance at the Circus, we had to hurry. We were fortunate to get a place to sit. The performance began at 7 p.m. and lasted until 11 o'clock. The audience filled the place to overflowing. At the entrance of the circus we met P. Wiens, P. Hoff with daughter. We lodged together in the same place.
15. The weather was good. In the morning we looked after some business and left Danzig at about 10 a.m. At 2 p.m. we arrived at the Range. The previous Sunday I had already been asked by J. Froese to accompany him on a trip to Königsberg, which I gladly accepted. We were to leave the very next day. First, however, J. Froese took me along to Janzens, Hinterfeld, where I also had a few errands. By evening we were back, and I stayed with my friendly hosts overnight.
16. Jacob Froese, together with David Froese and I left early for Gross Masedorf, from where we took another 4-spring wagon and 2 more passengers: Elizabeth and Anna. At about 10



a.m. we arrived at the train station in Elbing. We had rain from early morn, with dismal weather. At 11:08 we left Elbing with the freight train (second class) which cost us each 2 Th. 10<sup>8</sup>. We arrived at Königsberg at the station of Violbabude at 4:37, after stopping for 10 to 15 min. at each of the 8 small stations: Guelderbuden, Schlobitten, Muehlhausen, Braunenberg, Kuligenboil, Woitnik, Ludwigdorf, and Violbabude. The rain had stopped at Braunenberg, and later skies were clear. We took a Droschke (hackney-carriage) which brought us to our hotel where we took lodging. Our first visit was to see the commemorative statue of Friedrich Wilhelm III, situated on the Plaza of the so called King's Garden (Königsgarten), near our hotel. It is an impressive statue.

Then we looked up N. Wiens, who had been taking treatments at a mineral Health Spa for one month, and who wanted to accompany us home. That

8 This is 2 Prussian thalers and 10 silbergroschen or about Can\$1.60. Thaler subdivided into 30 Silbergroschen, each of 12 Pfennige. Then in 1871 with German unification the Thaler was replaced by the Goldmark at the rate of 1 Thaler = 3 Goldmark. A Goldmark was worth about Can \$0.25

evening, together with him and a friend, H. Bronkamst, we took a walk to the new fortifications at the "Herzogsakker", then through the King's Gate and finally back to our Hotel. It was a wonderful evening.

Accompanied by the administrator of the Health Spa, the honourable Dr. Vogelgesang, we toured the grounds of this Spa which was situated at the castle pond. A very astonishing phenomenon to me was the "bleating" sound of the water in the pond. It appeared to glow in light green colours of marble. While I write my notes this evening in a hotel of a city unknown to me, unwittingly I think: What changes life brings! Today here in Königsberg in the "Hotel du Nord"; very soon I hope to be on my tiresome journey to Russia; yesterday evening at a circus of the Prince of Danzig; and where perhaps after another year?

17. Today our first visit was at the iron foundry "Annohaetts" at the cattle-market; then the large iron factory at the Werder Dam. Returning from there we went to the castle, and climbed up to the throne of the same: 17 staircases and 256 steps high. The view from the top is majestic! After that we viewed the "Moskreitensaal" which was 100 steps long and 25 steps wide. Then we saw the castle itself. Below the rooms I noticed the sleeping quarters of the King and next to this the coronation hall with its ancient decor from the time of F. I.; the throne room with the throne, the completely gilded furniture and carmine-coloured decor, which cost Frederick the II, 2 thrones. Besides this there is in this hall a lifesize portrait of the Prussian Kings; furthermore the Elector Hall with the portraits of the Electors and Dukes, and various high galleries; finally the "House of Assembly" room. From the castle we went to the city museum in which we saw a Portrait Gallery. One of them drew my attention in particular: The Gate Kapuzinerkloster in Rome, because of its extraordinary natural light perspective, and a Turkish man and woman in conversation. The scene had incomparable lighting, which illuminated the face and clothes of the two persons like a glowing fire behind a curtain. Unfortunately our leader Honourable Wiens was in a hurry, so I could see all of this only in passing, and some of it not at all.

\*(The results of the election of an Elder at Ladekopp, held today, fell on the Honourable Joh. Toews)

24. Arrived home at 5:30 p.m. I went to Adrians for a little while. I said Good-bye to all these loved ones and will spend the last night in the home of my parents. Tomorrow, God willing, I must say farewell to them.

### **My departure for Russia.**

25. 8 a.m. It has been raining since early morning with some thunder, but no wind. Weatherwise a dismal departure; but after rain follows sunshine. **1 p.m.**, soon, too soon, it is time to leave. My loved ones, including my mother, are composed and prepared for this, which already seemed evident during the last few days. The thought of following me to Russia seems to make her strong. The Lord be praised for this. Yesterday father also hinted strongly about taking steps to follow me. Well, as God in His wisdom has ordained! Yes, Lord, my God! Very soon the hour of parting from my parental home will be here, first and foremost from my mother and sister. Only you, Lord, know whether I will ever see these dear ones on this earth. Guide us all according to your wisdom, thus we will not miss the goal. I have experienced many good things in my homeland. Praise and Glory to you my God for this! Oh guide my steps in the future, so that I may walk in your ways, for Jesus Christ's sake, Amen.

Broecknerfelde, in the evening. Finally I have overcome the hour of parting from my parental home, from mother and my siblings. It will remain unforgettable! What I felt, what mother and sister may have felt, as we embrace for the last time—surely for a long time—only someone having experienced this can know. I have no doubt that she bore thoughts

that this could be the last time she would hold her parting son in her arms. Involuntarily these thoughts also crossed my mind. However, as the Lord has ordained, so shall it be.

At 2:15 I stepped on the wagon, driven by brother Jacob, which took me away from my parental home, the place in which for 18 years I experienced intimate relationships with parents, siblings and loving relatives, as also friends. At the "Triff" (common pasture) I took a last look at the place where my loved ones were standing to see their son and brother leave; heard the loud sobs of my mother and sister. But soon they disappeared from my view. O God! Watch over my dear mother and let the angel of peace hover over her. Towards evening we arrived here. Later a number of friends, acquaintances and neighbours of the Janzen family gathered to bid them farewell. Just before dark, I also said farewell to my brother, Jacob, and he returned home. It rained heavily today, and is still dull.

26. **Tralau** 11 o'clock a.m. We finally left from Joh. Toewses, Broecknerfelde at 8 a.m. We had actually agreed to leave real early, but because of the dreary weather and the bad roads, Mr. Janzen decided to wait until daylight. The road to Broeckn is very poor, so we needed extra horses to pull the wagons. Here at Mr. Abram Janzens we are stopping for a half hour for a drink of water. Weather is dull and humid.

**Stuhm** 6 p.m. At 12:45 we arrived at Caladave, where my father, brother Dietrich and cousin Jacob Hamm, Petershagen were already waiting for us since morning. They accompanied us through the town to the Willonberg stopping place where we took care of the horses. I made use of this hour to talk to my loved ones. But all too soon the time of parting arrived. We departed with the hope of reuniting at the Volga. Brother Dietrich seemed very emotional at this separation. All too soon we left to resume our journey, while my loved ones returned home. Lord, keep them in your care, and grant that we may have a happy reunion, according to your will.

At 5:30 we arrived here and hope to spend the night. Johann Duecks with daughter and son accompanied us to the Warsaw rest station. We also met the "*Kleinwerderischen*" [people from the Klein (small) Werder of the Vestula River delta] travelling group, including 2 families; the Peters and Martens. Later Abr. and Johann Janzen joined us with fodder supplies, and who would also accompany us to the border.

27. At sunrise, 8:45 we left our lodging place. It is cloudy again with a few trickles of rain. We fed the horses and had breakfast at a "Kregu" in the woods of Bakkelshof.

**Liebenthal**—1/4 mile behind Marienwerder. 1 p.m. At 10 our dear Elder J. Toews and wife took leave of us. J. Toews Jr. accompanied us to the border and will return home with the Janzens. Saying farewell to these dear friends was quite painful. The rest of us continued our journey and passed Marienwerder at 12 o'clock. We will have our noon meal at the suburb. However, since we were not allowed to station our wagons at the guesthouse, we decided to go a bit farther. It is beginning to rain again. We have left the "Chaussee" (highway) behind us since Marienwerder.

**Garnecdorf**, immediately behind Garnec, 7:30 p.m. After our noon meal we left Liebenthal, which lies in a romantic valley. Before this we had gone downhill on a steep decline, but now as steeply uphill. Our otherwise strong horses barely made this with the greatest exertion, since the wagons had to be pulled through much sand. It was a difficult stretch. At 6 p.m. we arrived here at a moderately good guesthouse. The horses were quartered in a liverybarn, the wagons outside where it was dry. The weather has almost completely cleared. Since a few days ago we have seen a comet<sup>9</sup> in the west.

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9 This was a very bright comet officially designated as: *1853 III Klinkerfues*. For reference, see: Gary W. Kronk. *Comets: A descriptive catalog*. (Hillside, N.J. 1984)

28. **Sunday.** Joh. Toews, Jr. and I slept in the “Grossstube” (livingroom) on straw. Just after we had gone to bed, and barely fallen asleep, we witnessed a fight with all the accompanying rowdiness among drunken card players. This kept on until 12 p.m. and at 3 a.m. we already prepared to leave.

Amt Roggenhausen. 10 a.m. We have had hard travelling thus far. Right at the start we made a wrong turn leading us to Graudanz, which road we followed for a good hour. Besides, we had much sand to go through both coming and returning. This was very hard on our wagons, since we found deep rain washed gullies where we had to put blocks under the wagons to keep them from overturning. 15 minutes ago we arrived here. Fortunately we have a stretch of Chaussee which leads us into the romantic valley enclosed by high, rugged cliffs, in which Amt Rogg. is situated. Joh. Toews and I climbed one of these high hills on which we saw an old watchtower and a large section of a foundation wall where the old castle Roggenhausen once stood. Below rushed a mighty millstream hemmed in by sluices over which it tumbled with a deafening roar. It was a picturesque scene which gave us much pleasure.

Rohwald 9:15 p.m. At 2 we left A.R. This stretch on this side of Honberg presents a beautiful view. Left of the street is a large estate, Peterhof. At Orle we received the necessary advice from friendly people. From there we came to Firorno. On this stretch we experienced the misfortune that the front wagon got stuck on a hollow road leading uphill steeply, while one of the horses slipped and fell. However, after we hitched the horses one behind another, we were able to get the wagon to the top, as well as the others. From Firorno we arrived here at 8 p.m. The road is getting better, though it is again hilly, as at Marienwerder and Garnsee. Our quarters, where we spend the night, teem with dancers. It is raining a bit. Peters had to buy a horse at R—hausen already, since one of his became sick. At a puddle, not far from here, we broke the seat on Mr. J.'s wagon.

29. **Bahrendorf.** 12 a.m. We have just arrived at the station, near the mosque and will have our dinner here. We had left 7:45 this morning. We passed by a lovely manor renovated in the old style, with massive farm buildings. Here, in the middle of the street we found a deep hole, so that we could bring the wagons across only with much difficulty. Similarly, we had to descend a very steep, stony hill where we could hardly be careful enough. But God has helped us thus far lovingly and watched over us. We thank Him for this. Farther on, another magnificent manor with mosaic-decorated buildings. Before Bahrendorf we had a lovely forest, and a good road. During the morning it was quite slippery because of yesterday's rain, so that we expected a great deal of mud. However, we have not found a better road yet.

30. **Gollop** 6 a.m. On the dot of 6 p.m. we arrived here last night, taking quarters for the night in the “Drei Kronen” (Three Crowns). The hosts are Jews. After supper I accompanied Mr. Janzen to see Mr. Lauf, who had been recommended by Hugo Moller to give us directions concerning changing our money and other matters for border crossing. After that we went to the bridge, and later with co-travellers to see Mr. Zanf, the innkeeper. Today it has been raining since early morning with some thunder.

**The Russian Border, Rypin**<sup>10</sup> 8:30 p.m. Right after breakfast Mr. Janzen and I went to see Mr. Lauf again regarding changing money. He recommended a pharmacist, who in a very friendly manner helped us with changing our money. Then Mr. Janzen took our passports, ordered the horses to be hitched, and we were on our way to the border with Mr. Zanf accompanying us. At the Prussian border, we were asked about contraband; when we declared that we had none, we were not searched. After a short time the gate on this side was opened, and I was the first one to step onto the bridge which was the actual boundary

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10 Rypin is today in central Poland at coordinates: 53°04'N 19°27'E.

between our fatherland and that of the mighty neighbouring country, which was to become our second home.

A number of sensations came alive in me as I left my homeland; yet no feelings of hesitation or faintheartedness, rather my trust in a worthy cause gave me any reason to look back. Of course, my eyes filled with tears, but my heart remained steadfast. All the wagons passed over the bridge, and in 15 minutes we were on Russian soil. For each wagon we had to pay 2 Silver Rubles<sup>11</sup>, besides which the officials received some blocks of cheese. After a few entries were made in the passports, we received the go-ahead without any delay. Those who were with us accompanied us on foot for a stretch, and after many wishes of Goodwill and God's blessings, we parted and our party continued on our way. The dull, dreary weather could have influenced our innermost feelings during this brief experience, but we remained confident, trusting completely in the Lord and His grace.

For dinner we stopped at the town of Radomin. The road thus far had been sandy and difficult. At 3:30 we left again. The road became better and the rain had stopped. At 8 p.m. we had arrived at the guesthouse where we will spend the night. On the way we met a butcher from Breslau, who transported a herd of sheep, which he had gathered to take home. I talked with for him a bit. We have good quarters here. In Gollop Peters had to leave a sick horse and buy a second one.

31. At 7 a.m. we left. For the first time Jacob Janzen and I had been nightwatchmen. It was a clear, but cool night. We passed through a lovely, wooded area, and arrived at the village of Ornechelewo, where we are stopping for dinner in the "Kratschma" (guesthouse). At places we had a lot of sand again. Close by we see a lovely lake.

Cerpo, 8:30 p.m. We arrived here at 7 p.m. Again we had a large wooded area and much sand to pass through. We experienced a misfortune here that could easily have caused a long delay. But as the saying goes: "There is no misfortune so great, that doesn't turn into fortune" (Es ist kein Unglueck so gross, es ist ein Glueck dabei). The front wagon, driven by friend Abr. Martens, but at the time by Mr. Janzen, on which I also have my place since the town of Gollop, got into a peat-moor, which stretched across the entire road. It was unavoidable and the wagon almost stopped as the front wheels got stuck up to the axles in the quagmire. The horses fortunately, though covered with mud, had been able to step on hard ground before the hind wheels also got stuck. Actually we found ourselves on the wrong road, since we had been misinformed to leave the old street and turn onto a newer, unfinished one, which seemed to be closer. It was now necessary to hitch the horses to the back and try to pull the wagon out backwards. Fortunately it was possible to do this with six horses, without harm to the wagon, contents or harness. But since the street was too narrow, we had to unhitch all the horses and shove the wagons around. Finally, after a short detour, we got onto the right road. Before this happened, we had to cross a bridge where the planks were so rotten, that some of them broke. The Lord be praised for His gracious protection.

At this stop we had to look for fodder, which seemed to be in short supply here, however was obtainable from a Jewish man. The town has quite a friendly appearance. Near the "Karatschma" there is a monastery.

## **September 1853**

September 1. Jerschawo. 12 a.m. We are stopping here at the Kartschma (guesthouse) for dinner. We had left our quarters late, since we had to put new horseshoes on the front feet

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11 Imperial Russia had several different types of rubles. In 1853 one Silver Ruble, paid in silver coins, was worth slightly more than one credit paper ruble or about \$CAD 0.50.

of our horses. Also we bought oats, straw and bread, which took about an hour. The street here is sandy, but even. Preparations are being made for a Chaussee-road (highway). We came upon a bad bridge; also had some rain. Drobyen at the guesthouse, 9:45 p.m. After dinner we resumed our journey. We had a level road ahead of us, and followed it. Except for sandy stretches, travelling was good. However, we almost had another accident, had we not experienced a similar misfortune yesterday. A small peatmoor crossed our path, so we stopped. We investigated and found the place impassable. As yesterday we had to turn the wagons around and return to the old road. This proved to be very stony, so that our axles were under great strain. A further delay was caused by a rotten bridge, where we had to unhitch all the horses and pull the wagons over. All this resulted in arriving at our night lodgings after sunset.

We are camping on a large green plaza in front of the house; only a few of the horses are under a roof. Some of our younger people drank their coffee outside on the lawn. Now I am sitting at the lawn table to write my notes. Above me I see a canopy of stars in all its beauty; a soft breeze fans the light in the open lantern; around us are the wagons in which preparations for the night are being made; others of our company are standing around chatting together. We are all in a happy mood. May God grant that this friendly atmosphere will continue until our new home will receive us. Yes, Lord, our God! All our hope, our comfort, our confidence is in you. Grant us furthermore whatever can serve to our good \*(zu unserm Heile dienen kann). Give our loved ones at home from the abundance of your grace, blessings upon blessings, for Christ's sake, Amen. I must close. The group wants to go to rest, as well as I. So Goodnight, my loved ones at home. May the angel of the Lord watch over you this night.

2. Guentherruh, German colony, 8 verst<sup>12</sup> from Ploneki, 1:15 p.m. We were advised to go a different route than the usual specified roads, but we decided to keep to this one. Arriving at the second crossroad, a Jewish man told us that the other road was a bit farther, but we would have a stretch of Chaussee, whereas the other would be quite sandy. Therefore we brought the wagons back, and turned on the road he advised. In one of the villages we made a wrong turn and had to push the wagons back in order to get to the right road. Farther on we came to a very bad bridge, at which we would have had to turn back, had we not found some bushes which we used to cover the bridge. We pulled the heavier wagons across, while the others were able to make it on their own. Again God helped us in our predicament. At Gurie we arrived at the Chaussee, which we followed a good stretch, until it became an unfinished road, but fortunately we could drive alongside. The town of Guentherruhe was settled about 60 years ago, by a General Guenther, and named after him.

Karatschma (guesthouse) 2 verst past Gourki, 8:15 p.m. From Guentherruhe on we had Chaussee again. At Plourki we bought oats and hay. All day we have had dull, dreary weather with some rain. Here we have the best lodging ever on our trip; clean, some new buildings; cleanliness in barn and guestroom, the former plastered; the horses are bedded on straw. Everything very comfortable.

3. Saturday. We left at 7 a.m. Some stretches we had Chaussee. At noon we arrived at a lodging-place. Oats costs 7 rubles per "Karchez". We bought a young calf here for 11 rubles, which we had butchered. At 2 p.m. we went on following the Chaussee, then sandy road to Cakrotrahin.

We decided to continue on towards Novidwar. On our way we passed the fortress of Modlin which we circled around, since it was familiar to us from 3 years ago. At my request we

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<sup>12</sup> Verst is now an obsolete Russian unit of length. It was equal to 1.067 kilometres or 3,500 feet or 0.663 miles.

were shown the way past the gate which we had followed down to the bridge the other time. This led from the Chaussee to the bend in the road which I had taken note of earlier. I went ahead of the wagon as usual. Suddenly I hear a soldier calling me, signifying that we were taking a forbidden road. After making some remarks to him I was told to go to a certain small house farther downhill, where, for some drinking money (“tip”), I would no doubt get permission to continue on. I went and found the place where a woman, who seemed rather unwilling, told us to get going quickly. I climb up the hill to get the wagons over, but hear from afar a soldier scolding and demanding that we “nocmou” (stop). Coming nearer, I hear him with much cursing say that the road under no circumstances is passable; that we have to stop. But we had no desire to take a detour of 3 or 4 verst, since it was almost evening, and besides a thunderstorm was brewing. After a few kind words on my behalf, which really didn't seem to have much effect, I said something about “Trinkgeld” (tip), upon which the episode takes a complete turnabout. The soldier, and a second one who joined him, demanded 1 ruble per wagon. I promise this and the road is clear, except that we are asked to leave as quickly as possible, so that the “Kommandeur” doesn't see us. As luck would have it, he was at a ball at the fortress. However, that this episode could have dire consequences for the soldiers, I gathered by the fearful glances the two soldiers exchanged. (There were mines in the area, which the soldier showed me). Very quickly we drove down the hill and got to the Chaussee, which led to the bridge. We crossed this, fulfilled our obligations and arrived here in Novidwar after dark. I was shown a German guesthouse, whose owner was Grossman, which I found after some searching. Now this is a distinguished place, but not quite suitable for us. It had begun to rain, and the guestbarn held the horses, but only two wagons. The others had to be stationed on a small yard in the open with a heavy rain coming down. As mentioned, the house was quite grand, but the owner was also at the Ball at the fortress, and so we had no permission to cook even our coffee in the same. We had no choice but to eat a cold supper of bread and butter and cheese. Meanwhile it was raining hard, but even so, we were in good spirits, reminding each other, that after rain follows sunshine. With this encouragement we retired for the night at 10 p.m.

4. **Sunday.** The sooner, the better to get out of this confined night—“Logi” we pack up at 6:15 a.m. without even eating breakfast. We arrive at Preichow, a German settlement, and eat our breakfast in the open. The weather is dull and dreary, and at arrival a fine dust-rain fell. We were going to go on for a while, but because of the weather decided to stop here at noon. In the meantime I wrote a letter to my loved ones. After a frugal noon meal (which was actually quite Sunday-like (mutton soup), we left at 2 p.m. At 5:15 we arrived at the guesthouse near the village of Dombrowka. I went to the village (about 1 verst farther) to ask for oats, but received only a scant 2 “Karschag” at the high price of 18 ruble per Kilo. The fodder seems to be in short supply because of much rain, and also not much has been threshed. All over we hear the Low German dialect, whereas in the vicinity there are supposed to be German colonies. Also the “Storasch” (watchman) speaks German or Polish. Janzen and I are again nightwatchmen.
5. The guesthouse, 7 verst past Warsaw. Here we had good barn facilities and a place for the wagons. At 10 a.m. we passed Warsaw, and arrived here at 12 p.m. It is very humid and cloudy. We have a clean, large guestbarn here, but have to cook in the open. I take the opportunity to walk to the iron monument at the battlefield of Gottslaw<sup>13</sup>. The inscription says that in 1831 15,000 infantry, 14,000 cavalry and 2000 Cossaks fought under the General Fieldmarshal Count Diebitrck. At Warsaw I spoke with an old Russian invalid, who told me that he had been at the last siege at Danzig, and knew the area well. We heard that

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13 This was a battle in the Polish “November Uprising” and today it is known as the Battle of Olszynka Grochowska.

the emperor is to be in Warsaw incognito; and yesterday the Grandduchess, heir to the throne, arrived there. The name of the place here is Gottslaw.

Rutka 7 p.m. We have lovely quarters here; the guestbarn easily holds our wagons and all the horses, and is neat and clean. The host is an elegant, friendly man who speaks German. The kitchen clean and roomy; and the surroundings are clean and nice. Since the weather is good too we must say that it is the best place we have come to so far. At 6 a.m. we left and arrived at the village of Chelasno where we stopped for the noon meal. At 6 we took lodging behind a postal station, Gurwolin. Behind Gurwolin one crosses over the Wjeprz. Again we have been able to be under cover with all the wagons and horses, and have a good lodgingplace.

7. Today we left at 6:45 and stopped for dinner at 11:30. The weather is cold and dull. I have a cold and have to cough, as well as a headcold. We arrived at our guesthouse at 5:30, 3 verst behind the postal station, Matrchenka.
8. During the afternoon we had a very hilly road through a wooded area. Even though we had to brake the wheels, it was a lovely drive. I walked for a long stretch. The weather was beautiful. At 6:30 we stopped for the night. During our evening coffee, which we drank in the guestbarn because of a party in the guesthouse, Mr. Janzen reminded us that today they would have farmers' market in Tiegenhoff. I made the comment that one or the other no doubt would be thinking of us there. Quietly I drank my coffee to their wellbeing. Yes, loved ones, may you fare well. May the Lord be with you and with us. Last night there was an uproar with some Jews, who wanted to forcefully enter the locked doors of the guesthouse.
9. Lublin 12 p.m. At 9:30 we arrived here at the guesthouse. We have visited the grave of Mr. Fr. Wall, who died here last summer, on August 19. We also took care of some business in town. The quarters are good, but expensive. Janzen and I were watchmen again.
10. Rainy, dark weather. At 8 we passed Piorky where we bought bread. At 6:15 we arrived at a guesthouse 10 verst before Chatm. The weather has cleared up. On the other side of the street there is a broken down tower, and nearby a spring flowing out of a stone-encased basin.
11. **Sunday**, 10a.m. We are having a bit of a rest. Yesterday when we arrived here, the guestbarn was full of Jewish travellers, who because of the Sabbath only left at 8:30 a.m. Last night we heard some of their worship service, which, because of the pleasant weather, was held in the open. It was a beautiful moonlit evening, so I spent some time walking back and forth on the Chaussee just in front of the house, thinking of my home and the loved ones there.

Strange! On this trip there are so many distractions, that one can hardly take time leisurely to think about the past or the future; and yet there is so much that relates to it. I have just finished a letter to my family, in which I gave them a short report of our journey thus far, and shared with them my frustrations with the distractions.

8:30 p.m. At 2 p.m. we left again. We bought feed and other provisions, mailed the letter, and went on for 9 more verst. Here we have good quarters and friendly hospitality by a Polish host. Weather is good, though a bit cool.

12. After we spent 2 hours shoeing our horses with new irons, we left at 7:30 a.m. At 12 we came to the end of the Chaussee at the village of Radzibissowich, where we are having dinner. The Postroad is being worked on. After dinner the horses were quite willing to take it at a good clip, so we arrived at Urtiluga for our night lodging.
13. 6 a.m. we left and passed the bend at Urtiluga where we bought fodder and provisions, arriving at a large and nice guesthouse—the largest we've had so far. In the afternoon we passed through Vladimir where we bought bread and oats. Farther on the road was sandy and very dusty. Our next stop has good quarters and especially good hay.



- 14.** Our next stop was a churchvillage, Catirez; then on to Fortrehin. On our way we passed through a dark, densely wooded area, where we met a group of soldiers. Our quarters are not exactly clean, but the host so much more friendly and cheerful.
- 15.** We passed through Lutzki at 10 a.m. where we bought bread and oats. Just out of Lutzki I saw the first "Mohillen", man-made hills, which were quite large. At Jarostowitsch we took our night lodging. We had to get our water from a long distance.
- 16.** This morning we travelled a good stretch through lovely oak woods. Since the postroad was farther from Warwowitsch, we took a country road. Near the village this again joined with the Postroad. This area already characterizes that of South Russia. When Henry and I came back from watering the horses, a large coachwagon drawn by 6 horses sped past us in all its luxury. We were told that it belonged to the entourage of His Imperial Highness, the Grand Duke and Crown Prince, who was expected to pass through here on his way from Kiev to Warsaw; and that in Duov every preparation had been made for his arrival.

It is strange how one's sentiments are so changeable at times. Yesterday, for example, we arrived at our nightlodging quite late, having passed through a dark wooded area, which surrounded both sides of the road; today again we drove through lonely steppes, which seemed to make me feel depressed and anxious, one might say, almost fearful. But I know it stems purely from sympathetic impressions, which a fading day leaves on the spirit of a feeling and thinking person. In the morning I am again happy and cheerful, so much so that I must contain myself not to break out in exclamations of gaiety. This evening while passing by the desolate fields towards the village surrounded by low-lying hills and a poplar grove, the last rays of a golden sunset bathed the scene of the tour-party in the centre in a flood of colour and tranquility. As usual I had hurried ahead of the wagons, and looking back caught the last wagon coming over the hill on which the parting sun sent its last rays. "Auswanderer"! (emigrants) I heard an inner voice echo my thoughts, accompanied by a melancholy feeling for several seconds. But I did not have much time to let these sentiments take hold, since I had to hurry to make arrangements for the night lodging. Just now some of the tourparty are preparing for a night's rest; others, as I, wait for the arrival of His Highness.

- 17.** The Crown Prince and entourage did not pass by yesterday. However, today when we arrived in Warjowitz, we found some 50 stately harnessed posthorses, a large number of uniformed Jamschschiki and Postofficers waiting for His Highness at the large market plaza near the Post Office. An officer approached me (I happened to be driving the first wagon) with the words: "na z mou cmanyin na mpabo" (at this station with care). Without delay we drove on. However, I got off to walk ahead, to give the wagons a signal as soon as the entourage approached, so that we would make room for them. After we had gone farther for a few M. I saw dust clouds whirling in the distance and a few wagons hurrying along. I gave my signal and our wagons stationed themselves to the right of the road. After a few minutes 5 large travel coaches rushed by drawn by 6 to 8 foam-spurring, panting horses. In the last wagon I recognized (according to the portrait) the Honourable traveller; except that the minute he came into view, he was already gone. He wore a grey coat, on his head a military cap. God be with the Honourable Traveller!

At 11 a.m. we stopped for dinner, and left again at 1 p.m., to get to Ortega before night if possible. **Ortega:** We have a clean lodging place here. Soon after our arrival we noticed that one of our metal pails was gone—probably stolen.

- 18. Sunday.** I went into town right after breakfast to ask about our brothers in the faith, who were to lend us a team of horses to get us through the Ortega sand. We were told that they would likely come to market today. After dinner some of our women also came along to see a Russian market. We met a few men who invited us to their village, Karolswalde, for night.

**Karolswalde**<sup>14</sup> A Mennonite colony at Ortega! [Ostrog ?] We are camping on the yard of a family by the name of Unruh. The weather is good, though cloudy. Janzen and I are night watchmen again.

**19.** We left with the extra horses, arriving at Laterkuey 8 p.m. The Ortega sand is behind us. It was very deep in only a few places. Our nightlodging is rather meager, and most of our horses have to be outside. The guestroom swarms with soldiers and people who are on their way to the market at Fortan. While we were drinking our evening coffee in the guestroom, there was much dancing and music, moreover jolly partying.

**20.** At 8:30 a.m. we passed Farlow. We bought oats and bread and a sheep for butchering. This area is very flat, yet hilly and steppelike. The woodland here seems not as luscious, but rather dry, and contains moss, especially in the Ortega woods. The Ortega people told us that they (some 200 church members) annually make 2000 fb. prb. for firewood, and everyone can have as much as he needs. They also have wood for construction purposes.

After 2 hours of travelling we had the misfortune of having taken the wrong road. After getting advice from a Russian man to make a detour, which took us another 2 hours, we got on the right road. Our guesthouse where we will spend the night is the cleanest, largest and nicest of all we have lodged in so far.

**21. Labunye** 12 a.m. We are stopping here to water the horses from a 90' deep well. Labunye lies between two rivers with steep embankments. Here we met the first "Tschunakkenzug". The area is very flat, with some woods on both sides.

**22.** We passed through Labar where we bought bread and oats. Labar is a typical Russian town. All over near the roads one sees many crosses, covered with insignias of suffering. For the travelling public it might be better to place road-markers instead of the crosses at the crossroads. However, "wie laendlich, so sittlich" (every country has its customs); and actually these crosses are symbols of a people striving for godliness, and achieving godliness.

**Karthma** 4 verst from Krarnopol. In the afternoon we again took the wrong road, but finally arrived at Krarnopol. Here we were given wrong directions again, which led us to a strange and dirty village, where we have to camp in the open. I asked other travellers about the road, and was told that we had to return to Krarnopol.

**23.** We had a lovely moonlit night, mild and quiet. This morning under the silver light of the moon from heaven's dome, I curried the horses for friend Martens, who has rheumatism. We left at 7 a.m. and got to the postroad at Glabizka, arriving at Lipowitz where we are stopping for dinner. We have often met huge oxen and hog transports, as also today, some 1000 oxen going to Warsaw, and a hog transport to Kalinek. In the evening we arrived at a poor "Kartschma" where we have prepared for the night. Unfortunately, we did not find water nearby. Jacob Janzen and I went to look for some and found a well about 1 verst farther on. After evening coffee, we rode to the place, but found instead of water, only a slimy well, and we were obliged to ride back without having watered the horses. It is my turn to be night watchman. The weather is beautiful.

**24.** Today we left at sunrise and found a well with a good supply of water for the horses, as well as for cooking. At noon we arrived at a German colony (Mennonites) called **Michalin**<sup>15</sup> on

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14 Karolswalde was established as a Mennonite colony in 1801 by West Prussian Mennonites. It was located near Ostrog, Volhynia, Russia. Tobias Unruh was ordained Elder in 1853 but the name Unruh was popular in the colony. In 1874 all the Mennonites migrated to the United States.

15 The Mennonite settlement of Michalin, sometimes named as: Deutsch-Michalin, was on the eastern edge of the province of Volhynia, Polish Russia, near Machnovka (Russian: Махновка) but in Soviet times it was named: Komsomolske (Russian: Комсомольское). Mennonites settled there about 1791 by families from the Graudenz area of the Vistula River. In the period 1874–78 the entire community moved to Kansas and founded the Gnadenberg Mennonite Church.

the postroad. Here we stopped for dinner, bought supplies and feed, as well as potatoes (1 “Korssy” for a silver ruble). Our brothers in the faith live quite scattered on both sides of the postroad. The buildings are better than those at Ortega. At 4 p.m. we passed by a town called Camporadok, where we saw a small church for both Greek and Russian worshippers.

**Otrehownack**—a village situated at a picturesque lake. On the other side of the lake are the buildings for the guards of the manor and business edifices, surrounded by a park. As we approached we were impressed by the beauty of the scene before us. The village lies to the left; to the right a bare, flat steppe. Our quarters are sufficient for wagons and horses, and it is in Russian terms quite clean. Interestingly, the Polish language is used here, as also the Polish currency, which, for some time, was not usable on our trip. The hosts are less frequently Jewish, rather Russian and on the average quite amiable. From Krarnopol to the postroad we have travelled through bare, steppe-like areas, where one finds a pitiful guesthouse at the road, which here and there breaks the monotony of the lonely road.

Who knows what my loved ones at home are doing this evening? Certainly they will think of me after a day's work, as I am thinking of them. Oh! It is quite hard to be in a strange land, far from all my loved ones. However, the thought, that there are so many loving hearts beating for the departed son, brother and friend, is like a healing balsam to my heart, which feels the pain of separation so keenly. But ever so soothing and calming is the conviction that the heavenly Father near us and His holy angels are our guides who keep us from harm and danger. Oh! When we think of what untoward problems or accidents could befall us on our way, and how graciously our faithful God has led us thus far, we must humbly confess: “Lord, I am not worthy of all the mercy and faithfulness, which you have bestowed on me”.

**25. Sunday** We rested until noon again. Mr. Janzen and I wrote letters to our homes. At 11:30 we are on our way again, arriving near Libowitz for night. With us is a herd of about 500 sheep.

**26. At Libowitz** we bought feed for the horses and supplies, and mailed our letters. At the next guesthouse where we were going to water our horses, we had a bit of a run-in with the hosts. They thought we were not going to pay for this service, and so they tried to deny access to the well, which led to a very embarrassing encounter. However, the end of it was that we paid for the water troughs; furthermore, we had to give a silver ruble to a woman, who insisted that because of the episode she had received a blow on her leg. We are camping entirely in the open, and drank our evening coffee in a special room called “Stanpin”. The host is a very friendly man—a Russian. In the evening Mr. Janzen and a few of us sat around in cordial conversation for a while.

**27.** Today our way took us through oak woods, partly clad in autumn colours. We have passed through quite a wooded area, but no more evergreen trees. Mr. Janzen is not well; he is having chest pains.

8 p.m. A guesthouse at **Cibabowka**. On our way we had some rain, which increased, so that we were glad to arrive at a guesthouse, even though it had only a partial roof, and our horses and wagons were barely under cover. The ducks and geese wade around comradely in the gutter of the barn. In spite of this we are glad not to have to camp completely in the open. The cookstove too, is quite adequate, and the hosts are friendly. The rain is still coming down hard and the wind blowing through the broken windowpanes of our “Stanpin” is trying to blow out our lights. The Lord be praised that so far He has given us pleasant travelling.

**28.** Our next stop is **Gokolowka**, where we stop for dinner in a guesthouse, which is crawling with Jews. From there on the going was hard, so we stopped in good time at a fairly good “Kartschma”. There is no guest barn here, but a yard enclosed by high stone walls and an eastern-styled “Girverian” (roof), looking quite elegant. Nearby is a garden with a Chapel which invites travellers for prayer.

**29.** This morning I failed to ask for directions, so we took the wrong road again. After a few verst we turned around and got to **Rogku** at noon. The hostess was quite brazen at first, but after several of us bought a few things from her, including a watermelon, she became very friendly. It so happened that the watermelon didn't find great acclaim by our party, since it was too old. No doubt this area is not quite right for watermelons. In this village are many orchards.

**Wyrchepolskaja.** Arrived here at 6 p.m., a clean room and friendly host. We almost experienced an adventure here. Some of our group immediately rode to another village to water the horses. Meanwhile darkness began to set in. Because of carelessness, some of them were separated from each other in order to look for better water. Since it became completely dark very quickly, they could not find their way back to the others, though they looked around for one hour. Those of us who stayed at the guesthouse were also beginning to be worried. Finally, friend Toews came back with the news that the other party were really lost. The two of us quickly went out with lanterns. We were on our way only a short distance when we saw the whole gang coming merrily our way. We were all very much relieved!

**30.** Near noon we got to **Forgowitreh**, a military colony. Here I was impressed by the hostess, a corpulent Russian woman, who though very talkative, yet in a discreet and obliging manner took care of all our needs. At 8:15 we arrived at the place where we will spend the night. We are in the open with everything. I am sitting at the camping table, writing my notes, whereas the rest of the company is getting ready for bed. May God protect you all, my loved at home, as also us.

## October 1853

**October 1.** After a long day of travelling, we arrived at a guesthouse, 7verst behind **Chmelosooey**. It is near a deep gorge by a wooded area. It seems that in this region the actual steppes begin; there are fewer and fewer trees; yet more and more Mohillen. Large trains of Tscheunekken are seen on all streets. The soil seems to be very good, although they say it has been a dry summer. Yet there are many flat areas covered with stooks.

**2. Sunday** 10 a.m. Yesterday evening we sat in the warm room talking to the Hosts until 9 p.m. During our conversation I translated what was said to the rest of our party. We left at 12 noon. Our purpose is to reach the Old Colony by next Sunday, but whether we will, God knows. He has helped us thus far and will help in days to come.

At **Habrina** we took the post road, but soon noticed that it wasn't the right road. At Bolrekoj Wioka, a military colony, near a small lake, we bought oats and hay. Here we had to show our passports, so we got to our night lodging at sunset. The weather is pleasant.

**3.** At 12 noon we arrived at **Elizabethgrad**. Just as we entered the town (I was walking alongside the wagon) I suddenly heard someone talk to me in German. I followed the call, and found a few friendly men, who were delighted to see and talk to fellow countrymen. The travellers of a few years ago had also talked to them on their way through. We drove our wagons onto the yard of a Russian. We went to market here to buy a few necessities, also taking our women-folk to shop. Elizabethgrad is quite a nice town with large military establishments. From time to time the emperor has big military manoeuvres here.

**4.** Mr. Janzen and I were watchmen this night. Among other things we talked about those who had gone ahead to settle at the Volga, and whether the group might have made arrangements to organize a church, or whether they would wait until they were fully settled.

The weather is clear and mild. I am sitting quite comfortably at my camp table between the wagons, writing my notes. Soon we must give the command to wake up, feed the horses, eat breakfast and start out again: "In order to arrive at the Molotschnaja". Our next station is

a very large, lovely “church village” surrounded by nice (Plantagen) plantations. With its cute little white houses, it is certainly the nicest village we have seen so far. We stop at 7 p.m. for night out in the open, near Hawkolowka, since this place is supposed to have something that is called water.

5. After a few stops through the day, we camped at a place called **Wadnoja**. Just before the village we met a group of homeward bound Germans, among them Janzen of Heubuden and Wall of Muensterberg. We conversed with them for a bit and then each went our way. The evening is beautiful—mild, quiet and clear. The young people stand and sit at the task of peeling potatoes. We are all in a happy mood. I sit in my summer clothes; above me are God's friendly stars. It seems almost as if nature is celebrating! Lord, we praise you for all your faithfulness, with which you surround us day by day!
6. **Sojuowka**. Noon. Here we met a Mennonite mother from Katherinaslav. In the afternoon we again had the misfortune to have taken the wrong road, costing us 3/4 hour, which however, since we couldn't find water, was offset by the fact that we found a very good well where we are stationed at this time.
7. A cool morning with some hoarfrost, later a dense fog covered the area. Tomorrow we hope to reach the Old Colony.
9. **Neuenburg** (Chortitz district) We arrived at the guesthouse at 9 a.m. where we have spoken with some of the brethren. We rented a wagon which is to bring Mr. Janzen and me to **Neuendorf**, where Mr. Janzen has a cousin. The other wagons were to go to Einlage, where we would meet them later. We saw the iron foundry and together with Mr. Franz, who arrived later, had a pleasant evening talking together.
10. **Schoenwiese** 10 p.m. Our tour-party gathered on the yard of a certain Abr. Dueck. Buying our provisions took so much time that we decided to have our noon meal first before we made our way across the Dnjepr River. The crossing took quite a long time, and before we went on we had another delay. A Tcheumuk party were ahead of us, making their way along a stony, hollow road with loads of wood. At the worst place 2 of them got stuck having broken their “Sperrnaegel” (shoes of wheel). It took a while to fix them, so that instead of arriving at Veonikay for night we are preparing to spend the night here. I am writing my notes by the light of a full moon, while the others are peeling potatoes. In Chortitz we were told about the election of elder and minister among the group of emigrants that passed through ahead of us. May the Lord bless both for their honourable service!
11. We left today in the early morning darkness and arrived in **Moneky**, where we bought feed. At 8 p.m. we took lodging 8 verst this side of Jankelhurak. It has been extraordinarily warm during the day, and is still quite mild tonight.

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## At the Molotschna Colony

### 12 October 1853

- \* 12. We left this morning quite early, and arrived at the village of Gruenthal, where we tried in vain to get feed, so we went on to Klein Montal. We bought feed, as well as eating an early dinner. After this without further delay, we made our way to the final destination of our journey. Very soon I saw the “Six Mohillen” in the distance, and further the Mohille at Prirehip, as well as the church spire, then to the left the Great Tokmak, Ladekopp and Petershagen. At 1/4 to three we finally crossed the Molotschna bridge between Prirehop and Halbstadt. I immediately went to Jacob Wiebe, the “Gebietslehrer” (district schoolteacher) to announce our arrival. Mr. Janzen and the rest of the company continued on their way towards Muensterberg, while I stayed in Halbstadt, hoping to get a ride to Orloff. That evening Mr. Wiebe took me to visit a few friends I had earlier learned to know.

- 13./1<sup>16</sup> I spent the morning visiting around. After dinner Mr. Wiebe took me to Orloff to see Mr. H. Wiebe, my former principal, but he had gone on an inspection tour of the colony. Mrs. Wiebe gave me a hearty welcome. I also met friend Harder there, who seemed to be very happy to see me.
- 14/2. I had promised Mr. Janzen to help unpack our belongings, so I made use of the opportunity of a ride to Muensterberg.
- 15/3. After the necessary job of unpacking was done I was able to get a ride to Orloff with Mr. Wall and from there back to Halbstadt, where I received a hearty welcome by Mr. Wiebe and Doerksen, who had come back from their trip. After "tea" I took the opportunity to talk to Mr. Wiebe about my present stay at this colony. I received the warm offer that he would use my services in the "Kanzlei" (colony office). I was happy to hear that my needs in this respect had been taken care of.
- 16/4. Sunday. I went to church with Doerksen and Harder. The reverend Mr. Wall delivered the Thanksgiving sermon. The Janzen family was also in attendance. The Janzens, as well as Mr. Wall, were here for "coffee". In the evening we had some rain and thunder.
- 17/5. Mr. Wiebe and Doerksen went to the villages again, while I began to work in the office.
18. Today I wrote letters to my loved ones, telling them of my safe arrival here.
- 19/7. Today I re-copied my notes of our trip.
- 21/9. Mr. Wiebe finished his inspection tour, while I had to enter the figures in a ledger.
- 22/10. Today I worked hard at my travel notes which I finished this evening. The weather is quite pleasant.
- 23/11. Today Doerksen and I had our worship service at home, with the former reading a sermon from "Hofacker",<sup>17</sup> (Rom. 6:19–23). Later we read parts of "Uncle Tom's Cabin". After dinner I went to Altonau by horseback, where I again met a number of friends and had pleasant conversations with them. On the way back it was rather windy and cool; and felt like rain. ("hatte Lust zu regnen")

It is unbelievable how expensive certain services have become here. For example, Schmidt Wiens had a partner ("Geselle") whom he offered 200 (say that again) two hundred silver rubles, since he couldn't get anyone from elsewhere. The store clerk at Thiessens in Schoenau receives 400 silver rubles!

- 25/13. The morning was cloudy and cool. After dinner my travel companion P. Toews was here for a few hours. For "Vesper" Hamm from Yushanlee was here. Friend Harder went back with him to see about his position as schoolteacher. And so I am alone and quite lonely here. All kinds of thoughts: past, present and future crowd in my inner being. For evening tea Mrs. Wiebe and I were all alone and our conversation turned to all kinds of events which have taken place between the Hamm family at Juschanlee and other inhabitants which resulted in a "cold" farewell for the former. Further, the tension between Uncle Epp (Claas Epp, Sr.) and Mr. Wall gives great concern in view of the prospective establishment of a new settlement at the Volga. Oh, who had thought of this right at the beginning? Who wouldn't have thought that these two men, above all others, would have gone about this task with the greatest of forethought, with selflessness, impartiality, and in every respect credible reliability, with God's help to ensure and carry out the great responsibility of this venture?

However, it's not the end of the world ("Es ist ja auch nicht aller Tage Abend"), and "They who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." Who knows but that the Lord may from the very beginning send trials and tribulations upon the newly-formed church, so that the members may be kept from pride and arrogance, and no one may harbour the sinful thought

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16 At this point in the Dairy Martin Klaassen is giving dates in both the Gregorian (i.e modern calendar) and the Julian, or old style calendar that you can see is 12 days behind.

17 Ludwig Hofacker (1798–1828) was a gifted evangelical Lutheran preacher whose sermons were published and very popular with many Mennonites and others.

that the Lord does not guide and reign over all in His Wisdom, and for the Glory of His Name. Looking at it from this side, one need not lose one's trust in this matter; but rather recognize that human foolishness, or seeming evil can turn into good for future generations; furthermore, personally to strive to diminish the present misunderstanding, meanwhile not forget humbly to ask the Lord for His gracious help, yes, to implore Him very humbly, if otherwise one does not want to "reckon without one's host".

Yes, Lord, our God! We commend this serious situation to you! The wellbeing of so many souls, as well as of those, who already have sought to establish their homes there, depends on this situation, since they have made it their calling to work to the glory of Your Name, as also those who will strive for this in future generations, building on that foundation, which is being laid now. Therefore, O Father, be gracious and merciful to those, who in spite of great weakness, undertake to build a holy place in the hearts of a new congregation; who presently are breaking through as a budding shoot. Oh, grant this by your grace, mercy and love, for Christ's sake! Amen.

26/14. A beautiful day. Mr. Wiebe and Doerksen returned from their trip. By now I am more or less fully employed in the office. In between we are reading "*Uncle Tom's Cabin*"<sup>18</sup>—a very interesting book.

27/15. After dinner I accompanied Mrs. Wiebe to Yuschanlee,<sup>19</sup> but returned after Tea. A huge bull will be slaughtered in J. [Yushanlee] tomorrow.

30/18. **Sunday.** A good rain today. I had gone to church, where Abram Isaak gave the preparatory sermon. Text: Rev. 3:20—"Behold, I stand at the door .." In the p.m. I went to Rev. Elder Behrend<sup>20</sup> for a visit. At this opportunity I handed him my church certificate<sup>21</sup>, and was received as member of the church by him. In the evening I had a conversation with Doerksen about the sciences; this time Humboldt's "*Kosmos*"<sup>22</sup> "was the topic.

### November 1853

1. November (20. Oct.) Overcast and foggy weather, some wind. Mr. Wiebe went to Juschanlee [Yushanlee] with Doerksen, and has just returned. Tomorrow he travels to Derpa where he has business concerns regarding land rentals.

4. Just before dinner I had a visit from our dear Elder Joh. Wall. The same imparted a number of things about the Volga, and his experiences about the business transactions there, which have been quite remarkable. I was sorry he couldn't elaborate more, since he was in a hurry.

5. Overcast and moist, 7 degrees warm during the day. Towards evening Mr. Cornies and family came to attend the communion service here tomorrow. Later in the evening after Tea, I spent some time talking to him in the living room.

6. Sunday. Today I attended communion which was celebrated in the local church. After Vesper I went to Janzens where I met Doerksen. Janzen told us of his experiences on his trip to Norway and Sweden.

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18 The book *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe was first serialised in 1851 and published in book form in Boston in 1852. It was an immediate success and sold several hundred thousand copies in its first year of publication. Still it is a surprise to know that only one year later it was already translated into German as: *Onkel Toms Hütte* and available in Russia. This is a measure of its popularity and cosmopolitan nature of Russian Mennonite society

19 Also spelled Juschanlee. Yushanlee was Johann Cornies' large estate in the Molotschna settlement south of Ohrloff in South Russia. It was established in 1830.

20 This is probably Bernhard Fast (1787–1861).

21 The use of church certificates for transfer of membership is still done today.

22 Baron Friedrich Heinrich Alexander von Humboldt (1769–1859) was German naturalist whose greatest work was the five volume *Kosmos*. This work was published from 1845 to 1862 and described the physical universe. This was one of the great scientific works of the mid-nineteenth century.

7. All day we had cool, cloudy weather. Tomorrow Mr. Cornies and family go to Halbstadt by horseback for a visit. Doerksen is not home either, so I am all alone in the office, and can revel in my own thoughts undisturbed. I assume that no one would think it strange that I naturally concentrate uninterruptedly on the reality of my concerns and the resulting consequences that could follow. I am now in Russia, the country which since my early youth I have dreamed about as being the place of my final destiny. I have torn myself away for the second time, and perhaps the last time, from the bonds which held me to my home country and my parental home, which for years I feared most, and for which my soul trembled. But I have overcome; however, the painful, yet at the same time sweet, memories with many loving tokens have remained. The very hand which holds this pen also, in this very hour, holds one of the most cherished, most precious of memories. But what recompense have I been given for the sacrifice which I have made, for the pain which I have suffered? Or what prospects do my yearning eyes behold, which for years have looked into a dismal future, whose horizons now seem to be close at hand? But the future seems as dark as ever. It lies hidden from my view. I still cannot surmise where at this time I can find my secure earthly city; where my actual vocation waits for me. If I look at the newly-formed life at the Volga, I feel myself compelled to hazard my given talents in that direction; but what good could I do there at this time, since I have no material means at my disposal, as others have, to establish my own hearth. Were I as independent as I could and might be; would I want to distance myself from all obligations to my loved ones at home and only concentrate on my own material interests; who knows whether I could dedicate myself to the settlement at the Molotschna, even though I know that they would not expel me. Haven't certain signs indicated that? But I do not feel exempt from the responsibilities to my parents, and so the place of my eventual destiny is still in question, except that I deem it to be nearer now. But be it as it may, I want to keep on trusting the Lord as always. In His good time He will make all things well.
8. Dark, cloudy weather. Towards evening Mr. Cornies and family returned from Halbstadt. After Tea I took part in the conversation of the company and just now have retired to my room at 9:30.
9. Morning frost. Mr. Cornies and family left for home. I have tidied up in the office, and am alone again in my room. My friend Toews was here for a half hour today.
10. I went to Halbstadt with Heinr. Cornies. We went through several villages where people were slaughtering pigs. After dinner I took my pass to friend Neufeld for further renewal. My passengers and I left and arrived home after dark. Snow was drifting all day with a cold, sharp wind from the east. Soon after arrival at home friend Toews visited me. The poor chap! Life doesn't treat him according to his wishes.
11. Today we had a downright, cold, dry storm from the east. After dinner friend Toews stopped by and together we went to Janzens at Muensterberg to celebrate the Prussian "Martini", where friend Martens was also visiting. It is always a pleasure to me to think that we have cultivated our friendship to such an extent that we as travel companions can have a cheerful get-together. May such a relationship bind the settlers together at the Volga! How pleasant under those circumstances would this great undertaking continue to be? Yes, may God, the Almighty grant this!
13. Sunday. Cool, rainy weather. I went to Juschanlee with friend Toews, who wanted to see the Tabau. The weather was not very conducive to our trip, but we made it home by 8 p.m.
16. Around Vesper Mr. Wiebe and family arrived home from his trip to Odessa. After the evening Tea I spent some time talking to Mr. Wiebe. He told me about the expected circumstances of our Volga settlers. Peter Harder had come back from Odessa with Mr. Wiebe. He had to leave his apprenticeship because of an incident which had occurred due to his drunkenness. It may be that Mr. Wiebe will allow him to work as secretary in the



Association's office ("Vereins-kanzlei"), where he will be under constant supervision. Hopefully he will have a more promising future through this.

17. A year ago today—at this hour—I had arrived at Marienburg. And now—Oh, how could I have known—here again. In fact, amazing!
18. 9:30 p.m. Exactly a year ago, at this very hour, I arrived at Tiegenhoff, W. Prussia, meeting the first acquaintance. Here we have had a rainy day.
19. The anniversary of my homecoming from Russia! 1:30 p.m. Today—at this hour exactly—it is a year since I came back and entered my parental home, again to be taken into the circle of my loved ones. What rich experiences have been mine during this year, as with special sentiments I recall the many events which touched me. Not in the least did I imagine that my destiny would so soon lead me back to Russia. How strangely did this transpire, how peculiar the motives which influenced me to leave the homeland after so short a time and now?—Perhaps never to return to the beloved place, the place of witness to my childhood, my youth, as also witness to my many acts of foolishness. Trusting in the Lord my God I went out to seek my fortune in a strange land, which has become the second home to many of my kinsfolk and acquaintances. Yes, at what distance will I have to find that which I am looking for, only God knows. My destiny is in His hand. At this time I do not know which way He will lead me; I don't know whether it will be here to the Molotschna colony, or whether I will follow those who are settling at the Volga, and establish my hearth there. Perhaps, in the next few months this very important question will be resolved. I leave my concerns with the Lord, and ask Him to hold me by His right hand, and to lead me in ways everlasting. I am longingly waiting for letters from home, as also from the Volga. Perhaps they might contain something which will show me what to do, or what further steps to take.

9 p.m. Lately, as soon as I have a quiet hour when I can especially vent my feelings, all sorts of questions and thoughts have been uppermost in my mind. My inner mood is quite serious at those times; especially with regards to **when**, **how** and **where** I may finally find my life's calling. Involuntarily these thoughts crowd in on my heart with renewed force. I feel called to work for the good of humankind, according to the measure of strength given to me. But it seems that, so far, I have been afforded no opportunities to fulfill such a vocation. My work has always been one of subservience, which has never outwardly given me a comfortable life; and has offered no more than a so-called machinelike occupation. This has barely kept my spirit active, but has certainly kept it in lower regions, so that I have always felt I was merely an involuntary tool which was used for services that anyone else could do as well, whereas I needed to find fulfillment in my own way. However, my situation is unique. I have said farewell to my homeland, to which I could be of no use. Since my personal circumstances hindered me from staying any longer, I have come to seek my vocation here in Russia, which I already dreamed about as a child. In the meantime, my financial situation is such, that even though I could find a suitable place of service, and according to my years it were high time to do so, the prospect of establishing my own hearth is unthinkable. Often I hear a voice within me saying: "Move to the Volga! There you will find what you are looking for; there you can transfer your thoughts into action". But in order to take care of my physical needs, would I not be obliged to work as a day laborer? And what good could I do the fellowship with that service, especially since I am already somewhat unaccustomed to that type of work? Besides, it would be completely contrary to my inclination, yes, even against my conviction to decide for that kind of a subservient way of life. Could I, and would I decide to take a position here as a schoolteacher, which I would consider as a worthy profession, I do not doubt but that they would accept me without any problem, and besides being a highly noble vocation, I would be assured of a reasonable income. But would I according to my characteristics (with respect to my talents, I'm sure as good as anyone around here) be equal to the demands of a teacher for children and youth? All these misgivings aside, (I know that with God all these things could be possible) am I

free of all obligations towards my loved ones? Doesn't my conscience still feel such responsibilities in a greater measure? Even if my parents and siblings should also choose the far east as their homeland, don't they have great expectations of my meagre strengths? And further, that which fills my heart with holy, inner feelings are the words my mother lightly, yet tearfully, spoke at my farewell: "Do not say farewell to us forever", and more recently with loud sobs: "I hoped to stay with you during my old age, and now you are leaving me?" Therefore, could I stay here alone while those near and dear to me—above all my parents and siblings—would move to the far Volga, hopefully to live there happily? No, that would be wrong of me, because even if I were financially well supplied here, there would, no doubt, also be some work for me out there. Therefore, for the time being, I am obligated to wait and see how circumstances may shape up for me. Surely the Lord will show me the way. And this I must do: You, my Lord and my God, who has led me thus far, I will trust with all my soul. In you I will place all my hopes, thus will I never be put to shame. Do with me according to your good will, as long as I might rejoice in your eternal salvation at the end of my life, which is the soul's everlasting bliss. Grant this for the sake of the love of your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

20. Sunday. Today it is cool, windy and rainy—real fall weather. In the forenoon, Doerksen and I held our worship service at home, while he read a sermon from Hofacker: The call of the sinner by grace. Now in the evening I am sitting in the office at my workdesk, to which I fled in order to be undisturbed in my thoughts, since a lighthearted visit with Doerksen would have prevented this. Again today the memory of this year leads me back to my precious homeland and to a family very dear to me: a family whose destiny thus far has been powerfully connected with me. But now, it is a family whose fettered bonds have been loosed through strangely-working circumstances, and which through my departure from the homeland, has seen its destiny take quite a different direction from that of mine. Yet the impressions which the experiences that time has wrought and left behind, after the passing of a year, cannot be eradicated from the heart.

(The following is written in Greek letters, translated first into German, then into English):

"Beloved Renate! Short and full of disappointments was the dream of our happiness. It was mixed with visions of indescribable pain. Now I am far from you, and although our hearts beat with undiminished friendship for each other, our eyes may never meet again, the hands may never softly be placed one in the other; though far from each other, each goes separate ways, yet united through the love which is in Christ Jesus. Thus has the Lord, the wise guide of our destiny, ordained it. His Holy Name be praised!."

21. Today we have had rain all day. This kind of weather is exceptionally good for the winter crops. We are slaughtering pigs at our house today. Yesterday we finally received letters from the Volga, namely a short Travelogue by cousin David Hamm and Mr. H. Wiebe.

23. Russian Martini today.

24. Beautiful weather today. In the evening we celebrated the engagement of Mary Cornies to Martin Hamm.

27. Sunday. Harder und I read a sermon by Hofacker. During the day I had been thoroughly bored; but usually I seldom have a restful day for myself, especially now during the Martini-time. Meanwhile I am sure it will get better, even if not quite the way one wishes. I am actually having a good time of it, since I have an activity which is quite agreeable to me, even though it seems to me I am not quite suited to be in charge of the office. Doerksen and D. Wiebe went to Halbstadt concerning the land rental, since D. Kornies and the chief magistrate leave early tomorrow morning for Simpheropol, and need a paper from the "Gebietsamt" (District office). They were chauffeured from here to Lichtenau and were to take fresh horses from there, in order to be back tomorrow.

29. Sleet and rain today. In the evening, until midnight, I wrote a letter to David Hamm, living at the new settlement at the Volga.

### **December 1853**

1. 3 degrees frost this morning. I was in conversation with Doerksen until after midnight about the various views which my dear landlords hold which often differ drastically from those of people in this settlement.
3. When I think of our Volga people (which happens daily) and the prospects which could open up for them, I often wonder: How will the prospects unfold with regards to the way things are going now? Only 100 families are allowed to settle now, for 100 families the plans have been drawn up. After 100 emigration passes have been handed out, that is the final quota of settlers. Furthermore, as it seems, only those who have an emigration pass can be eligible for the establishment of a "Feuerstelle" (own home and hearth?). Since each family has only one emigration pass, what will the adult children do? Our principle as Mennonites is that we keep together as much as possible, in order to preserve our Mennonite way of life. The Government on the other hand: Definitely to accept the Mennonites as immigrants, but to resettle them in small parties, so that they will permeate the whole area like yeast; finally, however, to be assimilated within the whole population.

In reality, this principle exists: The Mennonite, and his living in Russia, is not to further his own purposes, but rather to be absolute means in the hands of the Government for the attainment of its purposes. This principle of course, concerns all settlers in Russia, but in particular the Mennonites, since they especially are to have the obligation to shine as a brilliant model. Their responsibility therefore is not only to be good, but excellent in their behaviour and activity; otherwise they miss their intended purpose. Failing this, the Government would not be wrong to take away their privileges. The next generation therefore, is probably already expected to emigrate, in which case one hopes that the Government would indicate a place for settlement, naturally at a different location.

In view of this it would be probable that Mennonitism even in Russia would not continue unchanged, since it is to be expected that its privileges will gradually be curtailed, until they are finally suspended. Instead, Mennonites would then be subjected to the usual regulations governing the Russian farmers. This of course, is not a pleasant prospect, since the treatment which the colonists, and especially the Mennonites, could expect from the Russian local authorities (who are bent on material gain, rather than justice), is seen by the criminal cases which happen off and on, over which the regional office has jurisdiction. When the officials seek wealth and riches they are like the leech and are liable to seize the property of the unfortunate. However, since it is possible that one generation may die before the order becomes effective, under which the colonists come under the provincial government; it is also possible that the Russian officialdom may reach a higher state of civilization. Thus the wall of partition between the Russians and Germans breaks down; both in a real sense become children of one land, and both are recognized as such. Finally, the foreign settlers in Russia will have accomplished their mission, will have fulfilled the mandate expected of them, and then will integrate with the people of the nation, whom, according to the wish of its noble rulers, they have raised from barbarism to the bright light of a genuine civilization. May God, who in the course of centuries allows kingdoms to rise and fall, even the strivings of those, from the throne to the lowliest hut, who labour for the wellbeing of this greatest nation of the world, not allow their work to be in vain.

A few things about the colony: During the last inspection trip of the colony by the association, Mr. Pertwa found great disorder among many farm operations, so that it found himself obliged to restore order by applying disciplinary measures by the executive, since

the “*Schulzenamt*” (local Mennonite village authority) was too weak. Two men from other colonies were given authority to use necessary methods to restore the neglected colony. The “*Schulzenamt*” received orders to follow carefully the regulations of these two men; otherwise it would suffer the consequences. As a result changes and reparations have been made to the extent that next week the board will make its inspection tour. The people seem to have been quite pleased, once they saw how necessary it was.

4. The temperature<sup>23</sup> this morning was –9 degrees with hoar-frost, clear and quiet. It was one of the beautiful winter days where the trees are adorned in all their glory, and all nature clad in a festive garment. Since it was quite early when I started for church, I took a short detour to the “Steppe” admiring the beauty of this wintry scene. Penner preached the sermon in church. With regards to the war which broke out between Russia and Turkey,<sup>24</sup> the song, No: 723 “O Lord, the clouds of war are threatening now, above our heads we see them roll”<sup>25</sup> was sung before the sermon. After Tea I had a long discussion with Mr. and Mrs. Wiebe, dealing again with the situation between the church and school. At the end I brought up the question whether there might be opportunities for me to be registered at this colony, in case I decided to stay here. His answer was that I probably could be registered, although right now he was in correspondence with the government, and he was waiting for the decision. Until that time there was nothing that could be done. According to this, I assume that if the answer is positive, there would also be a place of service for me; on the contrary, it might be a sign for me to go to the Volga. May the Lord direct according to His pleasure.

With regards to the disputes in the Chortitz district, between the local and district authorities (“*Inneren und Gebietsamt*”) which have gone on for several years, Mr. Siemens, the chairman of the district agricultural society (“*Landwirtschaftsbezirk Verein*”) has personally secured the decision from Petersburg, and received the explanation from Hahn<sup>26</sup>, the state adviser (“*Staatsrath*”), that Dueck, elected as chief colony manager (“*Oberschultze*”) is to be confirmed, and that the Elder Dueck withdraw from all further interference in the administration. Thanks to the mediation of the (*Staatsrath*) Hahn, this has been possible. In summer His Excellency himself is to be expected to arrive here.

7. Mr. Wiebe is not back yet from his inspection tour of the Patswa colony. Mr. Janzen of Muensterberg was here and, as he often did, asked me whether I would stay here or go to the Volga. He had heard that “Mr. Wall did not want to advise me what to do”; he, however, would definitely advise me to move to the Volga. I will think about this remark.
8. After I had closed a number of transactions this morning, Mr. Wiebe, Doerksen and I went to Yushanlee to the wedding of M. Hamm. Abram Isaak officiated at the ceremony. As usual a merry crowd had gathered there. A few young women especially encouraged HR to produce his “Hokuspokus” talents.
11. Sunday. I went to church in the morning. At the close of the service the concern about Peter Harder was to be dealt with before the membership. Elder Behrend presented the concern in a very fitting manner, saying that he felt Harder had been misled by the temptations in the big city of Odessa, and felt led to grant forgiveness, if the trespasser earnestly regretted his misdeeds and promised to make amends. A few voices commented

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23 Temperatures in the Diary are given in degrees Réaumur (Ré); to convert to Celsius divide the Réaumur value by 0.8. Example:  $-9^{\circ}\text{Ré}/0.8 = -11.25^{\circ}\text{C}$ .

24 This is the Crimean War which in Russia was known as the “Eastern War.” It began in October 1853 and ended in February 1856. Russia lost.

25 This song is found in the Mennonite hymnal *Gesangbuch* (10<sup>th</sup> Auflage, Odessa, 1844) and in German the song is titled “*In Kriegzeit*.”

26 This is Staatsrat [State Councillor] Eduard [sometimes known as Eugene] von Hahn who was appointed in 1845 as president of the *Fürsorgekomitee* and overseer of all German colonies including the Mennonites. He was firm, intrusive and far sighted in dealing with Mennonites and other Germans and served until 1849.

loudly, that they doubted the sincerity of Harder's earlier confession. This provoked a few of the relatives of Harder, saying that the verdict was too severe and that the accusers were partial. This aggravated the accusers, who then demanded another audible confession by Harder. He answered that: "More was expected of him than he was able to give." The accusers retorted that he acted as a proud Pharisee. The relatives, in defense pointed to another past event where the accusers had acted "unrighteously". When it seemed to me more like a war brewing, I left the assembly, especially since I did not feel justified to speak my mind about the matter. Later I was sorry, especially when I heard that Harder had been excommunicated. Surely the matter will be brought up again, and at that time H. may be ready to make a proper confession and be reinstated.

In the afternoon I rode to Muensterberg to visit the Janzens. They invited me to accompany them to the Volga in spring. After I returned, I found letters from my father and sister, also from David Hamm, Jacob Hamm and finally from Uncle C. Epp and Mr. Wiebe. From all these I still cannot see a clear answer.

15. Overnight a good snowfall, but the weather is mild. We have been quite busy at this time, since at the end of the year all the lists and records come in and need to be put together.
- Late evening: With today's mail I received a long, long significant and weighty letter from my cousin Renate, as well as one from her siblings. O God! What experiences have our hearts made! Oh! Lead and guide us as is best.
18. Sunday. I went to church in the morning. Elder Behrend preached. In the afternoon I wrote a letter to my mother. As a result of sleet, the street became a slippery sheet of ice which was good for sleighing; therefore the attendance was better than usual.
23. Rain today. Am writing a letter to Renate Schultz and her siblings.
25. Sunday. More snow last night. I went to church. The Honourable Wall preached about Jesus' witness of himself. After the service P. Harder was accepted back into the church. I finished my letters in the afternoon. A letter from Uncle Claass Epp related that the Volga people had all been at the Janzens on Friday, where they had discussed further plans for the settlement.
26. After coffee Mr. Wall was here in the office. He shared the letters from Uncle Froese and Uncle Epp with me. Uncle Epp is concerned about a teacher for the new colony. Will this have an influence on me? Today also, P. Harder accepted a position as secretary in my place.
27. -14 degrees, a beautiful winter day. We are having a wonderful road for sleighing. However, they say that it hardly pays to make good sleighs for the short duration of good sleighing conditions. We had to help Mr. Cornies when he broke through the ice with his wagon. In the evening I finished the letter to Renate.
28. Dark, stormy weather. Mr. Janzen was here to count money to send to the Volga for purchases of wood. I began to draw again. Today my letters to R.S. and my family have been mailed. O God! How despondent and defiant is the heart! This is so true of my own heart. At one point it is so firmly convinced that the Molotschna is the place for me; then again it is drawn to the Volga.
30. Today it is thawing. By evening there was snow, so that it is white again outside. Mr. Wiebe told me that the areas of Bessarabia, Cherson and Taurian are at war. I wonder whether this will have an effect on my future plans.
31. Prussian New Year's Eve. Again it is New Year's Eve! The 4th one I have spent here. A year ago I went back to my homeland from here, not having the slightest premonition that I would again be in this far-off place, not of my own accord, but led by strange circumstances, in ways that seldom occur. What keeps others bound to the sod on which they were born, grew up, and lived their lives—drove me out into a distant country, into an uncertain future, in which I cannot see what lies ahead, or know whether it will ever offer me a secure place. But what, in my position, will I do or leave? What will win the upper hand, the Molotschna,

or the Volga? How have I most adequately been able to use my talents for His glory? According to this, what will I finally be able to decide to do? God grant that hopefully after one year all these questions will have been answered! My Lord and God, you have guided me wonderfully in the past year. Oh! you can look into my heart; you know all my thoughts; you know my intentions. You know the present, as well as my divinely ordained past life. You allowed the events to happen as they did, only to show me where my own ways have led me. Now as ever I am in your hand! Lead me in the path which is to be the future way of life for me. Grant me an obedient heart that without rebellion accepts your guidance, according to your will. Amen.

## 1854

### January 1854

**Jan. 1, Sunday.** (Dec. 20, 1853, Old calendar—Russian) Prussian New Year. I went to the morning service again. Penner preached. After dinner I went to the Peters, my landlord, to talk about the conflicting views at the Volga. It is very evident that there is mistrust against Uncle Claas Epp with regards to the projected village plan. It is believed that he wants to settle the landless (“Anwohner”) between the farmsteads (“Feuerstellen”) in order to have them at his service. In spite of this, these plans were endorsed, which Uncle Epp sent to the Honourable Mr. Wall. Later I spoke at some length with Mr. Wiebe, also about the concerns of the Volga settlers. Mr. Wiebe does not agree with the projected village plan of the Volga people. He believes in an unbiased plan without respect to the wealthy. I am completely convinced that Mr. Wiebe's ideas are good. Above all, I would like to see the present misunderstanding overcome, before its roots are established in unreachable depths.

Today was a beautiful winter day. There was so much sleighing that one could hardly walk on the road.

2. Today we are having a real snowstorm at 6–8 degrees below zero. The snow is showering down in dark masses, with a raging wind from the east—the real storm centre. It reminds us of the storm of 1848. However, towards evening the storm has abated and the skies are clear.

3. This morning –8 degrees. Later there was a heavy snowfall, but mainly no wind. Since yesterday numerous snowdrifts have piled up. In the evening Mr. Wiebe informed me that H. Janzen, the chairman of the landless organization, has died. Last night an unusual incident occurred here: the large wall mirror in the livingroom fell down, and naturally broke. Yesterday evening Mr. Wiebe had sat at his writingdesk, at the place where the mirror fell. Had the mirror hook torn just a few hours earlier or perhaps at mealtime, where Doerksen and I sit, the incident could have caused a death. We can assume that the Lord has graciously protected us. We praise and thank Him for it.

4. More snow and a snowstorm during the day. They say there is much snow on the steppes.

5/24. Today the snow is thawing remarkably. I have just come in from helping Dietrich Wiebe (who will be here till New Year), decorate the Christmas Tree for the children. There will be great joy tomorrow. Last year D.W. together with Lenchen Hamm prepared the Christmas Tree. Where will I be next Christmas? God knows. It doesn't matter where I celebrate Christmas, as long as it is done in the right spirit.

**6/25. Christmas, 1st holiday.** (Russian Christmas—Old calendar). More thaw weather. Both Hamm couples from Yushanlee and Jacob Wiebes from Halbstadt came to Wiebes, and from here went to the church services. I stayed at home alone, reading Hofacker in the office, for my own devotions. The Corn. Wiebes, Yushanlee, joined the other guest for the afternoon. The first guests went home after coffee, the rest stayed overnight. After Tea we had a long discourse about the concerns of the Volga settlers, which I continued with Doerksen later.

7/26. Christmas, 2nd holiday. It isn't thawing as much today, but it is humid and foggy. This morning C. Wiebe and I went to church. Elder Behrend preached about 1 John 4:10. In the very long introduction Elder B. gave an exaggerated and comprehensive description of the "Fall", which was followed by a rather inadequate exegesis of the text. In the afternoon Mr. and Mrs. Wiebe, D.W. and I went to Altona to Johann Wiebes. (Exactly 3 years ago we went to the same place on this day). We came home at 6. On the way back we found the roads very muddy.

8/27. Sunday. Today it was not quite as cloudy as yesterday, but at 20 degrees warm, a strong thaw. As a result of the thaw which began Thursday, the water has accumulated to such an extent that arrangements have been made to drain the water into the gardens. Now it is beginning to freeze up; the sky is almost clear.

This morning Doerksen read a sermon by Hofacker, in which the writer proves that a person finds the foundation of his salvation not in, but beyond himself; not half in himself and half in Christ, but rather, entirely and solely in Christ.

After Vesper Mr. and Mrs. Wiebe, their family and I drove around to the south house to see the level of the water. Later Doerksen and I went to the end of the village to find that the water was very high.

The decision about the Martens affair has finally been made by the authorities. It reads as follows: The district authorities send the prescribed regulations to the association for information. But in these regulations the association wanted a distinction between "apology" and "reconciliation", so sent the document back and demanded a proper "Akt" (document).

Yesterday evening Doerksen and I had a discussion about adult and child baptism, as well as about the marriage ceremony. About baptism Doerksen feels that we should recognize both adult and child baptism, whereas I definitely hold with adult baptism. As to the vows at a marriage ceremony, he believes that they are not commanded by the Scriptures; that they were only instituted in the 13th century, by Pope Innocent III, as history shows. Until then the father of one of the marriage partners had given a blessing to the couple. My position is, that since it has been instituted, one can also recognize the vows as sacred, and necessary, aside from the fact that the marriage wedlock is divinely ordained, which requires not only the sanction of the government, but also that of the priesthood.

A number of persons (I also) were vaccinated today.

9. We are now the four of us working in the office—Doerksen, Harder, D.W. and I.

10. Today is a beautiful mild day. This afternoon I accompanied the Wiebes to Muensterberg by sleigh. According to reports from Prussia, prices have risen very high: cheese a/100 gr. —11 Thaler, butter 8 Pfennig. Wheat is 5—11 fb a Schfb.; rye 8 fb., barley, also 8fb. Cattle are also very expensive, 2 cows cost 77½ Thaler. Old Mr. Lietz of Ladekopp has died.

11. Lovely weather today. The water is gathering all over and flowing with great force. Towards evening I went to the end of the village to see where the water had broken through and rushes away with great might.

12/31. Russian New Year' Eve. Now the third New Year's Eve I have experienced and celebrated in Russia. Probably from now on I will celebrate all those I live to see here. But **where**—is still the question. However, the answer to this seems ever closer at hand. After a year I will be in a position to have the place of my work settled, and God grant that I may have chosen wisely. My past inner conviction as to what my vocation should be seems now attainable. In fact, I don't know in what other capacity I could serve the Mennonite community better than to dedicate myself to teaching the children and youth. Nevertheless, I know only too well, in how many ways I will be inadequate for the task. I also know that I do nothing without Him, who strengthens me—Jesus Christ. Therefore, in His Name I would dare to take on the responsibilities of instructing children. As to whether "Molotschna" or "Volga"? I have for some time felt drawn to the Volga. Why this is happening, I'm not sure. Were I to know that no one else could be found for this position, or that I could measure up

to the expectations which Uncle Epp sets, above all whether I am wanted, not because they cannot get anyone else, but truly because they want me, I would heartily accept a contract. I would hardly expect to receive more here, nor can I expect to give more here, than at the Volga. However, I want to wait patiently until I receive an answer to my letters, and make my decision.

But to you, O my God, I commit these important concerns of my life. You know of what I am capable. Without you nothing, nothing at all; with you, everything. If you have called me to your service, I want to work in your strength and for your glory, as long as you wish. For all your goodness, all your faithfulness which you have shown me, I will give you my heart's greatest thanks. Oh! I know that you do not treat me according to my merits, but according to your everlasting mercy. How shall I worthily praise you? Grant me strength to walk in your ways, in all I do, for Jesus Christ's sake.

**Friday, January 1, 1854 (Russian Old calendar).** What images flash through my mind at this time! One year rich in experiences has passed by. To renew these memories requires only a brief glance at my hand which holds the pen. The word "Memory" is engraved in gold; under it a **Beloved Name**. Oh! I wonder what she—who bears this name, is doing. Perhaps you often think of your dear friend afar; often he thinks of you. And the mutual wishes, they float back and forth, carried on angels' wings, and fall comfortingly, refreshingly into our hearts! God be with us on our life's journey! Soon the journey will be over. And if our friendship was true, is and will be, i.e. grounded in the love of God and Jesus Christ, then a happy, blessed meeting again waits for us. If our life praises the Lord our God, our souls will one day enjoy boundless blessedness, and tune in with the cherubim and seraphim everlastingly praising God before His throne. May he strengthen us to this end, in Christ Jesus.

New Year, a day which lends itself to serious reflection. It seems to me that there has always been something uniquely different about this day. The inner feeling I have had from the time of my childhood that some day Russia would be the land of my destiny, has come to fulfilment. I am in Russia, and am about to make a definite decision about my vocation. In the meantime, what wanderings I have undertaken to get here! At first I needed to have the wish to see Russia. The circumstances which led to the realization of this wish were strange enough. The decision had been made to send a deputation to Russia to look for further immigration possibilities. These deputies desired to be accompanied by someone, who could be of help to them on the journey. I offered my services, but was rejected, since another person had made the offer first. However, this person received word that his brother was returning to Prussia for a visit and offered to take him along on the way back to Russia. So he declined his offer to the delegates, whereupon they asked me to reconsider. Thus I had the privilege of seeing Russia for the first time. After more than a two-year stay in Russia I returned to Prussia. However, on the one hand I did not find what I was looking for here; on the other hand, far more than I expected, so that contrary to my intention to return to my homeland, I was ready to leave again, and that forever.

A year ago today, when I rode to Mirau together with my cousin, M. Schulz, I had no idea that in another year I would be back in Russia. Certainly this wouldn't have happened except for the strange thread of my destiny which drew me forcefully away. Where this thread will lead me, or where I will spend my next New Year, is no less of a mystery to me. Last night these thoughts were the subject of a conversation between Doerksen and me. We have made a commitment, in case we are not together, to let each other know where and under what circumstances each of us will celebrate this Day next year.

So now I ask this question: **Where will I celebrate the next New Year's Day?** In memory of this Day I am giving the following description of the same:



Concerning the weather, it is cloudy, windy and 4+. Since it has thawed so much, the snow has melted remarkably, and has filled the riverbeds, so that great masses of water are seen rushing by, and the gardens are overflowing. The water has also come close to the office. In the morning the three of us, Dietrich Wiebe, Doerksen and I went to church. Because of the water which had frozen on the street, walking was very treacherous. There were quite a number of sleighs at the church. Ohm Behrend preached. After dinner Mr. and Mrs. Wiebe went to the Abr. Klaassens, while Doerksen and I spent the afternoon at home. During Vesper Corn. Dueck played with his mechanical bird, which ran around in the room. After the evening Tea I stayed inside for a while. Now, at 11 p.m. I am writing my notes, which I want to finish now. You, O Lord! whose mercy has graciously led through this year, guide me also in the New. Be my protector, my keeper, and watch over my soul, for the sake of Christ, my Saviour! Amen.

3. Sunday. The high water has had somewhat the same effect as it has in our area of Prussia. For example, in Altona a number of the houses have been surrounded by water, and the people have had to be rescued by boats. Naturally this is not a common occurrence here, so people do not know how to deal with it. Besides, some of those travelling through have been delayed for several days.

Concerning the question of land ownership ("Landzuchtangelegenheit") it is said that the Molokans have sent a petition to the Council asking for the right to rent the land for 8 years, promising to pay 1 Silver ruble per dessiatin<sup>27</sup>. It is feared that they will get their wishes granted, as a result of which the Colony will suffer the adverse consequences. At the same time it is believed that the Molokans will eventually suffer the most, since it is not to be expected that these golden years will last forever. When hard times come, the same rent may be exceedingly high.

4. This morning we had some snow with 7 degrees frost. Harder is not here now—he is about to be married. Mr. Wiebe called me to his office today, inquiring about my decision to be a teacher. A position is open at Fioga. My response was to the effect that I would want to wait for a letter both from my home and from the Volga. Mr. Wiebe agreed to this.
5. At Halbstadt the water has caused such havoc ("Ruewo") that the bridge was torn away and almost caused an accident for several people. Another bridge was washed away at Tliviljar. Rumour has it that at 2 places demands have been made for billeting, which is a prerequisite of war. O God should it be your will that this region be subjected to the horrors of war; we pray that you may give the brethren the right conviction for actions according to the teachings which we have received. May we all realize how foolish it is to use "flesh as an arm" when you alone can protect from affliction and distress. O Lord, guard us from foes which can take earthly possessions of body and life; moreover save us from the hand of the enemy who destroys the soul, our highest good. Oh have mercy on us for the sake of Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Amen.
6. Festival of The three Kings.[Epiphany] I went to church. Penner preached the sermon appropriate to the occasion. A small attendance. After Vesper I went for a walk along the village. On my return I sat in my dark room thinking as often about my situation and the memories of the past days.

(The following written in Greek letters, translated into German by Menno & Esther Bergen):

**\* "O my Renate! As always I think of you, and yet I cannot tell you. But the day may come when I can speak more openly to you."**

At the church Mr. Janzen spoke to me, saying how necessary it was for me to go along to the Volga. When I told him of my plans to become a teacher, he expressed no doubt but

<sup>27</sup> A dessiatin is a now obsolete Russian measure for area, 1 desiatin = 1.092 hectares.

that I should definitely go along. When I had some reservation as to whether Uncle Epp would want me, he remarked that he believed the parents, who would send their children to the school, would have more to say about it than others, and that Mr. Epp would have to oblige!

In view of this, it seems to me that I will have to find ways myself for proceeding with my decisions. This I would gladly do, if I could hope to be treated fairly by the authorities, knowing that I will strive to fulfill my responsibilities as best I can, not driven by constant negative criticism, as Uncle Epp often tries to use. In the meantime I shall follow the direction which will lead me to a further path. I will consider it a sign from God and in His Name I trustingly risk my services for Him. At the same time I now feel that I will reserve the freedom to return to the Molotschna, whenever necessary. O Lord! If you have called me, your weak vessel, to work in your kingdom, among the world of children, O grant me the perception of a child, and a heart of love for the children whom you, O Jesus, friend of the children, loved so dearly and opened the Kingdom of Heaven to them. Fill me with the necessary gifts of your Spirit, that I may instruct them in your ways, so that they may come to you, their Creator, and be won for your Kingdom in the days of their youth. Amen.

7. Doerksen shared the news with me that friend Harder had accepted a school at Blumstein. It's hard to believe that Harder's situation has changed so much. Even his present mental condition seems to be abnormal. With the greatest ruthlessness he attacks everything that stands in his way, regardless of any suggestions, even ignoring the goodwill of Mr. Wiebe, bordering almost on insanity-like indifference against all that happens around him. Oh, what has my dear friend become, compared to who he was when I lived with him at Yushanlee, and what he appeared to be later in his letters to me? I hope to God, that he will not remain in the present condition, but soon change for the better. Yes, Lord, you beloved guide on life's way! Do not leave him, whom you have ordained to your service from the days of his childhood. Guard him, that he may not continue in the way his entangled mind now leads him. Lead him to the realization that he has gone astray, and renew him by the strength of your Spirit, so that he may overcome the enemy of his inner being, and then with joy may serve you with the talents you have given him. Yes, Lord Jesus, bring him back from the rubble in which he finds himself, and keep his soul from corruption. I do not doubt that you will do this. Amen.
8. Today 9 d. frost. Yesterday I received letters from brother Dietrich and my father. Father also wrote to Mr. Wiebe. Among other things, he told him about the bankruptcy of Willhelm Loepps, who took off to America with the sum of 10,000 thaler. Who would have thought it of this friendly man, whom everyone loved and respected? Father also told me of the death through drowning of Paul Dueck and Aaron Neufeld.
9. Today I sent 2 letters written by Harder, to David Hamm. What impression will they make?
10. Sunday. A very cold winter day; -17 degrees. I went to the worship service. A newly elected minister from the Rudnerweide Church, Driedger preached about "Jesus as a 12-year-old in the temple" with the topic: "The difference between the child, Jesus, and our children." Recently a decision has been made by the ministerium which says "that the church may keep the land for the rental payments for 12 years, but will have to make a rental payment of 13½ S. per Des. from the yearly 10%. In the meantime one waits anxiously what results will follow the petition which the Molokans have sent in.
11. Harder has come back again, so I am busy drawing. After Vesper H. Janzen was here for a while asking me about my plans of going to the Volga. He told me that Mr. Wall wanted to talk to me about this concern, so I went to see him in the evening. Mr. Wall is in agreement with my decision, but I would like to hear from David Hamm first, as well as Mr. Rempel's decision in the name of the district office. Mr. Wall told me of his long, comprehensive letter

from Rev. Mannhard,<sup>28</sup> Danzig, who had visited various Mennonite congregations at the Rhine and North Sea areas. A journal is to be published which describes the past as well as the present condition of all the Mennonite Churches in the total Mennonite constituencies, in order to take a good look at all their concerns. The result of this is to give the collective Mennonite churches more content outwardly, and more strength inwardly; especially to give them more unity, more working together as a corporate body than it has been before. May God grant His blessing to this endeavour!

12. I spoke to Mr. Wall about some minor business matters, as well as Elder Behrend. Concerning my move, if nothing intervenes, I definitely want to go along to the Volga.
13. Day by day there is less frost. Today it was only -7.

Every day I am expecting letters from David Hamm, as well as from home. Today Tiegenhoff has Market Day. Off and on the people will also remember me, one or the other will have asked about me. My future vocation will perhaps soon be directed at a definite place. May the Lord, whom I resolve to serve, sustain me with the gifts of His Spirit, to the promotion of His Kingdom, so that I may not work in vain.

14. Today the decision of the Ministerium regarding the land has gone into effect. The churches will definitely renew the land claim for another 12 years. Today our colony has received billets: in Halbstadt about 1000 soldiers. It is said that Joh. Neufelds have offered brandy (Branntwein), naturally without charge. The soldiers are supposed to have marched in with jubilant singing and much hilarity. They had been very happy for the wonderful reception they got, and promised to accomplish great things.
16. Today at the request of Mr. Wiebe I went along with Joh. Wiebe and Kroeker of Muensterberg to a School-teacher conference at Gnadenheim. It was the first time that I have taken part in a public school act. The discussion dealt with the establishment of a district conference, and a teacher's widow pension. Later we sang together. On the way back, Kroeker and I discussed the relationship of the teacher to the children and their parents, as well as concerns of the village church in general. I agreed fully with Kroeker's ideas: that the teacher in order to accomplish something with the children, above all should refrain from applying political pressure. First and foremost, he must win the confidence of the children, as also the parents. And really, this seems only too natural.
17. Sunday. I went to the service today. Elder Behrend preached. I was at home the rest of the day.
- 18-21. Mr. and Mrs. Janzen and I made a trip to Steinbach. We spent the night with the Nicholas Schmidts. We visited around in the village. Thursday morning a snowstorm blew up, so that we almost delayed our return; however, Mr. Wall and Mr. Schmidt accompanied us to Frangenoa, and all went well. Later the snow changed to rain. At 12 noon we arrived at "Three Roses" where we fed the horses, and also had a snack. We arrived home at 3:30 p.m. Concerning my decision to go along to the Volga, Mr. Wall and Mr. Janzen are in complete agreement, and we have discussed this matter quite a bit.

May you, O Lord grant that I might be worthy and able in this profession which I have decided to enter. May your Holy Spirit fill me with His gifts in Christ Jesus. Amen.

22. Yesterday I received a letter from father, in reply to mine. Their opinion is that I go to the Volga! Now I only need the answer from the Volga to make a definite decision on the matter. Until then I can assume that my plans can continue in that direction, and that it is God's will. Perhaps all the rest will also fall into place.
23. A beautiful day. We had much to do today, which kept me busy writing.

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28 This is Jacob Mannhard (1801-1885) who in 1854 began publishing the bimonthly periodical *Mennonitische Blätter*

24. Sunday. In the afternoon I chauffeured Mr. and Mrs. Wiebe and family, and Mr. Zander to Yushanlee on two sleighs. In the evening Doerksen told us that, according to a letter from the Volga we would have rough going in that new settlement. God grant that beginning and end may be to His honor and glory.
26. This afternoon a young man, Johann Cornies, died. We see that "Death is no respecter of age; one day everyone must go."
27. Today I mailed my letter to Uncle Epp at the Volga. I stated my decision to take on the position as a teacher there. I also wrote to David Hamm.
28. Beautiful weather. I am sketching farm implements.
30. Today application has been made at the district office regarding the passports for our trip to the Volga.
31. Sunday. The beginning of a snowstorm. Since Doerksen and I didn't go to church, we read a sermon from Hofacker. The rest of the day I alternately wrote and read. Dr. Karstens of Yarschansk have again arrived, and will inhabit the living room, during which time Doerksen and I will sleep in the "bakehouse".

## February 1854

1. About 1 foot of snow has fallen overnight. In the afternoon I met Mr. Cornies, who drew my attention to the fact that there could be problems at the Volga settlement for those who had received their passports, but financially might not be able to establish their household. In extreme cases the government might demand that every family would add to a fund for those who had few financial resources, so that they would not be a burden to the government. It seems that each family with a pass will need to fulfill its obligations within a definite period of time. How will this problem be solved? God will direct!
4. More snow and storm. The Karstens' left immediately after dinner.
7. Sunday. I am alone this afternoon. Today is my sister's birthday. I am reminded of it especially since she was always so concerned for my well-being and my affairs. Yes, dear sister, may each return of the day of your birth into this world give you renewed peace and true joys, which are not dependent on earthly goods, but joys whose fountain and estuary is God, the only giver of all good gifts.

Elder Behrend, in his sermon, remarked that as of today he has preached 1400, (say fourteen hundred) times. That surely says something of a Mennonite minister; surely many a kernel of truth will have fallen on fruitful ground, bringing life giving fruit. May God grant this, in Jesus Name! Amen.

13. According to the temperatures, this has been quite a mild winter, but there has been a scarcity of feed for the cattle. Since there has been so much snow, they have had to be fed for a long time, and will no doubt need to be fed for a while yet.
14. Doerksen has gone to the villages with David Cornies to inspect the domesticated cattle and horses. At tea-time Mr. Wiebe mentioned the unusual number of rabbits, and the damage they are doing in the orchard ("*Plantage*"). Mr. Cornies' garden has suffered much harm, and even strong trees have been ruined. The usual straw-wrap-around does not seem to be sufficient protection; even lime application has not seemed effective. In Yarchanak some 130 rabbits have been shot, and at Kiseljar 40,000, (fourty thousand) rabbit furs have been for sale. (Each one costs 30 K.<sup>29</sup>) The damage done by rabbits in the "Plantage" gardens will be tremendous.

Mr. Wiebe brought me 2 letters, one from cousin Jacob Hamm, the other from Renate Schulz. I could hardly believe my eyes when I read in the first letter: "Perhaps we will see

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<sup>29</sup> K = Kopek, 30 kopeks is about 15¢ Canadian. 100 kopeks = 1 ruble = \$0.50 Canadian.

each other at the Volga this summer. As the Lord leads, we can surely use you there.” On the other hand, how can my dear cousin be so sure of himself with regards to what he thinks is my vocation, even to the point of tempting me to be proud? Even apart from this, one is inclined to think more of oneself than is due, without having been led into it. O Lord! Create in me a humble spirit, which is willing to obey all your commands, both in the human and the spiritual realms. You alone know what I need—and I am in need of everything. You will show me the sphere of my work, and give me strength to do it. Your word is my security for this. Amen.

20. Today Harder was here. We had a long conversation together, from tea-time to 11 p.m. Perhaps I will not be disappointed in my expectations of him. May God grant this. Amen.
21. Today I received much information from Doerksen about officialdom in Russia. Civil service in Russia is quite unique and divided into ranks. First of all there is a great difference between military and civil ranks; the first having special privileges above the other. If a person has served in the army and achieved a high rank, he is eligible for a higher position in the civil service than one who has worked himself up merely as a civil servant. In Russia only the nobility is favoured with service merits. Anyone born into the nobility has to begin serving in the forces in a low rank. Not even the grand duke is exempt; except that such a person serves only in form rather than really serving, and advances easily to the proper heights. If the son of a nobleman does not serve, naturally for his person he retains the rank of nobility inherited from his father, but with that he erases the same for his children. It is quite natural that Peter the Great, who inaugurated this system, realized the benefits of great military strength. Otherwise of course, very few of the nobility would be willing to serve in the army; yet with this system of merited services, the future rank of nobility of such a person's family is guaranteed.

Further, Doerksen also explained a few things about the administration of the colonists in Russia. In several colonies the inspector is under the jurisdiction of the Social Welfare Committee (“Fuersorgekomitee”), and through its regulations he provides for the prescribed districts. The inspector also has the obligation of protecting the colonists from the Russian authorities, and in some cases, to represent them. He works through the district office, and has the special duty to see that the colonists fulfill their obligations; to punish them in case they fall short; to settle their disputes, as far as he can, and to represent them in difficult situations. For the Russians, the “Stoerwry” has these obligations. In some business deals both the Mennonite and the Russian authorities have to make decisions together. A beginning official has to decide in which department to serve, and can serve only in that one. From the top down the administrative duties are departmentalized, and it is hard to leave one and serve in another. The various ministries control the work of these departments. In this way there is order from top to bottom for the purpose of making the empire inwardly and outwardly strong.

25. The damage which the rabbits caused in the Plantages is inestimable. For instance, in the gardens at Tarchanak about one third of the fruit trees are lost. They have been stripped of the bark right to the wood, as far as the rabbits could reach. No coverings or lime have helped. The rabbits themselves must have suffered immeasurably because of the long period of deep snow.

On Feb. 16th, the chairman of the Social Welfare (“Fuersorge”) Committee for foreign settlers, Baron von Rosen,<sup>30</sup> died of the “Sosian<sup>31</sup>” epidemic.

26. Early this morning Mr. Wiebe and Doerksen, Mrs. Wiebe, Dr. Zander and I left for Halbstadt in two sleighs to attend the School closing examinations. A regular snowstorm accompanied us on the way. Since the teacher—Mr. Wiebe—was not well, also because he was retiring as teacher, the program did not turn out very well. After coffee at Joh. Neufelds’ we left for home. With better weather, travelling was good.
27. Today the snow is melting rapidly. Tonight I visited at the Reimers. As a result of a debate about the fraudulent actions of the Russian officials (the district secretary, Mr. Reimer, is actually also involved), I have come to the following conclusions: That one cannot protect oneself from the fraudulent Russian officials (if, in fact, one is in an official position to do so) and hope to get any results with complaints, nor lawsuits; rather only by winning their favour through suitable presents, given at the right time and in the proper manner. However, through obstinate demands for justice one only incurs greater costs and bitterness. Proper justice can often be obtained by bargaining.

Fellow worker, Christian, if you want to work for the good of our people, let your word and deed never be influenced by your feelings, but always by discernment, illuminated by the light of the Spirit of God. Feelings stem from the lower, earthly part of the person, and can lead us astray; discernment, however, arises in the heavenly, higher part of the soul, and never fails to lead us in the right path. Therefore, never allow feelings to rule over you, but rule over them, as over things which are subordinate to you.

Question: What distinguishes a Christian from other usual people?

Answer: Outwardly nothing; only the basis of his life and walk is different, more firm. His goals have definite direction, which is the fulfillment of the command: “You shall love the Lord your God from all your heart, all your soul and with all your strength, and you shall love your neighbour as yourself.” Therefore: enhancing natural, religious feelings through many edifying talks, or discussions, and regular repeated devotions do not make a Christian, rather active love practised to your fellow believer, any person, not for the sake of self-righteousness, but for the sake of Christ.

28. I have had an interesting discussion with Doerksen again, namely about convictions which change from time to time. What kind of experiences we will yet have, and how our convictions will be formed—God knows. I am certain that many great and hard experiences still lie ahead for me. May the Lord grant me strength in whatever I encounter! The most important experience I have had so far is this: That I have learned to see how hard it is to guard against folly. (Wie scher es halte sich vor Thorheiten zu hueten)

\*\* Cryptogram: “The time of the year which I am in demonstrates this fully.” (Deciphered by Esther Bergen. See additional page11: Kriptographie)

How hard it will be for me to undertake future activities without letting the past influence these; at the same time conscientiously to do what reason and religion command me to do!

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30 Baron von Rosen was President after Staatsrat Eugene von Hahn and served from 1849 to his death in 1853. He was followed by Baron von Mestmacher who served until 1856. The autonomy of the Mennonite and German settlers promised by the Czar during the recruitment took place via a Russian special authority by the name of *Fürsorgekomitee* (Welfare Service Committee), previously *Vormundschaftskontor*. It was concerned with the settlement of all Mennonite and German settlers in south Russia, with its location initially in Chişinău, later in Odessa. The official language of this Russian Government department was German. The staff consisted of: one president and approximately 20 co-workers (an official translator, a physician, a veterinary surgeon, a land surveyor and so on).

31 This is probably Cholera.

How powerless I feel, and how my natural inclinations well up against the voice of my conscience. "I feel there is a law in my body which resists the law of my conscience". If I believe that I have dedicated myself to the law of faith to the extent that I overcome the hardest struggle of my inner being, after having left my homeland for the second time, then I am extremely mistaken. I face struggles as hard, if not harder, in the future. At this time I do not dare to write down what thoughts I have with regards to my future position among humanity; however, I do not doubt that I might carry a good portion of responsibility. As to whether my presentiments will be confirmed or not, the future will verify this, and I will experience it.

As a result of the conversation between Doerksen and me, we decided to make a written agreement (of which we each have a copy) to promise: from this day and for 10 years to let each other know in written form, about our outward and inner situations, and whatever other circumstances we may experience. The report shall be written by March 1st and sent as soon as possible. Both documents are complete and properly signed. May God grant that until then we may be steadfast and watchful in our faith in our Lord Jesus Christ!

### **March 1854**

1. Very mild weather. Towards evening I chauffeured Mr. Wiebe to Yushanlee. The steppes are still snowcovered, but a lot of water has gathered in the villages already.
3. We got back from Yushanlee in mid-afternoon. Jacob Wiebe is moving to the "Three Roses." No doubt they will not be without thorns. Sleighing will likely be over for this year. The horses are breaking through in many places.
4. Finally I received a letter from David Hamm at the Volga. Their wish is that I will come. Good! How will I be received? What will my relatives expect and demand of me? They will want to hear news from home and ask about many events from there. O Lord, grant me understanding, enlighten my mind, that I might not do or say anything except what will enhance the reason of my being there! For Christ's sake. Amen.
6. The weather alternately mild and colder with snow. Until now we have had no real spring day. Nature has still retained its wintry character. It seems, according to the grain handlers, that professionals such as the speculators (Wagerbauern) have cancelled their bid, with the result that some farmers have laid off their workers. Another result is that wheat has dropped to 2 S. per Ruble, but the price of barley, rye and oats has risen.
7. Sunday. I went to church. We had a snowstorm this morning. After dinner I wrote letters.
10. Regular winter weather. Today I am sending letters to Jacob Hamm and my parents. Mr. Cornies from Halbstadt was here. After tea we talked about the political scene, in which frightening elements are budding up. Perhaps in the near future we may have great history-making events, accompanied by many woes for all concerned. The Lord, whose we are, will make all things well.
13. The snow is thawing, except on the fields it resists vigorously. Right now the thought of the Volga supercedes all other concerns. As to the future, with its weal and woe (Wohl und Wehe), it is still like a tender shoot in the lap of destiny, waiting to burst forth at the new settlement. My own life's fortune in the future so much depends on this. Again and again the thought wells up in me that establishment of the new colony may begin with a solid foundation to which future generations will only need to add more. Actually, I don't feel any obligation to be very concerned about this, since it will be the concern of the two who will be elected from the Church as administrators. However, I cannot help but think about these things. Therefore I have these questions: "How does one begin in order to build a solid foundation for future generations? And on what were such a foundation to be built?" For the last question it seems clear to me, that the main foundation for the spiritual as well as physical well-being of a community should rest on the principles that such a community has

established. If these principles express the basis of the Christian faith, also with regards to relationship to the State and its demands, and further the demands of church and its local character, then such a project (“routine”) could blossom quickly and with proper growth outwardly and inwardly serve as a model.

14. Sunday. I read a sermon by Hofacker. After dinner I sketched the route to Prussia.
20. Winter continues with frost. Already military troops are being transported to their destination, some 8,000 men. The weather is favourable for this, since the frost halts the flow of water, and the roads are still passable. [Ed. Crimean War, 1853–56]
24. Doerksen and I went to Altona to see the transport of troops. They are staying at 2 stations, Lindenau and Kronsplantage; for each group 650 wagons stand ready from this colony, each one making one trip.

Also, there are 100 horses ready for extraordinary situations. The soldiers seem to be unusually pleased with the billets here. They are also very much amazed at the generally well-kept teams of horses (which in fact, they are).

26. At noon today there was suddenly a military transport at our gates. Because of the poor roads from Altona to the Kronsplantage 2,000 men and equipment had to be transported by way of Halbstadt, so in order to ease the billeting, 500 men were ordered to pass through here. In this house we had to billet one young officer and 7 privates; the officer took our room, the others occupied the bakehouse. Across from Neufelds is the company commander.
28. Sunday. Our officer left the house yesterday and didn't return. After dinner I went visiting. In the evening the Choir sang a few selections on Neufeld's yard. The soldiers were amazed at the well-rehearsed presentation.
29. Cold weather. The military couldn't move because of the high water, so will stay till tomorrow.
30. Today the crossing at the dam was assured, but only about 15 wagons got across. In the meantime, all the troops from Altona and Muensterberg arrived but turned around, since this crossing was not trustworthy. They were then billeted in 4 villages. At Rosenort one of the soldiers almost drowned when a wagon fell into the water. We had an officer again at our house together with the other one, who really liked it here.
31. Early this morning the transport troop finally left. I went to see the scene at the crossing. Other troops crossed over at Rosenort and Halbstadt, where temporary bridges have been built.

#### **April 1854**

9. Good Friday. I went to the service. Our dear elder, Rev. Wall preached on the text Zechariah 3:9. These are great promises, which have long ago been fulfilled. The Lord, our God has in one day fulfilled what the wise of this world throughout the centuries have not achieved. He has given His only Son into the hands of sinners. All our sins are blotted out on that one great day, which in remembrance we are celebrating today. But we need to confess and repent to Him, who has offered Himself in our place on the cross. O Lord, my Saviour! How much you have done for us; what do I do for you? “Lord, cover all that's gone before; guide and direct what lies before.” (“Was ich gelebt, das decke zu, Was vor mir liegt, regiere Du.”)
11. Easter, first holiday. I went to the service again. Elder Bernhend preached. His message contained mainly citations of the Passion story to the Resurrection. It was 1½ hours long, and no doubt none of the listeners will have profited much by it.

At noon I went along to Muensterberg, from there to Altona to Isaac Wienses for night.



13. This morning I went back to Muensterberg to take part in the meeting, held at Janzens, with those who were going to the Volga. Many things were arranged about the trip, as well as other concerns.
14. This morning we were witness to a sad occurrence at Muensterberg. Last night Elder Wall had been called to a neighbour, Mr. Klaassen, who had had some concerns to discuss with him. He went there and stayed overnight. This morning—about 4:30—he knocked at the window of our house, asking to be let in. He told us the news that Klaassen had disappeared, and people were looking for him. After half an hour the place where he had disappeared was found on the bank of the Molotschna River. A boat was brought and by means of a rake the body was found. Rev. Wall had sat at the bedside of the sick Mr. Klaassen, talking to him till midnight. It had seemed to Mr. Wall that what Mr. K. had said was not in the least disturbing, and he had no inkling that this kind of thing could happen. Mr. K.'s wife had gone to bed at his request. But just before this he had had a seizure, with disjointed talk which, however, didn't last long. At 4 a.m. she had got up to see about him and found the bed empty. He had got up, put on only his fur coat, and without footwear had gone outside to find his death in the waters of the Molotschna. I was there when they recovered his body. May the Lord guard us all from such a death!
21. During these days we have had cold weather. In spite of this the May gooseberries are budding, but have not made much progress. The steppes, however, are beginning to turn green, and the cattle are in the pasture already. In the meantime the hoopoe bird (“sossian epidemic”) has returned in its annual migration.

During the time that the soldiers were billeted in the villages there has been an outbreak of infectious diseases. In many homes there have been sicknesses, and in some cases even deaths. At Orloff and Tiede 12 persons are sick.

I wrote to Peter Regehr and to the Schulzes today. I wonder what impression these letters will make and whether the recipients will have expected this of me?

29. This evening I planted watermelon in the garden. Everything is growing with might and main.

## **May 1854**

2. Sunday. We were at Yushanlee all day.

3–15. We visited a number of villages. The weather is beautiful, with some rain.

16. Sunday. Mr. Penner preached in church. Topic: Spring.

24. (June 5th) Last Monday I went to see the Nagaiers with Peter Isaak, on behalf of Mr. Wiebe, to shear some sheep. Life among the Nagaiers seems quite peculiar. If one is fortunate to have one's own kitchen, one has to contend only with the masses of insects. But if one has to eat at the same table with them, one's stomach simply has to get used to their way of life, otherwise one could not stay very long.

Yesterday I rode to Muensterberg to check some details about our trip to the Volga. Since we will be packing this week already, I will move over to Muensterberg.

25. In Muensterberg. Last evening I arrived here with my belongings. Mr. Janzen and I went to Halbstadt regarding the passports, as well as other business. During these days we are making preparations for our departure.
27. We packed our belongings. It is cold, rainy weather.
29. It began to rain this afternoon, with heavier rain after Vesper and a cold storm from the north. By evening it got still colder, so that it felt more like a gloomy November day when no one dared to leave the house. It is hard to believe that it is the day before Pentecost.
30. Sunday, Pentecost, first holiday. Today I went along to church and stayed at the Wiebes for dinner and the afternoon. In the evening Mr. and Mrs. Janzen and I visited Claas Wiebes.

We heard that because of the miserable weather, many sheep were lost—400 in Altona. Today the rain has let up.

31. 2nd holiday. Today I went to Altona with Mr. Janzen to say farewell to the Joh. Friesens and the Joh. Wiebes.

## The Trip to the Volga Settlement

### June 1854

1. I rode to Orloff where I had a few business matters to take care of.  
2–3. These days we were busy packing our belongings onto the wagons.  
4. I rode to Orloff to see the Nagaier, whom Mr. Wiebe has hired to bring the cattle to the Volga. However, he hasn't arrived yet. The sheep which perished in this area in the recent cold rains are counted in the hundreds of thousands. Many sheep farmers have lost their whole herd. One farmer's herd had plunged into the sea; only the shepherd had saved himself.

\*\* 5. 5:30 a.m. In one hour we will be on our way. Again we have a long journey ahead of us, the journey to our destination—our new home. Many good things have I experienced during my 8 months here at the Molotschna; they testify of your kindness, loving heavenly Father. I thank you from my whole heart. Be with us, be with me on my venture; may your holy angels protect us. Be with us, Lord Jesus with your grace, with your protection, with your faithfulness. Amen.

Noon, 1:30. After having had our breakfast at Neumanns', said our farewells, and received the good wishes of friends, we departed. We stopped at the Wiebes, Orloff, to close the contract with the Nagaier, who had just arrived. After our farewells here, we continued, making a short stop at the Reimers', arriving at the "Three Roses" where we will have our dinner.

6. Sunday. Yesterday at 6:30 p.m. we arrived at Steinbach. This will be our first lodging for the night. We are sharing travel arrangements with the Wall family, though I personally spent the night with the Heinrich Schmidts'. We held our worship service together with the village people in Schmidts' granary. We were quite a large crowd. The Honourable Elder Wall gave the farewell message. Then Rev. Janzen of Schardau gave a talk especially in keeping with our journey. The rest of the day was spent visiting with the Schmidt family. We had a good rain shower today.
7. Sartwa, 7:30 p.m. This morning after coffee, we all gathered at the Schmidts' living room. Our dear Elder Wall led in a heart warming prayer, in which he loudly praised the goodness of God, for the good accommodations during the time we lived at the Molotschna. Then the song: "Jesus still lead on" was sung, and after farewells, we were on our way. The horses were hitched to the wagons, and we left at 8 a.m., accompanied by good luck wishes and blessings from our dear Molotschna friends among whom we had lived and fellowshipped for a good while. The road was a bit difficult. We were 10 wagons. In Pordenau another wagon joined us. At 11:30 we arrived at Rudnerweide where some stayed at Rev. Ratzlaffs' and some at Franz Mathies for dinner. During the dinner hour we had a heavy rain accompanied by thunder. We left at 2:30 p.m., making our stop for the night at 6:30. Here again we received a warm welcome and good accommodations at various places, 2 wagons at each place. Even here in the village the road was very muddy, so that we nearly got stuck. A good thing that the horses are in the barns.
8. This morning we left at 8:45, arriving at the Tartar village of Kasarx at 11:45, where we will have our noon meal. The road is dry. Kosenfeld 5:45 p.m., where we are spending the night. We had a few drops of rain today.
9. At noon we arrived at the Tartar village of Armayen. Last night I kept guard for the first time. At 4 p.m. we arrived at Neuhoffnung where we will take quarters for the night. Because of

the cattle and sheep which accompany us, we need to stop early for the night, so that actually only half of the time is spent in travelling.

10. Today we came to the last German village, Neuhoffnung. On leaving we were able to take the Postroad. At Nobocnacknac we waited for the herds for an hour.
11. At 10 we watered the horses at a Greek village, Monayeur, where we also stopped for dinner. After we had waited a long time for the cattle, I had to ride to meet them. The heat made progress very slow. Meanwhile I was overtaken by a rain shower. We arrived at Mapiynoseb, and are camping outside the town. M. is located near the Mennung River. The problem is that all the water from the fountain ("Fontei") at the lower end of the town has to be hauled.

Our company is concerned about F. Wall, who has abdominal pains affecting his mental capacity. May the Lord keep him from greater problems. Another mishap is that Toews' mare is lame, so that she can hardly walk anymore. Otherwise all is well. From Neuhoffnung on we have a good road, so we are happy and in good spirits. May the good Lord continue to protect us and graciously bring us to our destination.

12. Noon, 1p.m. After breakfast we went into town to buy feed. When we arrived at the ferry we were fortunate to get across one after another, so that by 12 we were all at the other side. We are stopping here for dinner.

**\*\* Cryptogram** (See insert) "God guide you on your future path of life, dear Renate, and lead us to be together again in His kingdom of everlasting bliss."

13. Sunday. Early morning. After driving 16 verst farther yesterday, we stopped for night at a small river, which has a few springs flowing into it. We had our worship service outside; leaving again at 12:30. 13 verst farther we met a few Molotschna colonists. For night we stopped at a nobleman's estate, called Ugarok, situated at a flowing stream. Unfortunately, it is owned by a poor widow, who doesn't have the means to make use of its beautiful location.
14. We are having dinner at Worewjewa. There is much grass here. For night we are camped at an estate, 6 verst this side of the town, Torkaja. Our supply of oats and barley is running low, so we are glad that there is pasture with grass. There is also no hay.
15. Last night, and again this morning, we spent much time looking for feed for the horses; we finally found 11 pud<sup>32</sup> rye flour and continued on our way. For dinner we stopped at a place called Mariewna. Here again, after a long search for feed, we found 8 chetvert<sup>33</sup> oats at 11 rubles, but were not able to find any hay. It was 3:30 before we went on. It is quite hilly around here. Near the rivers there are a number of estates of the nobility, which however have become very run-down. The streams have good water, and have stone bridges to cross over. The soil is stony. Towards evening we again arrived at an estate overlooking a river. Along the low shore-line we see a large church village, almost like a town, called Nicolajawka. We had a long steep hill to descend which was done with great care. We have driven our wagons together in a circle for night, on this side of the river. The estate is called Zamiralskoye. It is 10 verst from the station, Korovsibrow.
16. At 8:30 we arrived at the Miuskh River. This river winds between wide banks covered with willow trees, and bordered by lovely parks. The estates on both sides are in better condition than those we have met so far. Even the people seem to look better. An estate manager, V. Kloist, captain of the gendarmerie (military police) with his family was stationed here near our wagons, asking us about various things. 4 verst from the station we are having dinner. Since some horses are lame and the roads very soft, we have had much difficulty travelling. At 6 p.m. we arrived at the village of Sasweyka, where we will spend the night. Here we

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32 Pud is an obsolete Russian weight measure equal to 16.38 kg; 11pud = 180.18 kg.

33 Chetvert is an obsolete Russian volume measure equal to 26.35 litres; 8 chetvert = 210.8 litres, or 45.6 bushels.

were able to find some hay, after having been without it for several days. This village has nice gardens. It seems that there are a number of apiaries here.

17. Today we are stopping for dinner at the station Morskoi Chushk. Behind us is the sea (Sea of Azov?), and to the right the town Taganrog<sup>34</sup>, where 20 years ago, Alexander “the Blessed” ended his good reign. May his memory be blessed as was his reign. The scenery here is beautiful near the sea. We left after the cattle caught up with us. This afternoon we encountered two broken bridges. At the first there were enough people and materials available to help us get across, but the people were so brazen and demanding that we had every right to despise them heartily. At the other bridge we were fortunate to get across without extra help. Since it was raining we decided to settle for the night 9 verst from the town of Vasemorv.
18. Today we mostly had very good roads. We watered our horses at Vasemorv and are having dinner after we travelled 25 verst farther. It is hot and humid. We camped at Pochmoc for the night. Since we had to buy a few things, we went into the town in the evening. The weather is pleasant.
19. This morning we only left at 9:30, since we had to look for feed. Right at the start we had the misfortune to take the wrong road, but very soon were able to get back to the right one. This evening we were obliged to camp for the night on the open prairie, 4 verst from the station, Zlavsky. The town lies in a deep ravine surrounded by bushes.
20. Sunday. This morning we left at 5 in order to get to a place where the horses could get water, and we could stop for a worship service. Our service began at 1:30 p.m. At 2:30 we headed for the town of Novo Peregkavk, where we would spend the night. On the way we had a heavy rain as a result of which the roads were very soft. Some of us went into town to buy a few necessities getting back to our camps after dark. It was difficult to get the horses watered.
24. At 5 p.m. we arrived at the place Kaskonka at the Donetz. The landscape is hilly so that it is hard travelling up and down these waves of hills. We camp at the Donetz Bridge. The cattle need to rest.
25. Today travel along the lower banks of the Donetz has been difficult, intermittently sandy and muddy. Near the station of Asmakhovska, near water, we are stopping for dinner. Most of the way has been very difficult, since the road was cut through by ditches. Besides, we had to drive around some impassable bridges. For the horses it was a hard day, however, the weather was pleasant. In the evening we met an old Cossack—a tall, strong man with a goodly white beard and hair, seemingly in best of health. He told us that he had been in the wars of liberation, and had taken part in many battles, but had never been wounded. Among other places, he had also been at Danzig, Leipzig and Paris.
26. 9 verst behind the station Pysskag we stop at a gorge with good water. Nearby we see a fountain gushing out of white soil, which feeds into the gorge. At 6 p.m. we arrived at the estate Tarasov. It is located at a gorge with plenty of water. The postroad is on the other side. We decide to camp here for the night. We have had beautiful weather, though rather humid in the afternoon.
27. Sunday. 6 p.m. Postroad, Ulnakovka. Early this morning I had to go shopping for dinner. I bought a sheep for 5 rubles. This was prepared for dinner. After the worship service we continued on our way. It was very warm. Now we are camping for night at Ulnakov situated at a wooded gorge with a bubbling fountain. It is a very romantic scene.
28. At 10 a.m. we arrived at the Kalitwa, and got across without delay. It was very warm, so we made use of the opportunity to bathe in the river. We will spend the night here at Tirnova

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34 Taganrog (Rus. Таганрог) located on the north shore of Sea of Azov is where Czar Alexander I of Russia died on 19 November/1 December 1825.

through which our road passes. Farther on the area resembles that of the region around Danzig.

29. 6 verst farther from Tirnova the cattle are grazing, but in a very sparse pasture. We are camping at Lasova for night. Alongside we still have the Kalitwa which supplies us with enough good water. 30. After Lasova we left the postroad, since we found a better, more-travelled road to the left. We are having our dinner near a "Balke" (gorge or ravine), which has some water. It is a bit cooler today. At 5 p.m. we came to the village of Tichovska where we will stop for the night, since there is a supply of water.

## July 1854

1. Today we leave early in order to get to the Don River if possible. At noon we stop at the village, Suchosovska, near the postroad. Heinrich Janzen has been sick for a few days.

6 p.m. We arrived at a "Stanitza" (large Cossack village) at the Don River, and are settling down for the night. The region around the Don is very hilly, though the hills are less steep than high, which makes for long ascents and descents. A little farther on we see the occasional bear roaming in the open, whereas farther back they kept themselves hidden in the ravines.

2. This morning we started out quite early, crossing the Don without any delays. We made various purchases at Kasanska, and also at the "Jahrmarkt" (market), leaving only at 11 a.m. The area this side of the Don is a plain, with very good roads. 6:30 p.m. Our night stop 6 verst past the station Mukisanska, near a Cossack village.
3. This morning we had a soft, penetrating dust rain, which cooled the air somewhat. At 5:45 we stopped at the station of Krusala for Sunday, our day of rest. Note: Between Tosmov and Kasarska Stanitz the houses are well-built and in the same style; on either side of the streets are stone posts. Following Kasarska the station houses are poorly constructed. Since this morning we are travelling alongside a "Ritsche" (creek) with a good supply of water, and have also had good pasture for the cattle. The cows have gained rather than lost weight. The sheep have also improved after we were rather worried about their condition. Just now we butchered one of the sheep which we bought this morning.
4. Sunday. As usual we had our worship service this morning. We left at 12 noon. About an hour on the way, we realized we had taken a wrong turn. It took us two hours to find our way back to the postroad, which earlier had seemed less travelled. However, we still reached the station in good time where we will camp for the night. The cattle, about which we had been worried, also arrived in time. On the way we had a shower which really got our backs wet. And so at times, the Lord allows us to lose our way, yet in our searching, we again find our way to Him. He lets rain to fall on His own, yet the sun comes out after the rain.

In the evening we met very friendly people, especially one old man, who could hardly contain himself for the joy that someone among us could speak Russian, immediately calling me his brother. He had been in the war between the Turks and the Persians, spoke some Tartar, Persian and German; however, only very little of the latter.

5. At 12 a.m. we arrived at the Khoper River, crossing over by means of a "new, strong" bridge, which, however, gave us every reason to doubt. But we crossed safely, and are having dinner on this side. The region here is quite romantic—on the other side steep cliffs of white, chalk-like soil; on this side, sandy flats overgrown with dense willow bushes. We are camped under one of these willow clusters. After dinner we had a good road as far as the station ("Stanitz") of Alexajewka. Here we had a long and steep hill to climb and descend, such as we had not encountered before. It became necessary to brake both back wheels on the big wagons. Otherwise everything went well. Beneath us is a wide plain, cut through by many arms of the Basalak River which flows into the Khoper. The scenery in places is

quite romantic. Alexajewka lies in this plain surrounded by the waters of the Basalak. The weather is cold and windy, with a few sprinkles of dusty rain.

6. Early this morning I went to the village to ask about the best way to take from here to Saratov. A few days ago we were told that there is a closer route, and the people here also recommended this, giving us a travel route to Yelan. Since we came down that long hill yesterday with such difficulty, and today were obliged to look with great wariness at the prospect of climbing it, our leaders decided to follow the advice given here, in spite of the fact that we all most reluctantly departed from the more travelled road. It almost seemed as if we wouldn't be able to find the road, but after driving back and forth a number of times, we were on our way. We have left the postroad and are heading for Durnovka station. This road leads through a low-lying area along the Baraluki River, where we see poverty-stricken farms ("Chutors") and find poor pasture.

For night we are camped at Durnovka, a very poor village in which the inhabitants seem very suspicious. Even the name of the village seems to indicate this.

7. At 8:30 a.m. we are stopping at a place where we fill our containers with water. At noon we stop to buy oats and have our dinner at a village. The people here are friendly. I talked to a religious man. To the inhabitants who have not served in the army, or travelled among German-speaking people, we appear almost as an apparition, and so they are very curious. There is no end to their questions of "From whence?, Where are you going? What kind of people? and Why?"

Just now we have passed the village of Flinevka, where there is water. We are camping here for the night. At Flin. we had a "malheur" (unfortunate) run-in with a drunken secretary, who demanded our passports. Since we hesitated in handing them over (not trusting him because of his ragged clothing) he took us to court in a very run-down building with no more than roof and walls. After being encouraged by more intelligent-speaking people, we handed over the documents to him, naturally not without a small "Magritsch" (tip).

8. 10 verst farther from Flinevka we stop at a place near a clear lake for dinner. We have had good roads—better than the average highway (Chaussee). This area is a large expanse of flat country with sparse grass for pasture. Off and on we find a pasture with some white clover. The riverbanks are mostly covered with willow bushes, in a few places there are wooded areas.

Evening. We are camped on a higher spot near Dudrovskie Khumora. We were asked for our passports again, and after one had been seen, the actual Prakyuna appeared in the form of a well-clad, but very drunk person with a very copper-coloured face, who couldn't really read our documents because first of all he lacked eye-glasses, secondly because his sight couldn't penetrate the flood of spirituous-filled tears which swam in his eyes. The tip (Magritsch) he was expecting was apparently not satisfactory.

We had the misfortune here, that two of our horses got stuck while being watered. However, they came out of it alright. Last night the temperature was 0, so it was cold.

9. Zavask. We bought oats at this village and are stopping at a ravine nearby for dinner. It is strange how suspicious the people are in this area, especially the women. I asked one woman for oats and bread, both of which she had, but would not let me into the house to look at it. I had to leave without having bought any.

Evening. We have travelled almost all day in a pleasant valley where we found much hay. Mr. Janzen is not well. I went to the village in the evening to enquire about the road.

10. This morning after the Nagaier had left with the cattle, we stopped at a village to buy oats. Here we were advised to take a different road to Misllovakva, which we did. However, I had directed the Nagaier to take the route I had been told yesterday. After we zigzagged back

and forth between the grainfields, we arrived at Mislokavka. However, the Nagaier with the cattle had not arrived, and only after looking for him with the field glasses did I find him not far from here in a ravine. He got here quite unconcerned after a while.

Evening 7 p.m. We travelled only 7 verst this afternoon. We spent much time looking for good water; finally locating some near a farm (Chutor), where the water was tolerable, but the location was good. God has been good to us today in helping us in our difficulties. We thank Him for it!

11. Sunday. Worship service with the text: "The eyes of the Lord are on us and He helps us". Yes, indeed! He helps us. Without His help we could not have come thus far. He will also help in the future. At 4:45 we have just filled our water containers with water from the Yelan River. On this side of Mislokavka there is the border between the Cossack land and the Saratov region.

W. J.'s sickness has become worse, and almost borders on insanity. May the heavenly Father undertake for him and grant him his normal senses again.

Evening. We are camping for the night at Yeslano near the Varovka River. We bought oats and bread, and I bought a map of our route to Saratov. We met with a German speaking man here. The weather is beautiful and we have a good place for night.

12. "Today we were well advised to get used to this new place." (A Russian proverb).

This morning we had to leave one of our horses behind, since it couldn't get up on its feet. This evening we met the first corn harvesting operation.

13. Today part of our way led between grainfields and the path was very narrow, so that it was difficult to chase the cattle. For night we have a good place near water.
14. At Kallenovka we bought feed, and are now stopping near a pond, where our cows also can graze. We met German Schemaks with wood. They were acquainted with our people at the Volga. Tonight we are stopping at a place 12 verst from Nyevyekanoy which belongs to royalty. It was hard to get permission to camp here.
15. At 11 a.m. we got to Nyebabiga where the bridge was impassable, so we made it through the water. All day our way has taken us between fields of grain, so the cattle have had a long day with little feed. This is also quite a wooded area, mostly birch on the hilltops.
16. The village where we are spending the night belongs to a prince, Sergey Sergeevich

Korubyey. It is built in Russian style, even with several massive houses, which adorn the villages. A cornmill which is being built looks very nice from the outside, but seen from close by is built typically Russian style, that is, not very good workmanship, with the hatchet as the only tool.

For night we are camped near the village of Pavyenka. One verst to one side is an estate where we can water the cattle. Water is scarce, so we have to be careful how much we use.

17. At 11 a.m. we arrived at the postroad at the village of Uvam. We have our dinner in the guesthouse. Water is to be had from a fountain which springs from a deep ravine.

## The Volga

18. Sunday. Yesterday Rev. Wall went to Saratov with a German man, in order to get quarters for our transport. We had the misfortune that one of Mr. Epp's cows, which seemed ill for a few days, died after only a few verst. We left quite early today, so that we could get to Saratov in good time. At 12 we arrived at a village 9 verst before Saratov. At the place where we first saw the Volga River, we had to descend a very stony, but not steep hill. The Volga flows quite near. At the top of the above mentioned hill, we had a very good view of the Volga, this largest river of Europe.

19. **In Saratov.** Yesterday at 4 p.m. we arrived at the gates of Saratov. Rev. Wall had arranged to get us from here himself, or ask a trustworthy German to do so. Therefore we drove through the gate, and waited in vain for about 2 hours. After we had run around for a while, and I had asked for him in the town a few times, he finally arrived with a German, the host where we are being billeted for the night. Rev. Wall had waited for us at the street-gate which leads to the town; whereas we had expected that he would wait for us at the postroad where it leads to the town. In the meantime Cornelius Wall had also gone looking for us. Now we needed to look for him and for the Nagaier, who hadn't arrived with the cattle yet. So immediately I went out of town, and was fortunate to find them all. The sun had set already, and it was 9:30 before we settled in at our night quarters. Later we all went for refreshments, and drank several bottles of good, strong beer.

20. Yesterday we spent all day shopping for various necessities. However, we took time to see the menagerie of rare animals, among them some which I had never seen. There were: 2 bears, a lioness, a tiger pair with 2 young ones, a black and grey spotted jaguar, a black jaguar, a llama, a zebra, a fallow deer, a barking deer (kakar) among the most interesting. Then there were hyenas, "larzandas", apes, various kinds of snakes, and a small crocodile.

This evening we went to the crossing to arrange for the ferry trip across the Volga. The set-up of the wagons took much longer than the actual crossing. The Peters' and Walls' spring wagon was the last load, and I the last man. There was a strong wind so that each load took longer than expected. So it was 7:30 before the last load left, and 9:10 before we arrived at the other side, where the rest of the company had been waiting for a long time. It was a cold evening and the current of the Volga very strong. But thank the Lord, all went well. We spent the night near the riverbank.

21. We bought feed in Cossacktown, and 10 verst along the Salt tract, we are having dinner. We spend the night at a Chutor. We were told that there would be no water on the way to the Tract, but this is the third fountain on the way from Cossacktown. Here there are 3 wells and also water in the ravine.

### **The End of our Journey**

22. At 5 p.m. we finally arrived at the goal of our destination: our fellow Mennonites at the new settlement at the Terlyka River. Some acquaintances, who had seen us from the fields where they worked, came by horseback to welcome us. We met the rest in the village. The joy of greeting each other was evident, especially between me and my relatives. Immediately cousin David Hamm and wife invited me to stay with them, which I naturally accepted. Thank God we are at our destination! Yes, and I have reached my goal; have arrived at the place of my second home, and hopefully the last of my earthly dwellings, the place where I can live and work. With my arrival all the early dreams of my childhood have been realized, that Russia would one day become the land of my future realm of work. My arrival has at the same time decided the destiny of my childhood premonitions, and forever my past is separated from the present, except for the memories, the painful memories which linger on. With the beginning of my life here, a new venture begins to unfold, yet the prospects begin to open up only in nebulous outlines. Will the new path for my feet be rough, even, rosy or thorny? I do not know, and am not able to comprehend; but I do believe that it will be toilsome, yet filled with blessings—one which I will someday leave with joy and go into my eternal rest. Oh! that some day after the earthly toils are over, I will be filled with the hope of that eternal rest, which is the inheritance of the saints; then all that weighs so heavily on the earthly pilgrim, will be considered as nothing.

Yes, O loving Lord and Saviour, how wonderfully have you led me thus far, in physical and spiritual ways, through obstacles that stood in the way, through darkness of soul, you led me



safely to my goal. As you have guided me in the past, O Father, lead me also in the future; guard me and keep me from all evil, and keep me in Thy ways, so that with Thy gracious help I might one day reach my eternal goal. Blessed Saviour, Lord Jesus! Help me to this end for the sake of Your great Love. Amen.

23. Today already, I was given small tasks to do, namely, to survey the plots for farmsteads (Baustellen bemessen). The barn for Claas Epp has almost been completed; the one at Hamm's just begun; cousin Franz Wall's barn under construction; at Franz Epps bricks are being used for the house. Otherwise, everyone is still living in temporary quarters ("Semljenk" huts and "carnien").
24. I started to write a letter to Mr. Wiebe; also had to measure a few things at the building sites.
25. Sunday. I am staying at the David Hamms, according to their wishes. Even in this way I am taken care of. We had service at the Hamms, as had been done earlier. Rev. Wall gave his first sermon. We were invited by the bridal couple, B. Epp and E. Horn for coffee. This then was the first Sunday at the Salt Tract.
- 26–28. During these days I have been busy writing letters, sketching, and unpacking my belongings. Today the barn was raised at the widow Wall, where I helped before dinner.
29. Today there was a wedding at B. Epps to which the whole new colony was invited. David Hamm officiated. The weather was very pleasant.
30. This afternoon I was busy on the field, surveying the cemetery, under the guidance of Uncle Claas Epp. Later I helped with pig-butchering at the Janzens. I returned at 11 p.m. in dark, stormy weather.

## **August 1854**

1. Sunday. D. Hamm preached today. Text: Col. 3:12–17, "The persevering cheerfulness of true Christians". After dinner we went to the "After-wedding".
2. Today, under the supervision of Uncle Epp, I surveyed and staked out the cemetery. It will be 222 sq. ft. The first seeds of God's acre have already been sown, and await the day in which they will break forth in glorified bodies. Here too will I rest after my days' work is done, and with me all those who have left the homeland to seek and find a new hearth.
3. Early this morning, I went to work as a labourer, earning wages, for the first time. I was engaged as a carpenter, helping to build the barn.
8. Sunday. Today Rev. Wall preached with 1 Cor. 10:6–13 as text. In the afternoon, at the request of Uncle Epp, I rode around the borders of this area of land with 12 householders. We made about 30 verst, arriving home after sundown. Beginning Tuesday, I have been busy barn-building at the Janzens. On Thursday we laid the door thresholds.
15. Sunday. This week I have alternately carpentered and surveyed land—the grainfields, and the areas between the village plan and the roads. On Thursday the barn was raised for Uncle Hamm. Today D. Hamm preached a sermon based on Romans 13, which I found very inspiring. I pray that I might do likewise. In the afternoon we went to the Hamms.
16. Today I sketched the plan for the assigned piece of land.
18. I am making some calculations on the plan. I received a letter from Doerksen. Who knows what all may happen at the Molotschna. May the Lord in His grace protect and watch over our brethren and the whole empire, that peace may reign, to the glory of His Kingdom.
- 19–21. These 3 days I have been at Janzens; the last 2 of which I went along to Warenburg to get lumber. This evening D. Hamm's house was erected.
22. Sunday. It had been decided to go to Warenburg for worship service this morning; that is, D. Hamms, Mariechen Hamm and I. We left quite early, but after we had gone only a short distance, the rain and the strong cold wind from the west got very much worse, so we turned around and headed for home. We still made it to the service here. In the afternoon we gladly stayed at home. I busied myself with writing, etc.

23. I was at the Janzens today, helping with their building project. Towards evening 2 surveyors, Mr. Ortrowski from Sakara, and Mr. Lyerand from Saratov were here to regularize the cattle route through our land.
- 24–25. Both these days I helped with the surveying of the cattle route, which we finished.
27. It rained almost all day, so we had to stop work at Vesper. I unpacked my linens and winter clothes, since it is getting quite cold.
28. More rain; it feels like fall weather; therefore the work does not go very well. Both these days, I have been feeling quite unwell. More rain and strong thunder in the evening.
29. Sunday. Today I got sick with the fever.

### **September 1854**

5. Sunday. All week I have been down with the fever, and accordingly am quite “marode” (tired out). The weather has been dismal and humid, with some rain.

Evening. The fever has left me, although I feel other than well.

Yesterday F. Wall's barn was raised.

8. More rain today. I hope I am rid of the fever, but am still resting, in order to be completely cured.
11. The weather has cleared again, and hopefully stays this way. There is still so much to do before winter sets in. This morning there was much dew on the ground.
12. Sunday. D. H. preached on today's Epistle, about the works of the flesh, and the works of the Spirit. In the afternoon Rev. Wall and Uncle Hamm were here. Since the weather was pleasant, we sat outside until 8 p.m.
13. Nice weather in the afternoon. I have resumed my work of surveying, and hope to continue with it.
- 14–15. Good summer weather has helped contribute to progress in our work. I was busy with my field measurements. Unfortunately, I cannot make much progress since Uncle Epp has had to deal with the Tarlikowkas. Because of the heavy and continued rains much of the grain has been damaged. This has resulted in the idea of building large granaries, which will be undertaken if there are sufficient funds.
16. Uncle Epp finally arrived home, and immediately arrangements were made to stake off the land that had been surveyed a long time ago.
17. Today we finally made the furrows which I had been waiting to do. There was also house-raising for B. E.
18. Today I measured off (surveyed?) the “Feuerstellen” at the cemetery road, and regulated a few details of the plan. Tonight, a beautiful moon-lit evening.
19. Sunday. David Hamms started out very early to attend the Child baptism for one of their estranged families at Warenburg. I went to Hamms for dinner (Maria's parents?). Back home again I wrote for a while, then went to Hamms again for coffee. After this Uncle Hamm and I went for a walk to the brickyards, the cemetery and the “garden” (located on the steppes). The sun was setting before we got back. After I partook of the evening meal at Hamms, I went home.
20. Today I was busy with various measurements in the village itself. J. Toews' had barn-raising.
- 21–22. The road around the cemetery and the farmyards was marked off, as well as the places for those who would live at the end of the village.
23. I felt rather unwell today, so I lay down after coffee. In the afternoon I measured the strip of land between the road behind Froeses and the ditch.
24. Had a heavy rain last night. Today I made a ground plan of the land between Froeses' road and the Terlyka River. Later I went to Claas Epps. Soon after I left Epps a coach

("Tarantas") drove up in which, as we later heard, His Excellency, the Honourable Chief Judge, had arrived.

25. His Excellency actually arrived yesterday. The village congregation was asked to gather at the Epps at 9 a.m., to be introduced to His Excellency. The same gave a short talk, in which he expressed his pleasure at seeing them together here. He also believed that they would become very good citizens, and that they would fulfill the great need to be exemplary models to the other German-speaking people in the area. There upon the congregation was dismissed; however, a number of people accompanied him on a sightseeing tour through the village. Towards evening His Exc. left for Warenburg. The weather was beautiful.
26. Sunday. Warm weather. Text for worship service: "The Young man of Nain." After dinner I visited the Walls.
28. We had enough frost last night to form a thick layer of ice in the open containers of water outside. In the evening I went for a walk to the cemetery.
29. After dinner I marked off the burial spots in one quarter of the cemetery.
30. This was an epoch-making day for us, since my dear hosts moved into their new house. We are finding it to be a very comfortable home, even though not all has been arranged or finished. There are still no doors. The Lord be praised for all His grace which He has shown us thus far! In the evening we were at the Schulzes where survey concerns were discussed.

#### **October 1854**

1. Clear, nice weather with some morning frost. I am working on the division of the cemetery plots on paper; however, I am not able to comprehend Uncle Epp's ideas in this.
3. Sunday. It is the first Sunday in which we find ourselves quite comfortable in the new room. Today is also the birthday of my beloved king<sup>35</sup> ("Landesvaters"). I think of him on this day, as well as many thousands of his subordinate subjects, with feelings of gratitude to God who has kept him to this day and made him a blessing to his people. May God bless him in days to come, with the fullness of His blessings, which spring from Him alone. Perhaps it is the last birthday of the beloved king which I as a subject will celebrate; under whose sceptre I have enjoyed so many happy days.

It is Harvest festival today. The service was not at Hamms, as at earlier times, but in their newly-constructed barn. In the afternoon Rev. Wall came for a visit. Many things concerning new facilities and arrangements of common concern were discussed, one of which was the organization of the church. Later D. H., Rev. Wall and I went to Jacob Janzens, where letters had arrived from Prussia. We had beautiful weather, though frost in the morning.

4. This evening candidates were chosen for election to the Executive Committee ("Schulzenamt"). Towards evening I was at Epps, and on the way back stopped at Michael Hamms, where I stayed until 8 p.m.
5. Today Uncle Epp, I, and a few others went to the steppe where the location of the surveyed acreage was to be decided. In the evening the election of the executive committee was finally held. The results were: Bernhard Epp, chairman ("Vorsteher"); Jacob Martens and Jacob Janzen, members.
6. Today a family of Prussian brethren from the Kuban Lowlands arrived: Mr. and Mrs. Wilh. Penner and 10 children. They are the first to have travelled the little-known route through Kiev, Kupek, and Woronesk. They have travelled 8 weeks less one day, and have been fortunate to have arrived at their destination without delay, without any harm, health wise or

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35 This is King Frederick William IV of Prussia who was born on 15 October /3 October 1795 and died 2 January /21 December 1865/4.

with regards to their belongings, in addition having had good weather. Praise be to God for His grace! This will definitely be encouraging to those who are still wishing to emigrate. This family is encamped on the Walls' yard. A second family, which travelled with them, but separated at Ortega, has gone to the Molotschna colony.

7. This morning the newly arrived family Schmor, Uncle Epp, Rev. Wall and I went to the second colony, where this family is to settle. After dinner I worked on the plan, then went to Schulzes to discuss the measurements, as well as the results of the election of the Executive committee ("Schulzenamt").
8. Today I have marked off the temporary village boundary. We were invited to the older Hamm family for the evening to celebrate Maria's birthday, which is tomorrow.
9. Today we drew the border furrow. The weather was good. David Hamm received a letter from Jacob Hamm, Petershagen.
10. Sunday. Today D. Hamm preached about the greatest commandment. After dinner we (the Hamms, Mariechen Hamm and I) went to Warenburg to the market (Jahrmarkt). It was dark, stormy weather with a lot of dust. We stayed at Kopekoeller for night. We made a few purchases that evening. Later we walked around at the big place for a while, \* at which occasion I spoke to Uncle Hamm about a very important matter concerning me!
11. Right after coffee we went to the market. It was very stormy, and I have never seen such dust as on that day. At times it was impossible to keep one's eyes open. We arrived home well after dark. I didn't like the market; there was a very meagre selection of wares. However, interesting were the Kirgis [Kyrgyz] people, whom I had never seen before. The marketplace just crawled, and the steppe for several square verst was covered with these people, since they pastured their camels there at night.
12. This afternoon I rode to the Steppe with Uncle Epp. We were looking for the border of one of our villages. I had staked it incorrectly, because the plan was not clear. During this time I talked to Uncle Epp about my future vocation, the arrangement for the same, and about plans for building a school.
13. Today I surveyed and staked off the borders where I had gone wrong.
15. Today we wanted to mark the tracks around the specified piece of arable land, but it was so foggy that we had to come home without accomplishing our task. In the evening we were at Epps for a feast of spareribs.
16. Early this morning we went to the field to draw furrows around the acreage. However, we did not finish.
17. Sunday. Sermon about "Putting off the old, and putting on the new person." Weather: humid and foggy; in one word: gloomy.
19. This morning it had frozen, about 1 degree, with a cold northwest wind. Again we made some furrows. In the evening we were at the old Hamms, where beef was slaughtered today.
20. I was on the fields all day, marking the boundaries along the Woronna River. D. Hamms have received a letter from mother.
22. A clear day; quite pleasant on the fields. However, this evening when I try to put on paper the measurements I had taken, not one line seems to be right.
23. Today I measured on the side towards the Malisch River.
24. Sunday. Sermon by Rev. Wall: The conversion of Paul. In the afternoon we were at the Epps.
27. Today again I surveyed, and finally finished the ploughed land.
30. The previous 2 days I have spent in rewriting the land surveys, as also today. No frost for several nights. Today—Prussian Martini.<sup>36</sup> A cloudy day. Actually it is quite dry; certainly no

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36 30 October / 11 November is the Christian Feast Day for St. Martin of Tours.

comparison with the mud we often had at home at this time of the year. The cattle are still out to pasture, and the outside work continues without a break.

31. Sunday. A beautiful day, a real Sunday. D. H. preached about the struggle against the kingdom of Satan. Because of Aunt Hamm's sickness, the worship service could not be held in their home, so it was held in Wall's "semljenka", where it will also be during the winter.

## November 1854

1. Good weather today. Several men and I went to the steppe to look at a few things.

2-3. Cloudy weather. Pigs were butchered at the "parents", (Hamms). Meanwhile, I was at C. Epps putting the land boundaries on paper.

7. Sunday. 6:30 a.m. Two years ago today, after a two-year absence, I arrived at my parent's home.<sup>37</sup> It was a wonderful day for me and my loved ones. However, I had strange feelings about my homecoming, and these sombre feelings were only too soon realized as a premonition of renewed separation. This separation occurred much sooner than I would have thought; and now I have already been in Russia for one year and a quarter, waiting for the fulfillment of my vocation.

Evening. Today we had service in Wall's "semljenka"<sup>38</sup> for the second time. After dinner I was home alone.

8. I have been at C. Epps all day to divide up the surveyed land. After coffee I rode to the designated second colony with Uncle Epp to make an overview. The weather was good; some morning frost.

9. Today I am making the plan for the second colony, but I did not get very far, because the weather turned cold with rain, snow and wind.

11. Today I finished the surveying I had begun for the second colony. The Warschina (River) has begun to freeze up, because of the colder temperatures.

13. There has been quite a lot of sleet, as a result of which several people have skated along the street. It was thawing in the afternoon with fog all day.

14. Sunday. Dull and foggy. D.H. preached this morning. Mariechen Hamm was here in the afternoon. D. H. and I accompanied her home, so we stayed for supper. It is terribly mucky outside.

16. Snow flurries today. Yesterday and today I surveyed parts of the second colony.

18. Around noon it started to snow with a strong wind. Before long it developed into a regular snowstorm.

19. I went to Cl. Epps this afternoon, where I found a long letter had arrived from my father.

21. Sunday. The worship service today included the preparation for communion, which we will celebrate here for the first time. Rev. Wall preached; Theme: "Behold I stand at the door and knock". After the sermon we had elections for a deacon: Wilhelm Penner was elected. May the Lord bless him in his service. After coffee I went to the "parents" (Hamms).

24. After dinner I went with Uncle Epp to the second colony to look over possibilities for more building sites for the landless ("Anwohnerstellen").

25. This morning I made the plans for the needed 6 building sites ("Anwohnerstellen"), located just behind Froeses at the old colony.

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37 He is referring to his scouting trip to Russia in 1850-2. See the very first entry, 19 November 1852, in this diary, page 16. Note the 12 days difference between Julian and Gregorian calendar dates.

38 This is a sod house, [Russian: Землянка which translates to "dugout"]. In English is often spelled "Semlin." A primitive Mennonite "Semlin" can be seen in the Mennonite Pioneer Museum in Steinbach, Manitoba and a more elaborate one in the Western Development Museum, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

26. Towards evening I took a walk to the projected building sites ("Anwohnerstellen"). On my way back I stopped at the Hamms, and at the wish of my aunt, stayed for a while.
28. Sunday. For the first time our small church is celebrating Holy Communion. There were 83 participants. Only a few were missing because of sickness. The celebration was held according to the rites of the Prussian churches. The fact that the members of this group came from various churches in West Prussia joining together into one body, made this a very important event. Since each brings from the Fatherland slightly different usages, all will need to adjust to this new community of believers. As the congregation is melted together outwardly, may it also grow together inwardly, bound together and united by the love of Christ into one body. Then the Lord's blessing would rest upon the fellowship outwardly and inwardly, and spiritual growth would be evident.
29. I had to go to the fields again to measure the places for the 6 building sites ("Anwohnerstellen") at the second colony. It started to rain and continued until evening.
30. More rain today. I am sketching the general plan of both colonies. In today's village meeting Abr. Janzen has been elected to be chairman of the Welfare Committee ("Waisenamt") and J. Wall as chairman of the school board.

#### **December 1854**

- 1-4 My aunt, Helena (Klaassen) Hamm is quite sick. We had a big snowstorm, though not very cold. During these days I have made a good copy of our colony plan. Friday I had to go through deep snow to get to the second colony to check some things. Saturday morning I went along with Uncle Epp to see whether the road at the building sites for the landless ("Anwohnerstellen") was straight. Towards evening I went to the Hamms. Aunt Helena is somewhat better.
5. Today we had a praise service for the communion held last Sunday. After dinner we went to Janzens together with Uncle Hamm and Elder Wall. We had some snow with cold winds.
- 7, 8, 9. During these 3 days I have been working on the two special plans to be verified by the office ("Comptoir").
10. This morning B. Epp, M. Harder, D. Penner, C. Wall and I went to Wackresensk and from there, accompanied by two Russians who want to rent land, we went to the steppes to look at it. Today I forwarded letters to Uncle Epp who will take them to Warenburg tomorrow. In the evening we all went to the "parents".
13. Today I have a very bad cold.
16. Today the brethren H. Peter, Carl Mueller, and their uncle, H. Conrad Mueller, visited our colony. Also a baby girl was born to the Penners. Towards evening I was at the "parents" for tea, to visit with the Mueller brethren. After that I accompanied Marie home. It was a wonderful moonlit winter evening.
- 17-18. These days we have had a great deal of snow with frost, so that there is a good sleigh track. Unfortunately, no one has a proper sleigh; everyone has to make do with a primitive Russian sleigh ("Stempelkasten").
- 19/31 Sunday. Today is German New Year's Eve. D. Hamm preached on the text, "Rejoice in the Lord.." Theme: "The great joy of Advent." I was at the "parents" from afternoon till evening.

Tomorrow the school opens, and with it comes the fulfillment of my vocation, which I have decided to enter. Last year when my conjecture, that many of the questions I had would be answered by this time, has come true. Amazing! How the Heavenly Father has led me, and given me more evidence of His love and grace, than I, unworthy, had ever hoped. I am treading on a new path. I am entering the teaching profession as instructor of young people, and am accepting important and holy responsibilities. Recognizing this, I would feel very inadequate to undertake this work, if I did not have the promises of Him, who Himself is

Truth and Strength. He says: "My grace is sufficient for you", for "my strength is made perfect in weakness". So trusting this strength, I will go forward in the work which I am about to begin, knowing that He will not withhold His strength, presence and blessing. Yes, loving Saviour, Lord Jesus! I will begin with you, continue with you and fulfill the ministry which I am undertaking in your name. Graciously look upon me, a weak vessel ("Werkzeug") and grant me the necessary gifts of your Spirit: wisdom, patience, gentleness, and love. May I always recognize the precious treasures, which you entrust to me in the souls of the children, that I may lead them to you, the source of all bliss. May I always remember the serious admonition, that someday you will demand them from me. Dearest Saviour! I know only too well that I am not fit to do anything without you; and unless your hand leads me and you grant me all I need, I will fail. However, I also know that in your strength I am strong, and that you recognize this in me. I know and believe this with all my heart, therefore I am at peace. O Lord help! O Lord, may all this be accomplished! Amen.

**\*\* 22.** In Wall's Zskalanka [semlijenka ?]—my home now. I have actually been inaugurated into my new position.

**Monday, December 20th,** the day before yesterday, (Russian calendar), and New Year's Day (Prussian calendar) the children assembled in this place for the first time. Elder Wall opened the school after we sang Verses 2 and 3 of song No: 2567: "Wir haben hier dies Haus erbaut" (We have built this house) from Knapp's Treasure Songs. He also spoke a heart warming prayer, especially commending this occasion to the faithful Shepherd, asking for the necessary gifts and abilities for me as teacher. Then the last verse of the song, No: 2568 was sung, whereupon I began my instruction. As an opening, I read the 2nd chapter of the gospel of Luke. 25 children were present. Some 10 may have stayed away because of the bad weather. Unfortunately, I was sick in the afternoon, so we had no classes.

Yesterday the weather was worse than the day before, but I could continue my work. There were only 15 children. Today there are 26 children, the weather being better. Today also we have started our singing lessons.

**23.** Good weather today. In the evening Marie and I went to D. Hamms.

**24. Christmas Eve.** The weather is mild. I am working on the plans all day at C. Epps. In the evening we had Choir practice again. 13 persons were present. The blessed Christmas holidays are here. Again we will have the privilege to receive the heavenly Guest in our hearts. Oh! may this happen gladly, and may we recognize the unspeakable worth and majesty of this royal guest, and in contrast our own lowliness, unworthiness and helplessness.

O Lord, my God and my Saviour! You have done so much for poor humanity; you have done so much for every single person, also for me. I hardly dare to stutter my thanks to you for the love which also enfolds me, even me. But you, Lord, do not consider our worthiness, nor our ability, nor our excellency, but only our weakness, our helplessness, which clings only to your strength and godly power with which you carry and protect us. O Saviour! strengthen also my hands, that they may lay hold of you more and more, and draw you into my heart more and more, to abide in it to the end of my days. Amen.

**25. Christmas Day,** first holiday. The blessed Christmas days are here for us in Russia! Oh! may we celebrate them in the right attitude, in order to receive the real Christmas blessing. Elder Wall preached about the Christmas theme: Luke 2.

**26. Christmas,** second holiday. D. Hamm preached. In his introduction he also referred to the end of the year, in a very touching manner, especially concerning the inner experiences of our fellowship here. In the afternoon we went to F. Walls, where unfortunately there was a very large crowd of young people. I was sorry I had gone. It is clear today, but 15 degrees frost.

27. I was at Cl. Epps in the morning, where I recopied some of the completed plans. In the afternoon I visited relatives.
30. Today the weather is stormy and blowing snow. In the evening we had our choir practice again. Elder Wall gave dedicatory closing remarks, by reading a few appropriate verses, and offering prayer, followed by the singing of the verse of a song.
- 31. New Years Eve**, (Sylvester Abend) 11 p.m. Here we stand; here I stand at the threshold of a new year, as the last hour of the old vanishes. Various sensations fill my heart as I look back at the bygone period of time. The feeling which speaks the loudest in my breast is that of sincerest thanks to God, the faithful guide of all my past destinies. Yet manifold were the wonderful demonstrations of His grace; each day, each hour bears witness to them. Even though last year at this time, I was uncertain about my future, and did not know which choices to make, the Lord has marvellously watched over me. I only needed to take His hand and let Him lead. Consequently, I am now so far from my last year's location, even farther from my dear homeland, having arrived at a situation, which I can only call fortunate and joyful. How could I have expected such happiness: to be able to serve my people in a useful way and hopefully even more so in the future? O dear Lord and Saviour! Your help is beyond understanding; you bring all to a glorious end. Oh! How amazing were your ways that led me finally to this place. I give you my innermost heartfelt thanks for all your goodness, for each joy which you granted. Oh! I am not worthy; you do not regard my sins, but your deeds are purely goodness and love.

Oh! look down on me, your sinful child, at the close of this year, and lead me with your hand into the next year. Take away from me all that may hinder my service to you. As the old year passes, may also my old nature depart more and more, so that I may take a new heart into the New Year, one which dedicates itself to live and die only for you. Help me, Lord Jesus towards this end, and bless me in my work! Yes, strengthen and empower me that I may be diligent in all I do. Bless all those, whom you entrust to my care, that I may guide them to you, that one day they and I may sing eternal praises before your throne. O dearest Lord Jesus! Hear my prayer with which at this moment I bid farewell to this year. Hear me for the sake of your great love for sinners and for the children. Amen.

## 1855

### January 1855

1. I greet you, the first hour of the dear, New Year. With God in Christ's Name I begin the new journey, with God I also want to close it.

New Year's Day, 10 p.m. The days flow unrelentlessly forward; there is nothing to stop them. New Year's Day has barely begun, and it is already gone. It didn't even stay with us one minute longer than any other day. As the waves of the river, which break through all barriers, each day crowds into the next, and time finally flows into eternity. Therefore, O Heavenly Father, bless this day to my heart as the entrance to the New Year and dedicate it as your possession. Teach me to ponder the three petitions which were commended to us at the holy place. Yes, teach me to pray with all my heart: "Deliver me, Lord, from myself and dedicate me for your service." "Grant me all that which leads me to you." and "take all that draws me away from you." O Jesus, dearest Lord and Saviour, be my guide and true helper and adviser in all my future activities, and teach me to do that which is pleasing in your sight. Amen.

Last night it started to blow so that we had a regular blizzard through the night. By noon it started to thaw. In the afternoon we had visitors: Fransen, Martens, H. Janzen, Cornies and Gerh. Wall. Later in the evening Elder Wall came to see me. We talked about various



things, especially concerning the wonderful guidance in the immigration to the Tract, the conditions of the Molotschna settlement in the early days, as well as our own situation in the present, and the future.

2. Sunday. D. Hamm gave the message about: we must suffer; we want to suffer; we can suffer; and, we may suffer. After Vesper I went to D. Hamms.
5. Today after a big snowstorm, it is thawing. Later frost. Dietr. Penner spent the night on the fields, since he was caught in the snowstorm. He got lost on his way back from Warenburg.
6. Epiphany. We are celebrating this holiday with a church service.
8. 16 degrees frost. I went to Abr. Janzens to sketch a plan for their house.
9. Sunday. D. Hamm preached about "Jesus, the 12-year old." My visitors today were Jacob Janzens, D. Hamms and Penners' young people. I received letters from Doerksen, Uncle Hamm, Uncle Epp, Mr. Wiebe, and several friends here.
12. -16 degrees. In the evening it dropped down to -22. Jacob Schmidt froze his hands today.
14. Today we had the signing of declarations of loyalty by the baptized church members, male or female, who had come as immigrants. This was carried out under the auspices of the higher Government authorities by the director, Mr. Claus. It was done according to our ritual of the solemn "Yes", handshake and signature. However, I was not present because of illness.
15. I find myself under the weather these days, with headaches and vertigo. However, I did some sketching on the plan of our village.
16. Sunday. This morning Uncle Epp asked me whether I could still go along to Saratov, in spite of not feeling too well. Since I was feeling better, and didn't want to forego this trip concerning school matters, I obliged. We left at 2 p.m. We had good weather and the road was good. We drove through Terlikowka, Fort and Lauke. We stopped for some business matters, then through Kokus in order to arrive in Hahl by evening. In spite of having taken a wrong turn, we arrived at our night lodging at the chief administrator, Schoeneberg, by 7 p.m. We had travelled 37 verst.
17. Saratov. After breakfast we continued towards Saratov. We had the wind at our backs, so in spite of the snow, it was not too cold. 15 verst before Saratov we got to the Volga. At 2 p.m. we arrived at the home of Mr. Dietz. Soon after our arrival Pastor Thomas from Katharinatown met us. Later in the evening we visited him at his night lodging. We also met Mr. Lippert from Katherinatown.
18. After coffee I went to the market in Saratov, and later with Mr. Dietz to make various purchases. In the evening the rest of the group arrived: Elder Wall, W. Penner, Michael Hamm Jr., Abr. Janzen and a few others. Yesterday a new evangelical pastor arrived, Rev. Buzky, who has been pastor in Siberia, Jakutzk, and Irkutzk.
19. Beautiful weather. This morning I did some shopping together with cousin Michael Hamm. After diner I wrote a list. We have received several letters here; one from P.B. Mirau, who gave me the news that my parents had also decided to emigrate to "The Trakt." For this purpose they had already put their farmstead up for sale. Lord, bless their decision.
20. I have not been out on the streets all day, but have rather written letters to my parents.
21. Krasnoi-jar. Evening. We left at 2:30 to go to Katherinatown, arriving here at 5:30 at the storeman, Mr. Kraft, where we will stay for night.
22. Katherinatown. This morning when we got up, there was a snowstorm, which kept up as we travelled. However, the road was well-travelled, so we didn't lose our way. We arrived at the home of Mr. Lippert, whom we had met in Saratov. After coffee we had a short visit with Pastor Thomas. Here I learned to know the teacher, Mr. Hauerstein, where we visited in the evening, and where I spent the night. A dear, friendly man.
23. Sunday. I went to the service which, in absence of the 2 pastors, was led by the teacher. He read a sermon about the workers in the vineyard. The inside of the church is magnificent, especially the altar. They say that Mr. Lippert with his own means decorated

the church, according to his own taste. There were more visitors in the afternoon—a brother of the teacher (also a teacher) and the father-in-law of our host, Mr. Schoenberg, as well as another teacher. We had a good time of discussion.

24. Orlowsky. Immediately after coffee we went to the market which in fact is really grand. At the invitation of the teacher, I went to the school after that. There were ca. 300 students. I attended the classes for about an hour. I was also invited to the family room, and from there to the home of Pastor Thomas, where Uncle Epp and I were invited for the noon meal. Following that we went to the family Rothkaermel where, as at all the other places, we were given a hearty welcome.
25. There is much frost today and a strong wind. We visited at Gottlieb Rothkaermel over the noon hour; then to the Baners, a brother to Pastor Baner, whom we had met yesterday. We also met another teacher here. After coffee we left for Katherinatown and will spend the night at the Lipperts. In the evening we visited with a son-in-law of Mr. Peters.
26. I went to Mr. Hauerstein again on some business, then left from the Lipperts driving back to Saratov.
28. I made a few purchases today, walked around town for a while, but at the same time was perfectly bored, and quite ready to go back to the beloved "Tract".
29. After packing all our things, we left Saratov at 9 a.m. There was quite a bit of frost, but again we had the wind behind us. We were going to spend the night in Lauwe but, since Mr. Garmuek wasn't at home, we decided to continue on. However, we first drank a cup of tea, and fed the horses, leaving at 5 p.m. The weather was clear, and all went well, except that the track was rather snow swept and the horses were tired, so driving was slow. Darkness overtook us, and it was quite foggy, so the stars were not visible. Thankfully the road was staked, so that we did not lose our way. After crossing the Terlyka River we had to walk ahead to make sure we were still on the road, so step by step was slow going. We arrived home at 10 p.m. but, thank God, without mishap. We thank and praise you, Father, for your gracious protection all the way. Yours be the glory eternally. Amen.
30. Sunday. More frost today. After the worship service our chief carpenter B. had to appear before the church because of drunkenness. May the Lord lead him to repentance and free him from his chains. Lord Jesus, have mercy on this our poor brother and save him from his enemy, who is leading him to his eternal destruction. Only you can do this. We ask this for the sake of your love for sinners. Amen.
31. I was at school again today. We had a snowstorm with cold temperatures. I went to Epps in the evening to get my belongings.

## **February 1855**

1. This morning it was 20 below. I had to go to Epps again on business. This evening it is storming as never before. With this kind of weather it is far from comfortable in our semljenka.
3. Thaw weather again today. In the evening, B. Epp, D. Hamm, Michael Hamm and I went to Claas Epps where we regulated some figures made in the office ("Comptoir") regarding the postage expenses. Meanwhile we enjoyed a good cup of tea.
5. Cousins Michael and Barbara went to the market in Warenburg, will return tomorrow. After supper I went to David Hamms for a while. "As God leads me, I will go, without any of my own choosing".
6. Sunday. D. Hamm gave the message on: "If I spoke with the tongues of men or angels...." In the evening some of us went to D. Hamms' to hear what Dietrich Hamm had written to D. H. For me it contains very good news, that my parents have sold their place with good returns. O Lord, you have helped thus far; I pray, grant us your help also in the future.

11. Today the business committee ("Schulzenamt") as such was elected; I as Colony secretary. This was through our administrator, according to our rituals. We have had a snowstorm all day, but not very cold.
12. I am working on the plans for Mr. Wiebe. Towards evening, Maria, Barbara and I went to D. Hamms.
13. Sunday. In the afternoon the David Hamms and I went to Peter Klaassens, where there were many other guests.
16. German day of prayer and repentance, with a worship service. It was observed here too. D. Hamm spoke about Jeremiah 4:3-7, a spicy sermon on repentance. All day we had rain, storm and thaw-weather.
20. Sunday. This afternoon the Confirmation class was begun, which was attended by some of our members. Oh! what unbelievable blessings could result from these classes! May God send the right man, who has a deep concern for this, and who is filled with the gifts of the Spirit. O dear God! You do not wish that not even one soul be lost, but that all come to the knowledge of the truth. We pray that you will always send men, who will do your work in our church, for its blessing and your praise, for the sake of Jesus Christ.
24. Still some frost. Today 20 milk cows, which were bought for resale, have arrived here.
26. I received a letter from my parents today. It contained important news for me: an open door to great happiness for me, which in fact can be accomplished, since nothing seems to stand in the way. In your name, Lord, I want to dare to enter into this state, which you have hallowed. Be with me and with the one whom you have sent to me. From your hand I want to accept her as a wonderful gift. I want to guard her as the apple of my eye, and together with her walk in your ways. O Lord, help! O Lord, may all be well!
27. Sunday. Worship service: D. Hamm. In the afternoon I wrote letters to my friends Regier and Mirau. Then I went to Walls for coffee, and later to the confirmation class. Also for a short while to D. Hamms.
28. **\*\* I spoke to Marie for the first time!** (Written in Greek letters) This evening is a very important and portentous one. I have entered into a bond with a heart that has decided to belong to me, and to share all that life offers, joy or sorrow, affliction or happiness. Of course, I haven't received the important "yes"; yet before God our covenant is made. O gracious Heavenly Father! You have guided this heart, to which, in your presence, I have bound myself in love and faithfulness. Through you we have found each other. From your hand I receive her as a gift of your grace. I thank you for this in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. But now I pray that you will prepare our hearts for your dwelling-place, and a temple in which your glory abides. May the relationship which awaits us be an example always of the Church of Christ. To this end hallow our hearts and minds, and draw us to you. Grant that we look to you for all that we begin and fulfill; that you are always the centre of what we strive for, so that your name may be exalted and God, the Father glorified. Amen.

### March 1855

1. Today we had a snowstorm again with cold temperatures.
2. Still cold and stormy. D. H. was here in the evening. I made use of the opportunity, and in his presence made a proposal to Marie's parents. For the time being they have received the proposal with silence, but their acceptance will be awaited the next time. In the evening Marie herself was here for a while, during which time we discussed things privately ("under four eyes") and in God's presence. Oh, what a gem I am discovering in Marie, especially since I have been able to see her personally. Keep her, O Father, for me; and me for her. Grant that we might fulfill our work for the welfare of our people, to our own souls' wellbeing, and to the glory of your name. Oh that our whole life might be a song of praise to you, whose last sounds softly waft to the beyond, to the habitations of the saints, whom we shall join through the grace of our Lord!

\* Day of death of His Majesty, the Emperor Nikolai Pawlowitsch<sup>39</sup>.

3, 4, 5. These days a stinging cold north wind blew, with temperatures of 14–11 below zero.

6. Sunday. Text of worship service: Isaiah 53. My situation is good. Concerning the death of the Emperor, it seems that he had been ill for a long time, probably as a result of the frightful stress he was under because of the war (Crimean War). He died on the 18th of February (Gregorian calendar). So he is gone, he has been gathered to his fathers. Although he was the greatest and mightiest ruler of his time, he was not able to avoid the sentence of death. Many millions of his subjects will mourn his death with good reason, because he was a real father of the fatherland. Naturally, everyone will look to the Honourable Emperor's son, as an heir to the throne. May the Lord of Lords bless the new ruler of this land, Alexander II, and may his reign be a blessing to his people!

7. Lovely weather today. Early this morning I went to D. Hamms with regards to ordering the rings.

9. Spring has come. This morning I followed Marie to D. Hamms. After I returned I found I had a letter from B. Schulz. Oh what strange ways you lead your own. Oh may I, as also the one whom you have entrusted to me as life's partner, continually be counted as your own. Oh help us to this end, through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

11. A beautiful spring day. This morning during recess, my students went for a walk to the steppes. After school I went to Cl. Epps where I had to regulate some things concerning the foreign passports.

12. This morning I went to Funks to order my survey-instrument. Otherwise, I am occupied with the plans of our acreage and settlements, which I intend to send to Prussia.

13. Sunday. The water is beginning to collect in places where it is not wanted. A number of semljenkas are filling with water, so that they have had to be vacated. Here too, during the classes the water began to run across the threshold; however we were able to stop it in time. The dugout ("Cornie"?) is full.

16. After school I went to Epps, Janzens and Walls to invite these dear families to the service of my engagement to Marie Hamm.

The farmers are beginning to think of seeding-time.

18. Today preparations are being made for the celebration of our engagement which, God willing, is to take place tomorrow. Oh may this bond be hallowed by the Lord, that it may become the foundation of our further walk with Christ, whose strength may continually renew our love for Him.

19. \* Saturday. So we, my Marie and I, have actually celebrated our ENGAGEMENT. The performance was done by our dear Elder Wall in the presence of our dear Papa. In your most Holy presence, Lord God, our heavenly Father, we have promised to walk before you in faithfulness and love to each other, and have thereupon received the blessing. Oh, we pray that you may graciously watch over us, guide our steps, that they may never leave the path of piety, in the name of the Father, and your dear Son, Jesus Christ. Grant us your Spirit to helps us read your word, that it may constantly "be a lamp to our feet and a light on our way". O Father, do not forsake us, whom you have called to be heirs of your kingdom. Draw us more and more to you, even though it be through suffering. Keep us from wantonness; in bad days keep us with your right hand, so that we may not falter, or sin against you, who have given us countless good things; you, who have led us together in a marvellous way. Oh that at the end of our life we may call out with assurance: "Here, here we are! Take us into your heavenly kingdom." Yes, grant us this by your grace, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

20. Sunday. (April 1.—Pr[ussian] calendar) Weather-wise, it is winter again, with a snowstorm; 5–6 below. Today is Palm Sunday. Elder Wall gave the message. In the afternoon we were at D. Hamms together with the siblings.

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39 The Russian Czar Nicholas I Pavlovich Romanov died on 2 March (old style 18 February) 1855.

23. Marie and I went to D. Hamms towards evening.
24. "Green Thursday<sup>40</sup>" We had classes today, but school will be closed for the time being. No definite time when we will begin again.
25. **Good Friday.** A memorable day. The day on which we celebrate death and victory. The word: "It is finished" was the text of the incomparable, thought-provoking sermon given by D. Hamm today. The plan which took 4000 years to fulfill was finished on the cross, when the Lord, bleeding and struggling with life and death, with the princes of darkness, took the place of humanity. It was finished when He, the victor over hell and death, shouted this word. Oh what an amazing means it required for a merciful God to lift fallen humanity to its original state! Oh how indescribable and sublime was the arrangement which He, the righteous, wise God designed! Through a period of 4000 years humanity had to become aware of its fallen state. For this purpose God chose a people and made a covenant with them; gave them laws, rights and responsibilities; promised blessing for obedience and curse for disobedience. Finally, after a set time was fulfilled, He sent His own Son from heaven as Saviour. But very few accepted Him. He finally had to die on the cross in order to conquer death, that is, the devil. Praise, thanks and worship be to you, Lord and Saviour, Lord Jesus, that by your death you have brought life and everlasting bliss to lost humanity, to which I also belong. Amen.

We were invited to Claas Epps today. Before that we went to school to read the passion story of our Lord.

26. Beautiful weather. This forenoon I assembled my new instrument for surveying. After Vesper we divided up the piece of land near the middle road. Towards evening Marie and I took a walk to the steppe, then to the school, where we read some letters, and discussed a few things concerning the Easter days.
27. Easter Sunday. First holiday. Elder Wall gave the message on the theme: "We have an Easter lamb, which is Christ..." After the worship service Marie, Barbara, Margarethe and I sat in the schoolroom reading the Resurrection story, and commenting on it. Then we went to Walls for coffee. Later Marie and I went to the steppe, from where we arrived home after dark.
28. Second holiday. D. Hamm preached about "The Walk to Emmaus." I wrote letters in the afternoon, and later Marie and I, together with Elder Wall and brother-in-law \*\* David Hamm attended the Unger wedding, which was held right after the worship service.

The Lord is risen. "Yes, He is risen indeed, and become the first fruits of them that sleep!" What a great truth! He has become the first, and we all follow after, each one in his turn. By His mighty word at the time of the trumpet call, "all who are asleep in the graves will rise, some to eternal life, others to eternal death." To which will I belong? Truly, it is up to me, for the Saviour wants all to be saved, none to be lost. O precious Saviour, Lord Jesus! Without you we can do nothing. O take me as I am, and cleanse me; then will I be cleansed, and take part in the resurrection to eternal life. O grant that through this earthly bond, which I have and will clasp in a more significant way, I and the one I receive from your hand, may be a means towards an earnest conversion. Grant us your Holy Spirit, to work in us both to will and to fulfill this. And may our body and soul be a habitation for your Spirit, and prepare our physical body for the eternal resurrection. Amen.

29. I wrote letters until noon. After coffee I went to Janzens, where I measured the yard and the building site for the granary.
30. Today I have to stake off the first farmsteads for Koeppenthal. In the evening I also staked off the line to the fence, and the place for the granary at Janzens.

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40 The popular German name "Gründonnerstag" means "Green Thursday" but in English this day is named: "Maundy Thursday."

31. Today I measured the watermelon land, but it didn't seem to come out, so I left it for a while. After Vesper, Schulz, Epp, Michael Hamm and I went to the field together, and got the correct measurements.

#### April 1855

1. Today B. Epp and I divided up the watermelon land which we had measured yesterday. In the evening, Barbara, Marie and I went to the fields for a while. Weather is clear but cool. Seeding is in full swing. The steppes are getting green. Brooding has begun.
2. Today I sketched and wrote all day, mostly on the plans to be sent to Prussia. In the evening Barbara, Marie and I went to D. Hamm's. Today we mailed our letters to Prussia.
3. Sunday. Elder Wall gave the message in church. In the afternoon we went to Penners, before and after the "Kinderlehre" (Sunday School?)
- 4-5. Fr. Wall and I measured the stubble field around the well, and wrote out the description of the same. By afternoon I was not feeling well, so lay down on the sofa, and went to bed early.

[**N.B.** \*\* David Hamm's wife Anna, and Marie Hamm were sisters; both David and Anna (Hamm) Hamm were cousins to Martin Klaassen; David and Anna Hamm were double cousin to each other. See Hamm register.]

6. I feel better again. During the morning I was at Claas Epps; after dinner on the fields with Heinr. Janzen to divide up the land we had measured on Monday. Towards evening Marie and I went for a walk to the Terlyka (River), later to D. Hamms. His wife is in bed again.

It was a beautiful evening; the nicest so far this spring.

Thank you, dear heavenly Father, that you have sent me a tender soul to whom I can express all my inner feelings. Oh guide both our hearts to walk in your ways, never to stray from your presence. May we be bound together in the bond of love, through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen

- 7-9. During these days I measured the watermelon field at Claas Epps. Also I wrote letters. Walls' shed is being built.
10. Sunday. D. Hamm preached on the theme, "The Good Shepherd." In the afternoon Marie and I, accompanied by Margarethe, went for a walk to Koeppenthal. After we returned I read the morning sermon to Marie. No doubt it was a blessing to both of us. The thought: "Feed my lambs" made a deep impression on me. I feel that I have the responsibility of taking care of my little herd, to lead them "to quiet pastures and still waters" which flow from the Good Shepherd Himself. But how can I do this, unless you, O Lord, fill me with your Spirit? But this Spirit is the Spirit of Love, the love with which You love your own. This love shall be the driving-force for the shepherd to fulfill his responsibility; above all, love to the lambs as the motive in his vocation. When you handed over the shepherd's staff to Peter with the words: "Feed my lambs" you first asked: "Do you love me?", and after each of the repeated questions and answers, you said: "Feed my lambs", and "Feed my sheep". Therefore also, my love to you shall be the incentive of my vocation, because the lambs, which you have entrusted to my care, belong to you. I know that one day you will require them from my hand, so that none may be lost. O loving Shepherd, fill me with your shepherd's love, so that I too may have the privilege of fulfilling my labour with love, as becomes a shepherd.
13. Today is father-in-law's birthday: 65 years old. May the Lord grant him happy retirement years; and one day he may be gathered to his forefathers. In the evening Marie and I picked flowers for a birthday bouquet.
14. Today is my dear mother's birthday; no doubt the last one which she will celebrate in her homeland. May you also enlighten her coming days of life with the rays of your mild

goodness, which alone can brighten the dark times of life, and be a light on the pathway. O Father, grant her your presence, which she needs so much in the evening of her life, and may her future days here be filled with rest from her labours and anxieties. To you, O dear Saviour, I commit her, as all of my loved ones. Lead and guide us by your Spirit. Amen.

We had visitors today: Pastor Hoelz and Pastor Allendorf and family. In the evening Marie and I were at D. Hamms. We are having good weather these days. Unfortunately, we heard the news of a bad breakthrough of the dykes in our Werder in W. Prussia. God be merciful to all those who suffered this disaster.

15. **My birthday.** Lord of Life! You have graciously given me life until this day. so that I might make use of it for your glory. O "Lord!, cover all that's gone before; guide and direct what lies before." Yes, direct all my future days, so that the last, my day of death may be the first birthday in the blessed, eternal life. Lord help me to this end! Amen.

Today Abram Janzen's shed was erected.

16. Jacob Janzen's shed was erected today. Most people have finished seeding, and the first seeds have already sprouted. I am writing songs for the school.
17. **Sunday.** Today is the birthday of His Majesty, the reigning Emperor<sup>41</sup>. Lord, may his reign be blessed with long years for the good of his kingdom and the honour of your Kingdom. Amen.

This afternoon we were visiting at the home of Elder Wall. It was 22 degrees warm today.

18. Lovely weather. I planted potatoes for us, i.e. Marie and me. May God bless this first seed, which we have planted together.
20. School began again today, but attendance is low. We have had news of the flooding in the home country. In the vicinity of the breaks they have not seen such devastation in a lifetime. May the Lord comfort those who suffered so much loss.
24. **Sunday.** Elder Wall gave the message on the theme of Faith, its substance, nature and function. We went to Abr. Janzens for the afternoon.
- 25–27. Barn-raising at the Martens'. Michael and I measured the building site for the parents. The construction gang arrived to begin work. I received two letters today: one from father and one from Esau (Mirau). What descriptions they contain of the terrible flooding! Truly when the Lord allows the elements to rule in such a way, man's might is naught. Oh! that we might all recognize the visitation of the hand of the Lord, and humble ourselves, knowing why this scourge has come; then it would be a blessing for the people out there. If they do not humble themselves, who knows whether there may not even be more severe afflictions. For the holy and righteous God it is a small thing to bring to naught the plots of the wise of this world. He humiliates the proud, and overtakes the wise in their wisdom. But He gives grace to the humble and restores their heart with peace, even in tribulation. O my soul, give praise to Him, the Most High. I thank you for your mercy and faithfulness. I thank you also, Lord and Saviour, that you have mercifully kept my dear loved ones in your care, and that you protected them from accident and sickness. Be with them in days to come, and guard their going out and coming in; yes, bless all they do, and bring them safely to their destination here.
29. Today the fifth shed was raised at the Claas Epps. It is getting to be quite dry, so rain would be very welcome.
30. Today I sketched all day. Towards evening Marie and I went to D. Hamms for a while. Unfortunately, Marie has a toothache.

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41 This is Czar Alexander II of Russia born 17/29 April 1818.

## May 1855

1. **Sunday** Today the articles of faith were read, and in the afternoon the last instruction class was given. Towards evening D. H. and I went to W. Penner for a while. Later Michael Hamm and I talked to each other for a long time. The director Mr. Claus arrived in the evening, for the purpose of looking into the incident of the Terlikowkers, who have been ploughing in our fields.
2. It is warm and dry. Late evening I went to Epps to get a receipt for the business I hope to do in Saratov. In the afternoon the frame of the house for the parents was raised.
3. As had previously been arranged, Wilhelm Penner, his son David and I left for Saratov at 5 a.m. We stopped at a guesthouse at Karg, then, leaving our wagon there, we made our way to the crossing, where we had no delay. The Volga had just reached its highest level, so it was very wide. We lodged at Mr. Dietz and made a few purchases that evening.
4. At 3 p.m. we had done all our business. I wrote a letter to the brothers Scheffer and by 6 p.m. we were on our way again. We almost didn't make it across, since there was only one vehicle on this side, but the ferryman was able to convince the inspector to go ahead. The crossing took us about 2 hours, though everyone worked hard at it.
5. **Ascencion Day.** We left at 3:45 a.m. and arrived home at noon. In the afternoon the articles of faith were presented to the candidates for baptism, including a short worship service. The weather was quite warm: +25.
6. School was to be in session today, but this had to be cancelled, since I was asked to go to the fields at the Terlikowka border, to restore the property markers where the Terlikers had worked the land. It was very warm +27½. There has been no rain for a long time, which may indicate a small harvest. Lord, may your hand of blessing not draw back, but give to us what we need at the right time. But we trust that you will not forsake us.
8. **Sunday.** During today's worship service the articles of faith were again presented, and the baptismal candidates gave their testimonies. May the Lord guard and strengthen the promises in the hearts of these young souls, so that they may grow into fruit bearing plants in God's garden, and adorn the doctrine of the heavenly in eternity. Sanctify their hearts through your Holy Spirit. Amen.

In the afternoon, Marie and I, accompanied by Barbara, visited at the B. Epps. The temperature climbed to +30½ in the shade.

9. Today school was in session again, but attendance was weak. Marie went to the annual market, and I am awaiting my dear one back any time. In the afternoon it looked like rain, and may have rained in some places. Here there was a lot of thunder with gusts of wind, but only a few drops of rain. Perhaps the Lord will send rain through the night.
10. We had a bit of rain last night with thunder. Today I measured a part of the colony, Koepenthal. It was very hot, but cooled off in the evening.
11. More measuring today. This afternoon brother-in-law (cousin Michael Hamm) celebrated his engagement to A. Epp. Marie and I got there only for the evening. We had a small shower this evening.
12. Classes today. After school I surveyed the Bertshe place. In the evening I had to help with calculations of the carpenters. Again much thunder and threat of rain, but none here.
13. There was a bad accident at J. Walls today. Simon Schmidt, who worked with building the shed as carpenter, was struck on the head by a log falling from quite a height. Blood streamed from the wound, so that it was feared he would bleed to death. However, the bleeding was stopped, and the victim seemed to remain conscious, in spite of the loss of blood. He seems to be doing alright. May God preserve him, which would be quite a relief for the master carpenter, Mr. Scherr.
- 15 **Sunday. Pentecost, first holiday.** Worship service: D. Hamm, a sermon with much substance of spirit and life, closing with a sincere prayer for the baptismal candidates. Lord,



our faithful God, grant to these souls, who have been added to the church, a living consciousness of the importance of this act of baptism, and grant them all your Spirit.

In the afternoon, Marie and I, accompanied by Tinchen Wall, went for a walk to the brick kiln. After that we were both at home, discussing the celebration of this day.

16. Pentecost, second holiday. Service of baptism. Text: Acts 10:42–48. Thus several souls have been added to our church, as first fruits of the same. Oh! that they might have been baptized with God's Spirit of love in Christ Jesus! You, O Lord, God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit! You know the hearts of all people, also these our young people; you know their frail efforts to do good, and that they cannot even will to do good without you, therefore also cannot make good resolutions or decisions without you. Oh! fill them according to your unfathomable mercy to perceive their Christian task, and to walk accordingly as real members of your body and in honour of your kingdom. Oh! impart to us the real blessing of Pentecost. May we always work together in harmony, in the teaching of our faith, in breaking of the bread and in prayer, so that as a church we will remain faithful to the end. Amen.

In the afternoon Marie and I were at home again, while the others were at D. Hamms, together with the bridal couple. Later we went to the D. Penners for tea. We had some rain in the evening.

17. This morning we had a brotherhood meeting (“Bruderschaft”) in which D. Penner was excommunicated from the church fellowship. For some time he had been guilty of theft. It is the first case of excommunication here. Penner of course does not at this time admit being guilty of this transgression, except that he has admitted it to individuals. But the facts speak loudly, and furthermore, the public regards him as one who is not honest; even Russians and the common people regard him as one connected with thievery and fraud. Unfortunately, his own wife, who is blindly loyal to him, regards him as completely innocent, encouraging him in his resistance, making herself—poor soul—a partner to his misdeeds. O God this is what happens if your Spirit does not reign in our hearts, when one follows the natural inclinations, and does not take note of the truth, disregarding a thorough inspection of reasons for and against, or completely neglects to do so.

O righteous and merciful God! You do not want the sinner to be lost, but that he be converted. Oh! may you also be merciful to this brother, that he acknowledges his sin, and confesses his misdeeds against the church and against you, O Holy One, so that he may turn and be reinstated again. May his wife also experience a change within; open her eyes to see where her blind love will lead her. Perhaps that she could be the instrument of her husband's restoration. We pray this, O merciful God and Helper, for the sake of Christ, your beloved son, our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

We are having cold weather with a storm from the north.

19. Again worked on the Koeppenthal Plan. Weather was bearable, with a shower of rain at Vespertime.
- 20./ June 1. Cold north wind today. I staked off the rest of the Koeppenthal Plan.
22. Sunday, Feast of the Holy Trinity. Worship service: D. Hamm. Text: Rom. 11:33–36. In the afternoon I went to our school garden with mother-in-law. It is cold and a constant storm from the north.
25. Have had school for two days. The Kronsfield surveyor, Lagus, has come to stake off the inner borders of the colony. This afternoon I had to close school to go with Uncle Epp to the fields. We got home quite late.
26. Today I helped Mr. Lagus measure the borders between Koeppenthal and Hahns-Au. Weather cool.
27. We finished the measurements yesterday. Had a good rain this afternoon.

28. Today I measured the length of the border between Hahns-Au and Koeppenthal, after this Mr. Lagus left.

29. Sunday. Preparation for next Sunday's Holy Communion. After the service D. Penner asked to be accepted again as member of the church. This was done at a special meeting of the brethren, at 4 p.m. May the Lord keep him, so that he will not fall again, but walk worthily before Him.

Marie and I, in company with D. Hamms, went to W. Penner. It is cold today, so that we feel like lighting the stove and wearing winter clothes. Uncle Epp wore a fur coat this afternoon.

30–31. More cold weather. I made preparations to survey the acreage. Marie and I went to the potato field to hill the plants. We had a village meeting (“Schulzenbot”) at which men were chosen to help with surveying.

## **June 1855**

1. I began measuring the acreage. Because of a slight mistake on the plan, we worked all day with no results. I had to correct the mistake first. Had a good rain this morning.

2. I worked almost all day in correcting and changing the plans, finishing them to my satisfaction. Many mosquitoes.

3. The measuring of the acreage is completed. Today we began to stake off the “Akkerkaegel” (individual segments of the acreage). This worked out well, since our men helped me a great deal.

5. Sunday. Our church here celebrated Holy Communion for the second time. The attendance was 89, including the 8 persons who joined the church through baptism. May the Lord bless this sacrament to all our hearts; above all, to continue in unity of the Spirit, through the bonds of peace, which is our faith in Christ and His salvation. Amen.

7. Furrowed the acreage. Very warm: +29.

8. Today I am working at various things: on my plans and writing. We had a hailstorm today with hailstones the size of hazelnuts. Windows were broken here and there.

9. Michael Hamm and Anna Epp celebrated their wedding today. It took place in the new shed, with Elder Wall officiating. It was a lovely day. In the evening the young people were out in the open singing songs. The closing song, “Now thank we all our God” ended a very enjoyable day.

10. Very hot today: +32 in the shade, with a hot wind. I worked on my papers in the morning. After vesper I rode to the homestead places in Koeppenthal to see about the farmyards.

11. Almost all day was spent with figures at the A. Epps. I had a hard time staying awake, especially since it involved no physical activity.

12. Sunday. Praise service by D.H. We were invited to the Epps for 5 p.m. for the “After wedding” of cousin Michael and Anna. A fair-sized group attended. In the evening we entertained ourselves by singing school songs.

15. In the morning I went to the fields with a few others to assess some things. Although it looked like rain, the strong south wind swept away the clouds. After Vesper the construction of the school was discussed at the village office (“Schulzenamt”). May the Lord bless this endeavour to His glory, so that it may fulfill its purpose.

16–18. During these days I finished measuring and furrowing the fields, as far as was possible for now. The house for D. Penners was to be erected, but because of a heavy rain had to be postponed. I also worked on the plan for the Koeppenthaler farmyards, and changed some of the calculations of the village borders. Lastly, I drew up the plans for the schoolhouse to be constructed.

19. Sunday. A very heavy rain with intermittent hailstones as big as hens' eggs. Elder Wall gave the message; the theme: “Judging others”. After dinner everyone went out, except that Marie and I entertained D. Hamms as visitors.

- 20–21. I am working on the plans for the school. Tuesday evening I had a good discussion with Elder Wall.
22. We had a heavy rain today, but unfortunately rather late for the crops, which don't look too promising. The hail has done a lot of damage in some grainfields. The rafters were put up on Wall's house today.
23. Cool, dark weather today. I am making a good copy of the plans for the school. Towards evening I received a letter from my father. It contains a few details about brother Dietrich's marriage. For me this is another indication of God's goodness and faithfulness; especially in the wonderful way He has led our family. He has blessed us above all expectations. All my wishes which I expressed before my departure from Prussia have most abundantly been realized. Moreover, since I have been here, I have received so much more than I anticipated. When I left, my greatest desire was, that my parents might some day follow me. Even when I was at the Molotschna I made a remark in my letters that it was commendable for adult sons of emigrating parents to bring a wife with them. I hinted in my letter that there are less choices of these "articles" here in Russia. However, in respect to brother Dietrich's character and sensitivity, I did not openly dare to say that he should bring a wife with him, since I couldn't think of any suitable person for him. But for me as well as for him, the Lord in His wonderful care, has provided wonderfully, above all expectations. He has sent a person who, as I have heard, is just the right one for him. It is an actual fact! He, the heavenly Father, guides us with a tender staff on rosy paths. Oh! that we might take grateful note of His goodness, lest He strew our path with thorns instead of roses. In remembrance of all these wonderful evidences of His love, I cannot help but put all my trust in Him, believing that also in the future He will lead and guide to our good. I trust also that concerning the departure of my loved ones, as well as the journey, all will go well. Yes, our help is in the Lord, who made heaven and earth. To Him be glory, honour and worship for all Eternity! Amen.
24. St. John's Day.<sup>42</sup> Since this day is being celebrated by the German-speaking colonists, we also have instituted this holiday. We had a worship service led by D. Hamm. Text: John 1:19–36 with the theme: "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" In the afternoon Marie and I went for a walk to our potato field. After that we had visitors: J. Janzens, D. Penners, and Joh. Penners.
25. I went to Koepenthal this morning with W. Penner, where I measured off his building-place. May the Lord bless the work of our hands.
26. Sunday. Elder Wall preached about Peter's catch of fish. We visited at Fr. Walls for the afternoon. Later I was called to A. Epps where some village concerns were discussed.
30. Harvest begins these days. I have been writing letters, and working on a wooden box.

## **July 1855**

1. Weather has become cooler. Michael Hamm, M. Horn, Marie and I went to the fields to the grain cutters.
3. Sunday. D. Hamm preached on the text, Matth. 5:20, etc. In the afternoon a stranger, painter by profession, stopped by our house, staying for most of the afternoon as well as the night. He is a Prussian from Wolderburg in the province of Brandenburg. He has wandered through parts of Germany, then Molotschna, where he worked in Halbstadt and Rudnerweide for 3 years. He also travelled through East Prussia, Danzig area, and Riga, St. Petersburg in Russia. Since the beginning of the New Year he has been in Karan, Samara and Saratov, then to our villages.
5. The harvest is in full swing. I am working on the history of the colony again.

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<sup>42</sup> This is the summer solstice.

6. The travelling painter, Beetz by name, is here again. He is a good man, knowledgeable, and has not travelled through the world in vain.
7. Mr. Beetz left this morning. Temporarily he intends to go to Balzar to see the painters' trade, then to establish himself here or somewhere else.
8. Today D. Hamm and I went to Cl. Epp to bring him the money which father has sent (800 Halbenzierelen<sup>43</sup>). However, when we added it up at home, there was one missing of the sum. We cannot imagine how this has happened. I received a letter from Doerksen today.
9. I went to D. Hamms in the evening, where Marie had been helping all day. Her sister Anna is sick again.
10. Sunday. Elder Wall gave the sermon in place of D. Hamm. Text: Rom. 6:19–23. An impressive sermon. O Lord! Draw us to you more and more, if not otherwise, then through suffering, but do not leave us for the sake of your love in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Today my letters to Warenburg were mailed.

11. Sister-in-law Hamm is seriously sick. A woman, visiting here from Kosakentown, is treating her as a Doctor. I will stay with the sick one for the night.
12. Today the village council (“Schulzenamt”) chose the Architect for the building of the school. It is Peters. Since others were jealous of him, they played little schemes, but Uncle Epp made the final decision.
13. Very warm today. I am pasting together my maps of Russia. In the evening I had the nightwatch at Hamms again. The patient sleeps a lot, and looks quite gaunt. Her condition is very uncertain. May the Lord do as it pleases Him.
15. Our dear Anna's sickness seems to be neuritis. She sleeps almost constantly, phantasizes at times, and doesn't take any food, except fluids. This morning I went to Claas Epps to get my notes for my Charnik. Mr. Janzen and father Hamm have bought lumber for the school.
17. Sunday. +25. We were at the D. Hamms in the afternoon. Anna seems a bit better. Tomorrow is the funeral of B. Epp's small boy.
20. (August 1) Very warm today—+30. In the evening I went to the mill, where the vanes were being installed.
24. Sunday. D. H. preached the sermon with 1 Kor. 10:6–13 as text. After dinner everyone went to Koeppenthal, only Marie and I were at home. D. P. was visiting here.
28. Had a good rain recently, but today only clouds. There is a fire almost every evening farther south. Several days ago the town of Kamychenka was almost completely destroyed by fire. Today again there were thick clouds of smoke coming from that direction. The colonists were talking about arson. O Lord, may you restrain the evil, and protect us by your great goodness.

I also pray that you will give us light in the matter of Barbara's upcoming marriage, since we are blind and do not know how to advise her. Her life's happiness so much depends on this decision, and not only hers, but ours too. Illumine our minds to do, or not to do; then all will be well. Help us for Christ's sake. Amen.

30. At midnight Abr. Janzen and Joh. Wall returned from Saratov. The latter told us about the fires while they were there. At various times of the day and various places, fires were started. In the area of the Volga 400 houses were destroyed by fire, leaving many people without homes.
31. Sunday. Good weather today. Elder Wall gave the message based on Luke 13:41–48. After that we were at D. Hamms. It is Marie's turn to take the nightwatch for her sister, who is slowly improving.

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43 This term and its value is unknown to me—VGW.

## August 1855

1. A decision has been made to arrange for patrols to avoid accidents, like arson. This night was the first one, and a few gypsies were brought in who, however, had their proper documents.

The nights are beginning to cool off; tonight only +5. After Vesper I was at Claas Epps. I am beginning the fieldwork again. Harvest operations are finished.

6. This week I have been busy with dividing up and staking off the farmyards in Hahns-Au. The weather was good, except that for a few days we had a bad duststorm. Later there was rain, so that I couldn't do any surveying, but rather helped D.H. plough his fallow land. Sister-in-law Anna has been very sick again with hemorrhage. Today they have set leeches, which made her very weak. May the Lord grant her better health again. I beseech you, O God, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

There have been more cases of setting fires; some of these at the marketplace. As a result of this the old Mr. Dietz fell, and died.

7. Sunday. D.H. preached about the Pharisee and the Publican this morning. In the afternoon we went to Koeppenthal together with D. Penner. After that we went to D. Hamms. Anna H. is worse again, with severe headaches. O Lord, you healed so many people, while here on earth, often with only one word; have mercy on our loved one. Help her when there is no human help. Yes, Lord, help; make all things well. Amen.
8. This morning I was called to Janzens to report some things about the school plan. I was on the yard acreage until Vesper, when it began to rain. We are having cool, wet fall weather.
9. We continued the division of the yard acreage in the afternoon. In the evening I accompanied Marie to D. Hamms where she will stay for the night. This evening's devotional spoke about those who entrust themselves to the Lord, as Moses did. He asked the Lord to go before him, and if not, then they would not move on. Yes, the person who has God as his/her guide and allows God to enlighten the path will walk safely. And so I hope that my loved ones, who at this moment are on the journey to Russia, will travel safely. Oh, their journey too, is long and very difficult; they, above all, need the guidance and protection of the Lord. Lord, we trust in you, may we not be put to shame.
10. This morning we marked off the two sides of the acreage with the wagons. Finally we have news from our loved ones. They left home July 27, so are on their way for a week. Where might they be today? I assume in the region of Khiova. According to this they could arrive here about the first days of October.
- 11–12. Yesterday, in spite of the rain, we were able to finish the border plots ("Kegel"). After Vesper we also finished staking off the yard acreages. Today I have measured the churchyard and vicinity, and marked it with wagon tracks. In the evening H. Janzen<sup>44</sup> and I went for a walk to the fields, making use of this opportunity to talk to him about a very important concern. Later I read to Marie over a cup of syrup coffee. It was a beautiful moonlit evening!
14. Sunday. Today it is properly cold, partly cloudy. Elder Wall preached on the text: 2 Cor. 3:4–11. Today is the anniversary of my second departure from W. Prussia.
15. I have a boil under my right arm, so cannot do much. For this reason I have worked all day at writing the history of this settlement. After Vesper I was called to Janzens where I had to indicate the exact place for the school to be built. The building is about to begin, the thresholds are being laid.

If our loved ones are travelling as we did, they should have passed Kiev today.

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44 This H. Janzen is Heinrich Jantzen, who married Barbara Hamm, sister to Maria Hamm, wife of Martin Klaassen.

17. Today I accompanied Janzen and Loewen to Woskresensk to buy fodder for our travelling loved ones, as well as to scout around for cattle. On our way we had rain.
18. Rainy weather. Towards evening I went to D.Hamm, and took the opportunity to talk to Barbara on behalf of H. A. Janzen.
- 20.(1. Sept). Today I have helped with digging holes between Hahns-Au and Koeppenthal.
21. Sunday. D. H. spoke on the text: Gal. 3:15–22. After Vesper we went to the building site, the mill, and finally to D. Hamms. Sister-in-law is feeling better, but so weak that she cannot walk.
22. Today I supervised the digging of holes for the border. While driving home, I enjoyed the scenery of our village, which in spite of the fact that not much work has been done in farming, in the glow of a setting sun looked quite picturesque. I was reminded of the imminent arrival of our beloved immigrants. May the Lord grant that they will arrive safely.
- 25–26. I worked at the plane, building a fireplace. More digging of border holes; then observing the mill at work for the first time. In the evening I helped with pig butchering.
27. Today I am working with my papers, making a plan for a barn at the school. In the evening I went to the Abr. Janzens with father Hamm. It has turned so cold that one does not want to step outside the door. Painter Beetz has arrived again. Where might our loved ones have spent the night? And will they have had such a cold night? Dear Father in heaven! Keep them from sickness and other bodily or spiritual harm, and grant us a joyful meeting! May through this your great name be glorified for Christ's sake. Amen.
28. Sunday. When we came home from the service, we met the chief administrator, C.M. of Warenburg, who was visiting here. Later we went to D. Hamms, where we found D.H. sick with a fever. His wife Anna, however, is steadily improving. May the Lord grant her a complete recovery.
29. School started again today, after having been closed since May 25<sup>th</sup>. Lord, my Saviour, again instruction has begun, again I count on your goodness, and pray that you may be present among us, and bless us, for the work is yours, and is done to your honour and glory. Help us, O Lord, and let us succeed.
30. After school I was called to the “Schulzenamt” (administrative office), where the Koeppenthal landowners, including me, and others who would follow, drew lots for their acreages. After that Marie went to the David Hamms. The weather is quite mild.

## **September 1855**

1. This evening Marie and I went to the garden at Claas Epps. I also went to the school building site.
3. Today I had to make the wagon tracks for several pieces of land. Uncle Epp brought a letter back from Saratov, which contained more details of the departure of our loved ones from Prussia. They are coming in two groups; one with 18 wagons and 66 persons, the other with 12 wagons and about 40 persons. Among these are some acquaintances, of whose coming I had not known. May God lead them safely to their destination, and may they all experience a warm reception and a good beginning here, through Christ Jesus, our Lord.
4. Sunday. Elder Wall gave the message.
- As to the celebration of our wedding, we have come to the decision to have the event before our loved ones arrive, since it would be too much activity, and we would also have to include many more guests. Therefore, we have had the minister announce our intention today.
7. Today we have drawn the border between the third and fourth colony plan, at the same time staking off two strips for the first.
9. Today sister-in-law Anna Hamm was here for a visit, after a 14-week absence. May the Lord restore her health completely.

10. We finished the work on the third colony today. I also measured the west border of our piece of land at the Terlyka. In the afternoon I finished the letter to J. Froese, and went to the school building site. After supper Barbara, Marie and I went to the fields. It is a beautiful, mild, moonlit night.
11. Sunday. D. Hamm gave a very inspired message. I received a letter from H. Wiebe, through Uncle Epp. The contents were very meaningful to me.
16. Frost this morning. At Vesper our Honourable Chief Judge, His Excellency V. Ritter arrived here. He visited the colony, and also went to Koeppenthal. Unfortunately, this dear man is very frail already. He is a real friend and patron to us. At 4 p.m. he departed for Warenburg. I have been at the churchyard all day where I staked off the grave plots.
18. Sunday. Elder Wall's theme for his sermon was: "The appropriate celebration of Sunday, the Christian day of rest: its purpose, and its reward." Quite late in the evening the first of our brethren from Prussia arrived here. They say that the others could be here in a few days. Unfortunately, there have been incidents of death on the journey: the widow Bergman and Penner from Orloff. O Lord! I thank you for your mercy which you show me through joys and sorrows. May your name be praised eternally. Amen.
20. Very lovely weather. We were to go to the steppes early this morning, but it was almost noon before we left.
21. Two wagonloads of immigrants have arrived from Zarendorf and Heubuden.
23. Today 5 wagons of immigrants, the "Kleinwerder" brethren, arrived.
24. I ran around almost all day for this and that; first about the change of location for the school barn, then to Claas Epps a few times, where I didn't accomplish much. Finally, I went back to the schoolyard where they were erecting the barn. Coming home from there I found great excitement about the news Penner had brought that several more wagons from Prussia had arrived at Portrowsk for the night, and that they could be here in a few hours. Brother-in-law Michael Hamm was hitching up to leave, after Penner and father Hamm had already left. So Marie and I left with Michael, his wife, D. Hamm and wife, sister-in-law Penner and Barbara to find and greet the newcomers. However, after going past our borders and not finding any sign of them, we decided to return, since it was already dark.
25. Sunday. Arrival of our loved ones. Early this morning D. Hamm woke me to say that we should immediately leave to greet the expected travellers. So father Hamm, D. Hamm and I left. Before we arrived at the border of the 4th colony, M. H. and D. Penner, who had already spent the night with the new arrivals, met us. They brought my dear father with them. After we greeted each other we all went to meet the rest of the company. There were 6 wagons, 3 belonging to my parents and brother Dietrich. The rest belonged to the Froeses and widow Penner. All were in good health and well. The hour had come when we could see each other again after such a long time of separation. Tears of joy and thanksgiving flowed freely. At 9 a.m. we arrived at our village with our loved ones, stopping first at Abr. Janzens where they would be billeted. Father came along to the service immediately. He came to our house for dinner, whereas the rest stayed at Janzens. After dinner brother Dietrich and I went to the fields and the church yard, during which time many questions were asked and answered. How full our hearts were! For coffee Marie and I were at the D. Penners. Everyone is so happy, and the newcomers visit cheerfully with friends and relatives. We were all at the Janzens for supper. The weather is beautiful.
26. I went to see the parents this morning, possibly to help them unpack, but nothing came of it. Instead, father, brother Dietrich and I went to Woskrecensk, where we bought hay and a fat pig. Back at Janzens we were just having coffee, when suddenly Jacob Tschempe and Esau arrived. They had camped for the night 15 verst from here. C. Froese, D. Kl. and I butchered the pig in the evening.
27. A number of couples drove out to meet the newcomers. I went to school in the morning, then to the parents, where I visited with mother until noon. Towards Vesper, I was asked to

go along to Warenburg to pay for the hay. Upon returning I found Marie already at the Janzens, so we stayed for supper.

28. Towards evening Joh. Wall, Jacob Hamm, Esaus, Cornelius Froeses and I went to Koeppenthal where the newcomers took a look at the surrounding area.
30. This morning I had classes at school again. In the afternoon I was asked to go along to Koeppenthal, where the places that would be allotted were viewed. Uncle Epp was there too.

### October 1855

1. At the parents again this morning. Father was unpacking books while I helped him arrange them almost until evening. We had a heavy rain.
2. Sunday. Since we expected many visitors we had service in Wall's shed. Elder Wall preached. There was a cold wind. In the afternoon we were visiting with my parents.
3. School only in the morning, since there were only 6 children present. I went along with Abr. Froese and D. Dueck to the Koeppenthal acreage. Later Marie and I visited Jacob Hamms.
4. This morning we had 4 degrees frost. It was very cold with a strong wind. A few others and I went to Koeppenthal again to see the places.
5. This morning I straightened out my accounts with my father and Esau. In the afternoon a few guests had arrived for our "pre-wedding" celebration. Later a number of ladies brought several gifts.

Tomorrow I am celebrating my wedding! An important change in life. And what a long and yet so short a journey I took to this day? Oh, when I look back to the past days of my life, how strangely the Lord has led, and how differently than my stubborn heart desired. In fact, it wasn't my choice earlier to strive for the goal to which I have come, so to speak without effort. My thoughts and my ways were so different from those of the Lord. But now I must shamefacedly confess to myself, but thankfully before the Lord, that His ways were so much better. It is evident that I am much happier now than I would have been, had I listened to the stubborn and often obstinate wishes of my heart. The Lord, however, knows how to direct our ways, provided we finally submit to His leading. This I have experienced. O Lord, my God, you have brought us thus far; help us further by your grace, that through the bond which we intend to forge we will fulfill the purpose of bringing honour to your kingdom. O faithful friend of humankind, Lord Jesus! Be present at our wedding and in our midst, as you were at Cana long ago. Be gracious to us, as you were to them, then will we be truly blest, and our wedding day will be one of great joy and bliss. Yes, Lord Jesus, come to us tomorrow and abide with us in our home for ever, never to leave us. Amen.

- \*\* Thursday, October 6, our wedding day. On this day my dear Marie and I celebrated our wedding. Cousin David Hamm officiated. He gave a powerful message, with special emphasis on the wonderful ways in which God brought us together, and the circumstance by which both of our beloved parents could be present, as well as many guests, to celebrate with us. This message was, and always will be, the climax of the celebration, and will through all times be like rays of blessing in our marriage. But you, O Lord, are the third member in our union. Sanctify it through the blood of the New Testament; fill us with your Spirit and grant that our marriage may be an example of your church. May we be heirs of the Kingdom which you have prepared for us in eternity. Amen.

The weather was mild, except for light rain.

7. Today we cleaned up a bit. After Vesper, Marie and I went to our parents. While we were there an incident happened that demonstrated how graciously God protects from great tragedy. Brother Dietrich fell from the top to the bottom of the stairs. He severely injured his right shoulder blade and all but fainted. However, nothing was broken or dislocated. God be praised that He graciously guarded against catastrophe!



8. Weather very pleasant. Brother Dietrich seems to be doing well. Today I have done nothing in particular; it is impossible even to think of doing something worthwhile.
- 9 Sunday. The service was in Wall's shed. My father gave an introductory sermon based on the words: "When I came to you, I came not with high words...etc." There was a strong, drafty wind. In the afternoon we celebrated a triple event: Barbara's engagement to Heinrich Janzen; our "After-wedding" and Marie's 26th birthday. O gracious Lord and Saviour! May my dear one celebrate many more birthdays under your care, that each may lead us closer to you.
10. This morning we found a covering of fresh white snow on the landscape. I had classes again, but there were only 4 students. In the evening I went to my parents, where I found only brother Dietrich and sister at home. The rest had gone to the market. We talked about my sister's concerns and memories of the past.
11. Wintry weather today, with snow and some sleet. We went to the Jantzen's where the bridal couple was visiting.
14. Milder weather today, so with the snow melting there is much slush on the road. This evening I went to the new school.
16. Sunday. Because of the cold we had service in Wall's living room. In the afternoon, the parents, D. Hamms and Jacob Hamm were here. Spring weather during the day.
18. Today Jacob Hamm's little daughter, born on the trip, was buried. We all went to the funeral.
20. Wedding at the Walls. I had school only in the morning.
21. A cow was butchered here today. Sister was here as well as Esaus, Jacob and David Hamms, Penners etc.
22. Sunday. I was unwell this morning, so did not go to the service.
28. Every morning this week we have had fog. The roads are almost dry.
29. Today I was writing wedding invitations. Lovely weather.
30. Sunday. Father preached. Text: "Love is the fulfillment of the law." The service was still at Walls. In the afternoon I went to Koeppenthal where a few of the new landowners and Uncle Epp needed to discuss some changes in plans. We arrived home at dusk.

## **November 1855**

1. School has been closed for the time being. However, I cannot really get to work because neither I nor my employers know what to do next.
2. I have mainly run around today, yet accomplished nothing; the reason being that I didn't know what to do or how. Weather, cloudy.
3. Wedding at Jantzens today. I did some writing this morning, but went to the wedding for the afternoon.
4. Today I was able to achieve the goal that for a number of years I had hoped for. I was able to establish and move into my own home with the one my Heavenly Father has given me as a life's partner. He has led me to this place, however, quite contrary to my earlier wishes and dreams, but so very much better than I ever could have hoped for. I have felt the sting of my own stubborn will ever so deeply, but now I sense nothing but joy and bliss. Step by step, slowly and surely, the Lord has allowed me to enjoy great, wonderful blessings, and finally to have found a good wife, as a crown to my hopes and wishes. A nice house which encompasses the hearth is now ours. Two pairs of loving parents support us according to their strength and in prayer; faithful and loving siblings, and a host of friends and relatives far and near congratulate us warmly. What more could one wish for? We feel inwardly compelled to praise the Lord for what He has done. Your praise shall be in our mouth evermore, and our heart shall be devoted to you. Together we bring our thanks to you, our Lord and Saviour, for the ways you have led us. We are not worthy of what you have done for us, and we consider your goodness to us a miracle of your unfathomable love.

Furthermore, you have graciously given us a task to do in which we help to build your kingdom, according to the measure of gifts you have given us. Finally, you have also allowed us to find a house where we can find shelter, and work to earn our daily bread. Yet the house was empty when we moved in today; and empty it would remain, if you would not dwell here. Therefore this, O gracious God and Saviour! is our innermost plea: come into our house and heart to dwell within; and go in and out with us in our vocation as long as we live, according to your good will. Bless us in all things, above all in our souls for eternal life. Amen.

5. We have spent all day arranging our small household. In the afternoon mother Hamm and brother Jacob were here. I had to be present at the viewing of the farmstead which H. Jantzen is going to own.
6. Sunday. D. Hamm preached on the subject: Prayer with friends. In the afternoon we attended the "Afterwedding" at Jantzens. Uncle Epp gave me a letter from Doerksen, who writes that he too is planning matrimony. May the Lord bless him.
7. Today I have done a bit of carpentry work, and writing; otherwise there was nothing of importance except the daily old and new goodness of God.
9. Beautiful weather for a change. Mother Hamm and sister-in-law were here today, as well as J. Hamm.
- 10–14. The weather has changed again with snow flurries and wind. Marie helped with butchering. I sketched the plan for Hahns-Au. Heinrich Jantzens were here in the evening.
13. Sunday. Today we had the worship service in the new school for the first time. Our Elder gave a suitable message on 1 Peter 2:5–10: "You also, as living stones, are being built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood...etc." To the teachers he gave this advice: "To love Christ is better than all knowledge". May these words have a place in the hearts of all those who will labour in this house, to your glory now and always. May they not only keep the words in their hearts, but also consider them to be an irrevocable, eternal truth, which will be preserved through the centuries and for all times. Amen.

A snowstorm is blowing up outside.

14. This morning Uncle Epp and I went to Koeppenthal on the sleigh. We looked at another place, then went to Penners, arriving home at 7 p.m.
15. Marie was at her parents' home to help with the laundry. I went there for dinner, but came home for coffee. It is quite cold: -15.
18. Today we made a wooden bookcase. Later we went to visit the parents. Before we left mother received word to come to D. Hamms, where sister-in-law was about to give birth to a child.
19. (Dec. 1.) No improvement for Anna Hamm. May the Lord help her in her anguish. We are having a terrible storm and rain. We are having the undesirable experience that because of the snow and milder weather, the poorly constructed clay blocks are falling down en masse, so that we cannot use the hearth.
20. Sunday. Early this morning we received word to come to D. Hamms, since Anna felt that she wished to talk to us, perhaps for the last time. We found her in a condition which not many women have to endure. By noon she was delirious with fever attacks.

Father led the worship service today on the text: Matt. 25:31–46, about the judge and the means by which the judge will pass judgment.

It was the close of the church year, and All Souls' Day.

8 p.m. We just returned from D. Hamms. Sister-in-law Anna has already suffered for 48 hours, with no improvement. The Doctor who had been called, has not arrived. Therefore, we are completely dependant on the only One who can help, which gives us a small ray of hope, for He has unlimited means at His disposal. O eternal, all-wise God and Saviour! You

have allowed this heavy affliction to come upon this soul. Human help and human skill, as far as is available to us, is exhausted. Perhaps you withdraw your present help, so that we may depend on you all the more. This we must do, beseeching you: O Lord help, Lord let all be well! In humility we bow before you and your mighty hand. And yet we cannot cease to call: "Lord Help!" Help us to endure patiently, and yet at the same time, to be available with our presence and comfort, where necessary; for the sake of your everlasting, merciful Love in Christ Jesus. Amen.

21. 6:30 a.m. "The Lord has done great things, for which we rejoice." This we, the close relatives of our suffering sister Anna Hamm, can call out with a voice filled with praise. The Lord has saved her from her great suffering and fear. This morning at 3:45 father Hamm, who had been there for the night, came to our window with the urgent request, that if all the near family members agreed to respect the earnest wish of the sufferer, and to try to alleviate her misery by an operation, that which is not possible in a natural way, to come to her aid immediately. Brother-in-law Michael Hamm had offered his services with the help of the midwife, Mrs. Moritz, to do the operation. First, the advice of Uncle Epp was sought as to the legality of such an operation; he expressed no reservations under the circumstances. So with trust in the Lord and His gracious help, the act was undertaken, and the birth was accomplished after a total of 60 hours of hard labour for the loved one. Praise and thanks be to Christ, the Son, our physician and helper. May He also help towards the restoration of health. Amen.

It seemed that the child, a girl, had already died the day before.

22. Sunday. About 11 degrees frost with a strong wind, which blows in the direction where a window is still missing on our outside door, and the actual door is still only a night door. So our dwelling has been very cold. Sister-in-law seems to be doing quite well, although she is still in critical condition.

24. With -21 degrees, and wind, it is too cold to do anything outside. Naturally we were at the D. Hamm funeral. Praise God, that Anna is improving steadily, and we are all hoping that she will stay with us. While we were there, a regular snowstorm blew up, so we were glad to get a ride home with M. H. J.'s sleigh. Since the wind changed direction, it is not quite as cold inside.

25–26. I am sketching the plans for Koeppental. Towards evening we had sleet and a raw wind. Marie has a toothache.

27. Sunday. First advent. Beginning of the church year. D. H. gave the message with the theme: I. The advent call a message of joy and salvation; II. A message of repentance and renewal. In the afternoon I had to go to Walls, B. Epps and Cl. Epps concerning teaching. Sister-in-law is suffering quite a bit with much pain. However, we are still hoping for complete recovery. Later we had visitors—the Hamm parents and Abr. Janzens.

28. Today A. Hamm's condition has worsened. She has lost a lot of weight.

30. We went to D. Hamms, where Marie is staying the night. Her sister has shown some improvement since yesterday. In the last 3 days which I should have spent in school, I have worked on finishing the plans. Tomorrow school is really supposed to begin again.

## **December 1855**

1. School is again in session. Quite a snowstorm today. There is a lot of snow already.

3. I went to B. Epps this morning. In the afternoon I did some writing. Also we had many visitors: Sister-in-law Penner, Sister-in-law Klaassen, my sister, father, Elder Wall, D. Hamm, Hr. Pusch, and brother-in-law Penner.

4. Sunday. -23 today. Preparation sermon given by father. Text: 1 Cor. 1:28. The theme: "The Lord's supper" 1. Remembrance 2. Reconciliation 3. Reunion 4. Sanctification 5. Resurrection.

In the evening I went to D. Hamms, Marie to her parents. Sister-in-law is gradually improving. She has walked across the room by herself already.

5. -25 today, and very cold. In the evening we went to the parents. Walking home was no "plaisir [French for "pleasure"]". A good thing that we had the wind at our backs.
9. Today we have begun our choir practice. Jacob and D. Hamm came too. They both stayed for a while after the practice.
11. Sunday. Communion was celebrated here today. There were 126 persons present.
16. We have had very mild weather this week. Yesterday we attended the wedding of friend Franz Wall. There have been many letters this week, but none addressed to us. We mailed one to Uncle P. Enss.
18. Sunday. The message was given by D. Hamm: Praise for Communion.
20. (1 January 1856) Prussian New Year.
22. I had to go to Cl. Epps to help calculate the accounts. I heard today that a few German wood haulers were attacked by 4 wolves in the area of Spitzlen, but except for the fright, and having killed one of the wolves, they were unharmed. They sold the dead wolf to a Russian for 5 rubles.
24. This morning I sketched a plan of the land areas in and around the Trakt in the interests of land inheritance.
25. **Christmas Day** The worship service was here. In the afternoon we went to my parents.
26. Second holiday. Father gave the message on the text: "For unto you a child is born, and a Son is given..." Theme: The name of the child. In the evening we went to Marie's parents, where all the family was gathered to discuss and come to terms with business concerns of the household.
27. It snowed all day. I really wanted to make use of this holiday to do a lot of writing, but we had company all day: D. Penner, J. Hamm, D. Klaassen, F. Hamm and D. Hamm, and D. Epp quite late. So the day passed.

## 1856

### January 1856

1. Sunday. New Years Day. D. Hamm gave the message, well suited for everyone, the contents taken from everyday life and presented most admirably. May it have been a blessing to every listener.

For me the past year has been a turning point of many years of questions concerning life. It has placed me into circumstances which I had never envisioned. It has given me two things of utmost importance for my present, future and eternal existence. It has given me a profession, which if conscientiously fulfilled has glorious promises; if not fulfilled, however, results in a curse. It has given me a marriage partner with whom I can share my life; but also can be a blessing or a burden. I have had hard things to bear, but also experienced wonderful things, and with God I hope to accomplish that which I cannot do on my own. In the name of Jesus I will pursue my task, and in His name I hope to complete it.

3. This afternoon there was an auction of things belonging to Marie's parents.
6. Epiphany. During the service I felt unwell, with spells of coughing, so that instead of visiting somewhere, I had to go to bed.
7. I was in bed most of the day, with my usual illness—a bad head cold.
8. Sunday. I am feeling somewhat better today, but did not go to church. Since father went to Saratov, D. Hamm gave the message in his place.
9. Today I am well enough again to be in school, although it was hard for me. The weather is cloudy, with some frost.
15. Father preached about the parable of the Sower.

19. Sister Helene celebrated her engagement to Abram Froese. May she find the blessings that she is worthy of. May her joys be not only of this world, but also blossom eternally.
21. Yesterday the first of my students, Helene Froese was buried. May the Friend of children take her to His bosom. Today we went to Marie's parents, since the bridal couple was visiting there.
22. Sunday. For the first time after a long absence Anna Hamm was in the worship service here in this house, and came to our house for a visit. Jacob Hamms were also here.
23. Today we had the betrothed couple here—the first which we had the honour to host at our house. We also had other relatives join us: the Hamm parents, my mother, Abr. Janzens, H. Janzens, F. Penners, Corn. Froese, and Corn. Wall. We had quite a snowstorm towards evening.
- 24–26. These three days we accompanied sister Helene and her fiancé to visit various places: David Hamms, Abr. Janzens, Claas Epps. The weather was pleasant.
29. Sunday. Father gave the message on the conversion of Cornelius. In the afternoon we went to the Hamm parents, where the house was full of guests, including the betrothed couple.
30. We were at Jacob Hamms with the betrothed couple.

## February 1856

- 1–2. More visiting with the couple: at Walls and Bernhard Epps.
4. Today I have been at home, busily writing, and have accomplished quite a lot. I have finished the grammar, almost as far as the sentence section.
5. Sunday. Small attendance at church because of the snow and stormy weather. In the afternoon we were visiting at my parents, where as usual a large crowd of visitors had gathered, including the betrothed couple. I am heartily weary of all the visiting around with my dear sister and fiancé, and will be glad when it will finally end. I have lost many a precious hour through this, but it seemed there was no way out.

An unfortunate event occurred today. The bookbinder, Pusch rode to Workrasowsk 8 days ago. The weather was pleasant, although wintry. Pusch had been wearing only a light jacket over a shirt. He did not come back in the evening, nor the next day. Meanwhile, there was a strong wind with snow flurries. People were worried and began looking for him. Someone knew that he had ridden away from W. in a drunken state, supplied with a bottle of brandy wine. Later a Russian had met him 15 verst from Workrasowsk. Further enquiries were made, but no trace of him. The idea that he may have perished grew, although one hoped that the horse which he rode, in case he had fallen off, might have come home. Yesterday Bergmann of Terlikowka found the horse tethered and almost starved to death. It seems evident that Pusch fell from the horse and perished. May the Lord have mercy on his soul! Amen.

12. Sunday. Yesterday (Saturday) we went to the parents here. We were taken there and back by sleigh because of the snowstorm.
19. Sunday. Father preached on the text from 1 John 3. In the past week we were at the fore-wedding, and Thursday at the wedding of my only sister, Helene, with Abram Froese. May the Lord be the third person of their marriage bond, and may His blessing go with them. Today we again attended their after-wedding.
22. This evening the parents, Abr. Froeses and D. Hamm were here. D. H. read a recent letter from D. Epp to Claas Epp. It was a very impertinent, rude letter, which gives raw material to fan the fires of disharmony, according to the reply from Claas Epp, which was also read. Will it end in a quarrel between the two brothers (brothers in the flesh as in the spirit, but not in the spirit of love)? And what results may it have for the whole community? May God the Omniscient guide this affair towards peace.

24. The travellers to Saratov have come home safely. Today we have had a very unusual blizzard from the south. At times we could barely see the village. Fortunately, it was not cold, in fact +1½.
25. 8 below today with a fierce snowstorm. The snow bank at our front door is at least 1½ ft. high.
26. Sunday. Beginning of Lent. The youth who wish to be confirmed this year were listed after the service, and the introduction made to the election of ministers in charge of instruction. May the One who knows each heart be gracious in choosing the right person to lead the sheep to green pastures and to the eternal spring of water in Christ Jesus.
28. Today we were at Jacob Hamms again, where Elder Wall was visiting. We had a long discussion about the dispute between the brothers, Claas and D. Epp, which has reached its climax, since D. Epp has hinted at excommunication.

### March 1856

- 1–3. The postage which Uncle Epp had laid out was paid here. Brother D. Klaassen was here for coffee, and later Abr. Forese and D. Epp. In between I regulated a few things with the postage-accounts.
4. Sunday. The confirmation instructions began this afternoon. After that we had company.
7. Day of Prayer and Repentance. Father preached: “.....and repent in dust and ashes...,” Job. After dinner we went to Koeppenthal. Good weather.
10. In the forenoon I ran around in the village doing all kinds of business at: the Hamm parents, Franz Wall, Joh. Wall, and my parents. Company in the afternoon.
11. Sunday. Father preached again in the place of D. Hamm, who has a sore foot. After the service the “Lehrerwahl” (elections of ministers) was announced for the following Sunday. Company in the afternoon. Cold and windy today with snow flurries.
- 12–14. School again. +4 during the day. The snow is melting fast, so that quite a bit of water has gathered already.
15. More snow, but mild. Joh. Peters' house (semljenke) is beginning to fall apart, because of the moisture and thawing conditions. They have had to move. The widow Janzen, who lived with them, is staying with us.
16. Very cold again, with snow—seems as if winter is here again. The latest news is that between the warring nations (Crimean War), peace has been declared and a treaty signed<sup>45</sup>. May God give His blessing to this.
18. Sunday. Today we had the election which, against all odds, has resulted in Peter Horn being chosen. The votes were as follows: Peter Horn 37, Dietr. Klaassen 26, Peter Kopper 10, and I 13. May the Lord, who has called this new servant into his vineyard, qualify him for his task. After the instruction class, we went to D. Hamms.
22. Snowstorm all day, the worst one this winter. Spring seems to be delayed.
25. Sunday. Our new minister, Peter Horn held his inaugural sermon today. In his introduction he told the congregation that they had no doubt elected him because of some of his writings, rather than his actual capabilities. Furthermore, because of his personal weaknesses, which they had disregarded, they had taken on themselves grave responsibilities; on his part he felt, that since they had chosen him on such undeserving grounds, his call must have come from God Himself, who had during the election only used them as a means to an end. He had received a definite call at one time when the Lord seemed to say to him: “You will one day be my follower”.

As text Peter Horn chose the word in Matth. 27:24: “Pilate washed his hands in innocence...” He emphasized the truth that we have no reason to find fault with Pilate, since we ourselves

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<sup>45</sup> Preliminary peace accepted on 1 February 1856 with the peace, Treaty of Paris, signed on 30 March 1856.

often act in fear of people, when it comes to giving God the honour and glory. After the instruction class, we had visitors: Koppers, Elder Wall, father, brother Dietrich Kl and D. Epp.

26. Finally it is spring! +6 degrees today. After school I went to the village for business.

29–31. The snow is disappearing as well as the sleigh tracks. The horses are beginning to step through the crust. On the fields the ground is showing through in many places.

Today (Saturday) I am busy “up to my ears”. For some time I have been working on an outline for the religious instruction, as well as an extract from the History of the Russian Empire. I also removed the storm windows from the schoolroom and corner room.

## April 1856

1. Sunday. Damp, dismal weather. D. H. gave the message today about the thief on the cross, whom Jesus received as the first-fruit of the kernels sown for the Kingdom of God.
2. The snow is beginning to melt rapidly, especially on a day like this, with +8 degrees. The Terlyka River is beginning to flow, which we can faintly hear. Already last week we heard the larks for the first time. Because of the unreliability of the roads, I was asked to close the school until further notice. However, the children do not want to hear of this, although the attendance is quite low already.
5. During these days when there were so few children in school, I have made use of the extra time in writing. I worked on the geography, as well as the catechism lessons. So much sitting necessitated some physical activity, so I walked to the parents here.
7. Today I had to go to the District Office with regard to the farmstead plans. Already this morning I felt unwell, so after I came back I went to bed. My old friend, the “Schnupfen”—fever (head cold) is back again.
8. Sunday. Palm Sunday. All day I have been alternately in bed and lying around. The weather was mild, but towards evening it started to rain and snow intermittently.
- 9–12. During these days I still felt rather unwell, and though I was in school part of the time, I spent some time at home in bed. The weather is cold and stormy, which I feel is partly the reason for my cold and fever.
13. Good Friday. Today I could be at the worship service again. D. H. preached with Matth. 27:50 as text. What had not been clear to me earlier, he explained in his theme: The death of Christ was a voluntary death; in other words, Christ's physical death was voluntary, inasmuch as it was not a wasting away, or as if death had conquered Him, as is the case for every human being, who dies when physical activity of the organs ceases; rather, that he was very much in possession of his physical and mental capacities, according to which he could have lived many hours longer. Death had to come to Him, because He willed it so when the work of salvation was finished. Of course, what was more wonderful or natural than this? How could death touch Him, who came to overcome the power of death, who Himself several times was snatched as a victim from death's fangs, before He willingly gave Himself?

It is Good Friday, and what is our place on this day? Under the cross of Jesus. What shall we do? We shall trust. Whom? Him, the crucified. He said to the women, who accompanied Him to the place of crucifixion: “Do not weep for me...”. So for ourselves and our sins we shall sorrow, for they are the reason for the disgraceful death Jesus suffered on the cross. On the other hand, we can also rejoice under the cross of Christ, for He has taken the sins away on one day, and will take them away henceforth, if we offer them to Him and be on guard to keep from sinning. Finally, we shall thank Him for His unspeakable goodness to us through His suffering and death, which is so great that even the angels in heaven break out in praise.

And so I too draw near to your cross, with all my young souls, which you have entrusted to me, O Lord Jesus! who looks down on each one full of love. May you also grant us the fruits of your redeeming death, and may we too one day join in the praises of the great throng (Rev. 7:9): "Glory be to Him who sits on the throne, our God and the Lamb." Amen.

Today is the first warm day of spring, +10 in the shade. Since it is father-in-law's 66th birthday today, all the children were invited. I feel much better today, so we also attended. From there we took a walk to the fenced-in ditch at the cemetery.

14. Mother's birthday today. May the Lord keep her for a long time, and grant her many joys with us, and finally a blessed parting. Seeding time has begun, but only in the farmyard acreages.

15. Easter Sunday. Father preached the sermon today. Good attendance. We visited at these parents in the afternoon. Since the Terlyka was flowing swiftly, after coffee we went to watch the ice break up.

Today is also my birthday. As a worshipping Catholic person counts one bead after another on the long string of beads, so my years are counted on the string of life. You, O Lord have written all my days in your book, those which still shall come, and those which are no longer there. I thank you for your past guidance and pray that in the future you will lead me, so that I may not stray, neither to the right or to the left, but walk according to your pleasure, to your honour and to my salvation for the sake of Jesus. Amen.

16. Easter Monday. P. Horn gave the message. Sister-in-law, Anna Hamm is bedridden again. I am not rid of my illness yet either, coughing and feeling quite weak.

17–20. We have begun with the garden work, measuring and digging. Since the parents want to plant some things in our garden, they are helping us. Sister Helena Froese is also helping. We are planting potatoes. I have 5 students, who have finished their course, and have said farewell to the school. I had a brief farewell message for them, giving each one a "Word of Life" from God's word. May the Lord guide them safely through this world's storm and temptation, and lead them finally to the blessed haven of rest through Christ Jesus. Amen.

21. Today I have worked in the garden since 5 a.m. which pleased me very much. We had a good rain today. We planted millet and potatoes during the day. Towards evening we went to the parents for a bit, since mother is sickly.

22. Sunday. Service with D. H. preaching. In the afternoon we went up the hill with sister J. Towards evening we had a heavy rain which lasted for an hour. Yesterday the last snow melted away at the gateway.

23–25. We visited the parents, since they intend to move shortly. Mother is well again. Besides teaching I have been quite busy in the garden. We have planted potatoes at D. Hamms.

26. After school we walked to Koeppenthal, where my parents are just getting settled. Marie's parents and the D. Hamms were there as well.

28. Today we planted the last potatoes. Mother Hamm was here.

29. Sunday. A dreary, cold day, only +8. Father was in charge of the service. Attendance was low. I was not feeling well, but we still went to see the D. Hamms.

30. The weather and my going out yesterday had a negative effect on my health, so that I could not properly keep the students busy.

## **May 1856**

1. Today the weather is milder, and I feel somewhat better. After school I went to Cl. Epps, where my parents from Koeppenthal were visiting, as well as Marie's parents and the D. Hamms. According to rumours, the remains of Pusch have been found at a place near



the Terlikowka. Some Germans are supposed to have found them. However, since they feared gangs and expenses, they did not move the corpse.

Rather a neighbour at Koeppenthal was asked to make a coffin and to bring the body back for burial. However, the body couldn't be found. After insisting that it was at a certain place, and that those who had found it first would not get into trouble, two or three men together with the Germans were shown where he had been found; this time not in vain. So the body was brought to a cemetery designated for strangers and buried there this evening. Of course, it had deteriorated to a mere skeleton, on which most of the clothing, as well as some of the body parts, were missing. He vanished on January 29th, and since then 13 weeks and one day have passed. May this tragic end be a warning to us all with the words of the apostle: "Let not sin reign over us..." Lord, protect us from that kind of an untimely death.

2. Beautiful weather today, with a lovely moonlit evening. Marie and I sat outside on the grass for a long time taking in the beauty of the firmament, where fluffy clouds slowly sailed along, from time to time covering the light of the moon. "Lord, how great and manifold are your works..."
3. Marie went to Koeppenthal partly on invitation, partly on business. The barn was raised for the J. Hamms. I followed her later, making my way across the steppes, through the deep trench. A lovely view unfolded before my eyes. As I stood on the other side I looked across the gully where the bed divides in two arms with a green and blooming mat on each side, cut through by a stream.

This side shows a small waterfall. On the other side there was still a deep patch of snow, 100 feet long, left in the bushes. An interesting contrast! Flowering life and mental death clasping hands. Such is life, as was the case with Mr. Pusch. Lord, how incomprehensible are your ways. Rom. 11:33.

- 4-5. Rainy weather. Marie and I went to Koeppenthal to see the Esaus, then to D. Klaassen. Otherwise I wrote letters.
6. Sunday. Mr. Horn preached. Father was here for dinner.
11. Today both mothers and Aunt Janzen were here. I have so much to write that I can hardly get it all done. Peter Horn, our new minister, is sick. It seems to be nerve-fever.
12. Today I wrote a letter to Hansertrin in Katherinastadt together with a book on School regulations which Fr. Epp will take along to Saratov tomorrow.
13. Sunday. Already last week the confirmation class had finished, but half of the material was reviewed briefly today. I went to Cl. Epps this afternoon to discuss a few things about the inheritance regulations, since the first format that was handed in to the board, had not been discussed sufficiently. We had a good rain last night.
19. I have very much work to do. Garden work in the morning. In the afternoon I went to the parents and to Walls on business; then to Koeppenthal to brother Dietrich where his barn is being raised. We also took a walk to the end of the village.
20. Sunday. Today the Articles of Faith were read. In the afternoon the last part of the material for the instruction class was reviewed, which closed off the study. Later we went to Abr. Janzens, since my parents were visiting there.
24. Ascension Day. Father preached on the text from Rom. 12: What Ascension means, and what promises it offers to us. In the afternoon the candidates for confirmation gave their testimonies. After that we went to the Hamm parents together with my parents who had had dinner with us.
26. I am working on the Catechism all day, besides other activities.
27. Today the Articles of Faith were read for the second time, and the appropriate questions asked of the confirmation (baptismal) candidates. Oh how lightly this most important "Yes" is given, without really thinking about the responsibility. O Lord! may we all follow your

eternal invitation and be converted to you. Do not cease to draw us to you. Even though we may not yet be completely willing, you will finally triumph, Lord Jesus! Amen.

28. Today Marie went to the market in Warenburg with Abr. and C. Froese. This morning it was overcast with rain; later it cleared, becoming quite pleasant.

## June 1856

1. Today the Governor of Samara is to arrive here. In the absence of Uncle Epp, the two magistrates—Epp and Hamm—were to welcome him; however, Uncle Epp arrived home from Saratov around Vesper, but the Governor has not come.

There are rumours that Prussian Mennonites have bought 15000 Desj. land, which the chief magistrate legally had the right to sell. However, he heard that it had already been sold to Prussian Mennonites. How this mix-up occurred is not clear.

The circumstance of Mr. Pusch's burial seems to have caused considerable problems.

2. Since this morning we have been very busy because our maid, Katte, is not here anymore.

Towards evening, the Honourable Governor arrived unexpectedly. The riders, who had been sent to wait for him, had assumed he would not be coming, so had unsaddled their horses, putting them out to pasture. Very suddenly he was there, so they had to saddle their horses very quickly and then hurry to catch up to him, so that they could be in the lead. (This is a real picture of the false security of Christians. "He comes at an hour when they least expect Him") His Excellency was billeted at the Janzens.

3. Sunday. Pentecost, first holiday. According to previous arrangement, D. Hamm, D. Klaassen and I were chauffeured to Warenburg to attend the service of Child Dedication. We were billeted at Mr. Leonhard. There were 186 candidates. Pastor Hoelz gave a brief message about the Holy Spirit reminding the faithful of all that they have been taught, and giving them His blessing. The highlight of the message for me was the idea of remembering; how the Holy Spirit reminds also the adults, the young and the old of what they have been taught at instruction classes. No one can excuse himself with ignorance. Before the actual confirmation the pastor gave a brief catechism of the main points, which also spoke to young and old. By comparing the children of God to a family and servants, he said that children are also "heirs", whereas servants, although they may work harder, receive only their wages. On the other hand, those who through faith become children of God, receive their inheritance by grace. Fortunate are these young people, who receive instructions from such a renowned, spiritual and priestly pastor.

We had our dinner at Leonhards'. Later we took a walk to the Volga, where the water is still a few meters above the banks. Several grain bins and gardens are standing in water. The Volga has throughout known history never been this high; it has caused much damage. Much fruit has been ruined. At 5:30 we left for our return trip. Weather was beautiful.

4. Second holiday. We had baptism at our church today. There were only 5 candidates. May the Lord fill them with His Spirit as worthy members of the Church, to walk in His ways. In the afternoon we went to Marie's parents for coffee, returning home to do the milking. After supper we went to Heinrich Janzens—I for the first time.
5. Many visitors from Warenburg. Pastor Hoelz and family were visiting the parents and us. In the afternoon we went to Koeppenthal to see my parents, where there were many other visitors.
6. Today my wife almost had a serious accident, but the Lord graciously protected her. The cow she was milking threw herself on Marie by which she suffered a mild contusion on her leg. We thank the Lord for His protection.
10. Sunday. Today preparation message for the observation of Holy Communion next Sunday. D. H. spoke on: "The worthy preparation".

13. We were invited to Koeppenthal by J. H. because of minor measurements, so D. H. took us there after school.
15. Today we had a meeting at the schoolhouse, concerning the matter of Pusch. The document, written in Russian, had to have 19 signatures, including mine.
17. Sunday. Holy Communion today. Text: Isaiah 53: the sufferings of the Lord. There were 111 members. Because of the number of participants, we have had to take two Sundays for communion.

This afternoon I went to the potato acreage alone.

22. Today we have received several letters, including one from Uncle Cornelius Klaassen, who told us that Aunt Hamm of Ladekopp has laid down her pilgrim's staff and gone to her eternal rest. And so, one after another departs from the temporal, and what the apostles say is verified: "We have no permanent dwelling, but seek the future one." Seek! Yes indeed! All our life we seek; but unfortunately, so many do not seek that which is above, our future dwelling place, but rather it is a seeking, a running for that which is on earth. We seek to acquire, to achieve, to accomplish, to steal, to obtain greedily, to gain the riches of the world. (Or whatever words one could use to describe this kind of hot pursuit). But all that is vanity. Blessed then are they who gather riches which neither rust, nor moths will destroy, and seek His riches in heaven. They find permanent, eternal treasures which never fade.
24. Sunday. Today we had communion for the rest of the congregation. There were 58 persons, so 169 altogether. Marie went to Warenburg with M. Hamm. I had other company: Abr. Martens, Abr. Froese and Herman Janzen.
29. Today we have been busy with "divining" for water, and have had good results. In places water has been found at the depth of 6–7 fathoms.<sup>46</sup> In the evening we butchered a calf.

## July 1856

1. Sunday. Father gave the message of thanksgiving for communion, basing it on Rom. 6:4, 5: 1. The necessity of baptism into the death of Christ; 2. The possibility of walking in a new life. A very edifying message. The Koeppenthal parents, D. Hamms and brother Jacob were here for a roast beef dinner. For coffee we all went to Claas Epps. After Vesper we had a nice shower.
- 6–7. Heavy rain for the last few days. Temperatures on average of +20–22. I spent much time writing. D. H. and I went to the fields together.
8. Sunday. D. H. gave the message: "The salvation of the waiting creation" Rom. 8:18–22. Went to visit D. Klaassens, Koeppenthal, with the D. Hamms.
9. Today Uncle Epp returned from Saratov, bringing with him Corn. Andreas, who last year returned from the United States; now he travelled via Petersburg, Moscow, Nyscherry and Saratov by ship in 13 days.
10. In order to get some physical exercise, I walked to Esaus, Jr., where they were erecting a barn. Peter Toews and his friend Andreas stopped at the Esaus, so I had the opportunity to renew my acquaintance with Andreas.
14. We had company from Katherinastadt: Pastor Thomas and family, Mr. Hauerstein (teacher) with two sons, and teacher Sommer of Kara. Also Madam Mueller with her children was here for a while. On Friday the men were in my school, both teachers as visitors at our house. Later we took the visitors to Koeppenthal to see my parents; from there back to Cl. Epps for tea. Both teachers and families were at our house for the night. We had a most pleasant conversation about Christian truths until almost 11:30 p.m.

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<sup>46</sup> A fathom, also called a "faden," or properly named in Russian as "sazhen" (Russian: сажень) is an obsolete Russian measure of length equal to 2.1335 metres or about 7.0 feet.

15. Sunday. In the afternoon we attended the wedding of Heinrich H. and Anna Funk. At this occasion I had the privilege of conversing with Corn. Andreas about America. Many things he told me were as I had imagined them to be.
22. Sunday. Early this morning the Heinrich Janzens had a baby girl. Mother and daughter are doing well. D. H. gave the message today about the rich man: the rich and the poor man in this world; and the rich and poor in the next world. In the afternoon we visited at the Walls. They had other visitors as well.
27. This week school vacations have begun, although there are still 2 half days of school a week.
29. Sunday. Father preached this morning. We visited at Michael Hamms Jr, and later in the evening at Marie's parents.

### **August 1856**

5. Sunday. We have had exceptionally cold weather, with severe storms last week. The grain and also the gardens have suffered; the watermelons are practically ruined. In the last few days I have been working on the barn, and other small rooms. This afternoon we have been visiting around at various places.
6. Last week's cold has let up somewhat. After Vesper 4 carpenters came to work on our upstairs.
7. In between I am making several things with wood, just finishing a flower stand. In the afternoon my father, Abr. Froese and I went to see the new treadmill which Peter Toews has made. We also visited with Andreas again.
10. Today we moved again. Since the carpenters opened the floor in the worship area, we moved our furniture to the livingroom.
11. I am somewhat discouraged because of my sickness. Since yesterday I have felt feverish, and my mouth and gums are sore. D. H. visited me this evening.
12. Sunday. Today I felt so much better that I could be at the worship service. Peter Horn preached. After the service D. Hamms and later D. Klaassens were here. We had a pleasant discussion.
13. Today 3 years have passed since I said farewell to my parental home. What experiences I have had between then and now! For me they have all been happy ones. My path was a rosy one, and the plateau I walk on is strewn with flowers. I have a lovely wife, and my loved ones have been given back to me. Praise, thanks and worship to You, O Lord, who has led me in such a wonderful way. May my happiness lead me closer to you, and that as your child I may have part in the glorious inheritance in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

This afternoon we went to my parents to celebrate the memory of my departure from Prussia.

15. Today we had a warm, almost Asiatic wind from the south, +27. Marie's parents were here for dinner, as well as my mother.
18. For several days people have been busy with getting the grain under cover. It has been a good year, so that most people will get their bins full. Brother Jacob was here for the purpose of learning the trade of surveying. In the evening we went to see the D. H's. Sister-in-law is ill again.
20. Anna Hamm is recovering from a crisis. Mrs. Moritz had to use a forceful method this time, but after the event Anna feels weak, yet without pain. The Lord helps when the need is greatest.
24. I was called to Koeppenthal this morning, where with the help of J. Hamm and brother Jacob we measured the cemetery plot. Tomorrow a Mrs. Janzen is to be buried.

26–27. Father preached the Sunday morning sermon, about the Fall of Adam. Next morning I went to Koeppenthal to assess the border between various fields. In the evening I attended the village business meeting (“Schulzenbot”).

## **September 1856**

1. Sunday. All week we have measured and staked off acreages in Koeppenthal. During this time many corrections had to be made, so that we lost a day and a half without accomplishing anything. The weather has been cold. I stayed at my parents until Friday. For several weeks the Honourable Chief Judge has been expected to arrive here. Finally last night he arrived. Today we were honoured by his presence at the worship service, accompanied by the Honourable Graef. D. H. preached about the healing of the deaf man. In the afternoon we went to visit at the D. H's. Anna feels quite well, though still in bed.
6. Yesterday and today I have been at home busy with figuring out the Koeppenthal border-fields. The weather has been quite cold with light frost.
7. Despite the rainy weather I walked to Koeppenthal to see what to do next. Since it looked like clearing up, the workers were persuaded to go to work, this time to drive around the measured fields with the wagons, which we finished by evening.
8. I spent the night with my parents again, going to work on the fields this morning with the men. Later cousin Hamm took me home.
- 10–11. On the fields again. Later at the village office men were chosen to measure off the “Plosch”, at which occasion I was also present.
16. Sunday. The rest of the days we “drove off” the assigned pieces of land, but did not finish. In the afternoon we had a meeting to hand out the travel documents to the 3 men, Franz Funk, Phillip Engbrecht and Ekkart, who are leaving for Prussia. In the afternoon there was an auction at F.W. to sell various items for the 3 men going to Prussia. May the Lord go with them.
17. Today we drove around the rest of the plots (“Kegel”). At the occasion of the farewell party yesterday at the F. Epps, it turned out to be a very rowdy get-together, so much so that the wine bottles flew out the door, and a few young men were completely drunk. This event will likely necessitate a brotherhood meeting, which could mean serious discipline for those who secretly have taken part in drinking parties at F. E.
20. Today the 3 men finally left for Prussia.
- 21–22. I surveyed the area around the ditches and worked in the garden at home. I planted 10 small apple trees.
23. Sunday. Father gave the third message on the Fall. His theme was: Judgment on the tempter and the tempted: I. The curse on the serpent; II. ? III. A word from God to Eve; IV. A word of God to Adam. After the service we had a brotherhood meeting, where the event of last Sunday was discussed. It was unanimously decided that F. E. should be persuaded to give up voluntarily his practice of making home brew and operating a tavern. The desecration of the Sabbath was also discussed, neighbours having been disturbed with the noise; one neighbour in retaliation having arranged for a drinking party at his house. The culprits were warned to cease such activity.
26. Since it is rainy today, I am working on the plans at home all day.
27. Today there was an auction of the belongings of the deceased Mr. Pusch. It was held at the Walls. At Koeppenthal most villagers are far behind in their preparations for winter. The cold fall weather has been a real hindrance.

In the evening there was a meeting of the Elder and the participants of last Sunday's drinking party. Kliewer, who had been asked to be a witness, gave a very brazen testimony, which resulted in angry words.

28. Today mother from Koeppenthal has come to stay with us for a while, since their house is still very drafty, and the oven has not been installed.
29. Today there was a layer of snow on the ground—about 1 inch. It is quite cold. Most people are keeping their cows in the barn at this time.
30. Sunday. Harvest festival. D. H. preached on the theme: “The right harvest blessing”. A very precious message, full of truth. Ab. Froeses and D. Klaassens were here for dinner. Together with them we went to the Walls for the afternoon.

### October 1856

1. Today I measured a plot on which to plant trees at the parents' place. Then I dug holes in our garden to plant the trees I had bought.
2. The weather is cold and raw; and the thermometer unusually low (“temporaire”). I sketched plans here at home.
- 3–4. I went to P. Epps for a few purchases. In the afternoon I planted 10 little trees; 5 winter and 5 summer peaches. In the evening I went to the D. Hamms where they were slaughtering beef. Mother and Marie had gone earlier already. The two of them have been visiting around in the village all week.
6. Today is our first wedding anniversary. Oh! how happy we have been during this year; not a cloud has darkened our marital bliss. If Gellert<sup>47</sup> says in his poem that it is a fable to say that a couple can live through more than eight days of perfect bliss after their wedding day; then our experience could disprove that statement. But it wasn't our doing, but the Lord, who is gracious and faithful, who ruled in our hearts. Therefore to Him be the glory for all the blessings which we have received during this first year. May He also keep our hearts in the ways of peace in Christ Jesus.

In the afternoon the Abr. Janzens, Maries' parents, the D. Hamms and P. Epps were here for a visit.

8. Early this morning Abr. Froes and I went to Warenburg to the market. After our purchases, we went to the Kirgisian horse-market. From there we went to the village market, which sister had never seen.
9. Rain and sleet. I am sketching on the plan for the Plosch acreage. Today is Marie's birthday. Lord, thank you for your faithfulness which has led my dear wife into another year. This new year she awaits new experiences. I pray that according to your great mercy you will not cease to watch over her especially since she at present is in this blessed state. May we not cease to praise your goodness to us and glorify your name.
- 11–13. I worked on the fields, and planted some trees. We continued to mark off the border acreages, but could not finish. The furrows need to be made yet.
14. Sunday. Rev. Wall preached about punishment: “If your brother sins...” The theme: what, whom, how. This message must have touched all hearts, since we don't hear this very often. May the Lord give His blessing.

In the afternoon there was another meeting about the matter of Kliewer and Nikkel's accusation against Cl. Epp who, they claimed, was biased in disciplining some and not others. This was actually an accusation against his authority. The claim was made that the “Kleinwerder” group was being oppressed by the “Grosswerder<sup>48</sup>” group; and that the second held themselves to be the ruling party. Nikkel had a similar accusation, being a retaliation to the punishment he had been given. Since neither of the three could give proof of these accusations, they were considered as false, and so in the future could not be considered as witnesses anymore. A resolution concerning this decision was formulated

<sup>47</sup> Christian Fürchtgott Gellert (1715–1769) esteemed and venerated German poet and playwright.

<sup>48</sup> This refers to an old conflict between Mennonite churches from Prussia that probably had its origin in differences between Flemish–Friesen church practices.

and signed by those attending, whereupon the meeting was adjourned. May the Lord lead us all in the way that is right and leads to peace, so that further meetings like these may be unnecessary.

16. I banked some earth around the barn, finished the accounts and placed these in circulation. Some men are winterizing the schoolhouse.
- 17–19. In Koeppenthal things still look quite threadbare. Not nearly all households have their ovens installed. My parents and the Froeses are living in the warm room for 8 days already, so mother went home last Sunday. I have been working on the barn, fastening the doors, etc. The cows have been kept in the barn since Tuesday. I also began to assess the payments for the accounts, but did not finish.
18. Today I put on the storm windows in the living room, and started to get things ready for starting school on Monday. The weather is cold. Towards evening a few people came to pay their accounts. Marie had a hard day with her Saturday work today, which because of her condition is becoming more difficult. Lord, be her strength during this time.
19. Sunday. Father preached the last of his sermons on the Fall of mankind. After the service we went to Abr. Froeses where H. Jantzens, M. Hamms and Dietr. Klaassens were also visiting.
- 22–23. School has begun this week. We received half a beef to be put up. Marie went to Walls for the night, since they had a baby yesterday.
27. A snowstorm from the north all day. I sketched, wrote letters and regulated various things. In the evening we went for spareribs (“Rippspeer”).
- 30–31. We went to Michael Hamms, jeune (junior) where they were slaughtering pigs. The weather was mild. Also went to D. H. for a slaughtering “feast”.

### **November 1856**

1. School attendance is still weak, since many students have to help at home. A daughter was born to D. Penners today.
2. Classes only in the morning. In the afternoon we went to the funeral.
4. Sunday. Rev. Horn preached. Heavy fog, so that we could not see the village.
10. Today I transplanted the willow tree, and worked at writing the catechism.
11. Sunday. We had dinner at the Esaus today. Some frost today.
- 13–15. Today Marie's parents slaughtered pigs, for us also. We had a snowstorm in the morning. I went to the parents for the evening, where quite a group was gathered. Next day we went to D. H.'s after school.
18. Sunday. Father preached the sermon with 2 Peter 1:16–21 as text. His theme was: The foundation of our faith, and on what it is based. In the afternoon we were all at the Walls.
25. Sunday. Remembering the Dead. D. H. preached. Text: Hebr. 4:9–11. Tearfully he also remembered his dear mother, our aunt, who passed away this year. After the service Marie's parents and we visited at the Jacob Hamms.
29. Today we visited at the D. H.'s, as also J. H., P. Epps, H. Jantzens, M. Hamms junior, and mother Hamm. The place was full to bursting. I was thoroughly bored.
30. Koeppenthal at this time is planning to open a school. When it opens I will lose half my pupils, and mostly the best ones. However, a school in Koeppenthal is very necessary.

### **December 1856**

1. I was busy with various minor details. In the afternoon A. Froese came to get Marie, and I followed on foot a while later.
2. Sunday. First Advent. Peter Horn preached. After the service we went to D. Klaassens, but came home early. The weather is dull, but +3.

7. Today I have said farewell to my Koeppenthal students, since that school is opening on Monday. May the Lord through His spirit bless all that in my weakness I have tried to teach.
9. Sunday. Father gave the message using the verse: "God was manifest in the flesh..." I was at home for the afternoon, while Marie went to her parents. Because of her condition she is often not able to be very active.
10. **\*\* Morning.** "The Lord has done great things for us, therefore we are glad. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me praise His holy name. He is the Lord who does wonders, and shows His might to His children. His hand is not shortened, and He helps those, who call on Him; for He is a God who hears prayers, He hears the supplications of His children. He hears the petitions of those in distress and sorrow. When the waters of affliction surround the soul, He holds His right hand mightily above us. He demonstrates mercy to all who seek Him, and does not forsake those who trust in Him. He saves us from all anguish, and His help is there before we call. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits. Hallelujah! praise the Lord! Amen.

Already during the service the day before yesterday, my wife felt unwell. Later she felt a bit better, so that we went to her parents with a borrowed sleigh. However, she came back early. At midnight she had consistent cramps, which appearing from time to time, kept her awake. All next day they continued, but although she had intermittent pains, she could work at some sewing. Not quite recognizing her condition, she allowed me to go to her parents after school, where I informed her mother of her condition. Her mother was convinced that her time had come to give birth, and she ordered the necessary preparations. Back home again, Marie was not quite ready to have someone called, but finally agreed. So Aunt Epp was called, and mother Hamm and Anna Hamm also came. Before long Mrs. Moritz was called as well as my mother, who arrived within an hour. Further preparations were made and by 8:30 p.m. everything was ready. Labour was hard, but thank God not too long. At 9:30 our first-born, a healthy baby boy, saw the light of day. The dear mother was very exhausted, but quite relieved and well. She slept from about midnight till morning.

And now O gracious God and Saviour! You have given us a miracle of your mercy, and you have heard our supplications. You have given us a child; praise and thanks be to you for this gift. But we pray for those things that are beyond our abilities. Help our dear sick one, that she may soon be completely well. Above all, our Lord and Saviour, may you grant us grace to raise our child in the fear of the Lord. He is yours. We bring him to your loving heart, O Jesus, that you may lay your hands of blessing on him, so that he may be rich in you from the time of his birth. Yes, bless him and make him your own. Above all, grant us through faith and a measure of your Holy Spirit the courage to engage in the raising of this child. Yes, may he be under your protection and care, physically and spiritually to the glory of your kingdom here on earth and in eternity. But should you choose him for a special service, then prepare him for this, and enable him through your Holy Spirit. Amen.

11. My dear wife and the little one are doing very well. This morning my father came from Koeppenthal to see her, and to welcome his little grandson. Anna Hamm stayed the night. Towards evening H. Janzens were here.
12. Marie and the baby slept very well. During the day she has improved and all her functions are working well. My mother went back to Koeppenthal to celebrate brother Dietrich's birthday. In the meantime Marie's parents came, and her mother will spend the night here.
- 14–15. My wife's condition has changed, but not for the better. She had a fever off and on, with quite a lot of pain. Aunt Epp and Aunt Janzen were here, as well as other visitors.
16. Sunday. Marie's fever has repeated itself, and caused her to feel quite depressed. Also the commotion resulting from a larger Sunday morning congregation (communion Sunday) was rather hard on her. The weather is dull, foggy and rainy, which also has a depressing effect on one's spirit. The little one is doing very well.



17. Last night Marie had hot spells, so that we felt obliged to call Mrs. Moritz. She prescribed drops to rub on her forehead, which seemed to help. However, she is weak, and her appetite is lacking. Her organs are in good condition, though intermittently her fever is evident.
- 18–19. I went along with father, who took Mrs. Moritz and mother back. Instead Anna Hamm came to stay the night. Marie feels somewhat better. I went to Koeppenthal to ask for Mrs. Schmidt, since Kath. is not at home.
21. Today my dear Marie has been up and around for the first time, even though only for ½ an hour at a time. My mother was here again and will stay until tomorrow. The Lord be praised for each hour of improvement; but we also praise Him for the anxious hours which we experienced.
23. Sunday. Fourth Advent. In the afternoon mother went home to Koeppenthal, so we were left alone. Marie had fever again during the night, which subsided towards morning. This Sunday the service did not affect Marie negatively. Sister-in-law Penner came to stay for company. Mrs. Moritz was here again to apply a camomile mixture which proved very helpful.
24. Marie had a very good night. Towards evening Abr. Froese brought a fat duck for Marie.
25. Christmas Day, first holiday. I was able to attend the worship service this morning. D. H. in his message led us to Bethlehem, with the following points: 1. The preparations for the first Christmas; 2. The place; 3. The celebrative congregation; 4. The preacher; 5. The message; and 6. The Choir. My parents were here for the day.
26. Second holiday. Marie finds herself well, although the little one had spells of discomfort.
29. Today I wrote out the birth announcements for our son, Jacobus. I mailed these including a letter to Uncle Enns and Aunt Schulz. Anna Hamm spent the night with us again.
30. Sunday. Today we had service in our room again.

Among all those who experienced the kindness and graciousness of God in this past year, and feel compelled to praise and thank Him, I too have much reason to be grateful for God's kindness and love. We have experienced it in a special way, not only by giving us our daily bread, but by granting us the privilege of becoming parents, and having been with my dear wife in her travail, restoring her to health. To Him be glory and worship for His unending mercy. And now, O Lord, be with us with the wealth of your goodness, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

## 1857

### January 1857

1. New Year's Day. Father preached on the text: Ps. 39:13. We were quite alone in the afternoon.
6. Sunday. Marie is improving day by day, though slowly; she is up and around most of the day. She is beginning to do light housework. The little one is happy and content. School began on Wednesday, January 2.
13. Sunday. My dear wife was at the service for the first time since the baby was born. The Lord be praised for His goodness.
19. Today Marie was out for the first time. She went to her parents here in Hahns-Au. She feels completely restored, and can more or less keep her household going by herself, which is a good thing, since help is hard to get. This week winter has come upon us in a real way with temperatures -12 to -18, however no wind.
20. Sunday. Elder Wall preached about the wedding at Cana. After dinner we went to the H. Jantzens.

26. Today we went to my parents in Koepenthal, taking our little one with us. We got home by 6 p.m., a beautiful moonlit night. On Thursday we went to D. Hamms to celebrate Anna's birthday. There were 21 visitors.
27. Sunday. Father preached today. We still don't have a maid to help with the work.

### **February 1857**

2. Last night Marie was very sick. She finally felt better after she threw up, but is still weak, so that her household duties are a burden. I also feel rather unwell, especially with a nasty cough. Sister-in-law D. H. is here to help. Our little one has sores in his mouth (a fungus, called "Schwaemme"). In the evening we had visitors: D. and J. Klaassen, C. Froese and D. H.
3. Sunday. Today D. H. preached about the "Workers in the Vineyard". A wonderful message for those who took it to heart.
- In the afternoon we went to D. Penners, where it happened that we could hire help for the house again.
7. Yesterday our new maid got sick, whether for real, or because she felt sorry for herself. Whatever the reason, she took advantage of the opportunity to go home today; so we are without help again, and have to take care of our household ourselves. This encroaches on the time I need to prepare for school classes.
8. We received several letters from Prussia, among them one from Hinterfeld addressed to Marie's father. Uncle wrote about the engagement of his daughter-in-law.
10. Sunday. Horn gave the message on the Sower and the Seed. After dinner my colleague, B. Epp was here. Later we went to Mich. Hamms taking the little one along. The weather is bearable; some snow flurries.
16. More frost these days: down to -25. Our hired girl has resigned from working for us, so we are alone. However, D. H's have let us have their Agathe for a while. She attends school, and has been helping us after school for 8 days. At D. Klaassens they are expecting a baby since 14 days ago, so they are quite worried. May the Lord grant that all may be well.
24. Sunday. Father preached about the temptation of Jesus. In the afternoon we went to the Abr. Janzens together with my parents.

### **March 1857**

1. I received mail expense accounts after school today.
3. Sunday. This afternoon Youth Instruction began. Those who have finished school are to gather here on the first Sunday of each month, to be instructed in the catechism. In the evening I went to the village to see about help in the house.
4. We have hired Eliche Funk to help us in the house for several weeks.
7. At 11 p.m. last night a baby girl was born to the D. Klaassens. Her name is Helene. Sister-in-law is in good condition, though the baby is quite weak. May the Lord be her helper during these days.
17. All week we have had beautiful, clear weather with little wind. I am beginning to work on the globe.
18. Sunday. Father preached about Math. 26:7 to the end. In the afternoon we visited at Marie's parents. H. Jantzens were there also.
- 22-23. We have had winter again for a few days: Rain and some snow, which however has thawed already. The roads are a mess, but the larks are singing of spring. I have begun to make a stand for a larger globe. Since 8 days ago I have been plagued with a cough which hinders me while I teach.
25. Celebration of the announcement of Mary, which we often celebrate together with the other German-speaking people.

26. Today I had very few children in school, since seeding time has begun. Tomorrow I have to do some surveying again.
28. Yesterday and today I surveyed land for Mr. Dieklene. It was cold and windy. We were able to hire a maid again. She seems to feel terribly sorry for herself, so it is not certain whether she will stay. Eva Funk will stay here for a few days.
30. Yesterday and today I was in Koeppenthal measuring additional housing plots (“Anwohnerstellen”). The girl, Baerbel, whom we had hired didn't stay, so I went to the Janzens to see about Lannie. We are in quite a fix, since Eva has to help at home on the fields.
31. Sunday. Elder Wall preached. The girl we had hoped would help us out had to go home, since she wasn't well. I had a bad experience last winter with regards to maids, which I must dearly pay for now. It has been a lesson to me, to be more patient, and to adjust to circumstances beyond my control. May the Lord help me in this.

### **April 1857**

1. I went to the office first thing today to ask for holidays, since the garden work begins, and we have no grown-up maid. Later I prepared a stall in the barn for the pigs. After Vesper H. Janzen came over with the plough to work a piece of land for potatoes. We still found some frost in the ground. The garden work has begun.
2. Today we let the cows out to pasture for the first time. Actually it could have been done sooner, but the cowherd did not realize that spring was so advanced here, since on the hillsides there is still a lot of snow. Marie sowed the first vegetable plots today.
3. Today I took the wrappings off the trees, cleaned them, planted raspberry stems and did various other things. The Koeppenthal parents had walked to Hahns-Au and stopped by here, then went to P. Epps. Later I went to the Epps to deliver the payments for the mail accounts<sup>49</sup> (“Porto Einzahlungen”). It is +16 today.

We are worried how we will manage after “Sarnchen” leaves us. With all the school and garden work—God knows, and we want to trust Him. He will not lay more burdens on us than we can carry. Yes, Lord, our God, you are our Helper in every need, physical and spiritual. Amen.

4. Maunday Thursday. Today I planted 21 locust trees and 8 cherry stems, besides potatoes. B. Epp ploughed a piece of garden land for us. It is getting warmer every day. I went to D. H.'s concerning Anna Froese, but accomplished nothing, so the last thread of hope for a maid is extinguished. A bull has charged at widow Janzen's little Jacob, injuring his eye, but thank God not too seriously. The angel of the Lord watches over the little ones.
5. Good Friday. Father preached on the text, Luke 23:46. His theme was: The seven last words of Christ on the cross; 1. How Jesus demonstrated His great love to us; 2. How He finished His great work. In the afternoon we went to Marie's parents, where the H. Jantzens were also visiting.
6. Today I have mostly worked in the garden. I raked the piece to the left of the crosswalk, and marked off the paths. In the afternoon I planted 4 rows of potatoes. It was +21.
7. Easter, first holiday. D. H. gave the message. We went along to D. Klaassens for dinner; also visited the Horns.
8. Easter, second holiday. Rev. Horn preached. It was cold, raw weather with a strong north wind, and hail and sleet in the afternoon. This afternoon there was instruction class for the

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<sup>49</sup> The first use of postage stamps in Russia was in 1858. Up to that time a person sending an international letter, say to Prussia, had to make cash payment at the post office. Beginning in 1845 a person could send a local letter by buying a prepaid postal envelope for 5 kopeck, about 2½ cents Canadian.

youth. Later I went to M. Hamm jr. where many Koeppenthaler were visiting. The cattle had to be taken into the barn at 4 p.m. already, because of the weather.

9. Today we are having winter weather. I have spent most of the day writing: a letter to Doerksen. Later we spent a few hours at Marie's parents here. In the evening we received household help again—a young widow. Everyone wanted to work on the fields, but it was impossible because of the roads.
11. Frost and very cold. I made a small table for the hired help. In the afternoon I ploughed a piece in the garden near the winter apple trees. A snowstorm developed, so we had to unharness the horses and quit.
13. Today I planted 8 rows of potatoes with the help of little Henry. In the afternoon my parents came to see us. After Vesper I took a walk to the fields on the other side of the Malisch River, together with father.
14. Sunday. After celebration of Easter. D. H. preached.
15. Today is my birthday. I started classes again in school, with 6 students present. One of my students, Agathe Claassen brought me a wreath of flowers, and my little son on the arms of his mother a small bouquet of flowers. Thanks for both. A special thank you to you, O dear Father in heaven! Thank you through Jesus Christ, for your faithfulness which has carried me through this year. Thank you for not regarding my sinfulness. Oh, may you lead me through your Spirit, that I might daily increase in that which is pleasing to you, and help me finally to obtain the blessedness of your heavenly kingdom through Jesus Christ. Amen.
18. Today our hired help left again, and we are alone, except for Agathe. After school I marked off the flower garden for the parents. Marie was also there with Jacobus.
19. Today I went to Koeppenthal at which opportunity I paid Mrs. Moritz.
20. I worked in the garden all day, arranging the main path. After Vesper I called it a day, since I felt very “marode” (unwell). Marie also felt unwell. We are having a difficult time, since we have no help.
21. Sunday. Father preached on the text Luke 13:6–8, emphasizing the words: “Lord, leave it one more year....”, the petition of the high priestly gardener.

D. Klaassen was here for dinner. All day a strong warm wind blew across the fields, which really dried out the soil. It is very dry already, and some are thinking of breaking off seeding. Some grain has sprouted, also some garden seeds. Some apple and cherry trees, as well as shrubs, are budding.

- 22–26. We had some rain yesterday which really causes things to grow. We planted some beans. I wrote some letters to M. Schulz.
27. Yesterday we hired a gardener. There was a fire in Ekkers' barn today, caused by someone smoking a pipe. Fortunately, it was possible to put it out immediately. One can only say, “If the Lord does not watch over the city, the guards watch in vain.” Thanks be to Him who watches over Israel, and neither slumbers, nor sleeps. May He ever watch over us; for we have no way to prevent accidents by fire when we cannot halt the habit of smoking. However, we know that no sparrow falls from the roof without God's will. Therefore, in Him we put our trust also concerning this.
28. Sunday. Yesterday a guest arrived, a sheep farmer from the Chortitza settlement. In the afternoon we had a congregational meeting at which D. Epp read some documents concerning discipline with regards to F. Epp. After this Kliewer again made some objections, saying that with a meeting like this they were making the Lord's house to a den of thieves. But he was interrupted sharply by Uncle Epp and ordered to keep his peace. When he didn't listen to this, he had to be put out by several strong men, Martens and M. Hamm junior.

## May 1857

1. Very cold weather today. We heated the little room.
3. -3 frost this morning. The beans are probably frozen. This morning the black cow almost died when she lay twisted on her back.
5. Sunday. Rev. P. Horn had a bad experience, when through the carelessness of J. Ph. the old horses ran away. Their hoof-prints have been discovered, and so it is hoped that they will be found. Because of this he could not give his message today, so Elder Wall took his place.

After dinner we went to Marie's parents for tea. Mother is not very well, no doubt as a result of the unusual cold at this time of year.

- 6-7. I am working on a bookshelf for the schoolroom. It is still quite cold with frost overnight. Earlier already some of the new plants in the garden froze; no doubt there will be damage. Beans, cucumbers, watermelon etc. and also potatoes are gone. We have had 8 days of frost. Today it was so cold in the schoolroom that I couldn't do any writing.
11. At Koeppenthal they are beginning to clean out the canal. The wolf hunt last week was not productive, except that 2 caves with young ones were discovered, which were killed, as well as two old wolves.
12. Sunday. Our first cow had a calf this morning. A mad dog has bitten various dogs, so some of them have been locked up or killed.

In the afternoon we went to Marie's parents, but because of the cows were home early.

13. Today I received orders again to do some surveying, so I had to close school for one week.
15. Have been on the fields all day. Again we had to relocate the border between Koeppenthal and Hahns-Au, and staked off the village's building plot additions.
16. Ascension Day. Rev. Wall preached on the theme of the day. My dear wife is not feeling very well, probably because of the stress of household chores.
19. Sunday. D. H. preached on the theme: "The Holy Spirit witnessing for Christ." In the afternoon we had a lot of company: six couples from our village.
24. Since a few small things have disappeared from the school room, I held an inquiry with the students, but, thankfully, nothing was discovered. The weather remains dry, with no rain, so that the vegetables are not growing, except for the potatoes and the weeds. This is similar to the human heart: if the good does not blossom, then the evil in time certainly flourishes. "So with prayer and supplication, the weeds need to be destroyed."
26. Pentecost, first holiday. Horn preached on the gospel theme. My mother from Koeppenthal had dinner with us, then we went to Marie's parents to celebrate her mother's birthday.
28. Father, Abr. Froese, D. H., brother Jacob and I left from Koeppenthal at 6 a.m. on the way to Katharinatown. At ¼ to 3 we arrived at Mr. Hermann in Kosaktown. We had a strong, cold wind to face, which made it very cold. After Brother Jacob and I paid a short visit at Mr. Schaefer's in Kosaktown, and had the horses fed and watered, we went on to Kraserjur, where we arrived at 7 p.m. We were billeted at Mr. Stieler. In the evening we visited Mr. Kreft for a short while. Mr. Kreft showed us various portraits of the emperor's family and also his spouse.
29. At 4 a.m. we left our lodging. Between the two colonies—Sweden and Stahl—we passed the Karmau with tree-covered banks, and lovely meadows. We arrived at Katherinatown at 9:30, and took lodging at Mrs. Gutjahr. We could not see Pastor Thomas and teacher Hauerstein today, since they had gone on an outing. We spent part of the afternoon making various purchases. Since we couldn't find everything we needed, we decided to return to Katharinatown the next day. We spent a few hours visiting Mr. Lippert over coffee. Then Mr. Schaufter showed us the church tower. We climbed to the top of the tower looking down on the whole area. From there we took a walk along the Volga, where we boarded a Berlin-type boat loaded with tobacco. Another boat was loaded with wheat. After that we saw the

statue of the Empress Katharina II. In the evening I paid Mr. Hauerstein a visit. I had a very pleasant visit with him as well as with another co-teacher Mr. Zorn. The topic of our conversation was: The comparison of teaching in their colony and ours, and agricultural concerns. We also talked about the son of Pastor Wohlberg, who took part in the 11-month siege of Simpferpol. His distinguished service was rewarded by a gold and silver medal, as well as by the conferral of a ceremonial sabre.

30. Today I visited Pastor Thomas together with the others. At 11 a.m. we left, returning by the same route as we had come. We stopped at Krasnojarsk for a few purchases, and continued on to Kosak-town where we spent the night.
31. We left at 5 a.m. stopping at Saratov to buy a few things, then on towards home. However, we were delayed at the crossing. Many changes are being made in Saratov, since His Majesty Konstantin is to come through in the near future.

Our crossing was rather interesting. Just as the ferry began to move away from the riverbank, it unloaded some oxen, which needed to jump into the water and swim to land. At first they are very reluctant to do so, but after the first one makes the plunge, the others all follow. Since it was rather deep at this point, the oxen fell headfirst into the water, but came to the surface in a few seconds, then swam to shore. Our crossing this time took fully 4 hours. We landed at 6:30 p.m. and immediately found our night lodging. We had good weather all day.

## **June 1857**

1. We left at 4:30 a.m. arriving at Koeppenthal around noon. After making all our arrangements, we had coffee, whereupon brother Jacob took us home. Thank God for His protection on the way, and for finding our loved ones well! In the meantime we have received hired help again.
2. Sunday. Father preached the sermon on John 3: The conversation between the Lord and Nicodemus. The Theme: The strange bearing of our Lord to the Pharisees. I. The way he deals with Nicodemus; II. How he puts down his pride; III. How he teaches him the real piety; and IV. How he shows him the way to it.

In the afternoon there was instruction class for youth, which I attended only for a short while, since we had company.

3. Today the children received their vaccinations.
6. The weather is humid and cloudy with some rain in the afternoon, which, however, is still not enough for the dry pastures. Because of the long drought, the prospects of a good harvest are dim. The rye, barley and oat fields may experience a crop failure. The gardens similarly look pathetic, since many of the seeds have not even germinated. The beans seem to be drying at the roots. We have replanted yesterday. Watermelon and cucumbers will not yield well. There is almost no hay. Only the potatoes at least seem to have lots of greenery, and if they yield a harvest, people and beasts will not starve. However, we want to trust in the Lord, who will not forsake us.

We have just received word at the office "compteur" that His Highness, the Grand Duke, Grand Admiral Konstantin will come to Saratov, and also visit some of the colonies.

8. Today I have studied all day at language and composition, as well as projected and written a new daily outline of studies. A very unpleasant event occurred in Koeppenthal, which could result in undesirable consequences. J. Hamm's hired man stole a saddle and bridle from his employer, as well as one of Ekkert's horses in the pasture. After his offer to sell the horse in the colony did not materialize, he let it go for fear of being discovered. After he got back to his employer, someone informed on him; he was accused of thievery, and taken into detention. However, he got away and hid himself. A search was made by horseback in the

fields, but in vain. Then the search was made in all corners in the yard. All kinds of equipment was used, as hayforks, etc., in haystacks and strawstacks. Finally he was discovered deep in a haystack, and was wounded in the process. J. Hamm, overcome by anger, was convinced he should be punished, which he did rather harshly. Therefore, there is rather a lot of unrest among the hired help. The inspector has been asked to come to assess and arbitrate the incident in the near future.

May the episode be judged conscientiously and fairly; then may a lesson be drawn from it that: "Anger does not accomplish that which is right before God". I too have to learn this lesson; since recently in my haste and anger I punished a child, which I now regret. I have asked the Lord to forgive me, and to give me the assurance that He has granted this.

9. Sunday. First day of summer: the longest day. Today the cemetery was dedicated, which was a solemn occasion with the Elder officiating. At this time there are 4 adults and 9 children; in total 13 corpses resting in this place.

We had some rain today.

13-16. We have had several good rains and everything looks green and refreshed. Plants are beginning to grow again. I have been busy with letter writing and other things.

19. In the evening I went to the parents here to ask about H. who it seems has been guilty of transgressing the 8th commandment. It is likely that he will have taken the things that were missing in the schoolroom. I do not like to think that this is the case.

20. This morning after the first hour of instruction I repeated the inquiry with regards to the recent theft. Actually I need not have done this since I had already found the missing writing pens in H's box. The little thief adamantly refused to admit that he had taken the pens. Only after I showed him the evidence did he admit his guilt. Bit by bit other things came to light. Oh, how this cheerful, diligent boy has disappointed me. I would give anything to say that it was not true. May the Lord keep him from further going astray. May the punishment lead him to do the right, and make him into a person for His glory.

23. Very hard thunderclaps; one which made me hurry outside to see what had happened. This was accompanied by rain. I have received work again: to sketch 4 village and 2 mayors' posters in both Russian and German languages. This will probably take me a good week.

23. Sunday. Holy Communion was observed here today. There were 10 communicants. May this celebration fulfill the purpose of enhancing the fellowship with Christ and through Him with one another.

As a result of the recent rains, the Koeppenthal canal is flowing again. Also the field crops are looking better than last year.

25. Today I have worked on sketching the posters; as a sideline held classes in school, since the former had to be done now.

29. Have worked all day on the posters which are finished except for the numbers. This morning B. Epp was here regarding school business. We received the news that there are Mennonite emigrants to be expected here in about 8 days.

30. Sunday. Father gave a brief message for "Thanksgiving for the Communion". In his sermon he spoke about judging: I. How Jesus understood the word, "Do not judge" II. The reasons for, and the results of judging, III. How one can get rid of judging.

## **July 1857**

1. Rainy weather this morning. The Honourable Headmaster is to have arrived at Saratov today, and is expected to come through here in the next few days. J. H. was here and took the posters with him.

2. Today the village plan for the colony was begun. I got home rather late.

3. Today I finally finished the last of the posters, and delivered them to the mayor's office for today's meeting. At Janzens they have begun harvesting rye; at other places in the colony they began a few days ago. Every day the arrival of the Prussians is expected under the leadership of C.W.
5. Late yesterday evening His Exc. the Lord Headmaster arrived here. Today he visited Koeppenthal as well as the third colony. This evening he asked to have a membership meeting in the schoolroom. He gave a friendly talk in which he expressed his satisfaction with our activities and accomplishments. He also drew our attention to the purpose of being here, as well as our responsibilities in case of any disruptive behaviour, admonishing us to be obedient and diligent in fulfilling our obligations. With regards to our activities His Exc. said: "I need not reproach you in your diligence; it is your characteristic and will remain so." With the promise to visit us again, and the wish that all would be in order as usual, he bade us farewell. With regards to the arrival of the new emigrants, we learned that they could be here in about 8 days.
7. Sunday. Shortly before dinner I heard the news that the Prussians had arrived. Immediately following the instruction class, I went to D. H. where I met many guests including M. H. and Cl. Wiens. Later we walked to the brick kiln where we met other immigrants. In all, 8 persons had arrived; the rest would follow in a few days.
9. This afternoon my mother came to see us, bringing with her Martin Hamm. Later father and D. H. joined us. We had a very interesting conversation. It seems that cousin Hamm likes it here.

Since last Sunday our son, Jacobus, is sick. He cries a lot and sleeps very little. It seems to be a bad cold. May God grant him a quick recovery.

14. Sunday -15. P. Horn gave the message. It seems necessary for the school to be closed, since harvest has begun.
17. Today I attended examination day at Koeppenthal. 28 children were present, but few visitors. Very few teachers would have accomplished as much in half a year, though according to my estimation not everything was perfect. The subjects were: Bible Story, oral and slate arithmetic, nature study, German language, nature story? In between the Lectures there was singing and poetry recital. Right after the program I went home to work on my globe.
19. Today a new Inspector came to Koeppenthal to investigate the matter of the thievery by Hamm's hired help. The culprit was placed under the supervision of his father. Moreover, Mr. Hamm was not reprimanded for the punishment he had given the thief; in fact, the inspector had sanctioned it. With regards to servants running away from their employers, this has been strictly forbidden; otherwise they will suffer the consequences of punishment.
21. Sunday. Early this morning—at 5 a.m. C. Wall and his company have finally arrived. The trip had gone very well, except for a few delays. However, they had a sudden death in Samara. A brother of H. Ewert who lives in Samara, made a make-shift coffin, so they brought the body with them. He is to be buried today.
25. School was closed at noon today, since doors and windows needed to be painted. I am busily working on the globe. The frame is almost finished. Towards evening our district secretary visited me. He seems to be a very decent man, one who is knowledgerable in many areas.
28. Sunday. In the afternoon we were at Abr. Janzens with many other visitors, including Heinr. and C. Froese. We had a good rain towards evening.
- 29-30. The bricklayers came to put the stove into the living room. Today new visitors arrived from Prussia. They had spent the winter at the Molotschna: Wiebe, Sukkau, and Rahn. They are billeted at the Walls.



## August 1857

1. Marie and I went to Koeppenthal at Vesper time. Here we found the Prussians auctioning off their travel gear, including wagons etc. In between I have been working on the globe, as also on a small wagon for our Jacobus.
4. Sunday. All week it has been warm, up to +27. The harvest is in full swing.
- 5–9. I have covered the globe with linen material, then with a paste made of a flour and water mixture.
11. Sunday. The Koeppenthal parents were here this afternoon, as well as D. Hamm.
- 13–15. I pasted paper over the globe. The Molotschna guests, Dietr. Hueberts, Isaak Wiens and Johann Schmidt, have arrived. Tomorrow the others want to leave.
18. Sunday. In the afternoon Marie and I went to D. H. and from there sister Helena and I to F. H.'s in Koeppenthal, where Joh. Schmidt was visiting among many other guests. We had a good time of fellowship. Schmidt told of the many events which had taken place during the war.
19. Early this morning I was asked to go to Koeppenthal to survey the new homesteads. In the afternoon I sketched a plan of our land with the addition.
21. Last night our little son was quite sick, so we had little rest. The harvest is going well; people are storing their produce.
24. Today I worked on the globe, which I covered for the last time, and cleaned it off.
25. Sunday. Father preached about the deaf mutes. All day we have been visiting around, finding many guests all over.
26. School began again today with 5 students.
- 29–31. We had a lot of company today. This morning we found 2 degrees of frost. Most of the vegetables in the garden are frozen, so not suitable for display at the Harvest Festival. They say the immigrants for this year have already arrived in Saratov, and are expected here shortly.

## September 1857

1. Sunday. D. H. preached about the Good Samaritan. Father was here for dinner. In the afternoon he came with me to B. Epps, where there were many other guests.
4. At noon the first of the immigrants arrived—4 wagons. They are the first ones who travelled the route over Werbalen.
6. This forenoon Pastor Seremba, accompanied by Pastors Hoelz and Kohenz stopped by in Hahns-Au. Immediately our congregation was called together to hear a message by Pastor Seremba. He spoke on the theme: "For God so loved the world...". Among other things he emphasized the idea that when churches get together for fellowship, one should put less emphasis on that which separates us, and more on that which unites us. In other words, the teaching of child baptism was very important to him, but this did not hinder him from accepting the Mennonites as brothers in Christ, and together with them labour in the work of the Master. "You too," he stated, "have a definite call to work among the Kyrgyz". In his closing prayer he remembered the work among this tribe and that of the Jaklmuecken. In the afternoon the whole ministerial was assembled at Elder Wall's which I also attended. We had an edifying discussion. Pastor Seremba had earlier been in Persia as a missionary; now travelling through Russia in the interests of the Missions Organization for the Evangelical Churches of Russia. May the Lord bless his efforts.
8. Sunday. Our guests plan to leave today. P. Horn preached on today's Text: The ten lepers.
9. This morning we went to the Walls to bid farewell to our guests, Wiens and Schmidt. Before they left, our Elder suggested singing a few verses of the song: "They, who journey with God", after which we all took leave in a most intimate manner, with many good wishes and blessings for them on their way. May the Lord go with them. In the afternoon the Prussian

guests visited us, having coffee with us. Later we accompanied them to Koepenthal where we bade them farewell. May the Lord also go with them.

- 11–14. Very small attendance in school. The weather is rainy and cold. I am giving the globe a coat of paint every day.
18. I am working with a wall map now, as well as drawing the parallels on the globe. At the same time I am writing a Nature Study text. Only 5 children in school today. We dug our potatoes today; they have yielded well. The Lord be praised for the bounty of his provisions.
22. Sunday. Father preached today. In the afternoon we were at D. H.'s celebrating his birthday.
27. Today I drew the meridian lines on the globe. We bought 10 apple—and 5 cherry trees today, and dug the holes to plant them.
29. Sunday. For the second time His Excellency attended our worship service. D. H. preached on the epistle for the St. Michael's festival: Revelation 12:7. In the afternoon we visited Marie's parents, where His Exc. was stopping by after seeing the brick works. He is accompanied by a young son of the estate owner—a very friendly young man. His Exc. is said to be very happy about the good progress this settlement has made.

### **October 1857**

1. This evening after the stars were out, I gathered some of my students to look at the stars which we had studied about yesterday, showing them the important constellations and star formations.
- 4–5. Today Marie's parents are slaughtering, in which we are taking part. I also finished the sideboard which served to salt the meat. It is very stormy today with dust. During the evening our little Jacobus took seriously ill.
6. Sunday. Thanksgiving festival! Jacobus is very sick.
7. Our little son has complained a lot during the night, which was very hard to hear, since we did not know how to help him. We are glad that we can rely on the One who is able to help, and we called on Him. After a while he seemed better for which we thank the Lord.
11. Yesterday Jacobus was quite sick again. Today is feeling better. I finished the sketches on the globe with chalk. Besides that I worked in the garden, and made a carpenter's bench.
12. I went to the village office to see about an increase in salary. I tied up the trees with sacks, and later went to Koepenthal to see B. Epp and visit my parents, getting home after dark.
17. School attendance has improved. I am very busy with all kinds of writing for the classes. Today is the 24th wedding anniversary of my uncle C. Claassen as well as the wedding day of his daughter—my cousin, Margarethe Claassen. I am writing a letter to my uncle for this occasion.
- 18–19. In between I am writing Geography, Nature Study and German Grammar for the children to copy into their books. I also worked in the barn, cleaning and getting it ready for winter.
24. Today I laboured all day with “Schnupfenfieber” (running nose fever), but I didn't lie down until evening. The K. parents were here as well as D. H.
30. At school all day. After school I joined Marie at the Abr. Froeses where they were slaughtering.

### **November 1857**

- 1–2. Some snow and storm these days. I put up the storm windows in the schoolroom and glued up some slates. In other words, I was very busy.
3. Sunday. Last night more snow. The cattle were kept at home for the first time. After the service P. Horn officiated at the wedding of neighbour Funk. C. Froeses came by sleigh to visit us. –10 Frost.

- 4. I am writing material for Nature Study and World History.
- 9. Very busy today. Father stopped by here for dinner on his way back from Lindenau to Koeppenthal. Marie went to J. H. to do her mangling.
- 24. All Souls' Day D. H. preached on the words: "You have been weighed and been found wanting." After dinner Abr. Froese got us for a visit at their house.

### **December 1857**

- 1. Sunday. There was a brotherhood meeting in the afternoon. Various concerns were discussed: The celebration of Holy Communion; the reception of the Dueck family, and Bestvater; the disagreement between J. Epp and the Elder; and finally the use of "Demokratenbaerte" (Democratic-beards). There were negative reactions by the Horns and P. Toews about the last concern.
- 2. The Inspector arrived late yesterday evening to take care of receiving the oaths of the new immigrants. The concern of the beards was also referred to. The Inspector decided that the beards needed to be shorn.
- 5. This week we finally received the regular school desks, for which I had really been waiting.
- 8. Sunday. As a result of the cold weather, I came down with a bad cold, so that I went to bed after dinner. Brother-in-law brought us a rabbit roast, which was consumed at suppertime, but without me. I developed a high fever, which, however, let up later in the evening. Father preached today.
- 10. This morning I had to come to the "Schulzenberathung" (village council meeting) to report on various things. This afternoon the persons who were part of the church disagreements were called together at Elder Wall's for a mediation meeting.
- 11. At yesterday's meeting various opinions and views were expressed, so that the meeting adjourned in strained relations.
- 13. This morning Elder Wall spent some time with me. We talked about the church matter. Elder Wall cannot feel convinced that monetary means should be used to reach a peaceful agreement between him and F. Epp, as suggested by Epp. This matter is too closely connected with the entire church, and "Peace" cannot be bought with money. At this time I am fully in agreement with Elder Wall's view.
- 15. Sunday. Since the celebration of Holy Communion has been postponed (because of the church dispute), Rev. Horn preached a very forceful sermon of admonition, which could have been very effective. In the afternoon we visited at the J. Hamms. Hamm and I discussed the present unsettling situation in our church. The Lord knows how it will be resolved; may He accomplish what we cannot do.
- 20. Today the hired help left. Right after dinner I closed the school. It will remain closed until after the New Year week. I spent a short time with Uncle Epp, who in his usual manner gave me his viewpoints on the existing church conflict. According to his way of thinking the whole problem lies in the fact that Ohm Wall is right,—or our higher government authorities?
- 21. Today I went to Koeppenthal with Elder Wall and father Hamm, from there to the market at Warenburg. On our way it got much colder, so that I was thoroughly chilled when we got there. At the market everybody complained of the cold. Going back I had to be the chauffeur; it was actually quite pleasant since the cold had let up.

I was surprised when I stopped at the H. parents, that the thermometer actually read -20 degrees. Magarethe's birthday was being celebrated at the H. parents' place. My wife and the other siblings had come for that occasion.

- 22. Sunday. Today -17 and very cold. Father preached. In the afternoon H. Jantzens, Martens, and P. Jantzens were here. We prefer to stay very close to the stove.

23. After working in the barn and cleaning it, I went to Hortels with H. Jantzen to get some bookshelves. Later we had coffee at Hamms'. We went home early since there was to be a district office election.
24. Today I set up and arranged the bookshelves. Due to a cold, I came down with a fever again, but was able to be up and around.
25. Christmas Day, first holiday. D. H. preached on the appropriate Christmas text. Theme: "The birth of Christ, the crowning love of God." The sermon ended with "Peace on earth" and a few remarks referring to the church disputes. During the singing of the closing song, I was struck by the words in the last verse, which seemed to have been composed just for our present circumstances. It seemed to me the powers of darkness were sworn to condemn us. Therefore the prayer was so suitable: "Gracious God! Turn our sorrow and pain; Blot out the unrighteous flame!" Oh! that the celebration of Christmas may bring us **peace** again, so that with all our hearts we may recognize Him, and with both hands grasp His offer of salvation, accepting it with thanksgiving. Then, yes then all quarrels and strife, all enmity would disappear as the fog dissipates in the sunshine. Lord Jesus come and make your dwelling with us. Amen.

The Koeppenthal parents were here for dinner and coffee. Later Marie and I went to the Hamm parents. Jacobus stayed at home with the girls, Lenchen and Sannchen. There is quite a lot of snow by now, so we have a good sleighing track.

26. Christmas—second holiday. Very good church attendance for both holidays.
- 29–30. Good church attendance on Sunday. School was in session today, 30th, but only 10 students showed up. I closed early, since preparations had to be made for the brotherhood meeting tomorrow.
31. This morning a meeting was held regarding the postponed Communion celebration, which is now to be held next Sunday and the next day (Epiphany). Other matters for discussion were: Seats with backs were to be made for elderly or handicapped persons. In connection with this, objections were made about those who selected preferred seats in church. Positive responses were given to both these matters. J. E. has admitted his shortcomings, so we are confident that with this meeting, peace has been restored, and the misunderstandings liquidated. We have reason to hope that as a result, from here on there will be unity and harmony in our church. May the Lord, before whom we must all humbly bow, bring about a festive change from the Old Year to the New. May He also bless the celebration of Holy Communion to us all. Amen.

## 1858

### January 1858

1. New Years' Day. D. H. gave the message: "The Name of Jesus, our banner." We visited at Cl. Epps in the afternoon. The weather was very pleasant, so that I could drive all the way with a light coat.
15. The Communion services on the 5th and 6th of January were not too well attended. The reason was probably not because of the past conflict in the church, but rather that among the new immigrants it was not customary to attend more than once a year.

Last week I came down with a high fever again, so that I was quite bed-fast, and somewhat delirious at times. I had visitors: father Hamm, D. H., Esau and J. H., but did not really enjoy the visits. On Friday and Saturday brother Jacob came to help Marie with the chores. By Sunday I could leave my bed for part of the day, and by Monday I was able to work at my writing all day. School has been postponed until next Monday, but I am able to read and write in preparation for the classes. All the hired help is gone, so that Marie and Sannchen have to do all the chores. It is quite hard for them, especially with all the heating.

19. Sunday. Thank God I have again more or less recuperated. Yesterday Abr. Froese and brother Jacob were here to help us out. Today I could again attend the worship service. In the afternoon we went to the Hamm parents.

23–25. This week I was at school again. However I seem to have caught a cold, and feel feverish.

26. Sunday. I did not go to the service today, since I feel obligated to conserve my strength.

27. This morning we received the news that D. Penners' little Marie died last night. The Lord has planted her into the heavenly garden at an early age, so that she might be spared this troublesome life on earth. To God be the praise! I was asked to write the funeral invitations, which I brought to the Penners. I spent some time with them over a cup of tea.

## **February 1858**

5. Today Jacobus has been quite sick, especially in the evening. May the Lord keep him; His will be done. We have had a snowstorm all day.

6. Jacobus is very sick today. Who knows what purpose the Lord has for him and us. This evening according to previous arrangements, 5 men came to me for Russian language study: H. Penner, Gerh. Wall, D. Toews, D. Epp and J. Hamm. These classes will be held 3 times a week until Easter.

7. Jacobus is still not better. Involuntarily the thought has come to me that we may have to give him up. With this in mind I pled with the Lord for the life of this child yesterday. All day he has whimpered without eating, only drinking a bit.

9. This morning Jacobus is quite a bit better. I began cleaning the grain.

10. Again Jacobus is very sick, mainly sleeping, without food, except liquids. He has lost a lot of weight. We are really worried about him. We are finding it very hard to say: "Lord, your will be done." We are so attached to this friendly, lovable child, who gives us so much joy.

11. I closed school early today because of the holiday coming up. I made use of this extra time to visit sick people, as Anna Hamm, who is very sick, and father Hamm, who had an attack this morning. This evening we had our Russian class again.

12. Day of repentance. Father preached on Isaiah 5:2–7: "The right repentance". 1. consists not of outward actions, but 2. of the inward attitude of the heart. Attendance was poor. Jacobus is somewhat better; he slept well at night. Also sister-in-law Anna has improved, as well as father H. The K. parents were here for the afternoon.

14. Jacobus is mostly out of bed or the cradle, but seems to whimper a lot. We are now hoping for recovery.

23. Sunday. –23 today and with a strong wind very cold. Church attendance meagre. Jacobus has fever again today.

25. Jacobus is quite cheerful today. Mother seems to be unwell. No doubt Jacobus' sickness, as well as the difficult household circumstance of brother D. Kl. is very depressing for mother. One wishes that it would not be so, but the Lord will undertake. He is our strong fortress.

26. The Hamm parents were here for the afternoon. This is quite a rare occurrence, since father H. seldom comes to visit.

## **March 1858**

2. Sunday. After the instruction class we went to parents.

5. for the last three days we have had a terrible storm with snow, but not heavy frost. Now towards evening the wind has died down, temperature at 0.

8. This morning I cleaned grain, and did my "Saturday" work in my part of the household. In the evening the K. parents were here.

9. Sunday. Father preached on the theme: "Who can show me one sin?..." 1. The greatness of our sin; 2. The greatness of Christ's love; 3. The greatness of our responsibility.
12. In the afternoon I had an attack of vertigo, so that I lay down after school. I began to throw up, which lasted until 10 p.m. After that I slept quite well, and felt much better by morning.
14. Thaw-weather today. The snow is melting fast, so that sleighing is over. Uncle Epp came back from Samara, so I had to see him about small details concerning land exchanges for the colonists.
16. Palm Sunday. According to arrangements land dealings have been made at C. Epps today, Sunday!
17. I have to sketch some plans, so can't have classes today. This afternoon I went to Cl. Epps for the third time with the plans.
19. School closed at noon today. 3 of my best students left today: F. Hamm, Peter Wall, and Agathe Klaassen. I gave them a brief farewell message, reminding them of the foundation of our faith, which is Jesus Christ and His merit as the only way to our salvation.
20. Maundy Thursday. A mild +6 today. The water is flowing in gushes down slopes, making its way through gardens and yards, which does not please us. This morning I worked around the household and did some writing. Among other things I made an outline for Nature Study. It was quite pleasant working in the unheated schoolroom.
21. Good Friday. Peter Horn preached today. The church was still heated, but probably wouldn't have been necessary.
23. Easter Day, first holiday. Elder Wall preached on Revelation: 5:5. In the afternoon we visited the Hamm parents.
24. Easter, second holiday. Father preached on Mark 9:10. Theme: "What is the meaning of the resurrection from the dead?" In the afternoon I went to Koeppenthal to see my parents. We took a walk to the canals through which the water is rushing with great force to the Warschau. It was still quite cool.
- 28-31. Some rain and sleet. After school I went to pay the postal account. I ordered some feed chops at the village office, and began to work in the garden, digging up the flower plot.

### **April 1858**

1. School has been closed for seeding and garden work. I finished raking what I had begun in fall, and levelled the flower-beds. Towards evening I measured off Abr. Martens' building site. Temperature +10.
2. I ordered seeds for the garden. Marie set out "Pfoetz" around the flower-beds. Seeding is in full swing.
4. I planted acacia seedlings around the flower plot at the Hamm parents today.
6. Sunday. The first really nice, clear day. J. Wall preached.
7. I planted potatoes. The cows were taken to pasture for the first time.
9. My mother came for dinner, then, together with Marie, went to the Hamm parents. It was a most beautiful evening ever: the moon was in the first quarter, the air perfectly calm and mild. +10.
10. Today I set out 2 aspen trees and 8 acacia stems. +18.
12. We planted 8½ rows of potatoes, perhaps the last for this spring. We also sowed large millet around each side of the garden.
13. Sunday. Some frost this morning and quite cool. Father preached on Ps. 139:22-24. "Search me, O God, and know my heart..." We went to the H. parents to celebrate father's birthday. He has reached his 68th year. This year he has not been as strong as usual, seemingly he is losing his vitality. May the Lord be with him and keep him to the end of his days.
14. Mother Klaassen's birthday today. We celebrated it as usual in the midst of siblings and D. and J. Hamms. Mother is 65 years old. Her strength is also beginning to ebb rather than

remaining stable, although her heart is sound. May the Lord guard her coming and going in Christ Jesus, now and evermore, and help her to reach His heavenly kingdom. We had a good rain shower—no doubt it soaked the roots of the new seedlings. The soil was getting to be very dry.

**15. Another birthday—my own.** One year after another recedes from my life. Yes, indeed! And I am daily reminded of this when I take note of the days in school; also as I write my diary. Days, weeks, months, years, and finally decades follow one another as pearls on a string. Soon my 1st three-decade period will be gone. Perhaps I will complete the 2nd three-decade, but a 3rd three-decade certainly not, since the human lifespan lasts perhaps 70 years, and if long, 80. Already I harbour the thought, that although I am in the prime of life, yet I am coming nearer to life's goal by each passing day. Still, I don't know the reason, but might it not be grace? This is a comforting thought, because, although I feel content in my career, my marriage and my circumstances, yet daily I feel I am not completely at home, that I have no permanent abode, but am waiting for one in the future. And what is it that a person searches for and discovers? It is always something better, more perfect, more beautiful than what one has. This already shows and is a guarantee that there is something, somewhere, that is not only better, more perfect and more beautiful, but best, most perfect and most beautiful. "What no eye has seen, and no ear has heard...God has prepared for those who love Him."

Oh, for loving in this way I daily feel my shortcomings! O Lord, my God and Saviour! Look down on me in your mercy this day, and grant me your grace. I know not whether I will see many more birthdays during my lifetime. However, I know that one day I will depart from here and will give account before you. Oh, grant that I may not be found naked, but may be clothed with the robe of righteousness which you have acquired; so that I may enter into the wedding reception to be with you in all eternity. Amen.

- 16.** School began again today, but I had only the Jantzen children. I held classes with them in our room, since it was too cold in the schoolroom.
- 17.** Today even the Jantzen children were absent, so the only pupil I had was Jacob Schmidt, with whom I had a few activities. Last night and all this day we had a very big storm which brought havoc to our garden, dumping sand over a large area.
- 18.** We had rain tonight. In the morning I transplanted wild rose-stems and acacias, which sister Penner brought from the Steppes. Marie and I walked to Koeppenthal this afternoon. On our way back we saw a "Steppe-fire" on the other side of the Warsaw (River).
- 19.** Today I sketched the continents of Europe and the Americas onto the globe. I had done Australia earlier. I also worked in the garden.
- 20. Sunday.** In the afternoon the candidates for confirmation recited the Catechism. Later we went to J. Jantzens for coffee, where the bridal couple was visiting.
- 21.** Since I had very few students, I sketched the continents of Africa and Asia onto the globe, so all of the continents are on it. There is always work to do in the garden after school.
- 23.** In between-time I sketched the colony of Hans-Au with pencil. I intend to send this to Prussia. I also finished a slate with phonics for the students.
- 26.** This evening we received many letters, also concerning the Orloff-journey.
- 28.** The Honourable Elder wishes to have a substitute Elder and so has mentioned having an election. This is to be held at Easter, last holiday. May the Lord be gracious to us in showing us the right man.
- 29.** I am sketching the rivers onto the globe.

## May 1858

- 1. Ascension Day.** We have had rain all day. In the afternoon the confirmants gave their testimonies.

6. At Vesper, His Exl. the Honourable Chief Mayor came here quite unexpectedly.
7. We are having very good growing weather. However, last Sunday the storm damaged the young vegetables so much that they look as if they were frozen. It is quite sad. But with the rains no doubt they will recover.
- 8–9. Today two wings fell off the windmill. I have cleaned up for the holidays almost all day.
11. Pentecost, first holiday. Father preached about the respective text: the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles.
12. Pentecost, second holiday. The 15 baptismal candidates were baptized today.
13. Today under the Lord's guidance a new Elder was elected, as substitute to Elder Wall, and in the case of his incapability or death. With a very large majority of 93 against 16, (15 for P. Horn and 1 for father) our dear brother-in-law, David Hamm, was elected. This large majority could be seen as evidence of the concurrence of God, the Lord, and is reason for praise for His great grace. Although the newly elected has not accepted this position officially, we all hope that he will. May the Lord qualify him for this service, to the praise of His wonderful Name and to the salvation and blessing of His church!
14. After school J. H. and I visited with D. H. Towards evening Horn's son Henry drove up with the message that I should come to Koeppenthal, because mother had suddenly become very sick. Marie and I both went immediately. We found mother with severe pain in her abdomen and very weak. She was given enemas, which, however, didn't help. Finally around 9 p.m., she felt somewhat better, so we left with D.H. and J.H. at 10:30.
15. Early this morning I went to Koeppenthal to see how mother was doing. I found her much better; she had slept well at night, and her pain was gone. The Lord be praised for His help.
17. This morning I made a flower-box and wrote an outline for Church History, which I had begun earlier. Our garden looks very good again. We are having a wonderful spring. This evening 3 large wagons of workers arrived, among them also our girl.
23. This evening H. and I went to the village meeting to pay the postal dues. Among other topics the concern about cattle-seizures was discussed. It has been found that other sellers have begun to bring their cattle to feed on our pastures, and some armed "Patrouille" (patrols) hide to ambush our cattle tenders. Unfortunately, this discussion resulted in a violent debate with Uncle Cl. Epp, who considered suggestions as commands, and rejected these with very forceful expressions.
25. Sunday. Today half of our congregation observed Holy Communion. There were 76 communicants. Towards evening we visited Marie's parents.
26. We went to Abr. Froeses, Koeppenthal with D. H. where brother Jacob held a farewell tea, since he is leaving for Samara in a few days. 30 persons were present.
30. Cool weather today. In between I am working on an outline for Church History. At 11 p.m. yesterday the D. Klaassens had a baby girl, Katherina.

## June 1858

1. Sunday. Today we had Communion with the other half of our congregation. Marie went to Koeppenthal at noon. Sister-in-law is doing quite well.
7. D. H. and I went to Warenburg today for various business details. Had a heavy rain in the evening.
12. After school I went to Koeppenthal to J. Hamm, who, with Esau and Toews had returned from land investigation and inspection<sup>50</sup> 40 verst behind the upper German colony. They found an estate of 7028 dessiatine, half of it very good land, the other half not arable. It belongs to a Count Tosecmou.

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50 This is the beginning of a rather lengthy process to establish the Alexandertal Colony also known as the Alt-Samara Colony.



13. Today both our parents visited us, which is a rare occasion. I went to the steppes with father where he talked to me about brother Jacob's interests in buying land. Father believes that among the main reasons for Hamm and Toews in this venture is the growing tension between them and Cl. Epp. The latter always deals very harshly with them; and they in turn get into an agitated mood, so that the relationship between them and Cl. Epp has been a rather deplorable one. Each occasion seems to result in a more or less passionate conflict. May the Lord change the situation.
14. Today I framed the picture: "Yushanlee".<sup>51</sup>
15. Sunday. Early this morning A.F., D.K., D.H. and I left for Warenburg. We stopped at the Moritzes and then attended the worship service, which was led by Pastor Hoelz. In the afternoon we visited with the teacher for a while, then went to the youth instruction class held in the school.
16. For some time we have had more regular school attendance. Abr. Jantzen and J. Martens have been elected as School Trustees.
19. Abr. Froese and Esau were here after Vesper. The latter returned from Caramow and reported that the land purchase is proceeding, though it may take some time. The young man P. is very enthused about the land purchase, and would rather plough today than tomorrow, let alone waiting for another year.
21. Today I made the great pyramid in the garden and various other things. In the evening I went outside for a while with Jacobus, and was so pleased that he noticed the stars, and pointed to each of the larger ones as it appeared in the sky as darkness descended. In his own way he had a remark to make about each one, even though he still could not speak a word. Brother-in-law D.Hamm, who was here later, jokingly said: "He will be an astronomer some day." I am sure that he will not, but if in early childhood he reads of the great wonders of God's works, and learns to praise the Creator, then that would be much more valuable than mere knowledge about the stars.

Recently when we were in Warenburg we learned that there has been an investigation about working on other peoples' land, namely on the Trakt. It is interesting how some people feel that the whole "Trakt" belongs to them, and no one can pick a quarrel with that. So they have ploughed year after year without checking whether they have a legal right to this. It is known that an important Russian had rented land from the colony, then rented it to a second, who rented it to others, and so on. Finally, it was discovered, and all the renters have had to pay 10 silver rubles per Dessj. There have been those who have had to pay quite a sum. One is supposed to have paid 400 silver rubles, perhaps even more. All of Warenburg has had to pay 40,000 silver rubles. Those who couldn't pay have received corporal punishment. This is what it means to be subject to the government. The Pastor mentioned this incident in his message.

23. Our neighbours, C. Fast have experienced great sorrow when their oldest son was buried last Wednesday. Today the youngest and last son, Cornelius, died, and is to be buried next Wednesday. May the Lord comfort the family in their sorrow. The little ones are well taken care of in the hands of the Saviour.

The new Chief Magistrate, Fleischier, is expected in Saratov anytime. The old man has retired and is leaving for St. Petersburg. May the Lord grant him grace as he retires. He has done much for the settlers here.

25. In the afternoon we were at the funeral of the youngest son of C. Fart. Both sons died of the dysentery, which is quite common at this time. Thinking of our Jacobus, this funeral made a deep impression on me, so that I had quite a struggle to overcome. Later in the evening I went for a walk in the garden, where, after much thoughtful prayer, I realized that

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<sup>51</sup> Sometime before his death in 1848 Johann Cornies had printed an engraved drawing of his large Yushamlee estate.

the two little sons resting so peacefully in the grave, were actually fortunate above our little son at the moment sleeping in his cradle. I almost felt that they were to be envied. May the Lord keep our little one, that he may grow up to the honour and glory of His kingdom. In all, may His will be done.

27. This evening brother-in-law Froese and brother Jacob, who arrived yesterday, were here. The results of their trip are very positive. The beginning of the settlement there seems to be planned for next year. H. Penner and Ewert are spearheading it. It seems that a private Russian, who has been chosen as agent of the Volga Steamship Line, has assured us that this piece of land will definitely be available for us. Brother Jacob is building his hopes on this. Furthermore, Uncle Epp has recently received a written document from the Samara governor, which says that according to the mandate given by the R. Honourable Minister, Marawjest is offering the Mennonites the "Kronsforme" for settlement. It seems certain that the Mennonites have received the mandate to transplant their agriculture to the outermost borders of Europe. Could it be that in the near future a great emigration may follow? It seems strongly evident; but time will tell.

### **July 1858**

1. The weather is very warm: +26.50.
6. Sunday Father preached. Yesterday the deacon, Joh. Dueck of Broeske, arrived here with his son and a young Bartel by steamship to Saratov. Jacobus was quite sick last night, but somewhat better today.
7. After school today I took Marie to J. Hamms, where B. Epp, the secretary of the crown, D. Klaassen, D. Dueck and father had come to sign an application for a "Teacher's" library. Jacobus is quite well today.
11. Today I closed school, since it is harvest time. The children have begun to be absent.
12. All day I have written Church—and World History.
13. Sunday. D. H. preached. We went to Marie's parents in the afternoon.
16. Today we were in Koeppenthal for the school examinations. There were about 40–42 students, and quite a group of visitors. The examination was rather weak, and in some subjects, such as Bible and World History, quite boring.
17. From early morning till late at night I have worked on an outline for World—and Church History. I am now as far as the Mohammedans. Last evening I attended the testing of the Koeppenthal reaping-machine at Walter Hofacker's. The thing cuts very smoothly and takes a big swath; but no one can keep up with sheaving. The machinist, Mr. Steinberg, has been here since Monday, and has been very busy keeping both machines going.
20. Sunday. +29 degrees yesterday, the highest temperature so far.
26. During the 14 days of holiday, I strained my eyes from all the reading and writing, so I have been doing other things today.
30. It is a pleasure to see the rich blessings of God on the steppes. Unfortunately hired help is hard to get this year, since the workers are quite unconscientious and often purposely walk away, whenever they wish.
31. This evening D. H. sprained his hand severely by falling from the fodder-wagon. He came to father and M. H. for help, which he immediately received.

### **August 1858**

1. Cl. Epp just returned from Saratov.
2. Today I cleaned upstairs, rearranged the grain-box and reworked the flour bin among other things. The grain is almost all harvested, except for millet; people are busy storing it.

3. Sunday. Father preached on the Gospel of John: 1. What God gave us in Christ; 2. What Christ gave us; 3. What we should give Christ. Marie went to Koeppenthal to my parents; I followed later, after the instruction class.
6. Yesterday a sad accident happened in Lindenau, when a hut collapsed where the carpenters slept, killing one man. 6 men were saved, only one of these hurt.
8. Today the inspector was here, looking into the incident at Lindenau. All week I have written letters, and worked on World-and Church History. Yesterday I broke the lower rows of tobacco with father, piling it onto the upstairs floor. People are more or less finished with harvesting; there is a lot of straw, but the question is, how much grain? The weather is dry, but not too warm. Wednesday we had night frost.
13. Yesterday evening His Exc. the Governor of Samara arrived here. He is staying at the Cl. Epps.
15. I am now half way through writing World and Church History.
16. Today the first of this year's emigrants arrived from Prussia: P. Epps. They travelled only 7 weeks. There were 6 wagons.
18. Today I began surveying again: the acreage at Lindenau, at the "Spitzbuben" area and beyond.
19. Today I had a severe dizzy spell on the fields, so that I had to go home. I lay all afternoon, and still feel very sick. Later in the evening I was able to get up for a bit.
20. I received a map of the Holy Land, which I had ordered from Warenburg.
21. J. H. and Esau were here this morning. They are working on plans for the church building. The new immigrant, P. Epp has offered a good sum of money for this project.
24. Sunday. After the worship service we went to Koeppenthal. The proposed building of a church is on everyone's mind now. Unfortunately, there is much disagreement, and here in Hahnsau even many who directly oppose the idea. The main quarrel is where to build: In Hahnsau or Koeppenthal? The majority is for Koeppenthal, mainly because of the lower cost, rather than the convenience of the place. O Lord! look down on us graciously, and guide our thoughts and actions towards harmony, so that your house may be built in unity, the house where you are to be honoured and proclaimed; and not one which becomes a "den of thieves".

Several wagons of new immigrants arrived this morning. Last night there was a big brawl among the hired men, by which one man has been sorely injured.

26. Today I did some measuring on the fields at Lindenau. At dusk His Exc., the Chief Judge arrived quite unexpectedly. He is staying with P. E.
27. In order to be at home during the time His Exc. would be here, I did not go out to the fields today. I was hoping that His Exc. would visit the school, but he was not able to come. In order at least to see him I went to Marie's parents, where I stayed for coffee. D. Kl. was there too. His Exc. left for Warenburg at 4 p.m.
29. Today I went out to do some measuring together with Siebert and Susie Quiring. When I got back after 5 p.m. I found a number of church members gathered at the church grounds to plan for the construction of the church. The dissension about the concern is just now beginning to break open, since the parties of both sides are very hostile to each other. The old saying holds true also in this case: "Where the Lord builds a church, the devil builds a chapel nearby". What will be the outcome? Lord, come into our midst and help us, even though we do not deserve it.
31. Sunday. Father preached. The parents were here for dinner and went with us to H. Jantzens, where Cl. Epps and M. Hamms were also visiting. Uncle Epp began the discussion about the church building plans. According to his figures, building a church in

Hahnsau<sup>52</sup> would be just minimally more expensive than in Koeppenthal. One cannot say too much about this fact, but things may look quite differently from the other side.

### September 1858

1. More surveying today.
2. Frost today. We broke the last tobacco. The inspector has come to see about the brawl in Koeppenthal.
3. We went to see the parents in Koeppenthal. Today at the "Schulzenamt" the inspector carried out the punishment for the persons involved in the brawl. Three of them received lashes.

\*\* Since about 8 days ago we have seen a comet<sup>53</sup> between the star clusters: the "Little Lion" and the "Big Bear". Tonight it was clearly visible.

Concerning the building of a church, the Koeppenthalers, being very wrought up about the matter, have signed a written request, co-signed by the Lindenau people, without regard to the people of Hahnsau, to build a church at Koeppenthal. (Father and Rev. Horn did not sign.) The request was to be submitted, after no other negative statements were made, without further delay. However, F. Doerksen, together with Esau were under the conviction that they could not conscientiously go along with this petition, and tried to convince a few others. So now only a few stipulations, which we hope will be accepted, need to be met with regards to building the church here in Hahnsau. May the Almighty God grant His blessing to this undertaking.

4. This morning I talked to B. Epp about the building concern. He too is hopeful that with this new turn of events, a peaceful settlement will soon be underway. Today we began to dig our potatoes.
7. Sunday. Today we celebrated the installation of the dear friend of my youth, cousin, and brother-in-law, David Hamm, as Elder of this local church, and associate Elder to Elder P. Wall. He has undertaken a difficult task, especially at this time when there is so much dissension, when Satan, through a spirit of disunity has caused such a rift in the congregation. Of course, D. H. has not taken on this responsibility on the basis of his own strength, but much more on the thousands of promises which the Lord, in whom he trusts, has given. May the Lord, the true and faithful shepherd, grant to this His "under-shepherd" His Spirit and the gifts of His Spirit to discharge the duties of his office according to His will and pleasure, to His glory and to the salvation and blessing of his entrusted congregation.
10. I was in Lindenau again this morning to do some more measuring and reporting. I returned home at 2 p.m., and immediately sketched my plan measurements.
11. I had many interruptions today: Elder Wall was here about the church building plans, and later D. H. with the same concern; then towards evening P. Dueck came to ask about Russian language instruction. D. Epp brought me a letter from Doerksen.
12. Today we had a lot of visitors: sister-in-law Mich. Hamm, mother from Koeppenthal, later father, A. Froese, and brothers Dietr. and Jacob Kl. In the evening there was a brotherhood meeting at which the church building concerns were discussed. J. Hamm and Esau were not there, since they were away on business of land purchases. As representatives of the Hahnsau party, only B. and Abr. Froese made their ideas known. Since the other party is at the head of the collective pastoral ministry, and insists that the decision has to be made by the committee, it was impossible to come to a unified decision. The people attending the meeting parted peacefully, but certainly not satisfied with the outcome. This was very true in

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52 In the Dairy this name is given as Hahnsau

53 This was known as the *Great Comet of 1858*, also called the *Donati Comet*, and was one of the most impressive comets of the nineteenth century. It was visible for several months and has an orbit of about 2,000 years. It is officially designated as *1858 VI Donati*.

my case. I cannot give either one of the parties my wholehearted approval, and certainly not to the pastoral ministry for the way they are handling the problem. May the Lord allow it to be resolved peacefully, but also may we allow Him free reign.

14. Sunday. This evening I had a good view of the comet in a clear sky. It seems it is always coming closer. I sketched its course in D. H's "Planet-globe". It is situated almost in one line (a bit to the right) of the last tail-star of the Big Bear (Great Dipper) and the Star "Eiche" (oak), or "Prinz Karl II" (Prince Charles II's) in the area of the "hunting-hounds": about half the distance and a little below these last two.

16. Marie is washing today. It has been a hard day for her since she had no help.

17. Today I went to the shoemaker, Stoerkel, with footwear to be repaired. On the way back I met Uncle Epp, and stopped to talk to him for a while. However, during our conversation I talked myself into a rather "unholy emotional outburst", which later I duly regretted, since it does not become a younger relative to talk in this manner to one of such superior rank. So right after dinner I went to him to confess my mistake, and make amends.

Yesterday evening, Uncle Epp called the Hahnsau neighbours together with his party, making the recommendation that the present Schoolroom will remain, as before, serving both as classroom and worship area. If Koeppenthal wants to build a new church, they may do as they wish. He had mentioned this to me before dinner, which was the reason for my impulsive outburst. The separation of the two congregations is a foregone conclusion.

18. I am working on the partitions of the Lindenau acreages, sketching it on the plan to be presented to the authorities. This was done in the evening at Lindenau, and the plan was accepted.

19. Today I had to figure out by how much the Church lot was lower than the village street. I found it to be 7 feet.

Yesterday D. Toews has made a marriage proposal to sister-in-law Margarethe. When I was at Wall's at noon, father Hamm was there too with the purpose of refusing the marriage proposal, because his daughter, Margarethe could not make a decision as yet.

20. Yesterday Esau, Cl. Epp and Abr. Jantzen went to the estate "Kronsferme" to find that the estate would be sold or rented to others. In the evening I measured the tail of the comet, finding it 25 degrees.<sup>54</sup> For the third time I entered the findings into D.H.'s map. The comet could be at its largest now.

21. Sunday. In the evening we walked over to Marie's parents, to hear what D. Toews had accomplished. We learned that he has received a mostly positive answer, which pleases the parents. May the Lord grant His Yea and Amen to this.

22. I measured off homesteads at Lindenau today. In the evening Marie told me that Margarethe has refused definitely the marriage offer for the second time. May she never regret her decision.

27. Today the comet is to be at its largest, then become smaller.

29. Today classes began again.

30. Cl. Epp, Esau, J. Hamm, D. Toews are again on a trip, perhaps to Nowed-Usen, as the Governor has directed. It seems the Committee is anxious to give this piece of land to the Mennonites; the latter also anxious to take over, so that it is not lost to us. Cl. Epp, however, as it seems, would rather refuse the offer.

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54 Annotator's comment: Today with our vast increase in knowledge and use of technology would you, dear reader, know the technique of how to measure a comet? To our surprise, our ancestor Martin did indeed know this and he did it correctly! Professional Astronomers measured the tail of this *1858 VI Donati* comet as well and on 24th September (i.e. 2 October by the new style Gregorian calendar) also found its tail to be 25 degrees long. The eventually grew to be 60 degrees long before fading and disappeared late in October.

## October 1858

- 1-3. We are having good weather. The comet is receding more and more; partly because it loses itself in the evening glow, and vanishes in moonlight.
11. This morning I tied up the trees, and made a goose-pen. Father had given us 3 geese from Herman Jantzen, Koeppenthal. Towards evening I went to the village office for market-money. Abr. Jantzen was there with a complaint about one of the pupils. School is poorly attended—only 6 pupils.
17. No school today, since I had to rework the plan. In the afternoon I went to the office to pay the postal money, and submit another plan, which I have to rework again. I have been asked to sketch a small plan for Hahnsau, make a plan for the Lindenau acreages and stake off some land here at the village. So for next week school will need to remain closed. Abr. Jantzen has often talked about taking the children to Koeppenthal to school, because they miss too many days here, since I am asked to do all the surveying.
18. Today I cleaned up in the barn. At noon D. Dueck and Peter Hiebert, the local secretary, were here concerning the postal accounts.
- 21-22. These two days I have staked off the Lindenau acreages. It was quite cold.
25. Today I tied up the rest of the trees. In the afternoon J. Hamm took me to Koeppenthal where I measured the new location for the cemetery—nearer to the village.

\* According to the reports which J. Hamm and D. Dueck brought back from Saratov, where they had talked to the chief Judge himself, the location for the new church has been confirmed as Koeppenthal. However, Cl. Epp, who went to Saratov after these were back, tried to cancel this confirmation. What will be the outcome? Some of the old tensions will be renewed.

26. Sunday. Father preached a sermon of great depth, the contents were well worth thinking about.
27. Through Cl. Epp's trip to Saratov—he came home on Saturday—the church disputes have taken a turn for the worse. Cl. Epp has presented the problem to the Chief Magistrate from his point of view. The confirmation to build the church in Koeppenthal, which E. some time ago received from the “Comptoir” addressed to the pastoral committee, in the name of Elder Wall, however, got to Cl. Epp instead, and was kept by him, finally returned to the office. This is considered as well as cancelled. According to Cl. Epp, His Exc. is supposed to have been very astonished, that the Mennonites would falsify matters in such a way. He demanded of Epp to present his reasons in written form, which he most certainly will not fail to do.
28. Daily conversation concentrates more than ever on the church building project. May the Lord take things into His own hands, otherwise nothing will come of it.
29. After school I made various arrangements for tomorrow's pig butchering. Abr. Froese and brother Jacob came for night.
30. Father from Koeppenthal came to help with the butchering, as well as 7 other persons.

## November 1858

1. Today I fixed various things in the barn. In the afternoon I had another light attack of vertigo, but after a while I felt alright. D. H. and Joh. Dueck were here late afternoon. They said that Cl. Epp had only now sent the packet regarding the church construction to Elder Wall, via the local district secretary. Elder Wall took this document, together with the original edition, back to the “authority” giving his own justification as to the “Untruths” the Mennonites were accused of. In turn the “authority” wrote a long article about his activities and connections with the “Comptoir”, which is to be mailed soon. Joh. Dueck assesses the situation to be such that the confirmation to build the church in Koeppenthal may be validated without delay. This confirmation, however, seems to be only for the building of a school, since the

building of a church requires the confirmation of the Secretary of State. However, the Chief Judge seems to have understood "School" to mean a "Worship building", for which purpose, of course, it would definitely be used.

14. Today mother came from Koeppenthal, and later father and D. Hamm. Brother Jacob is planning to travel to the Molotschna in spring, and possibly settle down there in the area of Berdyansk. I am supposed to write a letter to Doerksen concerning this.

We are butchering the goose today.

15. Today I tried to catch up with all manner of household chores. Later I went to Abr. Froese to talk about the arrangement of the school, etc.

16–22. Many visitors during these days. Weather is mild, winter has not really set in.

23. Sunday. All Saints Day was celebrated today. Father preached about the 10 virgins. We visited at the D. Klaassens this afternoon.

24. This afternoon the village counsellors and the mayor were here to discuss the building of a "Vorhaus" to the school. Martens was to be the carpenter.

27. Today Uncle Epp, together with the secretary, left for Samara regarding concerns of the settlement. My schoolchildren are copying Christmas songs and New Year's Wishes.

30. Sunday. **First Advent**. D. H. preached on the theme: "Behold, your King comes to you..."

### December 1858

3. Today the newly arrived immigrants gave their oaths at the Mayor's office.

6. I have begun to sketch the map of Germany.

7. Sunday. Preparation Sunday for the celebration of Holy Communion. Today 22½ degrees frost.

8. Today there was sort of a meeting of the Hahnsau part of the congregation at Elder Wall's, for the purpose of justifying himself before the church and ministerial with regards to the accusations from the "Authority".

9. Today I had to come to Cl. Epps at the wish of the "Schulzenamt" to interpret for a Russian official with regards to revising the Revision. I got home only at 4:30 p.m.

10. Today is Jacobus's birthday. Praise and thanks be to you, Heavenly Father, that you have given us the joy of seeing our child well and happy on this day. Watch over him with your loving arms, and make him to be a citizen of your kingdom through Jesus Christ, the loving friend of children and sinners. We had invited both our parents to celebrate his birthday, as well as Abr. Jantzens.

13. This morning the youngest son of Fr. Wall died of the measles. This week there have been 3 deaths: a woman, a young woman and a child, a grave reminder for young and old. Today I had to write the funeral letter for F. Epp. Today also, uncle Epp has come home.

14. We attended the service of communion today, although my wife already felt a premonition of labour. She lay down immediately after the service, and at 5 p.m. she gave birth to a son. May the Lord, who called this earthly pilgrim into being, and called him to his heavenly kingdom at the same time, keep him in His grace in Christ Jesus, and make him an heir to His heavenly Kingdom to the praise of His most holy name.

15. My dear sick one together with the little one are doing unusually well. Maria slept quite well through the night, has a good appetite, and has no pain in any part of her body. The Lord be praised for this inexpressible grace. Sister Helena brought my mother the message, and so she and mother Hamm came, as well as Anna Hamm and sister-in-law Jantzen. Mother stayed for the night. In the afternoon father also came to see us.

16. All day and night Marie and the little one are doing very well. We named our new son Michael. However, since we couldn't quite decide what to name him, we invited father Hamm over, who wrote on a little piece of paper the name Michael; so he is named after his grandfather Michael (Hamm).

17. It is a joy to see how quickly my wife is improving, with no complications. She is getting stronger every day. The Lord be praised for this unexpected, undeserved grace. Mother and mother Hamm have been here most of the time, and Mrs. Bartel as well. Both my parents came for the afternoon, since I had promised to be a pall-bearer (for the first time here at the Volga). It was also the first body which was carried by 10 pall-bearers.
18. This afternoon brother Jacob was here telling us incidentally, that Margarethe Hamm had again given D. Toews the go ahead, but had also done the same to G. W.; as a result of which D. Toews withdrew his marriage proposal and went along with Loewens. This news affected Marie so much that she got quite sick, and we were obliged to get Bartels again. However, slowly she improved again.
20. Towards evening Mrs. Dansch came to help us until we can get a younger girl. I received a letter from Peter Claassen, Petershagen. Marie and the little one are well.
21. Sunday. Today the second communion service was celebrated. This time there were 101 communicants. Together with the previous time with 97, there were 198 altogether. Cl. Epp and Abr. Jantzen were absent. It seems Cl. Epp intends to segregate himself from the congregation. It sounds as if he has come to this decision because of a statement which D. Hamm is supposed to have made at a funeral service, having cursed B. Epp (according to Cl. Epp); and that “the measure is now full” (for D. Hamm or the clergy?). These two neighbours seem to have like minds these days, which perhaps is a good thing, but certainly not a long-lasting friendship. It may be more like a “Pilate-Herod” friendship. God, the Omniscient knows where and how this will all end. Otherwise, the enmity at present seems to have receded somewhat. However, it may be just temporarily, until a new offence from either side causes another fire to flare up.

Towards evening I went to the Hamm parents, where my parents also were visiting. Marie is well.

24. This morning I had to make some payments at the office. I also attended the “Schultzenamt” meeting where the fire insurance chief and fire insurance committee were elected. In the afternoon I was very busy preparing for worship service. Marie is up and around.
25. Christmas, First holiday. Father preached on Is. 61:1–3. I. The dignity and majesty of sending Jesus; II. The purpose of His coming into this world. Laud and honour be to God the Father, that He visited us from on High! In the afternoon, having no visitors, I wrote a letter to Uncle and Aunt Ens.
26. Second Holiday. I did not go to the service this morning, since we had no help.
27. Our visitors today were: Mich. Hamms, Bern. Epps, and D. Klaassens. We had quite a lively discussion. This winter there have been more wolves in the area, some have come quite close to the village.
30. This morning I learned that there has been confirmation of the building of the church—this time in Hahnsau. Cl. Epp has brought this confirmation along from Warenburg. We had a snow-storm today.
31. Today I have been writing and preparing for tomorrow. D. Hamms were here, telling us that recently letters have gone astray between the village and the school.

## 1859

### January 1859

1. New Year's Day. Again a year has gone by! As the waves of a stream carry the ship on and on, so the years go by one after another, and to the place of no return. Many are the experiences we have made, good and bad. If we look back at that which the Lord has done for us in the past year, we must confess with adoration that He has crowned the year with



His goodness. But if we look back at what we have done, the picture is depressing, for the enemy has succeeded in sowing seeds of enmity, which are growing well. Oh, that each one may bow in contrition and say: "O Lord! I am ashamed, for we have sinned and acted godlessly. Forgive our transgressions.

How will the church dispute finally end? What will result from this dissension? Will the ministers, as overseers of the church, find the right solution? Will they be able to leave all self-interests, and a great measure of self-denial, to act only under the guidance of the Spirit and strength of the Lord? O Lord! guide all our hearts and thoughts in obedience to you, that the house which is to be built may not become a den of thieves, but rather a temple, where your honour and presence abides. Amen.

Elder Wall preached on the theme: I. Lord, save us from ourselves; II. Take away all that displeases you; III. Give us all that makes us acceptable in your sight.

This afternoon we were left alone with our two little ones, since our German helper left at noon, and has not returned.

3. This morning I prepared for tomorrow's service, also the heating where with all. "Sannchen" came to help us again. Marie has had a headache all day. After coffee I went into the village, where I met Elder Wall on his way back from Cl. Epp. He invited me to come to his house where he read the report (received by Cl. Epp) of the decision as to where to build the church. Stated briefly, it said that as of now the church will be built in Hahnsau at the place formerly designated; and that all future petitions had to be handed in to the authorized person, Cl. Epp. On my way back I needed to place some orders with D. Hamm, which I signed and then went home.
4. Sunday. After the instruction class there was a meeting of the ministers and deaconate together with J. Hamm and Esau, when further steps about the church building project were to be decided. The outcome of this was that the time had come when the congregation and clergy (Dienst) needed to justify themselves before the higher authorities. For this purpose the Elders, together with Hamm and Esau, were to travel to Saratov.
5. Today I wrote Church History which I want to send along with Elder Wall to Saratov. Today for the first time Marie went on an outing with her family, (except for the head of the household) to see her parents. In the evening both elders were here to change a few things on the script.
6. Celebration of The Three Kings. I didn't attend the service, since I was still plagued with a cough and fever. After I had taken care of the heaters, I lay down. Meanwhile, my old friend, the "fever-sniffles" made its appearance, with the usual complications. It is quite cold today.
7. Today I was in school again, but only had 4 students, and I was still feeling sick. We are having a hard time of it at present—Marie is still not entirely well, and has to be up at night very often with the little one. Sannchen has also had a long spell of illness, so cannot do much; and I am in a sad state. So we really have to trust in the Lord, who will surely help us through.
8. I feel a bit better today, though my voice is still very hoarse.
9. Towards evening I had to go to the mayor's office to sign an authorization for Mr. Knobloch. Since Elder Wall, D. Hamm and J. Dueck were there I stayed for a while to take part in the conversation. Recently Uncle Epp is supposed to have chaired an assessor-election in Koepenthal, which he officially had no right to do. (p. 207, Jan. 9)
10. This morning Peter Horn and Peter Esau went to see Cl. Epp to discuss the church building project; rather, actually to talk about the dispute that has arisen from the same. The discussion had been held in a respectable manner with the result that Cl. Epp had given in to the extent, that he was willing to send in another writing to soften the earlier, judgmental one. On the other hand, a few days ago Cl. Epp had actually handed in his application for

withdrawal from the brotherhood to Elder Wall. Old Mr. Abr. Jantzen has taken this very seriously, and recently has asked Elder Wall not to act too quickly on this proposal, since it is a very sad situation and should not be taken lightly. This was the topic of discussion for the ministerial when they met yesterday. Next week Elder Wall together with J. Hamm and Esau intend to go to Saratov, and then to Cl. Epp.

11. Sunday. Since I was up with the little one much of the night, I did not go to the service. Brother Jacob was here for dinner.
  12. This afternoon there was a meeting at which it was decided with the Fire Insurance agent how high to charge for insurance. Also the statutes of the organization were read. I signed up for 350 rubles silver. J. Hamm and Esau went to Saratov.
  17. Today father came to get us to Koeppenthal for the first time since Michael was born. Our conversation centred mainly on the results of Hamm and Esau's trip to Saratov. At first the Chief Judge had not been exactly angry, but still quite serious, and thinking they were from the Koeppenthal party, asked whether they had a written document, upon which they handed him a report of the history of the church building project from the beginning. On the following day, after having read the report, the Chief Judge had completely changed his attitude. After giving him some more explanations verbally, he responded, that he had thought only the Koeppenthal people, were the resisting party. Concerning the location of the church building, they could build it wherever they chose, and could authorize whom they wanted to, but they had to be united. When he heard of Cl. Epp's request to withdraw from the church, the Judge made the comment, what a strange thing this was, since in that case Cl. Epp would have nothing to say. Concerning the location of the Koeppenthal cemetery, he had said that it was all in order. As to the Chief Judge: everyone says, "He is a man above all reproach."
  18. Sunday. Father preached on Eph. 5:15–17. Theme: "The bad times—The school of the cross and heaven." I. Without the cross no way to heaven; II. The cross opens heaven; III. The reward: the crown of life. We had company during the afternoon: Jacob and Corn. Dueck, Wiens, J. Hamm, brother Jacob and mother. All our conversation centered on the Molotschna people.
  21. Our son Michael is not well, but Jacobus a bit better, although still a bit peevish.
  23. Yesterday Sannchen was in bed again, so we are alone with our sick children.
  25. Sunday. We were taken to D.Hamm's for a visit in the afternoon. Here I read the counter presentation (against the church) which was handed in to the Mayor's office by the "authorized" Cl. Epp. According to this document the only reason for building the church in Hahnsau is to give the village "status", which is expressed in various repeated ways; in addition it clearly contains false assertions. Since Cl. Epp has left for Saratov again today, the church committee has earlier given him a letter of warning regarding his decision to leave the church, with the admonition to repent of his erring ways. Besides, it spells out the false accusations which the above-mentioned document contained.
- May the Lord look down on us graciously, and make all things well.
26. After school I went to B. Epps on business. At that occasion B. Epp told me that the School Board has expressed the wish that I would reduce the subjects of instruction to the bare minimum, which, because of the small school attendance, made my load unnecessarily heavy. I want to try this, but am concerned that I choose the right things.
  27. Today the first payment was made on the Fire Insurance policy at 100 rbls, 78 ks.
  29. Uncle Epp came back from Saratov yesterday. It is quite painful to see him in company with a group, where ordinarily he would be the spokesman surrounded by a circle of listeners; now standing alone, seemingly going from one to the other, trying to make conversation.

It sounds as if there will be strict regulations set up by the office with regards to smoking. We have received several letters from Prussia.

30. Our Jacobus has sort of a fever, complaining of various aches and pains. Little Michael is also quite sick.
31. Our little ones are still quite sick, having slept poorly last night. We were hoping for a girl to help us, but she also got sick, so I have had to do much of the work myself. Marie has had a hard time of it too. This evening little Michael became dangerously ill, so that we thought he might leave us. We felt very much alone, moreover, I was not feeling well either. But the Lord knows how to help. D. H. was here for a bit, so father went along with him to Koeppenthal bringing back hired help from Froeses. Mother Hamm also sent Margarethe to help us.

## February 1859

1. Sunday. I did not go to the service today, since I was up at night with Michael who is not much better yet. He has lost a lot of weight. He seems to be getting weaker.
2. Our dear little one's illness has gotten worse, so that we fear for his life. A few of our relatives looked in today. Margarethe came for the night.
3. Michael is somewhat better today, so that we are hoping for the best. Jacobus and I have a bad cough.
5. Jacobus is better today, but Michael much worse. I have a very bad cough, so that I have trouble talking.
8. Michael has had a very bad night, so that both Marie and I have been watching through the night. There is a terrible snowstorm outside, but not cold.
9. Although Michael's fever seems to have gone, he is still very sick, and so weak that it is hard to hold him. We have gone to D. Hamms for medicine for the second time.
10. Michael quite a bit better. Koeppenthal is hauling bricks for the construction of a schoolhouse. They are planning to build it at a different place and have received permission from the authorized person! It seems that the Chief Judge in Saratov has given Cl. Epp a few instructions, so that he has relented in a few matters. Also, there was a kind of conference at Epp's place recently, to which the 3 colonies each sent 2 deputies. Among other things smoking was on the agenda. However, Cl. Epp is supposed to have made a few concessions about his way of thinking. Because of a number of other disagreements, the Chief Judge has been asked to investigate some of the local disputes in the near future. Cl. Epp is to state his point of view clearly.
13. Last night our Jacobus had a severe case of uroschisis, so that we had to carry him around until 12:30. He had much pain until finally the problem solved itself the natural way, and he could finally fall asleep. Michael seems to be getting a bit better but he is beginning to eat only a little.

Elder Wall and Joh. Dueck visited me today. They told me of Cl. Epp's answer to the letter of warning from the church committee. Regarding the matter of coming back to the church fellowship, he is quite willing to do so as soon as all the disputes have been settled. He quotes the reason for all the conflict to be a question of whether the mayor and chief mayor are obligated to listen to the church authorities or the government? He seems to turn his head in a different direction, since the reason for the conflict is not that of which authority to obey, but where to build the church, whether in Hahnsau or Koeppenthal.

15. Sunday. Michael still quite sick. We have had a real snowstorm today which created high snow banks.
16. Today at 7:15 p.m. the Lord finally took our little son, Michael to himself. Humbly we say: "The Lord has given, the Lord has taken, the Name of the Lord be praised." Already at 1 a.m. the condition of the dear little one changed for the worse; he began to breathe with

difficulty, and to groan painfully. Also his features and his hands gave evidence of deep distress. This lasted all day, though he took some nourishment; but finally his breathing stopped, and his soul soared heavenward to rest in the bosom of the friend of children to be in His presence with eternal, unspeakable bliss. On this same day our dear uncle and aunt Epp of Orloff were celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary. For this reason the Hamm parents had invited their children and J. Hamms to celebrate with them. Mother Hamm was going to come for night, but had not arrived yet when the little one died, we sent word via Jantzens to bring them the message. In the meantime mother arrived, and with her D. Hamms, Michael Hamms and the Jantzens. So then, the dear deceased was washed and placed in his cradle in a cold room. He did not need our care anymore, but was cared for by the dear friend of children, Jesus Christ, eternally. At 1 p.m. we lay down to rest.

17. The siblings came over to discuss the funeral, and help prepare for the same. H. Jantzen brought the news to Koeppenthal, bringing mother back with him. The Hamm parents also came for a while. The funeral was to be on Friday, so the respective invitations were sent out. I still had classes in school.
18. A very embarrassing situation has arisen between brother Jacob and C. Fast. Brother J. has been instrumental in putting a blemish on Fast's reputation, so the latter is trying to sue him.
19. More preparations for the funeral. We had a great deal of help from relatives.
20. Friday. Today we buried our little Michael. We had invited ca. 16 families to the funeral. D. Hamm gave a short talk at the grave-side. Because of the cold weather, there were only a few visitors accompanying us to the grave. May you rest peacefully, dear little child, "The lines have fallen for you in pleasant places...", for in the arms of the great friend of children, whose salvation encompasses also the youngest of these, you are now protected from the storms of sin, which rage against every earthly pilgrim. You are enjoying eternal bliss and rapture; and, by God's grace, one day we will see you more beautiful than your earthly body which is now in the grave. Lord Jesus, to this end help us through your suffering and death. Amen.

This morning brother Jacob went to C. Fast to discuss the matter with him. Fast and also his wife demand that one of the pastoral team should give witness, that there were no grounds for the accusation made against him. When that is done the matter will be closed.

21. Today we cleaned up and got everything in order again, with the help of the relatives. Quite unexpectedly there were visitors from Prussia today. We went along with D. H. see the guests, at Cl. Epps. They were receiving the regional payments there at the time, so there was quite a company for Tea.
22. Sunday. D. H. preached. Cl. Epp was present at the service, at which time he was reinstated again. Also Mr. Fast's request was presented and dealt with. Furthermore, the conflict between Fr. Epp and the church was straightened out with complete reconciliation.
28. After I finished my Saturday work, I rewrote the Catechism, after Elder Dueck had looked through it.

### **March 1859**

1. Sunday. Father preached about Isaak's offering. Theme: About the necessary self-denial. I. It's subject; II. It's nature; III. It's effectiveness. Today we began instruction with the candidates for baptism.
2. D. D. was in Saratov last week to see the Chief Judge, and has received verbal permission to build the schoolhouse at the new location.
3. We are having snow flurries and thaw weather alternately. The water is rushing past the school again, gathering at the south corner.
12. Today we were able to hire a girl again.

14. Besides cleaning the barn today, I did a lot of writing—Catechism, and a foreword for our new Family Book.
20. Today I had something very unpleasant to deal with in school. Jakobus had been playing with a string of small beads. When the string broke, the beads were strewn on the floor. Three little girls had picked up the beads and put them in their pockets. I talked to them about what they had done, and they promised not to do such a thing anymore.
21. I did a lot of writing on the Catechism today.
22. Sunday. Father preached about the feeding of the five-thousand. After the service was over, the request by Elizabeth Ellert to be accepted into the church was discussed. As already surmised, there were a few members who were against this, since at an earlier occasion a Mrs. Hardemartens had made this request and it was not granted. Ellert's request was tabled.
25. The **Festival of the Annunciation to Mary** was celebrated today. After coffee we went to the canal, which is now flowing with great force from the Warschina River. The water has made prodigious furrows, greater than last year. The furrows which were made last summer have not been helpful.
28. Today I have begun to enter the family journal. In the afternoon we had company from Prussia, later Abr. Jantzen and Uncle Epp. I had the privilege of arbitrating a friendly debate between the two men, Jantzen and Epp. The debate was on the topic: Whether the “Kant<sup>55</sup>” from the point where this star is visible at twilight, vanishes from the horizon in a northern or southern direction. I had been somewhat prepared by C. Epp beforehand, but in the end it was evident that none of us was properly informed on the subject. Finally after much discussion pro and con, we all agreed that C. E. was right in saying it set in a northern direction.
30. I am making a good copy of the **Family Register**.

#### April 1859

3. I have had only 4 students in school today. In between I am working on the **Family Journal**, namely, sketching an outline for an ancestral register. Yesterday we began to dig in the garden, but had to postpone it until today, because of the rain.
4. With regards to the church dispute, one has perceived that the “authorized” in his presentation during his last visit to Saratov, has given verbal explanations of his reasons to the Chief Judge, having won his favour and overthrown what we requested. Now there is to be a meeting between the two parties, arranged for by the “Office”. Apparently the “authorized” has had an axe to grind with Elder Wall and my father, having put on them a heavy responsibility. Good for those who do not depend on human beings, but trust in the Lord. May the Lord bring to naught the counsel of the ungodly, and grant His own the wisdom to speak at the right time. May He grant this by His grace, according to His will. Amen.
5. Palm Sunday.
- 7–9. We have worked in the garden these days: planted lilac, gooseberry and currant stems; taken the bindings off the trees, etc. Also we cleaned up around the house and built up the garden paths.
10. **Good Friday**. Father preached about the Passion of the Lord. Theme: The Three crucified at Golgatha. I. The main person, Christ in the centre; II. The Thief to the right; III. The testimony of the centurion in charge.
12. **Easter, first holiday**. After dinner we went to the grave of our little Michael.
13. Easter, second holiday. We were at the Hamm parents today, celebrating father Hamm's 69th birthday in a small family circle.

55 “Kant” in English probably the noun “cant” which means the slope to which something is set, such as the cant of ship's hull.

14. This morning I went to the fields early to plant in his stead, since he has a sore hand. In the afternoon we went to Koeppenthal to my parents to celebrate mother's 66th birthday. Though mother is enjoying fairly good health, she has had various symptoms of temporary ailments, which remind us all that she is approaching her last hour. Indeed! It is God's will for us to prepare ourselves in time for death. May the Lord be with her in her old age, and lead her at last at a time He has set to His home as His redeemed possession.
15. My birthday today. With this birthday I am entering my 40th year of life. How time rushes by us, and heaps year upon year on our shoulders. Our years of youth are barely over, and we already stand in ripe old adulthood, when we involuntarily view from its height the end of our days coming ever closer. How near or how far this may be, our short-sighted eyes cannot fathom; yet with each new day it is coming closer bit by bit; each year brings us closer in a greater measure of time. Lord of my life! May each new birthday be a birth of this life, as well as a renewal of the new birth into the spiritual life, into the life of heartfelt fellowship with you, Jesus Christ, who has redeemed me.

In the afternoon both our parents were here for a visit.

18. Today we did various things in the garden, and did some reading in between. Towards evening we went to the cemetery to fix little Michael's grave. Marie planted some hyssop around it. Had a wonderful rain-shower this evening.
20. School began again today, but only 5 children showed up. After Vesper I went to the fields to plant flowers. I intend to make a collection of all varieties of field flowers.
21. I am sketching a copy of the Halbstadt Church for Elder Wall. Corn. Epp is to take it along to have it printed in the Mennonite papers.
24. Today it was 22½ degrees warm, with a big storm, which has left our garden looking like a Sahara desert. The paths are swept clean. After school we went to Koeppenthal in all that storm to see my sick mother. We found her a bit better, praise the Lord!
28. H. Jantzens and we planted potatoes today on the field outside the village. It was bitterly cold today, so that our fur coats were hardly warm enough.

### **May 1859**

1. Towards evening I went to Koeppenthal again, where I did some measuring for the school plan. Then I went to see my parents. Mother is quite well now, though rather weak. This week I have had only 3 or 4 children in school. The storm has wrought quite a bit of havoc on the fields.
3. Sunday. Right after dinner we went to the cemetery here. Later my parents came to visit us. Together we went for a walk up the embankment here.
6. In between I am working on the Family Register about the life of the ancestors. Today also I finished the school plan, and wrote a wedding list for Fr. Epp.
9. Today I went to see Cl. Epp, who has a severe Fever. Who knows in what way this delay will be beneficial; yet no hair falls without the will of the Father in Heaven.
15. After school I went to the fields. The strawberries are blooming, as well as other vegetation, including the white lilies and the little white asters, the "Kaermel" and camomile, the green and sour cabbages.
16. Recently the "authorized" (Cl. Epp) has sent a four-page letter to the church committee, in which he demands proof of the accusations against him. But as in all his sarcastic remarks in his writings, he says he will handle the situation himself. O Lord, grant us your grace, and let the sun of peace rise for us again.
17. Sunday. We had a terrible storm today, raging madly among the sand on the acreages and gardens. It seems completely devastated.

19. Today I was out botanizing again. The richest find I made was the “catch-fly” (Pechnelke) which is in full bloom now. I also saw blackroot and meadowrambeard; and a few kinds of thistle. It was +26 today.

21. Ascension Day of the Lord. I went along with Dietrich Kl. to attend the dedication of the newly-built church at Krikus<sup>56</sup>. We stayed at a certain **Busir** where we also met Elder Wall, Elder Dueck and D. Hamm. The service began after the singing of a few verses at the schoolhouse, and a talk by Pastor Thomas of Katharinatown. The functioning clergy were: The Superintendent Allendorf, Pastor Hoelz, Pastor Thomas and Pastor Allendorf (brother to the superintendent). From the schoolhouse the group walked towards the church with much crowding, headed by the bearers of the church keys and the vessels of the sacrament. Outside the hall, in front of the locked front door, Pastor Hoelz gave a talk on the topic: How to serve the wonderful Lord in the beautiful new House of God. After the superintendent had opened the door, he and the other clergy led the throng, according to arrangement, the guests and strangers first, and then the local members into the church. After singing a few verses, the Superintendent held the dedicatory address, and officiated with the dedication ceremony. His address was based on Ps. 118:24: “This is the day, which the Lord has made; let us be glad and rejoice in it.” After that Pastor Thomas led in the liturgy, and finally the local pastor, Allendorf J. gave the sermon on the words Eph. 2:9–22: “Now we are no more guests or strangers...etc.”

We arrived home quite early.

27. In between time I am busy botanizing. I have about 100 plants already.

28. This evening I had an invitation to visit Elder Wall. A certain Mr. Bartel had arrived from the Molotschna colony. His travels concern land purchases. He gave us some interesting news from the Molotschna, namely, that some 200 families are planning to immigrate to the **Amur** region.<sup>57</sup> However, a deputation will be sent first. The emigrants have been sent 300 Rubles per man for this journey.

31. Pentecost, first holiday. P. Horn preached the sermon.

## June 1859

1. Pentecost, second holiday. Today we had baptism for the youth—8 persons.

3. After school Margaretha and we went for an outing to the “Spitzbubengrund”. However, this pleasure was greatly diminished by the mosquitoes, which were so numerous and so exasperating that I was bitten all over. On our way back I stopped at the Bartels.

4. The J. Hamms and D. Hamms visited us today. At this occasion I was given a hint that I may be able to teach at the Koeppenthal school, since B. Epp was leaving his position as teacher. I will consider this very carefully, since this place has some advantages, which I would miss, but I want to ask the Lord for advice, and unconditionally listen to His leading, be it to stay, or to move. He has led me in a wonderful way, and will lead in the future.

10. +29 yesterday. Today I went to the ravine quite early, and came back with a rich bonanza (botanically speaking, of course).

12. Today I went across the fields to Koeppenthal. On my way I found several new flowers for my botanical garden.

15. Today we had a very good thundershower. There was an auction at Jac. Jantzens, where Elder Dueck sold some of his superfluous clothing. I bought a pair of boots and rubber overshoes.

17. Late evening Elder Wall came to our house and incidentally mentioned something that can be regarded as a miracle of God's grace, for which we cannot praise Him enough. Uncle

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<sup>56</sup> This is a Lutheran Church.

<sup>57</sup> In 1859–60 Mennonites investigated the Amur region which is in the far eastern Siberia but settled in Crimea instead.

Epp has given the church and the ministerial the hand of reconciliation, and made amends for his actions. There was a meeting at Elder Wall's in the evening at which time with prayer, supplication and tears the matter was cleared up. So now we can call out with praise and thanksgiving: "Today we have experienced deliverance, for the Lord, the God of peace, has come among us; He has seen our tribulation, when we were in distress, and there was no helper." But He has sent us a mediator in the person highly honoured, his Excellency, the Chief Judge, who most certainly was the blest instrument in the hand of the Lord, through whom Uncle Epp in a recent visit to the Comptoir surely must have been convinced and seen the error of his ways. Also, in a recent conversation between Elder Wall and the Pastors Hoelz and Allendorf about this situation, they sought the advice of the Comptoir member, Hofrath Oettingen. This occurred on Elder Wall's recent trip to Saratov.

18. This morning there was a public school examination held at the Koeppenthal School. I attended this event. In the afternoon I had classes in my school. B. Epp has closed the K. School now and is moving to the Molotschna.
21. Sunday. There were 145 members present at the communion service.
22. Early this morning Abr. D. and son left for the Molotschna. Brother Jacob also intends to go to the Molotschna, so we took leave of him today. Mother takes this decision quite hard. May the Lord help her in the pain of separation.
23. Since brother Jacob planned to leave today, and was going to pass through here on his way to Warenburg, we went to the street, to see him off. However, we had to wait for a long time. Finally, at 8:30 he passed by, together with his travelling companions, and we said our goodbyes. May the Lord go with him and lead him to find what he is looking for. May this be for his good and the Lord's glory.
28. Sunday. During the night 3 Molotschna men stopped at Cl. Epp's on their way to the Amur, from where they hope to return later this year. One is a Warkentin of Altona, another a Friesen of Rosenort, and a Martin Riediger. The guests also stopped at the Esau's where a large group was gathered. They hope to be in St. Petersburg by the 5th of August.
29. The Amur travellers left at noon today, and planned to stop at Saratov to buy a Taranta.

I have a boil on my back which is very painful.

## July 1859

1. Because of my ailment I lay down towards evening. We had a good rain around Vesper.
3. Although my boil is open, it is still getting larger, so that I feel worse today, and have been able to teach only at intervals, off and on being in bed. D. Hamm came to put a compress on it.
8. Today I feel quite a bit better. The swelling and the boil are diminishing.
13. Marie has sore eyes today, **so Mrs. Wall applied leeches**.
14. Yesterday we were in a real predicament. Some of Marie's wounds from the leeches did not stop bleeding, and she became so weak that she almost fainted; moreover, I couldn't help her because of my indisposition. Finally at 11 p.m. she was able to lie down. This morning the bleeding has stopped, but Marie developed pain in the middle finger of the right hand. My malady has lessened greatly.
15. Elder Wall was here today inviting me to express my decision as to whether or not I would accept the position to teach at Koeppenthal. If I don't accept, they are considering to hire a retired Hungarian soldier for this position. This was very short notice for me, since I had not been able to speak to the Hahnsau authorities about teaching here. Since I felt that I needed to make a decision without any help from the school board, I responded positively to the request of teaching in Koeppenthal. May the Lord direct my further steps according to His pleasure. After dinner Esau and Abr. Froese came to see me regarding the teaching position in Koeppenthal, inviting me also to accept that position, which I did.



16. Since yesterday Marie has had great pain in her right hand. Since no one seems to be able to help, we have been entirely dependent on the Lord, who surely will help. In the evening I had visitors for a while: Elder Wall brought a guest, Mr. Melville from Odessa, who is here in the interests of the British and Foreign Bible Society. It is +28 degrees today.
17. Marie has had excruciating pain during the night. She went to the village this morning to see where she could get advice. So sister-in-law Penner, who had had a similar infection earlier, cut open the abscess, which gave her some relief. Now she has to make a compress of fresh cow manure to prevent inflammation. My own boil is getting better, for which we are thankful, since Marie needs all our attention now.
18. Marie had quite a good night, except that the compress had to be changed a few times. I was able to leave the house for the first time with a visit to the Parents here, then to the Mayor Schulz with whom I conferred about my move to Koeppenthal.
19. Sunday. I went to the service for the first time today.
21. This morning I went to the fields to look for plants. My boil is healing well; and Marie's finger is getting better too. She has not put on compresses today, only a plaster. In the afternoon I went to the schoolhouse together with D. Hamm, J. H. and Esau, where we discussed the necessary arrangements.
24. This afternoon Marie and I, together with her parents, went to Koeppenthal. Marie was anxious to see the schoolhouse. Marie returned home with her parents, while I followed later on foot. I found Marie in a rather depressed mood, because of the change of location, and also because of the more limited accommodations in Koeppenthal. May the Lord grant her joy for this move.
26. Sunday. Today we have chosen a 5th minister, Joh. Epp. Among the prospective candidates the votes were as follows: Martin Klaassen, 7; Dietrich Klaassen, 11; Peter Kopper, 40; Joh. Epp, 40. Between the last two, being tied, the lot fell on Joh. Epp.
27. Today I have moved the bookshelves to the entry, packing all the books in preparation for the move. My parents were here for the last time before we move.
29. Today I pasted up the slates for addition. Marie went to the Walls with Jacobus.

## **August 1859**

1. Today I cleaned up various things, including the wardrobe.
2. Sunday. Today the new Koeppenthal Schoolhouse was dedicated for school and local worship services. It was held in the new schoolroom. D. Hamm held the dedicatory address on Genesis 28:17: "How holy is this place, this is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven." After the service the new "teacher" (minister), Joh. Epp was ordained and installed into his office in a solemn ceremony by Elder Wall.
3. Today we began with the move to Koeppenthal, with 3 loads of household items. After dinner the new teacher for Hahnsau visited me. I have discussed many things concerning the school with him.
4. This morning I went to our future living quarters and arranged some of the furniture etc. which had already been brought there. We went to H. Jantzens for coffee, and also stayed for supper.
5. This morning I went to the village on some business errands. In the afternoon 5 more loads of belongings arrived in Koeppenthal together with us. At 4 p.m. we left our house in Hahnsau, where we had lived happily and peacefully for 3 years and 10 months, and moved into the new house, where my parents and several neighbours gave us a hearty welcome. One of the reasons for this change was the very cold and drafty house in Hahnsau. Through the winter months, in spite of all the heating day and night, we had not been able to keep warm. This had an adverse effect on my health in general. Another reason for the move was that I had often not been able to fulfill my obligation as a teacher, since I was called away many times whenever measurements and surveys needed to be done.

Therefore some parents were not happy with my teaching. A third reason was that I saw this move as an opportunity for a new place, especially when it was offered to me. So now we are in Koeppenthal; and may the Lord's grace and blessing be with us as it has been in the past. May we for our part recognize and learn from our mistakes. "Lord, cover all that's gone before; guide and direct what lies before."

Yes, Lord, our faithful God, we give you thanks for all the blessings and thousand fold goodness which you allowed us to experience in our previous place. Be with us here and evermore; yes, watch over us in this house, and pour out your blessings over it as it serves us as a home, as well as school and church. May it be a true House of God, a house in which your glory abides and is promoted, through me as inhabitant, as well as teacher of children. Guide our hearts, that we may love you and acknowledge your goodness. Lead me, that I may be diligent in the work to which you have called me. May it be my priority to lead the children to you, that they may be part of your Kingdom. Lord, Lord help! O Lord grant that my work may prosper to that end. Amen.

6. Today we have cleaned up all day and put things in place. It feels quite lived-in already. After Vesper mother came to see us. In the evening our first real guest visited us: Peter Kopper with whom we had a good conversation.
- 7-8. Today and yesterday various visitors, mother Hamm came on foot from Hahnsau, my mother from here, father Hamm, the two sisters-in-law, Penner and Jantzen, as also father and the D. Hamms, Joh. Epp and sister Froese.
10. In the morning we went to Hahnsau to gather some ripe vegetables from the garden. Then I cleaned the tables which I placed in the schoolroom. In the evening the school builders were here to discuss the wall to be erected between the worship area and the schoolroom, which did not happen.
11. I fastened both Plain globes on the wall. In addition, I am beginning to learn Russian again, and am cleaning up in general. Last Sunday 90 dead geese were found in the village and the Warschina. It is believed that either colony dogs or wolves have killed and dismembered them. A number of the geese, about 30 were missing—simply vanished, perhaps eaten or dragged away. C. Jantzen had heard a wolf howling on the other side of the Warschina.
15. Harvest is almost over, but the results are very meagre.
21. In order to meet my students and find out where they are in their studies, I asked them to gather in the classroom today. I had them read and do some arithmetic; then I made up my list. In the afternoon I had some grammar, singing and gave them their verses for next week with which I ended the day. May the Lord give me strength to do His work for His glory. May this happen for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

We had +26 today, the air is full of dust, dry and murky. We saw the northern lights tonight.

24. **Monday.** Today with the help of the Lord I began teaching here at Koeppenthal. There were 39 students on the list, but only 22 present. I pray that you will stand by me in the vocation and the position which you have shown me, O God of grace, for without you I can do nothing. Daily I feel the great dearth of so many necessary things, as well as my inadequacy, that at times I feel like giving up. Lord, be my helper, my strength, and grant me what I need for this little flock, the work of your hands, which I want to lead to you. Amen.
25. Today I had only girls in school, since the boys had to help with some fixing on the windmill.
28. Today old Mr. Jantzen, D. D.'s father died after he had been here only 8 days. It is good that he could be with his loved ones and pass away in their midst.

## September 1859

1. Funeral of Mr. Jantzen. D. H. officiated.
4. People are busy digging a well, but unfortunately found only a small fountain with little water, and hard soil underneath.

- 5-7. I have worked on making an outline of lines for writing purposes. The men have begun to bore for water in the well, but so far have found no groundwater.
10. At 10 a.m. today His Esc. the Chief Judge arrived here in Koeppenthal. The local committee were waiting for him at the school. When he arrived he came to see the school first, asked about various things, then went on to inspect the colony. From there he went to the well of the fourth colony, but had expressed dissatisfaction with the same. Then he went on to Lindenau and back to Hahnsau. Here in Hahnsau he also criticized the "Semljenken" (mud houses) as living quarters, so they will have to be removed for next year. He also inquired about the "Authorized" (Cl. Epp) in many ways. It seems that it will not be long before a district office will be set up.
- 12-14. Half of the residents brought bricks for the building of a barn, and already the construction is well under way.
15. Brother Jacob writes that he is not quite happy with the way things are going for him at the Molotschna, and the establishment of a business seems too risky. Father answered his letter saying that we all wish that he might come back and settle at the fourth colony.
16. I went to Abr. Froese today to visit with D. and Joh. Dyck, who graphically described the living conditions in America.
18. After closing school somewhat early, we went to our garden in Hahnsau to dig potatoes, and to gather large pumpkins, and bottle pumpkins. We stopped at the grave of our little one and at the Hamm parents.
19. Today I put lines on the blackboards and changed the school's time-table.
22. Today we dug potatoes in Hahnsau. Marie went to stay the night at D. Hamm's, where Agatha is still very sick.
26. I worked hard today at the time-table, changing the reading time of the lower classes to the afternoon.
27. Sunday. The most beautiful morning since we have been here in Koeppenthal. D. H. preached.
30. Beginning today, the school will be closed for a while again, since I have to be on the steppes for surveys. Dyck and Hamm were here to discuss the necessary procedures for this.

### **October 1859**

1. Today I began to measure again—namely the piece on the other side of the Warschina, where we staked off the new border.
2. Because of the frost the surveying did not go well, so I stayed home after dinner. In the evening the directors of the library had a meeting here, where various things were discussed and new books placed in the library.
3. More measuring. H. Jantzen brought us the potatoes from our common field.
4. Sunday. Harvest Festival. Father preached on Lev. 26:3-6.
7. The Hamm parents are butchering beef today. Marie went to help. The bricklayer has begun to set up our oven. I sectioned off a place to store our potatoes in the cellar, and brought them in. Then I began with an outline for Grammar for the students to copy.
8. It is rainy and cold today. A good thing that Jacobus is still staying with his aunt, he certainly would have frozen here.
9. I wrote my Grammar lessons all day. Yesterday evening Uncle Epp arrived home after 9½ weeks of absence, however, without Dietrich, who died from Nerve-fever in Samara.
10. Yesterday evening the bricklayer finished our oven. I did some more measuring in the afternoon.
- 15-16. Marie helped with butchering at Quirings and Penners. I made some boards for the back room.
- 17-18. Lovely weather. I went to Hahnsau for the Sunday services.

19. I am busy with measuring the ditches, and sketching the plans.
21. Marie is at the Hamm parents for butchering. I went to J. Hamm's where they had spareribs for dinner. There was quite a group gathered. While we were there we had a heavy rain, so that walking home there was a lot of water on the street.
23. Today I sketched some plans. The bricklayer finished the last oven—the one for the church. The barn is getting the last finishing gable.
24. I needed to work in my schoolroom with reports and other things. I also had to make some decisions in my predicament regarding so many demands placed on me by the survey committee. It has no doubt come to a climax: I need to teach in this school, yet am constantly asked to serve the third colony, and now the fourth colony is urgently requiring my services for surveying. I simply cannot do justice to and please both the Koeppenthalers and the Lindenauers.
- 26–28. Again busy with the plans for the division of the acreages for Lindenau.
29. I am somewhat of a patient, having a fever. Altogether I feel illness in my body, which in several ways tries to cure itself.
30. Today we butchered our little pig. We also had the pleasure of greeting brother Jacob after 18½ weeks of absence. He has told us many new things from the Molotschna colony. The Lord be praised for His gracious leading, which brother Jacob experienced.
31. We cleaned up from our butchering, as well as in the barn, where we made the last arrangements for the cattle for winter.

### **November 1859**

1. Sunday. I went to Hahnsau for the service together with father. In the evening the homesteads of the 4th colony were allotted, in which brother Jacob took part. He told us many things about the Molotschna, also about the sect called “Springer”<sup>58</sup> in and around Berdyansk.
3. Today the carpentry work on the barn was finished. I also received the first feed for the cattle. I worked on a few things in the barn and chicken barn. –4 degrees today.
4. Again I was busy with the divisions of Lindenau's 5 homesteads. It is very cold today: –10. Last Saturday we took the cows into the barn for the first time. During the day they are still outside.
5. Fr. Wall cut glass for the storm windows. I arranged for a grain bin in the upstairs.
8. Sunday. Worship service here. During the day we had company: The Hamm parents, D. Epp, my parents, Dietr. Klaassen and D. Hamm.
11. Today I did some more figuring on the plan, found a mistake and had to do it all over again. J. H. helped me. The weather is beautiful and the ice on the Warschina wonderful for skating. If I had had time I would have liked to join in the skating.
13. J. Hamm came over this morning showing another mistake in the figures for the acreages. To correct it we would need to change all the previous figures again, which would be a tremendous job. Since many parents are impatiently waiting for school to begin, we delayed this calculation until next spring.
12. Today I completed the list for student enrolment and the weather-journal for the coming year. In between I brought wheat to the mill. Towards evening I went to brother D. Klaassen's birthday celebration. We have had some snow.
16. Marie went to Hahnsau to see her parents, where I followed after school. Mother Hamm is quite sick, so that one almost thinks of a last sickness. Jacobus went to “his aunt”, staying there for night.
18. Early this morning sister-in-law M. Hamm came to get some medicine from D. Hamm, taking Marie along to see her sick mother. Who knows what the Lord has in mind for her?

<sup>58</sup> This is an early and somewhat derogatory name for the Mennonite Brethren who in their early meetings sometimes jumped and hopped with religious fervour.

19. German Sylvester. (Dec. 31.) Today for a change I went along to the weekly market in Warenburg, where we bought presents also for the school children. In the evening J. H. was here to put in the storm windows, and to discuss the School Christmas program. Mother Hamm seems to be a bit better.
20. (January 1st, 1860, New calendar). Today we had Holy Communion here. Both times the participants totalled 202 persons. Marie went to her parents after church, and I followed later with my parents. Mother Hamm is very weak, but has a better appetite already.
23. J. Hamm and D. Hamm were here today to talk about the Christmas Eve program tomorrow.
24. **Christmas Eve celebration.** All my students and many parents, as well as people from Hahnsau attended the program. We sang a song for the opening: "O Du Froehliche" (Blessed Christmastime), followed by my explanation of the shining Christmas tree. Three more songs were sung: "Tochter Zion freue dich", "Ihr Kindelein kommet" (O come all ye children) and "Horch wie die Schar der Engel singt" (Hark how the choir of angels sing). Then D. Hamm gave a longer meditation addressed to the children, interspersed with a few appropriate stories: Of the birth of a king in Rome, and of how an estate owner, being a worldly man, became a Christian). D. H. then offered a very profound closing prayer, after which we sang one verse of the song: "Kamst du nun, Jesus, vom Himmel..." (Can you, Jesus, ... from heaven...). Then the children received their gifts. The parents and guests stayed for a short time of fellowship, then departed. May the Lord, the dear Saviour, in whose honour we celebrate this festival ever be the hero of the same, and may He bless this evening.
25. **Christmas Day, first holiday.** The worship service was in Hahnsau where father preached. We had dinner at the Hamm parents. Mother is still quite sick.
- 26 Second holiday. Service here in Koeppenthal. P. Horn preached. Snowstorm outside.
- 27-29. Snow and night frosts. Had much company.
30. Marie went to D. Hamms where she baked New Year's cookies.
31. We had classes only in the morning, when the students recited their New Year's wishes. In the afternoon I made some calculations.

## 1860

### January 1860

1. Sunday, New Year's Day. Again a year has gone by, and as usual we must say: "The Lord has done great things for us; wherefore we are glad." Even though He withdrew His hand of blessing somewhat in earthly matters, so that some have rather a bleak outlook into the future, yet we look forward with anticipation to the next harvest, even though there will be scarcely enough for the seed in spring. However, God's word teaches us to trust in His guidance, without which no one can survive. The Lord gives and takes, His is the earth and what it brings. Therefore, Lord grant us all the grace to put our trust in You alone, and to place all our worries on You, for You care for us."

Regarding the events that we experienced in our midst, namely our church disputes, we have come to a reconciliation and except for a few, unity and peace in the church has been restored. Unfortunately, it is sad that Uncle Epp's actions resulted in a schism between him and the church, as well as the Chief Judge. This no doubt will lead to the necessity of electing a proper district committee. May the Lord be praised for His guidance in this matter. May the Lord also grant each of us on his part to recognize and repent of his own wrongdoing in the matter; and He may grant us all the spirit of love and obedience to Him, as well as human laws, so that all our further doings may be according to His holy will, to make the coming year a year of blessing, bodily as well as spiritually.

Elder Wall preached about Jacob's struggle with reference to the words: "I will not leave You, except that You bless me."

2. I worked at carpentry, making the storeroom shelf narrower, and setting it up in the small room. There was a meeting at Cl. Epps today with the district representatives about the upcoming election of committee members for the district council to be held on Monday. May the Lord grant His approval.
4. Today the election was held for the district council. As Chairman, Jacob Hamm; Vice-chairmen Dietrich Dueck and Peter Kampen, all three are from here. May God give them of His Spirit to administer their office according to His will, and the good of the settlement.
6. Epiphany. D. Hamm preached about the wise men from the orient; through and through a Mission sermon, very convincing about the importance of missions. May we all be filled with faith doing what we can so that all the lands may see the glory of the Lord, and His kingdom spread to the praise and honour of His name.
9. Today I have been very busy cutting covers for the writing tablets, and putting in examples. Today we saw a very rare phenomenon. Already at sunrise the sun was accompanied by two so-called "sun-dogs" (Nebensonnen). At 11:30 Abr. Froese came running in to draw my attention to a very unique appearance, in case I hadn't seen it. The sun naturally was at mid-day height, (which at this time of the year is not very high), and on either side were two bright forms about as far from each side of the sun, as the height of the sun above the horizon, forming an arc of light across heaven's dome. The atmosphere was filled with vapours, otherwise a cloudless sky. On each side at about a distance of 23½ degrees, there was a second arc of light, though somewhat less brilliant, as reflections of the first two sun-dogs, crossing them in a vertical position. The sun itself sent rays upwards and downwards, which formed a cross with the sun in the middle. The whole appearance, together with a many-coloured quarter-arc formation with the tips of the sun's rays, looked something like the following:
10. Sunday. Today our congregation began the work of Missions, by an afternoon meeting held in the Hahnsau School. Both Elders were in charge of mission studies. We went to Hahnsau for the morning services and stayed for the afternoon meeting. D. H. gave a talk on historical data of Mission field activities and closed with prayer. May the Lord grant His blessing for the beginning, continuation and final ending in the future.
11. Today I went to Esau's to see a student, Marie, who is sick. 15. Marie went to Hahnsau to see her parents. On her return she informed me that the school in Hahnsau had closed because the teacher left. He had treated the schoolchildren to tea mixed with rum, and given them cigars, as a result of which some had become dizzy. A few had been kept home from school, and finally the school was closed. He also withdrew from the evening classes. C. Dueck has sent an invitation for this position and came to me to discuss this matter, and for advice.
16. This morning I made some tablets to paste up the alphabet. There was an election for the position of a new administrator and 2 assistants. The administrator will be Cornelius Jantzen, and Corn. Wall and Corn. Froese as assistants.
19. Michael Hamms were here today to see about Russian studies for Michael, since he didn't feel good about the classes held by Mr. Karnky at the J. Hamms.
- 21–23. Russian classes have begun. Two Bible colporteurs, Bartel and Becker, have arrived. I have worked on a grammar text. Sim. Schmidt was here to fix the inside of the oven.
24. Sunday. I went to Hahnsau for the service with D. H. He had the message, based on 1 Cor. 12, which is directed quite sharply against sects, to which in general the Bible colporteurs belong. We went to D. H.'s for dinner where Margarethe (Marie's sister) was celebrating her engagement to be married, and also her birthday.
30. This morning Mr. Bartel, the colporteur, visited me.

## February 1860

1. Michael Hamm was here for his Russian class.
5. I wrote a funeral letter for Mr. Wunderlich who died after a 7-day serious illness.
7. Sunday. I went to H-Au for the service. We have had a snowstorm all day, which made travelling difficult.
- 11–14. Russian class again. Mother Hamm came to visit for the first time after her illness. My mother and Anna (Mrs. D. H.) were here too. We had a Mission meeting here. Father read a report of Mission activity in India.
27. -14 degrees today with a strong wind and snow flurries. I worked on writing a catechism: the chapter about Christ's suffering and death.

## March 1860

1. A terrible snowstorm today, without interruption day and night. One can hardly stay on one's feet, and we can hardly see the mill, and very little of the village. How will those people fare, who have no fuel and no feed?
2. Because of the storm we have not had classes in school.
3. The storm is over, but the frost has increased. It is horribly cold. We had school today, but only 15 students.
23. Temperature by the afternoon: +10.50. As a result of the warm temperatures and the thaw the Warschina is beginning to flow. Between noon and 3 p.m. the ice began to move and build up, so that the water rose so high that the street and gardens, as also the island above the canal, were under water. It was something we hadn't experienced since we came to this settlement. Large blocks of ice lie on the riverbanks. After 3 p.m. the water slowly began to fall. All this time the residents of this village were out on foot or on horse back.
27. Sunday. Palm Sunday. We are having winter again with snow.
28. School again, but only half of the students were present. After dinner the local authorities were here to discuss the surveying which had been interrupted last fall. After school I worked on a plan for a small acreage.
29. I closed school early today, because of brother Jacob's engagement celebration. In the morning I went to J. Hamms to see about the surveying. While I was there the inspector ("Stanowau") from Kosakenstadt arrived to initiate the investigation regarding Kursky. Accompanied by 4 Russians, 4 local authorities and I went to the Kursky grave, and on the command of the inspector, it was dug up and the coffin lifted out and opened. The corpse looked more natural now than when it was first found, and except for being bloated and having a reddened skin, resembled the man as he was. After a very flighty examination, the official concluded that Kursky had simply frozen to death. The coffin was then lowered into the grave, but simply covered awaiting a further medical investigation by doctors.

In the afternoon we went to Hahnsau with brother Dietrich to brother Jacob's engagement celebration. The weather was beautiful. On our way back we took the road this side of the Warschina, across the fields, where the road is really not "passable" yet.

30. Today we closed school, since attendance has been very low. Together with the Chief administrator Hamm and P. Esau, I went to the estate acreages ("Hofaecker") of the first landless residents ("Anwohner").
31. Maundy Thursday. Because of the lack of fodder, the cattle were let out to pasture for the first time, but to be easy on the same, only 4 animals per household were let out. I cleaned the barn and worked on some plans. I went to Abr. Froeses for dinner, since the bridal couple was there, and Marie had come to help.

## April 1860

1. Good Friday. Father preached. What an unspeakable act of God! Is it possible that the Holy God, yes, God himself, has died for me, a sinner worthy of death; made sin for me, so that I can live; who had no sin, and committed no sin! Christ's death for my life? O Lord, rule in our hearts that we may be glorious fruits of Your praise worthy death, and someday may stand before you as reward of your pain and to the praise of your most holy name eternally. Amen.
2. This morning we measured Toews's yard acreage. Before breakfast I measured the first part of the area for our new garden. F. Janzen was so kind as to bring us the gooseberries and acacia bushes from our previous garden. We had rain after dinner, but in spite of it we went ahead with the measurements, which we finished. In the meantime the rain came down harder, also becoming colder, so that we were thoroughly drenched on coming home.
3. Easter Sunday. Hallelujah, the Lord is risen! Yes, He is truly risen, Hallelujah!

Jesus lives! I live with Him,  
Death, where are your terrors now?  
Jesus lives, from death's dark grave  
He will resurrect me too.  
In His light transformed I'll be,  
This my hope eternally.

The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon. Oh, to how many millions has He appeared since then, though not in bodily form, but through the eyes of faith and heart. Lord, may I and all my family be among the many who have seen You, and lead us all in our resurrection with You into Your Father's Kingdom.

The bridal couple, as well as my mother and D. Hamms, sister-in-law Margarethe were here for dinner; later also father and J. and H. Jantzens. After dinner I had to bank the gooseberries and the tree stems with soil.

5. I went to H-Au today to dig out the rest of the plants. D. D. was so kind as to bring them home to us. I transplanted them immediately. Spring seeding has begun.
10. Sunday. Worship service here. After dinner we went to my parents, from where Michael Hamm and I took a walk to the Terlyka. I talked to him about his sudden decision to resign from his position as "Vorsaenger" (songleader). I told him, I hoped to see him in his usual place again.
12. A meagre rain shower. I planted the small things, as raspberries, and apple stems. Later I went to D Penners with Jacobus.
13. Today, father Hamm's birthday. He is leaving his 70th year behind. Marie went to H-Au already this morning, so that she could tend to the grave of our little one. I followed after dinner. Father is well and robust as ever. He is celebrating his birthday in Russia for the eighth time. Who would have thought this? God's grace is able to sustain us and shower us with goodness. May He be praised for keeping father in good health in his advanced age, after so many years of ill health in his younger years.
14. This morning I planned the area for the flower garden. Then I went to get Jacobus from D. Hamms, where he has been since yesterday. After dinner I planted our potatoes. Towards evening we went to my parents here, to celebrate my mother's birthday with which she enters her 68th year. She too finds herself well under the circumstances, although she has been under considerable stress because of her youngest son, since the parents of his betrothed have acted rather strangely. May the faithful God and Saviour be near to her. Amen.



15. Today I am celebrating my birthday. I am ending my 40th year of life. I too cannot praise the great mercy of God enough, which has showered me with so much goodness and faithfulness, and carried me with so much patience. Therefore, "Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits, and His goodness; who has saved your life from corruption and crowned you with grace and mercy." Help us, O Lord, till the end of our days through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.
20. Today I worked out a new timetable and cleaned up outside. In the afternoon the members of the district and village mayor's office gathered, together with a few neighbours whom I accompanied, to choose places for the blacksmith's shop, shepherd's house, and village warehouse.
26. Today a hurricane-like storm raged across the fields, which dried out the wet soil so that dust was blowing around. In the evening Marie, Jacobus and I went to bring D. H. back from his trip. While we were there brother-in-law Hamm suddenly got very sick with an attack of kidney infection followed by a fever. His pain was so great that he could hardly find the strength to look for his own medication, which he knew would help him. We finally went home, but I came back to spend the night with him. However, I found him much better, the pain mostly gone, so that he was able to fall asleep.
28. Beautiful spring weather today. Since we came here we haven't seen the fields as green as this spring. After school Marie, Jacobus and I went to the ravine to pick sorrel-leaves.
30. I took a walk to the fields above the Warschina. Today the investigation of Karsky has been concluded and the doctor's decision is that he froze to death. (13 weeks have passed since his death).

## **May 1860**

1. Sunday. We went to Hahnsau for church services. In the afternoon we were at J. Hamm's, vice-chairman of the district office, where other guests were gathered. The weather is warm: +19.
6. Seeding-time has ended. School opened today. After school I was asked to get ready quickly for a trip to Saratov. By 12:30 p.m. Peter Esau, D. Toews, J. Bergmann and I were sitting on the wagon, ready to leave. By sunset we arrived at Moritz in Saratov, where we will spend the night. We left the wagon at the Kargs in Kosack-town.
7. Right after breakfast we went about our business, during which time we also visited the beautiful garden in Saratov. By 3 p.m. we had finished our business and started for home. We didn't have to wait long at the Volga, where we loaded our things onto a "Drtschneik" and left. Huge thunderclouds were hanging over the town, and the wet elements threatened to get under our feet and shower their contents over us. Finally it began to rain with lightning flashing through the air. But it held on until we arrived at our night lodging towards evening.
8. Sunday. At 4:30 a.m. we left for home and arrived at 11:30 just before the service here was over. But what met us as we entered the village! A terrible cloudburst as had never been seen had occurred yesterday, causing very much damage in the gardens, in which even now water covered some areas. The dam near the ravine is mostly gone. Since the bridal couple was to visit at D. Hamms, we also went there after the instruction class.
12. Ascension Day. I went to H-Au for the service. In the afternoon we had a lot of company. The weather is rainy with thunder. 8 days ago a woman was killed by lightning.
18. This morning Esau's new corn windmill is grinding for the first time. This evening the chief administrator and the village council were here to talk about the placing of the house here.
19. This afternoon I took a walk to Hahnsau with my students to see Mr. Horch. We spent about 1½ hours with him, hearing him play on his various instruments, and having my students sing along. He seems to be—and is in fact, as everyone says—a very pleasant

man. I hope to keep up a good relationship with him, which will add to my teaching. May the Lord bless this to the good of the students entrusted to me!

20–21 I am writing wedding invitations and sketched the Russian alphabet onto a tablet.

22. Pentecost, first holiday. I went to Warenburg for the services with D. Hamm. The confirmation of 180–190 candidates followed after the service. We had rain on the way back.

25. After school I went to the “Polterabend” (nuptial eve) for brother Jacob, from which I returned earlier than the rest.

26. Brother Jacob's wedding. We went along with Froeses and brother Dietrich. The weather was cold and rainy, so the guests mainly stayed inside. Since brother Jacob's past experiences were somewhat different, David Hamm took this into account in his sermon. O God! what might lie ahead for this poor brother of mine? May the merciful Lord guide his heart, and may he allow Him to guide it; grant him patience so that God's promises to him may be fulfilled.

30. Marie went along to Fresenheim, where the newly-weds will make their home.

### **June 1860**

4. Today I received grain. I sifted the corn and cleaned the floor. Father and I went to Fresenheim to brother Jacob, but he was not at home. Father has a very sore foot, since a horse stepped on it. It is very swollen and hot.

8. In between I am assembling the (Mangel) clothes press. Today Kursky, 15 weeks since his disappearance, is to be buried.

10. Today after school I took the students for another outing to the ravine, where they took delight in picking and eating the wild strawberries, while I gathered flowers. The weather was very pleasant, so that the mosquitoes didn't bother us in the least.

14. My mother accompanied the Hamm parents to Fresenheim, stopping at our house. Mother told us about H. Froese's hired girl, who had left them because she had fallen into a trance, making all kinds of spiritual utterances. Last Sunday after Holy Communion she had gone home with her parents in Fresenheim, when the same symptoms had appeared. After arriving home, she had gone directly behind the house, fallen on her knees and prayed loudly. This had been repeated several times during the day; when standing or walking, she had prayed with open eyes. Since this condition had repeated itself she was dismissed from her place of work.

Marie got an enormous attack because of being overworked with the laundry. The medicine which Mrs. Bartels sent is effective, so we are hoping for improvement. The Lord be praised!

18. Today I went to Warenburg on business with brother Dietrich. I stopped at the Esau's, where I found a large group gathered to see the 2 brothers Mueller, who recently arrived from Prussia. I had met one of them 8 years ago at Yushanlee. These two brothers had visited our people in Prussia, then come through Petersburg, and on to Samara, where they are checking out the land.

21. Today it is +30.50 degrees warm. With this kind of weather the fruit is suffering, and one expects a meagre harvest. O Lord, Your will be done; strengthen the weak in faith, and keep them from murmuring and doubting; teach us not to put our faith in the moneybag, or worldly wealth, but on You alone, the living God.

23. Since Marie is still not feeling well, we went to Lindenau on father's wagon, to see Mrs. Bartels for advice. She advised blood-letting, which we want to try. On our way back we stopped at H. Jantzens for supper.

26. Marie had her treatment done today, through a vein. After dinner we went to Fresenheim with D. Hamms.

28. Two large bear transports passed through here today, with 2 large bears, a brown and a black.

### July 1860

1. Today brother Jacob's wife, Helena, visited us, as well as my parents.

2–4. I drew a design for a stand for the globe, as well as sketching the small letters of the Russian and German alphabets on a tablet. I was also asked to circulate an announcement made by the village office, saying that in the next few days we could expect a prince to visit our colony. Everything is to be in good order.

6. We are waiting in vain for the Prince Vasispuiko to arrive.

We had an eclipse of the sun today, beginning at 5:15 and becoming completely dark so that there was no light at all.

7. I accompanied father to look for sweetwood, which we found. Marie is not well—she cannot do even the light housework.

14. Both my mother and mother Hamm were here. Later Teacher Horch and his wife visited us, as well as the secretary, Stoerkel.

20. I am working on the globe-stand and writing geography in between. Towards evening we witnessed a rare scene on the Warschina. A few “Biffelreicher” (rare birds) had settled on the Warschina, no doubt looking for water in these warm temperatures, and were calmly swimming around among the ducks and geese, as tame fowl, and even allowed those of us who were curious to come quite close. Later J. Hamm shot one of them. I want to cut off the beak, wings and feet and preserve them.

21. Very hot today: +29.50, with a dreadful storm, which is whipping up dust.

27. I finished the globe-stand, as well as the geography lessons.

29. In between I am writing catechism again. I also brought an order for books to H.B. Berdyansk.

30. I was going to go to H-Au today, but wanted to meet Mr. Horch, who, however, had gone to the colony. Mr. Stoerkel told me that a very interesting menagerie is being displayed in Saratov. I went to my parents to ask father whether he might not be interested in going to Saratov to see this display. So we arranged that Abr. Froese, D. Hamm, father and I would leave for Saratov very early Monday morning.

### August 1860

1. The four of us left for Saratov at 3 a.m. It was quite cold. We arrived in Cossack-town, at Herrmann's guesthouse about 10:30 a.m. We arranged for the crossing, and we didn't have to wait long. We arrived at our lodging with Moritz at 12:30. Right after dinner we went into the town to do some shopping, but it was a Russian holiday, so we were out of luck. Then we went to the Crown-garden, where Hamm and I climbed up the scaffold of a tower and building which was in the process of being built, in order to view the town. At 6 p.m. we went to see the menagerie, so that we could be there at the time the animals were fed. At the entrance we saw 2 white and red parrots; inside: 2 grey, one green, one red; and one red, white and black speckled parrot; an American lion, a puma, a jaguar, 5 apes, a spotted hyena, a pair of tigers, an Asian elephant, lions and bears, an American bear, a black panther, Amer. Jaguar, African and Asiatic leopards, unga, striped hyenas, an antbear,<sup>59</sup> and 2 apes. The elephant could have been 9–10 feet high.

2. We left our night lodging at sunrise, and were able to cross over very quickly, leaving Cossack-town at 8 for Chahl. to look at the organ. We stopped at the administrator Schoenberg's house. I went directly to Corn. Mueller where I looked at the organ. I found it

<sup>59</sup> An “unga” also known as a coconut crab is a large land crab that can have a leg span of 90 cm. and weigh over 4 kg. An “antbear” can be either an African aardvark or a South American giant anteater.

not suitable for my purposes, so didn't buy it. After 1½ hours we left for home. We had the misfortune of losing our way, so we arrived home late, at 11:30 p.m. However, we had travelled safely.

4. I worked on the catechism yesterday and today. Uncle Epp brought me a job: to sketch a piece of property for Mr. Reicher.
9. I am working on a plan for the administrator, of the colonies' entire piece of land.
10. I finished the plan today, and am also finishing the catechism. I got some fodder corn today, but since few people have fresh corn, I didn't get very much.
11. I have been writing all day today. I also brought back a nature book to P. Toews, and stopped by at D. H. where I met B. Epp. We had a lively conversation.
18. Today old Elder Neufeld died, very peacefully and—we hope—with faith in the Lord. He was 64 years, 4 months and 18 days old. I had to make the notes for the funeral letter, which I wrote this afternoon. School began Monday, but with very few children, mostly girls.
20. This morning I pasted together a large cardboard bowl. In the afternoon J. Hamm came to get us for a visit to celebrate sister-in-law Anna's birthday. D. Hamms went to Warenburg, taking our Jacobus along.
26. **(September 7. new calendar).** Praise and thanks be sung to You, O Lord. Yours be the glory that all has gone well! The Lord has again done great things for us, therefore we are glad! He has entered our home today and given us a third son, whose name again will be **Michael**. Yes, Lord, you have stood by us in our need, and You have wonderfully helped us. You have given us this son and there by granted us so much parental joy. You have also given us parental responsibilities, which we could not carry without Your help. Grant us furthermore the grace, so that, as he is born into this earthly life, we may raise him so that he will also be born unto eternal life, the new birth to God's Kingdom. Lord, help, Lord make all things well! Amen.

Already at midnight we called Mrs. Bartel and sister-in-law Anna Hamm, who are still both here.

27. Very unpleasant weather today—a bad north-storm.

### September 1860

3. Marie is improving steadily, is out of bed at times and beginning to do small tasks. Little Michael is also well and gaining weight. The Lord be praised for His goodness. This morning I counted the rows of fruit trees I planted: 5 rows apple, 1 row cherry, 1 row plum stems, and then 2 stems of wild plum.
4. Sunday. Father preached here in Koeppenthal. His theme was: The gratitude and ingratitude of people. I. Everyone comes with petitions II. We are slow to come with thanks. III. Therefore we often do not receive the heavenly blessings.

This afternoon both parents were here; also J. Klaassens.

5. Marie is improving steadily, with no complications, so far. We received some grain today.
8. I am again suffering from vertigo since yesterday. It is somewhat better today, so that I have been able to be in school again. A rather strange incident happened in Hahnsau today. A newborn child wrapped in rags was found in the chaff bin in the school barn. The Jacob Martens temporarily took the child in their care, otherwise nothing more is known about it.
10. I took a walk again in the ravine, mainly for exercise, since I am still not free of my dizziness. Also all the men of the village came to clean up here, to cut wood and to bring it up to dry. They have just now finished.
11. Sunday. Early this morning the Tartars brought the news that the immigrants were already this side of the Volga, and could arrive here today. Therefore, some of the relatives of the immigrants prepared to meet them, but have seen nothing. We all looked in vain for them all day.

12. Again early this morning news came through J. Kl., Froesenheim, that the immigrants had already been seen near Froesenheim. Joh. Wall and Isaak Epp with their families arrived well and happily at 8 a.m. at C. Wall, where they were joyfully welcomed by relatives, parents, siblings and friends. They had travelled for 10 months and 5 days.
13. A very devastating death has befallen the Wall family in Hahnsau, which has deeply shaken the hearts of everyone. At the first joyful meeting with the newly arrived immigrants, the dearly beloved Joh. Wall suddenly became ill this morning with symptoms of severe cholera. At 10 a.m. they eased somewhat, so there was hope for recovery. However, at 1:30 all hopes were shattered, Mr. Wall passed away. The pain for this family is immeasurable; everyone is deeply touched. Lord, how are your ways so hidden and so unfathomable! We pray, strengthen all those who mourn with the comfort of your word, and teach us all to bow in all humility before your counsel, to hold fast to your solace, so that we may experience your thoughts to be thoughts of peace. Above all, may we work out our salvation with fear and trembling through the only foundation of Jesus Christ. Amen.
14. I had to fulfill my sad obligation of writing the funeral letters for Joh. Wall.
16. Joh. Wall's funeral was held today in Hahnsau, to which we were also invited. Marie, however, could not go yet. The body was buried early this morning in view of the doubtful circumstances of the disease which so quickly ended his life. D. H. officiated with a very meaningful service with the text: "What I do now, you do not know, but you will know later." The grief of the widow is great.
17. I wrote Nature and Grammar lessons.
18. Sunday. Marie was at the service for the first time. We praise God that everything went well, and that she is back to normal so quickly. May the Lord continue to grant His grace, also for the little pilgrim. May he become a citizen of the heavenly kingdom, and bless us as parents to do what is needed for this end.
20. Today D. Hamms took Marie, Jacobus and Michael along to Hahnsau to see her parents.
24. This morning I sketched several rivers and towns on the map of Europe. In the afternoon we went to Cl. Epps in H-Au. Suddenly, while we were there we received the news that His Excellency the Chief Judge would arrive from Warenburg immediately. He arrived within an hour, stopping at Jantzens. After a brief rest, he went to Lindenau and Froesenheim.
25. Just after I rose at 6a.m., the Chief Administrator came to tell me that the students would be assembling immediately, since His Exc. the Chief Judge would be visiting and inspecting the school. Immediately we got things in order and the students arrived even in the rain. His Exc. arrived at 10 a.m. After he came in and greeted us, he announced that he would sit down and listen to the instruction and lessons. After singing the verse: "Wake up my heart and sing...", we did some reading and arithmetic. After that His Exc. asked about various things, then gave his farewells. He had spent about an hour with us. When he left he made the remark: "I thank you; what I have seen from you, has pleased me greatly." May the Lord bless this visit to our school.
26. With regards to the visit of His Exc. I took time to talk to the students, encouraging all of us to renew our efforts and responsibilities in studies and teaching in order to satisfy the authorities, but mostly to please our heavenly father in Christ Jesus. May He Himself help us to fulfill these desires through His Spirit.

### **October 1860**

1. I cleaned some wheat today. The weather is warm, though there is some frost at night.
3. In response to the requests of my students, I took time today to tell them a few things about the universe and its stars. A few of the older students had come too.
8. The Administrator was here this morning to inquire about a few things. The Russians are here dismantling the front gable. I have just finished rewriting the catechism. In the evening I felt some fever.

9. Sunday. Father preached about the paralytic man. Outline: 1. The kind of his sickness, 2. Who was the physician?
10. Today I went along with D. Kl. to the annual market in Warenburg. It was very large and everything quite expensive. There was a raging dust storm, which hindered us very much in doing our business.
- 11–18. Peter Wiebe has begun to stucco the schoolroom with clay. I repaired the cow manger. We celebrated father Hamm's birthday on Wednesday. Otherwise I cleaned up in the barn, and helped to iron ("mangle") the clothes. I also helped to whitewash the walls of the classroom as well as distribute the fertilizer in the garden.
21. Today we are slaughtering our pig. Brother-in-law Penner, M. Hamm and brother D. Kl. helped, as well as sisters-in-law Anna and Margarete.
24. School opened again today.
27. Today M. Hamm came to cut the glass for the stormwindows. Jacobus is not feeling well.
28. 29. I helped with preserving the beef, which we received from Cl. Epps, and visited at the Froeses. I cleaned the corn, tied up the trees and helped M. Hamm to winterize the storm windows with putty.
30. Sunday. D. Kl. gave us the news that some bake-houses burned in Laube. 6 persons had been injured as a result of which 3 adults and a few children died. Others were seriously injured, so that there is not much hope for improvement. May the Lord help them in their great pain and comfort them. Also we heard that **Her Majesty, the Empress mother, Alexandra Feodorovna** has "blessed her earthly pilgrimage" and gone to her eternal rest.
31. Today Corn. Stobbe began to stucco our living room. The barn roof is also being finished.

## November 1860

1. Today again many persons have cleaned up here and also brought the hay up into the loft. The teacher for Hahnsau, Mr. Gratz and his wife have arrived.
5. Very busy today with binding brooms and cleaning and sweeping the barn. In the afternoon I helped inside, since our maid left us. Stobbe finished the little room yesterday, and is in the livingroom with all the "clay". We received 12 pd. potatoes from Warenburg today.
6. Sunday. At the close of the worship service in Hahnsau the two schoolteachers, Gratz and Phillipsen, were formally committed to their service.
12. Wednesday Mr. Stobbe finished our living room. Today the church stormwindows were installed. At noon we hired another girl.
13. Sunday. Father preached in our church today. After the service, two men, Peter Fransen, who had been excommunicated, and Ab. Penner, who had joined the Baptist Church, were accepted into our congregation again.
15. We are beginning to copy Christmas songs in school.
19. Today I spray-cleaned father's ears. Then I winterized the storm windows.
24. This morning I was called to my parents, since father had suddenly become very sick. I found him in great pain, which was concentrated in the area of his throat. He was walking up and down, and alternately lying down in his bed. David Hamm diagnosed it as inflammation. During the day, except for short periods, the pain has not let up. May the Lord hear our heartfelt prayers and send him His help soon.
25. This afternoon I found father somewhat better. I wrote a funeral letter for a couple, who died the same day.
27. First Advent Sunday. This afternoon we had Mission Study here, led by Horn and Epp. This evening I looked through the books I received for the library.
30. The double funeral was held today at Corn. Walls. D. Hamm gave the sermon. It was a touching scene to see two elderly spouses lying together each in his/her coffin, so-to-speak having passed away hand in hand into the place of rest promised to the people of God. Both coffins were carried each by 8 pallbearers, laid to rest in the grave, one after the other.

There they sleep and rest in peace until the day of Resurrection. Lord, that I and my loved ones some day may all rest in peace which You have promised Your people. Help us to live and die through Christ our Lord.

## December 1860

2. Yesterday I went to see Elder Wall together with D. Hamm. Elder Wall is deathly sick with breathing problems. May the Lord strengthen him according to His will.
3. We had a heavy snowstorm today. I helped Marie with the laundry in the afternoon, and various other things, including the care of little Michael.
8. Yesterday I had another spell of dizziness, but did not have to lie down.
9. D. Kl., C. Froese and Kopper went to the Walls for the night. Elder Wall seems to be near his demise. He had serious attacks and mentally he is not conscious, except for a few minutes now and then. No doubt he finds himself in the valley of the shadows of death. O Lord! You know Your own; be near him who, we believe, is on his last journey, and who is in such tribulation during his last hours. O Lord help! O Lord! make all things well. Amen.
- 10. Today is Jacobus' birthday.** He is beginning his fifth year. O Lord! keep this little boy unto eternal life. This morning we learned that the Elder Wall passed away at 10:30 a.m. He has overcome his sufferings and laid his weary head to rest. I have known him to be a dear friend and have had wonderful fellowship with him for 10 years, giving me counsel, comfort, encouragement and prayerfully supporting me. Lord, reward him eternally for his kindness not only to me, but to the church which he founded and led as a spiritual father.
11. Sunday. Communion was held here today, at which D. Hamm officiated for the first time. May the Lord grant him strength to fulfill his obligations as Elder.

Today sister-in-law M. Hamm gave birth to a baby boy.

14. Today my older students gathered to practise some Christmas songs together with a few older ex-students.
16. The Honourable Elder Wall was buried today. I went to the funeral with Abr. Froese. D. Hamm officiated. After the closing he gave a brief memorial on the words: "Blessed are the dead, who die in the Lord; they rest from their labours and their works follow them."
18. Snowstorm all day. In the evening I went to Esau's, but he wasn't home. When J. Hamm came along we finally decided to go back to our house, since we couldn't really get into a good conversation; besides, it looked rather untidy ("wolfish") inside.
- 19–20. These evenings my students are gathering to practise Christmas songs. My parents, who were visiting us, enjoyed hearing the songs. I was pleased with the improvement the students were making.
22. This evening D. D. brought a Christmas tree, which he and the administrator had brought from Saratov.
- 24. Christmas Eve.** It was a very festive evening. We had a lovely Christmas tree—the crown of a spruce tree—which we decorated with candles. All my students were there as well as most of their parents and many friends. We first sang the songs: "O Holy Night, Thy rays transcending" (Dies ist die Nacht, da mir erschienen), and "What mercy and divine compassion" (Mir ist Erbarmung wiederfahren). Then I gave a brief meditation on the theme: "Who is He, who comes to the Christmas Festival and seeks entrance into our homes and hearts?" Then the children told the Christmas Story and sang: "Hark, how the Angel choirs are singing", and "O come, little children". At the end of this presentation, the song, "O Du Froehliche, O Du Selige" was sung, followed by a message by D. Hamm on the words of John: "Jesus is the real Light, that came into the world to illumine all the people". After asking the children a few questions, I handed out the gifts. We all stayed for a time of fellowship together. By 8 p.m. the audience left for home. May the Lord be praised for this very enjoyable evening, and bless the program to everyone.

**25. Christmas Day, First Holiday. Sunday.** Welcome, Lord Christ, welcome into this new world! Above all, welcome into our hearts!

Had You not been born, We would all be lost;  
And no one would have part, In Your salvation.  
Therefore we praise You, Lord, That You came to redeem us.  
Prepare us then to give praise and glory for Your great mercy.  
Accept us and use us for this eternal, blessed life for the  
sake of Your great love. Amen.

Father preached in Koeppenthal on the text, Titus 2:11. 1. It is a bright shining light, 2. It shines in every heart.

**26. Second Holiday.** We went to H-Au for the service. Later to the Hamm parents.

**28.** School again. We had company in the evening: J. Hamm, D. Hamms, J. Hamm, J., and Father. They all stayed for evening coffee.

## 1861

### January 1861

**1. New Years Day (Old calendar) Sunday.** The worship service was held here.

**3.** Today an auction was held at the widow Wall's to sell the books of the deceased Elder Wall. Only the heirs, the ministers, teachers, and a few other friends of Christian readers ("Lecteurs") (including me) were invited. I went along with D. Hamms and came back with J. Hamms, having dinner and coffee with the parents.

**5.** Today the cattle and other possessions of the Elder Wall were sold. On the average everything was sold at a good price, and quite a crowd had gathered for the sale. Our little Michael is quite sick.

**6. Celebration of Epiphany.** At this occasion D. Hamm, now our Elder, held a memorial service in honour of the deceased Elder Wall. Text: "Remember your teachers...etc." Among other things he mentioned that Elder Wall had given the message 577 times during his 7-year Eldership; had baptized 44 young people.

Last night we had a thick layer of snow, so that the sleigh track is quite difficult to follow. It is calm, but cold. We stayed home all day, since little Michael is still quite sick. The rest of us are plagued with headaches.

**8. Sunday.** Father preached on the text: "Seek first the kingdom of God...etc." Michael seems to have a bit of fever every night; he cries a lot.

**9–13.** Snowstorm Monday. We received a cow today, which Abr. Froese bought for 25 rbl. Michael is somewhat better. I went to the mayor's office to settle accounts. Brother D. Klaassen was elected as Chairman of the Board of School Trustees in place of the Administrator. We are having a very cold spell. I am beginning with the Russian classes again. Peter Janzen has joined J. Hamm for studies.

**20.** Today I am not feeling well—plagued with a bad cough. This evening I had another student in my Russian class.

**24.** Margarethe Hamm celebrated her engagement to Gerhard Wall today. Marie went with the parents, I with Abr. Froeses. Marie stayed overnight.

**28.** We had quite a lot of company today. Towards evening Marie suddenly had severe abdominal pain, which increased through the night. We couldn't even call anyone. We prayed much and finally the pains diminished, so that we could sleep.



## February 1861

1. Today the new Chief Judge, His Excellency Lord Lysander arrived here, and is stopping at the Administrator's place.
2. I have been in bed most of the day with a bad cough. Father visited me. We are so alone now, that if something would seriously go wrong we would be in quite a predicament. However, we know the Lord, our God is always near to those who call on Him.
4. Today we were able to get some help. Marie is still not without pain. I had to do a lot of writing, but Marie and I left the little ones with our helper, and went to see my parents.
11. Still very cold: -30. The bridal couple visited us today. In the afternoon we had many other visitors: our siblings from both sides, except sister Froese and sister-in-law Klaassen.
12. Sunday. For the ministerial election the following number of votes were cast: Peter Kopper, 17; Peter Ekkert, 25; Dietr. Klaassen, 32; and Isaak Epp, 37. Isaak Epp has the most votes, so has been elected as minister. May the Lord grant him the necessary gifts and abilities to fulfill his responsibilities, so that His name may be glorified, and many souls be brought into His kingdom. May He, the true shepherd of His sheep and of His church grant this by His grace. Amen.
18. I have been writing almost all day. Right now I am writing down the "Rules and regulations of the foreign settlements", which I have been asked to translate by the chief administrator.
19. Sunday. After the close of the service the new minister, Isaak Epp was confirmed (inaugurated?).
23. Today sister-in-law Margarethe celebrated her marriage to Gerhard Wall. D. H. officiated at the wedding ceremony.
26. Sunday. Today Bestvater was reinstated into the church. Also Peter Ekker was chosen as Song-leader (Vorsaenger) in place of J. Peters.
28. Tailor Hecht came to make my overcoat. The rest of my family went to H-Au for a visit.

## March 1861

3. We celebrated father's birthday at Abr. Froeses today, together with many other visitors. Father is now entering his 69th year of life. He is still very robust, which shows itself in helping his youngest son to settle. Lord, You in Your grace and goodness have carried our father to such an old age; have allowed him to be in the best of health and kept him from tribulations. May You continue to be with him as long as Your wisdom ordains him to be on this earth. After that may You receive him into Your heavenly kingdom, where we, too, some day hope to follow him. Amen.
- 4-8. All week we have had thaw-weather. The sleigh track is diminishing, so that the horses are beginning to step through.
11. This afternoon I finished the notebook with the translation of the legal regulations and delivered it to the administrator.  
The canal is beginning to flow.
12. Sunday. Today Isaak Epp gave his inaugural sermon. I had walked to H-Au for the service, but returned with Isaak and J. Epp. On our way back we had the misfortune of getting into a big rut, where we upset, but we suffered no harm.
- 15-18. I went to D. Klaassen concerning the conflict which has arisen between Abr. Froese and father. The D. Klaassens had a very healthy baby boy, named Dietrich. I am working hard on an outline for Russian Grammar.
24. I have begun to make an atlas as reference material for Nature Study. May the Lord grant me success also in this project.
25. Festival of the annunciation of Mary. Worship service was here. Peter Horn gave a good message, although I felt that a few of his points of prophecy were too direct.

Our Jacobus has had a fever all day, but is somewhat better now.

26. Spring is arriving quite unnoticeably with the snow melting gradually. Temperatures from +5 to +10.

#### **April 1861**

1. Today I have been in Fresenheim all day, measuring land for the first time.
3. I have been busy putting land measurements on paper during my classes in school. Neighbour Fr. Janzen ploughed our potato and watermelon patch today.
6. Again in Fresenheim, where we staked off the acreages. We had rain, snow and hail alternately—regular cold April weather.
7. I closed school today for seeding-time. After school I went to D. Hamms to see sister-in-law Anna, who is sick again. Sister-in-law J. Hamm has also been very sick for 8 weeks.
13. We celebrated father Hamm's birthday in H-Au today. He is now 71 years old. All the children, except Marie, were there. Praise be to God who has kept this dear father in good health in body and soul!
14. Today we are celebrating my mother's birthday. All her children were here, except Dietrich, who had to stay home because of the illness of his wife. Our dear mother is suffering from a headache, but it has not affected her as much as usual. May our gracious Lord also grant her rest and peace for her soul, and an enjoyable evening of life.
15. My birthday again, which I am celebrating with a small circle of loved ones. Lord of my life, how I thank You for leading me so graciously. You have blessed me with so much goodness for body and soul. I am not worthy of all your faithfulness. Be with me furthermore and grant me what I need for my soul's bliss. Draw me to You, that nothing may separate me from You in time and eternity. Amen.
- 18–19. I dug holes in the garden and put in 32 Tree stems. Also planted potatoes for which I used a marker I had made.
20. Good Friday. "O Welt sieh hier dein Leben am Stamm des Kreuzes schweben, Dein Heil sinkt in den Tod; Der grosse Fuerst der Ehren, laesst voellig sich beschweren Mit Schlaegen, Hohn und bitterm Spott..." (O world, here on this cross, your Lord has found His place, Your Saviour bleeds to death. The highest Prince of Glory, is suffering pain and sorrow, With beatings, mockery and scorn...) Oh what Love! Lord, may I understand and take this to heart.
23. Easter Sunday, First holiday.

Hallelujah! The Saviour lives,  
Peace now reigns upon the earth.  
Rise, O Redeemed! and adore  
The Lord with songs of praise.  
The heavens and the earth resound  
With numerous choirs and voices:  
"We have atonement through His blood,  
The Lamb of God give glory.  
The Saviour, who arose from death,  
After the tomb of darkness,  
Has made the resurrection day,  
A day of great rejoicing.  
Honour and praise to our great God,  
Though we were lost, has granted us  
Through Jesus' resurrection,  
New birth, new life from darkest death.  
Hallelujah! Glory and praise  
Unto His name be given;

We worship, laud and honour You,  
Our Lord for all eternity." Amen.

The weather doesn't seem suitable for Easter, with a cold rain and strong wind.

26–29. I planted a pea-hedge and the last potatoes. Also levelled off the place for a bake-oven. Marie went to H-Au to visit Hamm's little Cornelius, who has suffered cramps for 15 hours. Meanwhile, father came to bring us the news of the boy's death. The Lord be praised that his sufferings are over. Jacobus has had a fever again.

30. Sunday. D. H. preached the sermon. In the afternoon we had Missions Study, led by father and P. Horn. P. Horn actually gave a very strong message against smoking. Although this practice did not apply to the text, Horn applied it to the same sin as murder and adultery. Whether this message will have served its purpose is doubtful, but it would be commendable if excessive smoking could be lessened or even eradicated. However, whether the method proposed by P. Horn is the right one, is doubtful. It is more likely that Horn will keep away some of the churchgoers, which would be very sad.

### May 1861

1. School began again today, but only 5 students came.
3. Today I had to go along to the fields with the Administrator and H. Froese to measure the last of the border acreage. Last Saturday the teacher, Mr. Horch was around, and has applied to teach at the Hahnsau school.
6. I finished the digging for the bake-oven, sifted some rye and cleaned up in the barn. Seeding time is finished.
12. I planted beans after school. Jacobus is quite sick again. He has a very bad cough, which gives him no rest. I went to D. H. to get some medicine. Today Jacobus has slept a lot.
14. Today Marie has a fever, which kept her mainly in bed. Since Jacobus was also mostly lying down, it was quite a dismal day. Of course, we have to have those days too, since only sunny days would not be good for us.
18. After school I went to the ravine again. At this occasion I saw a strange bird again at the Warschina. According to the Nature Study Book, it could be a Roadrunner, the smallest swimming bird no bigger than a swallow. Near it was a Seawallow [aka Common Tern].
20. Today I cleaned the paths in the garden, and worked on the translation of the Russian legal system. Mother Hamm was here for a visit. Later Marie accompanied her to the D. Hamms.
24. I attended the local office meeting today where delegates were chosen to go to Petersburg. In the afternoon we celebrated mother Hamm's birthday in H-Au.
28. Sunday. After the worship service Elizabeth Ellert was accepted into our church. D. Hamm gave a brief message and officiated with a simple welcome and congratulation to the candidate.
29. After school I took the students for a walk across the fields and to the ravine.

### June 1861

1. Ascension Day. This afternoon we had the approbation of the candidates for baptism.
7. D. Hamm vaccinated the school children here in Koeppenthal.
9. We are very busy in school preparing for the coming examinations.
11. Pentecost, First holiday. I went along with D. Hamms and father to Warenburg to attend the worship service at which occasion 100 children were being confirmed. We were lodged at Mrs. Mueller's.
12. Second Holiday. Baptism at our church with 13 candidates. D. Hamm officiated for the first time.

14. Today we had a gathering at our house with J. Jantzens, sister-in-law H. J. and sister-in-law Wall, as well as D. Hamm, and my father. The subject of our discussion was all kinds of gossip in which D. H's and we had not taken part, and father was here as mediator between the two parties. The results were gratifying. May the Lord grant that the reconciliation will be satisfactory.
15. After school today, those children who had been vaccinated were examined.
17. I began to copy my Nature Study pictorial descriptions into a clean notebook.
19. As of today the Volga-steamship will be sailing regularly from Warenburg on Tuesdays and Fridays, leaving at 1 a.m.

Unexpectedly, we are seeing a **comet**<sup>60</sup> in the sky again. This morning I saw it near the Great Bear for the first time.

22. The comet was quite visible yesterday evening. It has a straight tail, and a somewhat limited head.
24. Festival of St. John and communion service in Koeppenthal.  
Today we were happy to greet the newcomers, our friends the Wiebes.
30. Today a shed was built at the Esau's. We were also invited, so went there after school. We met several other guests.

### **July 1861**

1. Today I worked in the garden and also made preparations for examination day, for which my students and I have practised all week.
2. Sunday. Thanksgiving Service for communion.
5. I prepared for tomorrow's day of examination.
6. Today for the first time I supervised the students' examinations, in the presence of spiritual and secular administrators. With the help of the Lord, for which I had earnestly prayed, I was able to begin this task with joy and confidence and finish it without a flaw. D. Hamm offered the opening and closing prayer. O Lord, You have helped me so graciously thus far, be with me in the future to teach these children, entrusted to me. Not only for our sake, Lord, but that Your name may be glorified.
8. Today I went to Warenburg with D. Kl., father and sister Wiebe. This evening there was a ministerial meeting here with certain church members, discussing the somewhat destructive disturbance caused by them at the recent wedding in Lindenau.
- 12–14. After school I went to the fields for a while. Sister-in-law J. Hamm is quite sick with "Nerve-fever". School is being closed for the holidays. Little Michael is still sick, no doubt he is teething.
16. Sunday. P. Horn preached a sermon on "Judging the splinter". After the service the Brotherhood met with regards to the Lindenau wedding. Both mothers were at our house for dinner. Harvest is in full swing.
- 20–22. Cold today with a strong north wind, +15. Whenever I have time I still continue to write Nature Study. I am as far as the Songbirds now. I have also begun to make the Fresenheim village tablets.
23. Sunday. After the service we had another meeting with regards to the incident at the Lindenau wedding. Since the culprits were there to plead guilty and promise better behaviour in the future, the matter was closed. Fr. Epp mentioned a few other matters, as amusements in which he included dancing. There was no further discussion about that.
28. I worked on the globe, and wrote Nature Study in between. Today the Prussian deputies from the Crimea and Kulm, Ewert (a teacher) and Wall arrived. In a few days His Exc., the Lord High Commissioner is expected to arrive.

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<sup>60</sup> This comet is officially designated as *1860 III*.

30. Sunday. The Rev. Ewert, as guest speaker gave a deeply spiritual message. In the afternoon he spoke at our Missions Meeting.
31. Marie and the children went to the H. Jantzens today, whereas I finished writing about the birds for my Nature Study Project.

### **August 1861**

1. Today I sketched several pictures of fish and amphibians. The Prussian visitors left for Samara yesterday.
- 2-5. I am copying my Nature Study material into a clean notebook, then did some more sketching. Towards evening Teacher Horch was here for a while.
7. The kernels in the stalks which have fallen over are beginning to grow. It is feared that the wonderful harvest may have been spoiled.
- 8-9. These two days I suffered from my old illness of dizziness, so that I have not been able to do much, except that I read the story of Pedla to Marie.
20. Sunday. I went to the Hahnsau service with my parents. In the afternoon little Anna Hamm, daughter of David and Anna Hamm was buried.
23. Tomorrow the three ministers, D. Hamm, my father and P. Horn are travelling to the Samara settlement to regulate some church matters.
24. This morning D. Klaassen's little Dietrich died after a long illness. I am working on the Hahnsau plan and Nature Study.
25. Mother Hamm was here today. Little Michael is somewhat better today and is beginning to take food which, except for fluids, he hasn't had for several weeks. We were almost ready to give up, but are quite hopeful again. He still wants to be carried around, and has a hard time sleeping.
27. Sunday. We attended the funeral of D. Klaassen's little boy. I returned from there at 11 p.m.

### **September 1861**

- 1-6. Dark, cool weather. I am sketching the Koeppenthal and Hahnsau village tablets (signs?) with pencil.
8. Today quite unexpectedly the "Krimmer" (Crimean) delegates arrived: Heinr. Janzen, Mirau, Corn. Epp and Joh. Dyck. Also our 3 ministers came back from their trip to Samara. I went to Esaus in the evening where all these guests were gathered.
10. Sunday. There was worship service here. In the afternoon I went to Abr. Jantzens to visit with the Prussian guests, and others who had congregated there. After coffee we all went to Cl. Epps. Later I had the privilege of getting a ride home with W. Penner on his lovely wagon.
12. Today Cl. Epp and family (except Cl. jr., who is staying here) left for his move to Samara, where he will be in charge of the new settlement, and then make his home there for the rest of his life. In order to watch the departure I went across the fields to the H-Au hill, from where I could view the train of 5 wagons leaving Hahnsau, and bid them my last farewells. May the Lord go with them and grant them success for the good of the settlement. In the evening I went to J. Hamms to visit with the Prussian guests.
- 13-14. Mother Hamm came to visit us but became quite ill. I am working hard on the village tablets, so that I can finally get rid of them. Mother H. is very sick. Father Hamm and sister-in-law Penner, as well as my mother, came to see her here.

In the afternoon we suddenly saw two Russian wagons arrive, and before I knew it, the well-known horse-doctor, J. Bestvater stood before me. He and his family are on their way to Samara. They are staying at Esaus, so I went to visit with them there for a bit.

17. Sunday. Service in H-Au. Father preached. Mission Study in the afternoon. In the evening I went to J. Hamms, where the Prussian guests had gathered to say farewell. We had a hard rain with thunder which continued on our way home.
- 19–20. The first night which affected the garden very much. Mr. Bestvater will be staying here for the winter, lodging at the Neufelds'. After school I put in a post to mark off our plot in our cemetery here. I consecrated the place of our final rest with a silent prayer.
21. Anna Hamm told me of an incident which happened at the widow Wunderlich's home. Later in the evening, while she was preparing for bed, there had been a sudden shot through the closed window, which seemed to have been directed at the bed. Thank God! No one was injured. With good reasons the carpenter, C. F-r is suspected to be the culprit, though nothing has been proven.
23. Today we dug out our potatoes here, and I immediately cleaned away the weeds.
26. Yesterday a healthy baby boy was born to the H. Jantzens. An incident happened at the Esaus: Their adopted son, Jacob Bergmann riding back from the funeral in LindenAu had the misfortune that his horse slipped and fell at which he broke his foot as well as his leg and dislocated his shoulder. He is in bed with great pain. While I went to visit him, F. Epp jr. came from Fresenheim to ask Esau for advice. His brother Rev. J. Epp had also fallen from a horse and broken his foot.
30. I cleaned up in the garden and got the last of the potatoes from D. Hamm. We got 108 Pd, of which we keep 60 Pd. We have had a sprinkling of snow today.

### **October 1861**

1. Sunday. I was at J. Bergmann until 3 a.m. cooling his foot. I went to church with D Kl. We are having **Harvest festival** today. It is cold enough to necessitate heating the church. I stayed with the children in the afternoon, while Marie went to the D. Hamms.
- 6–9. 6. Our wedding anniversary. I went to the market in Warenburg with D. Klaassen. It was very cold.
13. For the last few days I have been sick, and mostly in bed. Today we are slaughtering our pig. D. Penner and D. Klaassen helped.
15. Sunday. Because of my illness I stayed home from church.
18. After school I went to Penners to get the 100 Pd. meat which we had ordered. After that I went to Esaus for spareribs. We received some breadfruit today.
21. I sifted some grain to be ground, cleaned the barn, fixed the wall-clock among other various activities. After Vesper Krueger came to get the grain to be ground. At this occasion he told us of a sad incident concerning the carpenter C. Finkheifer. He had gone to get some fodder-chaff from a place near Fresenheim. When the horses didn't get going, he walked beside them to hurry them on, while his wife sat on top of the load holding the reins. The horses made a sudden start, his wife fell over forwards between the horses and under one of the back wheels. Mr. F. was not able to stop the horses immediately, so the wheels drove over her chest and throat. She died after about a quarter of an hour.
22. Father preached here today. The incident concerning Finkh. has led some people to suspect that the death of his wife could have been violent. It has been brought to the attention of the administrator.
23. Today the administrator is here to inspect the death of Mrs. F. 12 men have sworn unanimously, putting on record the suspicion of foul play in this death; the marks on head and throat seem to verify this.
28. This morning our household help left without notice. Marie and Jacobus went to Fresenheim to the G. Walls with father. Little Michael stayed at the Fr. Jantzens.
31. Yesterday evening the Doctor and the investigator ("Stonovau") arrived to do a post-mortem on the body of Mrs. F.

## November 1861

1. -7 to -10 frost today. All cattle have been brought under cover. The Dr.'s and "Stonovou's" inspection proved that Mrs. F. actually came to her death under the wheels of the wagon.
11. Marie did her laundry today. For a few days we have had a lot of smoke in our room as a result of which Marie and Jacobus have had headaches. Around Vesper Esau came to look at the situation, and took the stove pipes apart. During this time the room was thick with smoke, but after the pipes were back in, the problem was solved.
17. Today a sort of wolf-hunt took place. A number of wolves had been seen recently, especially at LindenAu, so about 100 riders and a few riflemen scoured the countryside in that area. Father, sister Froese, the Joh. Epps and I walked to a place where we could see some of the activity. However, though we saw many wolf tracks, we didn't see hide nor hair of any wolf, and came back quite disappointed. Fortunately, the weather was pleasant.
22. Today I went to J. Hamms where a meeting took place of newspaper readers to discuss the continuation of subscriptions for the future.
25. I wrote funeral letters this morning for Ab. W., whose youngest son, Peter has died.
29. I feel somewhat ill, as if my old friend, the "Schnupfenfieber" (head cold & fever) is visiting me again.
30. Our house looks absolutely like a hospital, because we are sick, so to speak, from young to old. Also almost half my students are missing from classes.

## December 1861

1. In view of the many cases of sickness, we were obliged to close school today. I felt quite relieved, since I was not feeling well myself.
4. There has been quite a lot of snow, so sleighing has begun.
10. Sunday. Communion in Hahnsau today. 108 participants were present. Today is Jacobus's birthday. May the Lord keep our dear child, and let him "grow in wisdom, stature and the fear of God" and make him a citizen of Your kingdom.
11. Singing practice again for Christmas Eve.
14. Today our cousin Claas Epp celebrated his engagement to Elizabeth Janzen in Hahnsau at the home of the latter.
17. The second communion celebration, held in Koeppenthal. There were 120 communicants. Weather: storm and snow.
23. We made many preparations for tomorrow's Christmas Eve program. I also had to write a funeral letter for Fr. Schmidt, whose wife died at childbirth (twins). It was a sad event, since the father was left with 4 small children.
24. I did not go to the worship service in Hahnsau today, since I had many things to prepare for the Christmas program. Many guests showed up in good time. In spite of the snowstorm, the room was overfilled with people. At 6 p.m. I went to get my students—38 in number—and led them into the room after the lights on the Christmas tree (a spruce tree again) were lit. After the congregation sang 3 verses of "O Holy Night, Thy rays transcending" (Dies ist die Nacht da mir erschienen), I made a few introductory remarks. Then I sang a few verses of a song in two-part harmony with the students. After that the time of Advent was represented from the Old Testament prophecies, then the actual Christmas story was presented by the students, alternating with a few verses, and singing songs. Then the Elder, D. Hamm gave a short Christmas sermon to the children. The gifts were then distributed, and the audience—may God grant—parted with a blessing and joyful hearts.
25. Christmas Day, First Holiday. Here it is again, this wonderful, happy, blessed Christmastime. Streams of blessing shower down from heaven upon poor sinful humanity. Blessed are they, who open their hearts, who unlock gates and doors high and wide, so that

the King of Glory can enter in. Yes, enter in to me and my loved ones, and make your dwelling with us, so that one day we can live with You eternally. Amen.

We have had a raging snow-storm all day. We were invited to D. H's for the afternoon, where the bridal couple, Cl. E. and other guests were visiting.

26. Second Holiday. The storm has completely quietened down. We went to H-Au for the service. Father preached. We were at the Hamm parents for dinner.
28. School again. Yesterday the first fire accident happened here: Bestvater's house caught fire accidentally through careless heating. O Lord, guard us from great accidents. What would we have done if, during the big snowstorm on the 25th, there had been a fire here or in H-Au? Thanks be to You, O great God, for Your gracious protection.
31. Father and sister Froese went to H-Au for the service today.

## 1862

### January NEW YEAR, 1862

1. With God's help we have entered another year. We speak with Samuel: "Hitherto the Lord has helped."

Thus far the Lord has led, Through His great grace and mercy,  
Thus far each day and night, He guarded heart and mind.  
Thus far He led and carried, Thus far He brought me joy.  
Thus far He daily helped me.  
Praise, honour, thanks and glory To Your great faithfulness,  
Which all my life You showed me; Each day was ever new.  
I place within my memory: The Lord has done such wondrous things  
To me and helped me always.  
O help me ever, dearest Lord; Help me e'en every hour,  
Help me in this and every place, Help me through Jesus' pow'r.  
Help me in life, in pain and death. Through Jesus' blood and sorrow.  
Help me, now and forever.

4. After I worked at some written material until 1 o'clock a.m., to keep Marie company in her wedding preparations for this afternoon, I felt dizziness again. However, by afternoon it was more or less gone, so that I could go along to the wedding of our cousin, Claas Epp, which was held at the Abr. Janzens. We went along with D. Klaassens. Meanwhile, there was a snowstorm, so that the Fresenheim people had to stay over night. Since we had the wind from the back, we managed to get home safely.
5. A raging snowstorm again, so there were almost no students in school. I closed school early.
9. Last Friday H. Claus the chief inspector was here to investigate anew the Finkheifer incident. On Sunday they had testimonies by witnesses at the local mayor's office.
12. Meeting at the mayor's office to which we were invited, but I went alone.
15. I had invited the members of the library committee, J. H. and D. H. for a meeting regarding the expansion of the library which was held here.
18. I am writing a Directory of the library for each village.
21. Sunday. I had no opportunity to go along to H-Au to the service, so stayed at home. Many Prussian letters arrived.
- 26–30. A heavy snowstorm these days. I attended the local service. We had a meeting of all the newspaper subscribers, to which I belong, held at J.H. The subscription fees were paid at this occasion.



## February 1862

1-2. A heavy snowstorm. I am translating the Volume of Laws.

6-9. My parents came for a veal roast. A daughter was born to G. Walls.

11. Sunday. We borrowed a wagon from Abr. Froeses to go to the Hamm parents in H-Au. Father Hamm is quite ill, a result of a grave condition which unfortunately was discovered too late. He noticed for some time that his body was covered with lice, which however, could be taken care of in short order. However, this malady could be the reason for his pale complexion at this time.

16. Today we went to D. Hamm's to discuss matters about the library.

18. A conflict has developed between Rev. Horn and the other ministers regarding the library. They have had a serious discussion, since Horn again connected smoking with the library.

24. Today I brought the little pigs into the regular pig barn.

28. Day of Repentance. Service at Hahnsau. I went along with my father. Father Hamm is improving.

## March 1862

1. Today I had to re-measure the general plan of the whole colony.

3. This morning we went to my parents to celebrate my father's birthday. All the children were invited, as well as J. Hamms and D. Hamms. Father is beginning his 70th year and one still cannot see any signs of actual aging.

6. It seems the enemy is trying to instigate another quarrel among us in connection with the missing land for Fresenheim. Many people are quite wrought up about it, especially in Hahnsau. Lord, our God, look down on us in your great goodness. We acknowledge in humility that we have earned nothing but wrath from You, and certainly none of the favours which Your hand has bestowed on us. Turn all our hearts towards peace, and prevent all further bitterness and conflict, so that Your holy name may not be slandered. Lord help us for Your name's sake, and the sake of Your son Jesus Christ. Amen.

7. This evening my father, J. H., D. H., and Esau were here talking about the ongoing disagreements. We encouraged each other to keep together as much as possible, to avoid a rift among us. May the Lord help us.

14. After school I went to the J. Hamm's who had just returned from Saratov. With regards to the Fresenheim land dispute, the councillor Attingen had said that the borders which had once been made for the 3 colonies were not to be changed, and that Fresenheim must have its land too. But it would have to wait until the new addition could be made. When will this be done? Perhaps after 12 years, according to Cl. Epp. I hope sooner.

In Alexanderthal (near Samara) according to a letter to Elder H. from the newly elected minister Gerh. Enss, Cl. Epp has suggested to elect Ewert as a new minister for the new immigrants to arrive in summer. However, the other Prussian ministerial is in favour of waiting until the new immigrants will arrive, and then to have the election together.

16. Our Michael is quite sick. We hope that when the teeth come through he will improve.

18. Sunday. Father preached here. His introduction was based on the Passion story. In his main theme he uttered strong words against the lukewarm, military-minded ("soldier-eager") Mennonite men in Prussia.

Last week the canal was cleaned out.

20. Today the temperature climbed to +7, so the canal is flowing with great force.

22-24. The canal is still flowing swiftly. School attendance is low because of all the water and slush. I finished sketching the plans of Hahnsau, which I had begun last fall.

25. Sunday. I walked to H-Au across the fields for the service for the first time this spring. It was hard going.

A very strange phenomenon is taking place this spring. The dry plants, and also the grass bunches on the fields, are covered with lime or flourlike dust: which if touched while walking create clouds of dust, which settles along the legs up to the knees. Could it be a kind of mildew?

26. Since the stove is not set up in the worship area, there is no school today.

27–28. The bricklayers are breaking down the oven and are beginning to transfer it to the worship area. The last snow in the garden is gone. I began to clean up the yard.

31. Today I sketched the amphibians for the Nature Atlas. In the afternoon the school was given a cleaning, so I was chased out.

## **April 1862**

1–2. School vacation for spring seeding has started. I cleaned up the library bookshelf and wrote some wedding invitations.

3–5. H. Schmidt ploughed our potato patch. Our rooms are being wiped down. I transplanted the rest of the acacia and oil shrubs, and began to dig up the garden. We have had very strong, dry winds which are drying out the soil.

### **6. Good Friday.**

Today the Lord on wounded back,  
Carries His cross at Golgotha;  
Behold, my heart and bow in worship,  
See what has happened here for you.  
Your debt and sin He too has carried,  
And shed His precious blood for You  
Upon the cross, with thousand scourges,  
For all the world He suffered there.

Yes, my Saviour, Lord Jesus! You have suffered to redeem me and my loved ones, so that we may have eternal life. Oh! may we gratefully reflect on these things, and praise Your inexpressible grace, which caused this exceptional wonder of love in saving us from eternal death. Help us by Your Spirit to consecrate ourselves to You, for all eternity, as return for Your pain and suffering. Amen.

8. Easter Day. The Lord has risen!

Hallelujah! Jesus lives! Death and Satan now are vanquished.  
Grave and tomb and earth have shaken, When triumphantly He rose.  
Go no more to Golgotha! Jesus lives! Hallelujah!  
Hallelujah! Do not search For the living, with the dead;  
But believe the wondrous story Of the joyous messengers.  
These have known what happened there: Jesus lives! Hallelujah!  
Hallelujah! He will give Life beyond the grave to all.  
Now I run my course with joy, Jesus' death is now my life.  
Though I die, I will not fear: Jesus Lives! Hallelujah!

D. H. preached on the Easter theme. G. Walls were here for a visit. Later I went to D. Klaassens, since they are leaving for Prussia shortly. The steppes are green, the flowers are blooming and the trees are budding. The weather is unusually good for this time of year.

10–12. We are planting potatoes. I had some abdominal discomfort today.

13. Today is father Hamm's birthday. He is entering his 73rd year. He is exactly 30 years and 2 days older than I. His vigour is gone. He has been plagued with diarrhea all winter (10–12

bowel movements a day). All winter he has not been at the worship services. May the Lord not allow him to suffer a long, painful sickness, and may He bless these last years to him.

14. This afternoon we went to see my parents and to celebrate mother's birthday. She is following father in entering her 70th year. Although she seems to be quite frail, we cannot say that she is ailing perceptibly. We thank the Lord for this. Lord, may You grant mother a peaceful entry into eternal life, in her good time.
15. Sunday. Today we are celebrating my birthday, by which I am entering my 43rd year. O Lord, how I praise You for granting me another year. Lead me by Your hand, so that I may not falter, or miss the way to eternal life; and that I may be found worthy as Your servant and possession, to the praise of Your most holy Name. Amen.

D. Hamm held a brief farewell message, since he is leaving for a trip to Prussia this coming week.

16. I wrote a few notes on the wild plants which grow here, to send along with D. H. for Rev. Sch. in Danzig.
17. Esau was here for a bit to tell me that the "Comptoir" had not accepted the hateful and revengeful accusations made by the local office secretary, Goerkel, supported by some of our Mennonites; in fact they had rejected them. May God guard us from all evil and ill-will of those who work against us.
19. I planted some potatoes and also made an outline of the chapter on fish for my Nature Study Project.
21. Psalm 145:1-7. Lord, I too want to praise You, for You have done great things for us, in giving us the great gift of a little daughter, thereby entrusted us anew with joyful responsibilities as parents. Thus may You furthermore not withhold Your all mighty hand from us, and grant us Your blessing for these joys and responsibilities of rearing this new child, together with the others, for Your heavenly kingdom. We entrust this child to Your care and keeping, that through Your Spirit she may be guided and kept to eternal life in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Early this morning, at 4:45 a.m. our daughter was born, our fourth child, whom we named Maria. May this name also be written in the Book of Life. We had both been at the funeral yesterday, coming home at 10 p.m. At 2 a.m. Marie woke me with signs of labour pains. At 4 I went to the parents here to get a wagon, in case we needed to go for help. But before the vehicle was here the birth had taken place with the help of our neighbour, Mrs. Esau. We have literally experienced the Lord's help with little or much. May He continue to help us.

22. Sunday. Both mother and daughter are in best of health. Today our 9 friends have left for Prussia. Many of us from here and Hahnsau came to bid them farewell. We sang "Jesus still lead on" (Jesu geh voran) and D.H. held a short message and prayer. Then we sang the song "Ach bleib mit Deiner Gnade". Lord, be with these travellers as they leave for this long journey, and bring them back safely. Amen.
- 23-25. Marie and the little one are well. A number of guests have come to see our newborn and to help around the house. I am still busy with sketching the various kinds of fish for the Atlas.
- 26-27. We have had some snow and cold. The travellers have started out with bad weather. We went to the Jantzens to get Michael back, and also visited father Hamm. The latter is in better health than he has been all winter.
30. Today I began classes again with a few children. In the afternoon I planted Poplar-sticks which I received from the administrator.

## **May 1862**

1. Funeral at Abr. Jantzens. Marie is up and around most of the time. Weather: +20 and quiet.

4. I have been cleaning the paths, which is difficult with the dry soil and storm.
7. On this date D. H. and company were to arrive in Prussia.
9. I went to J. Hamm this evening to bring him the papers which I had translated. At this occasion the Chief Judge was installed as state counsellor.
11. I planted the first beans at noon. After school I had to go to the Harms's, but I didn't give them any medicine this time.
13. Sunday. Father preached today. Marie attended the worship service for the first time. The Lord be praised for His grace that Marie was well so quickly. We visited my parents this afternoon. In the afternoon we had a soft, wonderful rain which was really needed for the dry, thirsty soil.
14. This morning M. Hamm's little Helene died as a result of cramps.
15. This afternoon I took my students to the ravine again for an outing.
16. Right after dinner I was asked to come to the Chief Administrator to translate for a Russian, Lord Okrudknou who had come from Nove Usan. It took me until 3 p.m. After that the administrator and my parents came for a visit.
17. Ascension Day. We went to the funeral of Hamm's little girl this afternoon, together with all our family. We were able to borrow D. Klaassen's wagon for this occasion.
25. Today I had to go to Dyck jr., who became mentally ill very suddenly. Then I went to Hertels with J. Hamm. J. Hamm used the new healing method of "Baushoidtismus" on Mr. Hertel. We received letters from Prussia, which stated that the travellers had arrived safely in Prussia on May 6. We also received the news that our cousin Mrs. D. Hamm I of Ladekopp had passed away.
26. A few days ago, H. Jantzen's little Heinrich swallowed a \*Tuchnadel" (dress-pin). Today the bricks are being cleaned up here. \*(the needle passed through the boy's stool after 5 days.)
27. Pentecost. Father preached in Hahnsau. We went to the Hamm parents for the afternoon. Beautiful weather.
28. This morning I planted beans. After coffee we went to Esaus to visit with the newly-arrived Molotschna visitors, Peters and Janzen.

## June 1862

- 1-4. I received a letter from M. Schulz, Prussia. Neighbour Ekkert of Alexanderthal has come back from Prussia. Some of the men, who have earlier been here at the **Trakt**, and gone back to Prussia, have given conflicting reports of the Samara settlements, so that the Prussian Mennonites have received many negative ideas from here. In one way many of us here have expected this; especially when the first reports were rather exaggerated; but in the meantime, the **Nimbus**<sup>61</sup> of Perfection, the illusion finally fades, and reality sets in. However, it is sad when the new immigrants have such high expectations, and are bitterly disappointed when they settle. Yet, it is true: The mistakes people make, are the people's fault; but the Lord is faithful.
6. This morning Peter Harms died of a serious throat sickness. Also this morning neighbours Neufeld and Neumann arrived home. Their reports agree with Ekkert's and that of the Prussian visitors. The three men, who were quite excited about the Samara settlement, are now fully healed and will likely stay here.
8. Yesterday Herman Jantzen put up a fence around this yard, and the Russian workers are working on this side of the barn roof. I sketched the LindenAu village plates. In the evening I brought Mrs. Ekkert some medicine.

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61 Nimbus is a synonym for Halo.

10–12. The Mich. Hamms have returned from the Samara settlement. I went to H-Au to see them and also visited with the Prussian guests, Janzen, Wiens and Toews. The farmers are cutting hay.

16. I finished the LindenAu village signs, and am writing an outline for my students' reports. At 3 p.m. Esau and C. Frose arrived home, so I went over to welcome them. Four more young people have arrived.

18–21. After school Phillipsen was here to talk about school matters. I received a letter from Doerksen. Today the second party of Prussians left for Prussia. At Koeppenthal a little boy was attacked by a bull, but thank God no harm was done. The Lord's angel certainly watched over the child's life.

**\*\* 22.** Today our little Michael (1 year and 10 months) **walked his first steps by himself.**

23. We are expecting His Exc., the Chief Judge today. All morning I have cleaned up as best I could. At noon Riesen came running breathlessly, that Loewen had almost drowned. I went over to his house and found him very feverish. Riesen had shown him a place for bathing, which was much deeper than he thought, whereupon Loewen had sunk. Since Riesen could not swim, he called for help at which he was saved. May this be a reminder to all of us that death does not always send a messenger, but comes quickly to fetch its prey. After Vesper I went to see Loewen again, who was feeling much better.

24. Sunday. His Exc. the Chief Judge finally arrived today. He has visited the 4 colonies very hastily.

25–27. I visited some sick people: Loewen, and Engbrecht's little child. Loewen has had severe pains in his chest. Later B. Epp came for me to see Ab. Martens, who has a high fever with pains in his side.

28. Today Corn. Wall was here to get medicine for their little son. In the evening I had to see Loewen again, who has difficulty breathing, and is extremely tired.

29. Today I was asked to come to Loewen again. He seems to be nearing his last hour. After midnight he became delirious and then had a heart attack. I sat close to his bedside, and before long he breathed his last. Mr. Wall who stayed with him the night before, had heard him pray.

30. This morning I sifted corn and wheat. Otherwise, I made preparations for the up-coming school examinations, drawing lines in the notebooks, etc. All day we have been waiting for D. Hamms' return.

## July 1862

1. Sunday. I walked to H-Au for the service this morning. I was told that D. Hamms were already in Saratov. A brother of the deceased Mr. Loewen also came, but is not here yet. What great sorrow will be his, to see his brother in a coffin after 10-year absence, one can only imagine. Even more so, to think that he will not even see him in death, since he had to be buried today already, even though the funeral service will be on Tuesday.

2. Loewen arrived yesterday evening, while D. Hamm arrived at 8 a.m. today. We went to welcome them in the afternoon. The Lord be praised for His wonderful protection. All of the siblings went to the Hamm parents to celebrate the return of our loved ones after their 10-week absence.

4. I went to the J. Hamms towards evening for a while. When I returned home at 10:30 a terrible scare awaited me, the like of which I had never in my life experienced. I found everything at rest, except Marie, who wasn't there, and Katherine didn't know either where she was, or where she had gone. A terrible fear wrenched my heart, but I tried to compose myself; after calling around in the barn, I lit a lamp to look for her, thinking she must have had an accident somewhere. In the meantime, Kath. remembered that there had been a note on the table, which she might have taken to Esau's. So I walked over and found her in

amiable conversation with the neighbours, and ready to come home. Thank God, that my fear was groundless.

5. Today 28 degrees warm. In the afternoon the Rev. Joh. Claassens and family visited at the Esaus, so we walked over to visit with them. After coffee they all came to see the school.
6. Today the Rev. Claassens visited my parents. Sister-in-law J. Hamm had a sort of epileptic seizure today, which made them think she was dead. However, she revived.
7. This morning I translated a page of Russian writing and brought it to the local mayor's office. After that I was called to the local office by the administrator to affirm my school examinations for next Thursday, and to give me a part of my total teacher's wages.
9. After Vesper today we had a sudden whirlwind which resulted in considerable damage. It tore a clump of burning straw out of one of the brick ovens before the heaters could prevent it, hurling it onto a straw pile, which ignited immediately, and in a few minutes the straw piles and the brick "schuppen" were in flames. The whole brickworks turned to ashes, as well as almost all of the workers' possessions. Neighbour Esau lost about 1000 "Schuppen" piled-up bricks. The Lord be praised, that this accident didn't happen in the village. The workers' damage amounted to 200, and Esau 600 rubles S.

Later I had a visit from my colleague, Dietrichsen of Hahnsau. He is a very friendly, plain, but very knowledgeable man, with whom I hope to have fellowship and much support for my teaching, to the blessing of my charges. May the Lord grant this. Amen.

- 10–11. Marie was quite sick today, and would like to have been in bed if she had had time. I don't feel well either—perhaps because of the heat yesterday. I am busy making preparations for tomorrow's examinations.
12. Today at the request of the administrator the examinations of the Koeppenthal and Fresenheim Schools took place. The LindenAu School could not participate because of sickness. In much weakness I was able to perform, though not without difficulty. I thank God for His help and for answered prayers. Both before and after dinner there were a good number of visitors. D. Hamm and D. Dietrichsen were here for dinner.
15. Sunday. Baptism took place in H-Au today. O what a holy transaction baptism is! How important are the commitments, which are given to the Lord; and how wonderful the promises which He gives. In the afternoon we visited at the H. Jantzens, Penners and later at Fr. Walls.
17. After Vesper I went to H-Au to see my new colleague Dietrichsen, with whom I discussed many school concerns. It seems to me we will agree on many things and also be able to cooperate in the choice of material for our classes.
19. Sister-in-law Anna Hamm came to get me to see the Penners in H-Au. They are both suffering from severe headaches. I had to go back and bring D. Hamm along, since the Penners both wished to be treated with the "Life-restorer" ("Lebenswecker"<sup>62</sup>). This remedy was tried and immediately gave good results. The right help, however, comes from the Lord, who can bless every treatment.

Harvest is in full swing.

- 20–25. I was home all day, alternately writing, and making a frame for the picture of the Emperor. Marie has a fever again. I also sketched the remaining LindenAu village tablets (signs). I also did some reading.
- 26–27. Marie has had fever again, so I have had to take care of little Marie. In between I translated 10 pages of the Russian papers given to me by the administrator.
28. This morning Marie expected the return of her fever, but instead, there were symptoms of a worse malady. At first she had bad dreams, sleeplessness, a throbbing headache, hand-

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62 An example of a "Lebenswecker" device can be seen at:  
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/heritagefutures/1486184354>

jerkings, pain in her left side, and a feeling of depression, which seemed to indicate a stroke. First thing in the morning, I went to D. Hamm to get medicine, in the meantime praying earnestly for God's gracious help. Thank God the symptoms have not reappeared during the day; in fact, she has been able to sleep restfully, and is feeling much better by tonight. During the day my parents, neighbour Esau and Barbara Jantzen were here. It seems like a Hospital in Marie's family these days. The Penners are on the mend. Their situation was made more difficult when 4 horses were stolen from them. They have no clue where they might be. On top of all this, harvest-time is here. Father Hamm was worse again too. D. Hamm also had a fever this morning, so that they were obliged to return Penner's children, one of which—little Marie—also had the fever. However, we know that “although affliction,... does not give us joy, but sorrow, works for peaceable fruits of righteousness to those who have experienced it.” May this healing work not miss its intent for us. May the triune God grant this by His grace. Amen. Our two little ones, who have suffered from boils, are getting better.

29. Marie slept well all night and feels much better today. Praise the Lord! Because of Marie, I stayed home from the Communion in church. In the afternoon I was called to the village office to write a report on the theft by Kopper's hired help. Because of all the stress Marie is extremely tired.
30. We had a hard night—Marie felt a great heat in her body with extreme headaches. I had to put cold compresses on her head for the rest of the night, and change the bedding. Towards morning she felt somewhat better. Right after breakfast I went for medicine. Neighbor Esau came to see us, as well as my mother, H. Jantzens and M. Hamm. The latter took our little Michael with him for a few days. Marie slept a lot during the day, and is feeling better.
31. Except that little Marie was very restless, we had a better night. The little one has sores in her mouth.

### August 1862

1. Marie was quite sick again this night, so that from midnight until morning I had to cool her head again. I have hardly left the sick room today. During the night Marie moved over to the other room, where it was not so stuffy. During the afternoon she even got up occasionally. However, she is very weak. It is very hot today: +27.5 with a warm wind. Since we have had no rain for so long, it is also very dry.
2. We had a better night, and Marie feels better, but very weak, so that it almost seems she will faint. We had a terrible duststorm. I went to see my parents. Father Hamm is suffering from diarrhea (18 stools a day) and is getting to be very weak.
3. When I came back from H-Au yesterday, Marie was worse again, so I went to D. H. to get some medicine, and also, because of Marie's sickness, to cancel the worship service for Sunday. She was so weak that she could hardly talk. Late evening her condition got worse, so that we sent for Mrs. Esau, who came over with Lieschen. Marie had a high fever and was delirious until about 3 a.m. At about 3 a.m. little Marie's crying brought her back to consciousness, so she took care of her. During the day Marie was somewhat better. My mother was here all day.
4. We had quite a good night. I did some writing until 1 a.m. Marie has been sleeping off and on all day, except that she drinks and eats a bit in between. Otherwise, she is getting weaker all the time. She cannot even get up alone anymore. O God! should her sickness become dangerous and thus a hard test be placed on me? Your will be done. Grant that Your will at all times be that of mine.
5. Yesterday evening a number of people called: mother, D. KI, D. Hamm, Mrs. Esau and Lieschen Ewert. After general consensus, we brought my dear sick one to the schoolroom, which we cleared out, and where she is much more comfortable. The night was much better

and she also had a good day. However, after a number of guests, she felt weaker again. We had a big storm today.

6. We had a good night except that Marie feels a bit of rheumatism, probably as a result of the ice compresses. However, she seems more aware of her sickness, which we hope is a good sign. In the evening the rheumatic pain in the back of her head increased so much that I went to D. H. again for advice. He suggested putting on cotton-padding compresses.
7. Marie slept well, and feels somewhat stronger. The Lord be praised for His mercy. Amen. All day things went well. Towards evening G. Walls, D. Hamms and H. Jantzens came over. D. H. brought us 3 little pigs, which when I tried to take them out of the wagon, got away on me. However, I was able to catch them. At Esau's they were trying out the threshing-machine for the first time.
8. It seems there is a distinct pattern in Marie's sickness: on alternate days she takes 2 steps forward, then 1 step backwards, so actually makes one step headway each day. We had a good rain last night. Anna Hamm is very sick.
- 10–13. Slow progress for our sick one. Fever every other day. Today Esau is selling 9 horses at the auction. Marie has been up a few times. She already cut some apples together with my mother.
14. Since Marie is feeling a bit better today, I took Jacobus along to visit Mr. Dietrichsen.
15. Today, for the first time Jacobus allowed us to put him on a horse, after H. Jantzen's little Abram demonstrated, that it was easy.
17. With my help Marie took a walk through the garden today. In the afternoon I had to go to the administrator to translate for Okrudknou from Novo Usan.
20. In between, I am writing World History.
21. I went to see mother Hamm this morning. She has overexerted herself during harvest-time, and I found her in bed. Father Hamm is gradually getting weaker. He is almost always lying down, though sometimes on the sofa. May the Lord not let him suffer a long illness. The Penners have both recuperated, so that they can take care of their household, as well as their parents. I also visited sister-in-law Anna Hamm, who has been very ill.
24. Today I went to the Colony on business, with D. Kl and Ar. Esau to see Pet. Gerhard. On my return I heard that the Prussian families, Thiessen and Wiebe, arrived in H-Au yesterday evening.
25. I received some barley and heating material for the school today. In the afternoon I went to H-Au with Jacobus to see the Hamm parents. Mother is well again, and father in good spirits—he is smoking his pipe again. On my way back I stopped at D. Hamm, who intends to travel to Samara tomorrow.
25. Sunday. Marie went to the D. Hamms for the first time since her illness. We have had good weather all week.

## **September 1862**

2. Sunday. Marie went to the worship service here for the first time since her illness.
7. School has been open all week.
9. Sunday. I went to the service with my father. Peter Horn preached. It was a good message. It would be too bad if this talent would be lost to the church because of personal weakness. There is an undercurrent of misunderstanding in the congregation against Horn because of what happened 8 days ago. Horn apparently was very disgusted when he came to the service, having seen the Rev. Joh. Claassen smoking on the way to the church, which the latter denied, so that Horn turned around and went home. It turned out to be mistaken identity, since it was Esau who had been smoking in the early morning hours, before dawn. If only one would not be in such a hurry to draw conclusions from what one has supposed to have seen, which results in more harm than good.



10. As I was about to begin the classes today, one of my pupils came running in with the news that: "The Prussians are here!" I asked him, "Where?" He said, that they had come from Moskentown. I hurry outside and see 6 large wagons coming towards us. Immediately I went out to meet them, and together with Esau, we had the privilege of greeting the new arrivals, Dietrich Hamm and Franz Suckau together with their families. I dismissed the class and together with Marie accompanied the guests to J. Hamms. On the way a large group of relatives and friends gathered to have coffee together at the J. Hamm's. After that the David Hamms and we accompanied them to their Hamm parents in H-Au. Then we went home with my father's vehicle. Next day Anna Hamm and cousin Sukkau visited us.
16. Sunday. Worship service here. Elder Joh. Claassen gave his first Message here. In the afternoon we visited the Hamm parents, together with the Sukkaus and other guests.
19. This evening I was asked to see the administrator about some further surveys. Later I went to the Esaus with D. H. to discuss the church building project. It was decided to have a "brotherhood" meeting to further plan the details.
20. Today we had the "brotherhood" consultation about building the church. By general consensus it was decided to build the church at a place formerly suggested by the Koeppenthal people. There was quite a debate as to who should be asked to be the building contractor. Finally it was decided that each colony should elect one builder. This meeting was opened with the singing of the song No. 387, verses 1 & 2, and a prayer led by my father, deliberated upon in brotherly love, and closed with the song: No. 926, v. 17 & 18 and the blessing. May our faithful God help us in this project.
29. During the last few days I have surveyed the new land area that was broken up by the previous renter. I went along with the chief administrator and D. Dyck, and began the measurements after having tea with the Russian living in the semljenka. We had snowy and stormy weather. Four of us stayed the night, finishing with our work at 3 p.m., then went home.
30. Sunday. Harvest Festival. Is. Epp preached. Because of the weather—snow, rain and hail—attendance was small. We had heated the worship area for the first time.

### **October 1862**

1. Good weather today: +13. Our Koeppenthal people brought lumber to the church. We went to Abr. Froeses for the evening.
- 4–5. Summer has ended today. We had some snow, with a big storm from the north. Towards evening a snowstorm. Today is our wedding day. My parents and D. Hamms visited us.
8. I went to the market in Warenburg with Abr. Froese. We saw the so-called "Teahut" (Theebude).
- 11–12. We were at Lieschen Horn and Abr. Neumann's wedding. My father officiated. Someone brought me some grain. My father took Marie and the two smallest children to H-Au to her parents. Her father is more or less in bed. Perhaps the Lord will take him home soon, thereby loosing the tired soul from its bonds. His will be done. Amen.
13. This morning I went to the ravine to get a few branches, in order to replant them in our garden. I also visited father Hamm, who is a bit better today. Jacobus is not feeling well.
- 16–18. We got some new books for the library, which I put in place. Jacobus is quite sick, and Michael too is not well. I helped slaughter some pigs at Abr. Froeses. Mariechen Bestvater came to our house to learn the trade of making fur coats.
20. Today I had to go along with D. Dyck to the newly surveyed land in order to obtain the receipt for the measured sections. However, the manager was not at home, so we had to go back without having accomplished anything. On the way back we had rain and snow.
21. Sunday. I went to the H-Au service with father. We had a very bad snowstorm. On the way back it was no pleasure, since the storm blew needles of snow into our faces, so that we could not keep our eyes open. In the afternoon it turned to sleet.

- 22–27. Snow with sleet. –1 degrees. The country has donned its winter garment. J. Bestvater fixed our windows.
28. Sunday. Today Elder Joh. Claassen gave the message. In the afternoon we had Mission study, at which occasion the young Peter Dyck came to us. The new Russian teacher also arrived yesterday. He is a congenial, educated young man, called Nikolau Gavrislsvip Monosnov, the son of a priest, 22 years old, from the village of Sunkorovka, 60 verst from Saratov. He will live with us.
31. Today the Russian school began its classes. They are to be held through the winter. H. Jantzen is doing carpentry work in the barn.

## **November 1862**

1. I went to J. Hamm with the new teacher to make some arrangements for the Russian School.
3. After cleaning up outside and sifting 3 sacks of corn, I had to go with administrator Janzen to the new acreage. Because of the snow, we had to go by sleigh.
4. Sunday. We went to see the Hamm parents at H-Au, since mother Hamm is quite sick. Father Hamm should really always be in bed, but he says: "I really don't like to". Almost all the family was there.
6. Because of heating problems, we had to move the Russian class from the local worship area to the "Summer-room" (Sommerstube) at the Esaus.
10. In the afternoon we attended the engagement celebration of Hermann Jantzen with Cornelia Horn. I also visited father Hamm, who is completely bed-ridden.
13. This morning Marie went to see her father. She came back saying that his end is probably near. He has requested that close relatives here and in Fresenheim are to be notified. I went to my parents immediately and also made arrangements for a vehicle for the evening. After school father took us to H-Au. In the meantime D. Hamm received the news that he was to come to H-Au immediately to see his father-in-law. Since we were delayed a bit because of little Marie, when we got to the house, father Hamm's soul had already departed its mortal shell. We found him a corpse. Also D. H. came too late to see him alive. Father Hamm has finished his course; his struggles are over. May his soul rejoice in the eternal rest and eternal life.
14. I wrote funeral letters during the day.
17. I spent most of the day writing notes for the obituary and life-story of father Hamm.
19. Marie went along with D. Hamms this morning to help make preparations for the funeral. I went to Froeses to see about a vehicle for tomorrow.
20. Funeral of our dear father, Michael Hamm. 36 families had been invited. We had been able to get a sleigh from D. Froese and a horse from Abr. Froese. Rev. Is. Epp officiated. His text was: "There is a rest...for the people of God." Many funeral guests followed the coffin to the grave. It was cold: –21, but no wind.
21. Today we went along with my parents to the "Nachbegrabnis" (memorial funeral).
- 23–24. We went to mother Hamm's auction in H-Au with Esau's sleigh. A number of articles of the deceased were sold: clothes, etc. Mother Hamm came to our house to stay for a few nights.
25. Sunday. Festival of All Souls. Service here in Kppthal. Father preached. Mother Hamm went to see my parents in the afternoon.
29. Wedding at the Abr. Jantzens in H-Au. In the morning I winterized the windows in both rooms.

## **December 1862**

1. I had business calls all afternoon. Marie is doing laundry.

5. Today, unexpectedly the administrator arrived, and without much notice an election of Chief Administrator was held. J. Hamm was again voted in.
10. Today is Jacobus's birthday. He has begun his 7th year. The D. Hamms, and Dietr. Hamms were here.

Our dear son is developing delightful tendencies. On his own he is beginning to read not too difficult books, learning the words by himself. He can count to 100 and over, forwards and backwards, is beginning to know the idea of numbers, is starting to write words, knows the commandments and the Lord's Prayer more or less by memory, and sings familiar melodies correctly. The Lord be greatly praised. May He help him to become a worker for His glory and a citizen of His Kingdom. Unfortunately, we have noticed an undesirable physical symptom of weakness in hearing, so that often we have to speak quite loudly to him. May the Lord keep him from further complications, above all, that his inner hearing may be open to heed God's Word.

11. Peter Toews has had the misfortune of getting his hand into the fine combs of the mill gears. His hand was broken in 3 places. Several combs had to be sawed off which took an hour before his hand was free. It is feared that his hand will never be restored. May the Lord Himself be the healer, then everything will be well.
15. I went to the village on business, then to see Peter Toews. He had excruciating pain, but the wounds are beginning to heal. Day and night, compresses of snow are being applied to avoid gangrene. May the Lord help him not to feel discouraged, and as he wishes receive a blessing from it all.
17. This evening we began the practices for Christmas. Marg. Horn, Catherine Peters, Eliz. Janzen and Mar. Hamm helped us.
22. Peter Toews's hand seems to be healing.
23. Sunday. This afternoon Lennchen Hamm helped with decorating the Christmas tree.
24. Christmas Eve. With God's help we celebrated this evening much in the same way as last year, except that several more poems were recited.
25. Christmas Day—first holiday. Worship service was held at both places today. This afternoon Marie went to the D. Hamms, while I stayed home with Jacobus, who has the chicken pox, and is not allowed to be out of the room.
- 28–31. I spent some time visiting Peter Epp, who is very sick. He is prepared for whatever God wills, and wishes to be relieved of his suffering. We have been reading to him and singing together.

## 1863

### January 1863

1. By God's gracious help we have lived to see the New Year. May His grace be praised for all His Faithfulness and Mercy, which He has shown us in our age. My parents, Jac. Klaassens, Peter Dyck and G. Walls were here to visit us.
2. School began again today.
- 5–9. We went to mother Hamm, H-Au, where all her children were gathered. We keenly felt the absence of father Hamm.

Little Michael has been sick for a while, perhaps because of teeth coming. I went to see Joh. Epp, who is still in bed, but is improving slowly.

11. This evening I visited with Rahn. He told me that as a result of having lifted all restrictions on the Brandy saloon after New Years, there have been 18 deaths by drinking. He himself had seen one case near the Volga. It seems among our midst also there are those who have gone to Woskarser St. in order to "taste the fresh brandy", and have been totally drunk, in one case even losing consciousness. Oh God! show us ways and means, wisdom and

understanding, and steadfastness to hinder this evil from becoming established among us, so that your Kingdom may not suffer. Amen.

12. Today the ministerial conferred with several persons: P. F., D. P., H. E., J. B., J. H. and A. N., who were in Worsk. last Sunday (the younger ones among them not included) which resulted in some indignation and resentment. However, the culprits had admitted their wrong-doing, and promised to change. May the Lord rule in their hearts, that they may keep their promises.
13. Sunday. We had Mission meeting this afternoon. We finally had Dietrichsen and his wife here for a visit.
17. This winter we are having strangely mild weather, which we have not seen since we are here.
20. Sunday. Yesterday we were at J. H., by invitation, for a meeting with regards to the building of the church. It seems that before any further plans are taken, the Warenburger church should be looked at, especially with respect to the metal roof.

I didn't have opportunity to go to Hahnsau for the service today, so I stayed at home, reading a sermon to the family. After that we were taken to Bestvaters for a visit. Weather is turning stormy, with snow.

27. Sunday. Worship service here. Since I was awake almost all night because of little Maria, and partly because of heating, I couldn't really stay awake, so I went to the schoolroom to listen to the service as best I could.
31. After school we went to see Mr. Suckau, who has been sick for 8 days with nerve fever and is going through a crisis. We received a girl to help out in the household.

## February 1863

2. I am beginning to sketch a star-chart. Will I be successful?
4. Today my parents came to visit us. We sang a few songs for mother. **Among other things I am writing a daily journal in the Russian language.** (This was written in the Russian language, and translated into German).
6. Today we had a general brotherhood meeting here in Koeppenthal with good attendance. After singing a few verses of a song and opening prayer, the first item on the agenda was the presentation of the church regulations, which since 1857 had not been discussed. They were read and accepted by silence. Then Joh. Wall of LindenAu was taken to task for his misdemeanour of deliberately having taken shrubs from Abr. Martens in H-Au. Then the administrator referred to the "Sack story" of C. Froese (our neighbour), which had never been settled. He read a lot of protocol given by various members, all of which gave not the least evidence about this story. Since nothing could be proven, a few of the brethren suggested: That the incident be put to rest; in spirit to give each other the brotherly hand of forgiveness and love, and in the future to take great care in living godly lives in word and deed. After a few remarks this suggestion was accepted by the assembly standing to its feet. After that there was another complicated item, concerning Corn. Froese of Fresenheim, which however, was tabled for the time being. May the Lord be praised for the peaceful atmosphere which prevailed among the brotherhood, as well as the peaceable way in which concerns were dealt with.
15. Today we had a discussion again with P. Janzen and Jac. Pauls, LindenAu regarding a drinking episode at the time of the village payment of accounts. Other than that we had much company: Father, D. Hamms, Dietr. Hamm and others. The first three stayed until 10p.m., maintaining lively conversation with us.
16. This morning I went to the fields armed with a stick and telescope to look for wolves. I was fortunate to see four of them, but only from a distance through my telescope.

17. Sunday. Peter Horn preached, a very sharp message against all sorts of sins. After the service the Joh. Wiebes were again accepted into the fellowship.

23. Yesterday I was called to see the Chief Administrator, to interpret for Mr. Okrapsnau who had just arrived. I got home at 1 p.m., and had to go back today. Little Maria is rather sick.

24. After the Mission study, Mr. Dietrichsen was installed as teacher for Hahnsau. He also gave a response message.

The snow is melting quickly. There is a lot of muck.

27–28. Brother Jacob was here as well as Dietrich, and C. Froese, H. Jantzen and Peter Dyck.

### March 1863

1. According to the newspapers and private papers, there is much unrest in Poland<sup>63</sup>. There have been incidents of horror, and a revolutionary party has become very strong.

3. Sunday. Father's 70th birthday. Father gave the morning's message for Rev. Joh. Claassen, who is rather weak. It happened for the third time in father's 39 years in the ministry, that he gave the message on his birthday. O Lord, and faithful God! You have allowed father to finish his 70th year of life. As he himself testifies, although there have been painful experiences during his long life, yet in general, you have given him a joyful pathway; and in spite of occasional serious illnesses, yet he has been in exceptionally good health, and you have protected his life and soul in a marvellous way. May you be praised a thousand fold for your faithfulness to him. Keep him also the rest of the life which you have ordained for him, and keep him in his faith, that he may finish his course with you, and one day receive the crown of life, which you have promised all, who love you. Amen.

Almost all of father's relatives here, except D. Penners, as well as his children, were invited to celebrate his birthday with him. In total there were 21 adults, 6 children: M. D., J. Kl., and families, Marie and I with Jacobus, Dietr. Hamms, Jacob and David Hamms, Fr. Suckau, H. Jantzen, Mich. Hamm & wife, Is. Epp, Corn. Froese, Peter Dyck.

18. Today there was a sort of examination in writing and arithmetic in the village office. I was also present after school.

21–22. The first new building of the year was erected today: Suckau's granary. After school I went to Jacob Hamms, where relatives were celebrating the birthday of the deceased wife of Dietr. Hamm. She is celebrating her birthday in heaven.

Cousin Hamm mentioned that 30 years ago on this day a large group of young people, among them he and I, (I as thirteen year-old) had taken a pleasure trip to Schoensee, Schoenhorst etc. Of these appr. 15 persons, 7 were no longer with us, as Barbara and Anna Hamm, Peter and Isaak Wiens, Jac. Wiens, Peter Froese and Corn. Loewen. After another 30 years—who of the rest of us, (even I as the youngest) will still be alive? Probably no one; certainly very few. Lord, you know; our life is in your hands. You have written all our days into your Book, even when there were none.

25. Today we had examinations again in the village office.

29. Good Friday. Worship Service here. Weather: +9.

### April 1863

2. At the instigation of a peculiar idea with regards to my vocation, I spoke to my father about this. As a result of a recent quite harmless discussion with Rev. Horn and brother-in-law Froese, (since last Saturday) quite incidentally the thought has been going through my mind: that if I give up my present vocation, and accept the position as local secretary, to which so

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63 The January Uprising in the Russian occupied Poland-Lithuanian Commonwealth began on 22 January 1863 and lasted to 1865. It was a spontaneous Polish protest against conscription into the Imperial Russian Army.

far no one has applied, I could thereby serve the entire church to the glory of God as well, and in general it would be somewhat easier, and I would have a much better income. Furthermore, if I could acquire a place (perhaps between school and church) on which I could build my own house, which would serve as village office at the same time for the time being, we would have a place to call our own even for our old age, and we would not have to be concerned about this in our retirement. However, I have prayed about it to the Lord and committed this concern to Him. If He would wish that I stay in my present service, this will be fine with me; I know that even in old age He will take care of us. Besides, I would find it hard to leave the school, which is the centre of my heart and life, thus entrusting the students to someone else. Unfortunately! how many false shepherds are there among the true shepherds, especially those who are to care for the lambs? May God's will be done; my will rests completely in His and no one else. May He help me. Amen.

3. I have begun to work in the garden today, planting all kinds of shrubs and saplings. Towards evening we suddenly received a visitor. Chief administrator Hamm brought His Exc. the Inspector Klaus accompanied by a young Marine Officer, to inspect the school.
- 5-12. I went to the 6th colony "Hohendorf" to measure some acreage. I also planted shrubs, apple trees and potatoes. I visited Anna Hamm, who again is sick.
13. Today I went to mother Hamm together with Jacobus, since it is our deceased father (Hamm's) birthday.
14. Sunday. Father preached here. After church we went to the cemetery, and then to my parents, where we celebrated mother's 70th birthday. Now she too has finished her 70th year. Actually she feels stronger now than she did a few years ago. May the Lord, who has so graciously kept her through many tribulations for so many years, also lead and guide her the remaining years of her life and receive her into His heavenly kingdom through Jesus Christ our Lord.
15. My birthday again today, as the third and last one in a row to be celebrated in the family. The first that my father-in-law's has been omitted this year. Not too many more times will we celebrate the second, that of my mother's, since the lower figure of a lifespan, according to Ps. 90:10 has already been reached. But I too have reached more than the upper half of this figure; and I really doubt whether I will reach the age of my parents, since I seem to lack the durable strength of either of them. Creator and Lord of my life! Who has made me and preserved me, I give you praise and thanks for all the faithfulness and mercy, which you have shown me. Continue to keep me in your grace and lead me through this time on earth to the blessed eternity. Amen.

In the afternoon brother-in-law David Hamm and I took the local doctor back to Warenburg. We spent the night at Carl Muellers, and in the evening had a pleasant conversation together.

16. We took a look at the church, where D. H. measured a few things. We got home at 2:30, after which I planted the lilac stems and a rose bush, which I had brought with me.
23. This evening we had a meeting at Esaus with the church building representatives, to discuss the building plans.
29. This week I had to sketch the plan of the church to present it to the office. The school therefore takes second place.

### **May 1863**

2. During these days I worked from early to late on the church plan. Yesterday evening the building representatives met at the building site, and actually decided and temporarily marked off the place where the church would be built.
3. Today I finished sketching the church plan.

4. This morning I wrote funeral letters. In the afternoon I had to go to the chief administrator to assess the costs of the church building.
9. Ascension Day. Worship service in Hahnsau. In the afternoon the candidates for baptism were examined in our schoolhouse.
10. Wolf hunt. I went along to Fresenheim, where Jantzen and Neumann had chased a wolf, but could not get it. After school I went to the ravine, and coming home it rained so hard that the Warschina was completely full and tore everything with it as it rushed along. Later in the evening brother Dietr. was here, telling me that he and a few others had seen something they had never seen before, that is, the beloved **Stork**. Father had seen it sitting on the wings of the windmill, and later flying in the direction of H-Au. Oh that it would make its home here, as it was in Prussia! It is possible, since some have seen it at the Molotschna, where there had never been any before.
11. A rather sad incident happened here yesterday evening. The young Gerh. Esau has been bitten by their own rabid dog. They had not noticed anything in particular about the dog earlier, except after he had been sleeping close to the cowherd in the hayloft he had raged around and scratched up the house door terribly, but without having come too near to the boy. After attacking Esau's boy, he was shot immediately. A cow has also been bitten. Oh may the Lord graciously prevent the inevitable, and grant that the medicine taken by Gerh. will be effective.
16. Yesterday after a very warm day, instead of rain we had a raging storm hit us, which harmed our acacia trees. Today the second fire hazard has hit our locality. Mr. Nicolai's house in H-Au burned down in broad daylight. Sparks from his blacksmith-semljenka had set a straw-stack in flames, and then the house. Since the house stood rather by itself, and the wind was blowing in the direction of the fields, by God's protecting grace no other damage was done. The Lord be praised for this protection! May this be a reminder for all of us to turn away from evil and live for Him alone.
18. Today again we measured and staked off the front part of the church building. The first bricks have been brought from Hahnsau. Two men, Dav. Penner and Corn. Dyck, from the Samara brothers have arrived here.
19. Sunday. Pentecost. Horn preached here today—a serious and edifying sermon about the Pentecost story. In the afternoon we had the Horns and their guest, as well as the parents here for a visit.
20. Today, as usual, baptism was held in Hahnsau.
21. Today we had a total eclipse of the moon. I watched it as best I could with my telescope. The beginning was to have been in Riga, according to Riga time, at 11:02 p.m., but according to my watch, was seen here only at 1:12 a.m. In my estimation it should have been seen here at 12:50 a.m. It began under quite a clear sky, but later clouds gathered, and at the total eclipse, nothing was visible, since the moon was completely dark.
22. After school I went to the fields with my students, where according to previous arrangements, we would meet with the Hahnsau School. However, since it began to rain, after 3 tries, we turned back without meeting the H-Au group. We all got quite wet on our return. However, we were all glad for the continuous soft rain, and thanked God that the earth was being refreshed, after a long period of drought.
23. **Today the digging for the foundation of the Koepenthal** church building was begun. Also bricks and sand were delivered.
24. After school today Marie and I accompanied the school children once more in a walk to Hahnsau; first of all to Dietrichsen, whom we paid a visit. The children and we spent a very enjoyable afternoon, especially since Mr. Dietrichsen, being very good at children's games etc. was at his best in entertaining them. We all enjoyed it so much that we decided that our schools should get together more often. It got rather late in the evening, besides the weather was cool.

27. In the evening a number of us got together at the Esaus to discuss the laying of the cornerstone for the church building.
30. This afternoon we celebrated the **Laying of the cornerstone** for our church, which took place in the local school. The Rev. D. Hamm gave the message based on Isaiah 28:16. Before the sermon, the first 5 verses of the song: "Ich habe nun den Grund gefunden", was sung, and later v. 10. After that the congregation, (a large group), went to the church building lot, upon which the actual ceremony of laying the foundation stone took place, led by the building representative, Peter Esau, from here. Following that, Rev. Horn gave a heartfelt message, and the celebration was closed by singing the song, "Nun danket alle Gott" (Now thank we all our God). During the ceremony of laying the cornerstone, a rain fell on the congregation. May God grant that, like this rain, His blessing may shower upon us, as we so earnestly have prayed.

In the afternoon I had classes again.

### **June 1863**

2. Sunday. We celebrated Holy Communion in Hahnsau. This was a very important occasion, since dissensions have again risen among us, though without reason. Oh! may the enemies of our hearts be changed to bind us together in love.
- 3-7. These days have brought us good rains, which no doubt has reached to the roots of plants and grain.
8. Yesterday evening the Elder Dietr. Hamm came back from the Samara settlement, and intends to move there with his family in 8 days.
9. Today we celebrated communion for the second time. 153 persons took part.
10. In Fresenheim a cow and a young calf were bitten by a rabid dog. Joh. Dyck promptly shot his dog, as well as those of 2 other families.
- \*\* 13. Yesterday evening, while I was having coffee at the Esau's, my dear wife had a terrible scare. Little Michael had suddenly disappeared. By God's gracious protection, after a short search, his whereabouts were discovered just before it was dark. D. Hamm's little Dietrich had seen a small boy wandering around at the church building site. At first he had thought it was a Russian child, so did not pay too much attention to him. Later the bricklayers had seen a child walking towards the churchyard, so Esau's little Mary ran in that direction, and found him near Abr. Froeses on the church yard. He was very tired and faint from crying, his whole body shaking. Apparently he had been looking for his mama, who was also at the Esau's. Thanks be to the dear shepherd of the "little flock" for his gracious protection, and that you allowed us to find some clues as to where our child might be, before the shades of night covered the little one and all searching would have been in vain. Oh may this experience be to the strengthening of our faith, but also serve as a warning to be more watchful about the dear ones which you have entrusted to us.
15. I am continuing the writing of the church regulations for Doerksen. Early this morning the Neufelds came back from Prussia and with them cousin M. Scultz with wife and daughter, as well as cousin Renate and Maria Schultz, and little Jacob Schultz.
17. Today both families, Dietr. Hamm and Abr. Wiebe, left for their destination, the settlement at Samara. We also went to see them off from Jacob Hamms, where a large group of friends and neighbours had gathered. They left around noon with 6 wagons, accompanied by the well wishes of all those who bade them farewell. Several relatives and friends accompanied them for a stretch. May the Lord accompany them, protect them and be their counsellor and helper in the establishment of their new homes.
19. Bible Conference and Missionfest in Warenburg. I went along with D. Hamm. We were billeted at Alex. Mueller. There were appr. 13 or 14 pastors present. H.E. Pastor Dietrich held the Liturgy and the regular church prayer, after which H.E. Pastor Heppner from



Orlowsky gave the actual festive message based on the words: "Search the Scriptures...". H.E. Pastor Jirns from Katharinastadt followed him with a message based on: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet...". Then H.E. Pastor Muensten of Schafhausen gave a talk and a report of various experiences in the area of Missions. Finally, H.E. Provost Bonwetsch of Norka, who was most active in missionary activity among the German-speaking people at the Volga, presented a number of interesting experiences in the area of Missions in powerful, and touching words and encouraging examples to further the work of the Lord through Missions. At the end of the service the old H.E. Provost Alexanderdorf presented the financial report. Besides these 6 Pastors and Pastor Hoelz, there were Pastor Hoelz jr. of Weizenfeld, Pastor Bonwetsch jr. Pastor Allendorf jr. of Viokus, Pastor Wahlberg (Reform) of Katharinastadt, and 2 or 3 other pastors. The service lasted till 1:30 p.m. In the afternoon we went to view various articles in the church, and then proceeded to the Gardens, after which we left for home. The Lord be praised for this day of rich blessings to soul and spirit.

21. Today we were at the Horns for their Silver wedding celebration. While we were having coffee, we noticed that thunderclouds were forming, accompanied by a strong wind. After a few minutes there were hard thunderclaps and the rain, mixed with hail, came down in torrents. It made a great noise. Soon we noticed a strange continuous roll of thunder, which at first sounded to us more like the noise of a hurricane in the clouds, but from time to time there was a sinister roar together with the rolls of thunder. We went to listen at both outside doors, then at the barn door. After the rain let up a bit, we went out into the open, where we could really watch this strange phenomenon. Without any appreciable interruption, this strange thunder and constant lightning, alternating between weak and strong, seemed as if the wind came together from all 4 directions, then parted again with violence. After watching this for a while, I decided to go home to attend to some chores, but came back again. Only after that did this strange pattern of thunder die down, except for hard claps now and then. It was certainly a spectacular phenomenon, which no one had ever seen or heard. We all felt as if God, the Almighty, was speaking to us in a special way with the voice of this powerful dialogue. All of us were shaken with a feeling of deep awe of His Holy Presence. O Lord, Lord, holy and righteous God! How will we feel when one day the thunder of your trumpet sound of judgment will be heard by our ears. Oh! may You then be to us an atoning, reconciling God. We pray that you will keep us and guard us in this time of testing through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son. Amen.

27. The warmest day today: +29.

### **July 1863**

5. The grain harvest began today.

9. This morning the school examinations were held in Hahnsau, and in LindenAu this afternoon.

11. School examinations were held here this morning, and in Fresenheim this afternoon. Concerning ours: Religion, Bible Story, History, Grammar, Spelling, and Geography went well; Reading and Writing fairly well; but Arithmetic weak, and in Singing we made two errors because of inattention. Gratz had a perfect score for Parables and Reciting of songs, Reading, Arithmetic, Bible Story and Religion, except that his explanation of the serpent in paradise was biblically not right, and his anti-Mennonite explanation of the 6th commandment about killing was not according to our understanding. Philippsen had: Bible Story, Catechism, Church History, Reading, Arithmetic, Grammar and Recitation of songs. All of it was very good.

14. Sunday. Father preached here. Very warm: +29.

15. +30 and extremely hot all day, as never before. I wrote an outline for History slates.

16. At 4 p.m. a number of us left for Saratov to see His Exc. the Emperor's Son, the successor to the Throne. We arrived in Kosack-town, and were billeted at the Ehrlichs. Here we

learned that His Exc. would not arrive until Thursday. Since it was extremely hot, we went shopping towards evening.

18. We made a few purchases this morning, then went to the place where we would have a good view, but there was such a crowd of people, and more were arriving, so that we could not see anything but people and heads. There was to be a 20-man Kosaktrain escorting His Exc. Finally at 6:30 p.m., he arrived. I had found a place near the tent of the Steamship Office, under which His Exc. was to get on his vehicle. Because of the life-threatening crowd, however, I could see next to nothing, and only with great difficulty could I make my way out of this throng, and back to our quarters. Towards evening we tried again, by going to the house of Prince Ursdamov, where His Exc. was billeted, but He did not appear.
19. Right after breakfast we again went to the house of the Prince. Meanwhile, the deputies of the town were being introduced, which took place on the yard, at which opportunity I got a fleeting glimpse of His Excellency. Finally, after waiting around until 1 p.m., we decided to leave for home. Because of the heavy rain, we stayed in Katharinatown overnight. Next day we arrived home safely at 11 a.m.

### **August 1863**

1. This morning we were called to Abr. Froeses very early (1:30 a.m.), since their little Abram seemed near death, after having suffered from severe diarrhea. When we got there he was already in his last death-struggle, and at 2:30, accompanied by our many prayers, he breathed his last, and his little soul rested in the arms of his Saviour. After only 7 months and 11 days he finished his life's short journey. After a few things were arranged, we went home.
5. Funeral at Abr. Froeses today.
10. This week I have worked partly on the history tablets, and partly on my nature study atlas. We also had a number of guests this week.
11. Sunday. Father preached the sermon. During the day we had many guests, 3 families and teacher B. Epp.
18. Sunday. In the afternoon we celebrated the birthday of our aged uncle, Jacob Hamm, Tiegenhagen, at the D. Klaassens. D. Kl. had gone to the Samara settlement, where he heard the dreadful news of 2 of our young people having been murdered—a newly married couple—by the name of Siebert. They had been found in their bed, beaten to death. This horrible incident naturally has been very worrisome to the people in that settlement. May the Lord keep them in His care!
27. Today Peters has built the choir loft for the church.

### **September 1863**

2. The day before yesterday I went along with D. and A. Hamm, and teacher Dietrichsen to Weizenfeld to see Pastor Hoelz. After we had been to their worship service, which is also still held in the school house, we left and arrived home at 7 p.m. The weather was beautiful.
6. Today we didn't have classes in school, since Dietrichsen was here with his students. My parents were also here.
7. I have begun to draw a planet system for the school. Today I pasted up the tablets for this. I am not feeling too well—sort of a frost-fever.
8. Sunday. Joh. Epp preached here. Mission Study in the afternoon. The two Epp brothers gave a very interesting talk on the development of the Church in Russia. After that we went to the D. Klaassens.
14. Good weather all week. I have finished the planet system. We slaughtered our little pig today. Brother Dietr. helped us.
16. Today the bricklayers have finished the back side of the church halfway up.

21. We had a wolf-hunt in our area today. During the summer a number of wolves have been seen, sometimes 3 or 4 at a time. During the hunt about 6 were spotted, but alas, they didn't catch any. In the afternoon I took Jacobus and my parents to Fresenheim.
28. I am presently working on a transparent star map. Today we went to Fresenheim with Jacobus and Michael, where we visited the Philippsens. We have had beautiful weather lately, but of course there is still much to do this fall.
30. The weather has changed to rain and cold.

### **October 1863**

1. Brother-in-law Penner, who in his delusion went to Straub yesterday with the ministers, got himself into a great rage, when the people concerned, in his presence testified of his misbehaviour. He tried to disprove everything, becoming very angry in doing so.
5. Today the beams and the rafters of the church were put up. After this was finished, the chief carpenter gave a talk with verses of Christian content. Unfortunately, this had not been announced, so not many people were gathered to hear this. May the Lord further the work to His glory. Yesterday 7 young people arrived from Samara.
8. Marie's birthday today. O faithful God! Thanks be to You for giving me this dear life companion, and to this day You have kept her in good health and sustained her. Be furthermore gracious to her and the little ones whom You have given us. Grant that through us Your Holy Name may be praised, and take us one day into Your heavenly kingdom through Jesus Christ. Amen.
11. The ministerial met today with regards to D. Penner's concern. Mrs. Fr. Wall, Mrs. Gerhard Wall, and Mrs. Unger were also there to testify of his wrongdoing. He admitted these, but he adamantly denied the accusations of the Strauber couple. May the Lord grant him repentance.
12. G. Wall brought us the message yesterday that his little son had died. They had found him dead in his cradle in the morning.
13. Sunday. Rev. Joh. Claassen preached in Hahnsau today. It was easier for him this time, but he mentioned the fact that this might be his last sermon. Father and D. H. led the Mission Study in the afternoon. -4 degrees frost today.
15. After school a brotherhood meeting was held, with regards to the Penner affair. Everyone seems to be convinced of his indecent living, so the case is to be examined more carefully.
18. Recently the "Foot and mouth disease" has broken out among the cattle, first in Fresenheim, now also in Koeppenthal. Our cow also was sick. Today we received chaff for the winter.
19. I sifted wheat to be ground, and cleaned up outside and in the barn. In the evening I went to Suckaus for spareribs.
20. Today we heated the worship area for the first time. Jacobus is somewhat ill and even seemed a bit out of it. Late in the evening I went to D. H. for medicine.
25. Today we slaughtered two of our pigs. D. Kl., Suckaus, D. H. and J. Bergmanns helped.
28. After school I went to the ravine where I picked some beans and cut some rosebushes. On the way back it was snowing heavily. Jacobus was able to be in class again today.

### **November 1863**

1. In between I am working on an outline for a larger star chart.
6. I am working on the star chart, putting in the figures taken from neighbour Thiessen's atlas.
12. Went to Esaus for a bit this evening. A letter was read from G. Peters, dated 8 Oct. from the state of Iowa.
13. Marie went along with Suckaus to see the G. Walls in Fresenheim. I went to see D. H. after school to discuss the request that I help with the presentations at the Mission Study.

Even though at this point I cannot quite decide to do this, I must regard this request as a call, so am inclined to accept it. May the Lord help me in this matter.

14. During the last few days of last week, and the first days of this week the church was covered, and closed in completely. Therefore, today an auction was held to sell various lumber products, rods, etc. During this time father, B. Epp, D. H. and M. H. visited us.
16. This morning I was asked to go with father and D. H. for a meeting to deliberate how we can counteract the establishment of saloons in our area, since colonists have decided in favour. Brother-in-law Hamm and father are of the opinion, that if ordinary inns were built for the convenience of travellers, to meet all their needs, (with the exception of alcoholic beverages), this could be a way of solving the problem. The case is to be presented to the Chief Administrator.

In the afternoon we were invited to the celebration of a housewarming at P. Dycks. Many neighbours had come, among them also the teacher Dietrichsen, who gave a presentation in poetry. In his poem he also mentioned Dyck's 27<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration. It was rather artless poetry, but came from the heart with a deep sense of love to his Saviour. Therefore, may the Lord grant him His blessing. Amen.

17. Sunday. Father preached this morning; a sermon which must have been a blessing. In the afternoon we visited at the Peter Dycks. Together with other visitors, we sang a few songs from the Pilgrim Psalter ("Reisepsalter").
22. After school I was asked to come to D. H. again with father. Again we discussed the matter of the saloon. Unfortunately, there are various opinions among the spiritual as well as worldly leaders, so that it is difficult to come to some conclusion. May the Lord grant that everything will be done to His honour, and our good.
27. After school I went to Rev. Joh. Classen in order to discuss the Mission Study, which the two of us are to lead next Sunday.
28. Today for the first time we have had a heavy snowfall, so that the ground is white, and sleighing will begin.

### **December 1863**

1. Sunday. First Advent. We had Mission Study in the afternoon. For the first time I made my presentation, though in great weakness, yet in the name of God, who is strong in those who are weak. I had only the report. Rev. Joh. Claassen had the actual message.

We had a great deal of snow today.

2. We had no classes in school today, since the heater needed to be repaired. In the afternoon I was asked to come to the office, where a legal command by the Emperor regarding the consumption of alcoholic wines and its economic results was read. Very strange! In order to suspend the monopoly on strong drink, the people are offered better and more easily available alcoholic wines, but at the same time punishment is dealt out for heavy drinking. May the Lord protect us from this terrible enemy of human kind.
- 7-9. This week many preparations have been made in school for Christmas. Choir practices have begun.
10. Jacobus's birthday. The D. Klaassens were here. May the Lord keep our son and make him a worker in His kingdom. He is adding, subtracting, knows the 1x1, reads well, and learns his verses and songs easily and by himself. He is also beginning to write.
15. Sunday. Today we are celebrating Holy Communion here for the first time. There were 193 communicants, more than ever. D. H. gave a very instructive and edifying message. I received a wonderful blessing from today's celebration.
20. I laboured under a bad cold because of which I found it difficult to lead the choir practice.
23. I had the children recite their verses today. Other preparations were made for tomorrow's Christmas program.

- 24. The celebration of Christmas Eve.** The evening proceeded as usual, though the weather was very stormy. However, attendance was very good.
- 25. Christmas Day.** D. H. had the message today on the theme: The Lord's entrance into the world through the gates of heaven, through the gate of the Emperor, and through the door of our hearts. We were at home for the afternoon, since it was snowing heavily, and quite cold.
- 30.** I went to the village this morning to invite people to a New Year's Eve ("Sylvester") evening for tomorrow.
- 31. New Year's Eve (Sylvester)** For the first time my students assembled for this celebration. We had invited them for coffee. I first read a nice Christmas story to them, and then asked them in for coffee. After that I read a Mission story to them, and gave a brief message. On the basis of this I suggested that we organize a Student Mission Club, of which all were in favour. May the Lord bless this newly planned organization. Other guests attending were: D. Klaassens, my parents, D. Hamms, P. Esaus, J. Hamms, and F. Suckaus.

## 1864

### January 1864

- 1.** There was a service at both places today. In the afternoon 3 families visited us. -23 Frost.
- 6. Celebration of Epiphany.** Marie was quite sick yesterday, so we stayed home. In the afternoon we had Mission Study with Dietrichsen giving the message. He emphasized very strongly the need to actively take part in Missions, and in closing he offered subscriptions to Mission periodicals. Among those present, 33 rbls. worth of material was ordered. May the Lord bless this work among us. We visited at the H. Jantzens in the afternoon. Our little Marie is quite sick—probably teething.
- 22.** Both Marie and I attended the business ("Schulzen") meeting by invitation.
- 25.** Today I went along with D.H. and my father to the Michael Hamms, where we had a discussion with sister-in-law Penner, regarding her husband's circumstances. At first she made accusations rather excitedly, but later on she calmed down. We do not know what the results of this discussion will be, with regards to helping Penner to turn around. May the Lord grant that the guilty one may repent.

### February 1864

- 5.** Today we had the local accounting to which we were invited. We have had a big snowstorm since Monday. I received a letter from Doerksen yesterday.
- 9. Sunday.** Mission Study here. Later the Abr. Jantzens, J. Klaassens and my parents visited us.
- 17.** Sister Froese is quite sick. I visited her yesterday. May the Lord be near her.
- 19.** I have begun to make an outline of the map of Germany for my students.
- 22.** In the afternoon I sketched a plan for the H-Au land exchanges. Esau has bought the old Martens' land in Fresenheim. We have had very foggy weather recently. Sister Froese is improving.
- 29.** We are having thawing weather. I have begun to sketch a plan of the church, which J. H. intends to send to Uncle Enns in Prussia.

### March 1864

- 1. Sunday.** Today father preached in Hahnsau. We have had rain almost all day. The water in the canal is rising.
- 3.** Today we celebrated father's 71st birthday. We all went to their house, including other guests. Father still enjoys good health. May God, the Lord keep him for a long time, to the joy of his family.

5. Yesterday the canal began to flow. The snow is melting visibly, and with it the sleigh tracks are gone.
13. Today our little Marie walked her first steps across the room.
19. Today is the anniversary of our engagement. In the evening we went to my parents, whom I gave a framed picture of the Emperor Alexander II. This year there will be no excessive high water in the Warschina. The snow on the steppes is almost gone. Some farmers have already begun their spring work. The children had flowering adenis in their hair today.
20. I worked in the garden today, planting wild maples. It was +10—almost summer weather. The larks are singing already, and the steppes are getting green. The lilacs and the maple stems of last year are beginning to bud. Late in the evening I scraped the ice and muck away from the front door. The roads are free of snow.
21. I cleaned up various things today, and planted ash and currant stems. Today it is +14. Spring seeding has begun.
25. Celebration of the Annunciation of Mary. Service here.
- 27–28. I planted raspberries, 3 rows of maple stems, 2 of linden trees, ½ row of ball roses, 3 rows hollender, and 3 rows whitethorn. The evening was clear and beautiful with brightly shining stars. The frogs are beginning their croaking music. We have not had such an early spring yet.

#### **April 1864**

1. This evening I grafted 2 “Quischernister” into the apple stems. It is very foggy, so that one can hardly see Hahnsau.
- 3–4. We planted our first potatoes. Later I planted 20 birch trees and 10 Aspen stems near Esau's fence.
6. The cattle were driven outside for the first time today. Unfortunately, much harm has been done, since at places there are still ice patches on which some cattle slipped and broke both front feet, others just twisted. At C. Froeses 4 animals have been injured. It seems as if in the first place there was a weakness in the bones of the cattle.
7. This week I began classes again, but only the younger students came. In between I am sketching the Alps on my map of Germany.
8. Today I grafted 9 pear-scions, on apple stocks. In total I have grafted: 3 quitsch, 25 apple, and 9 pear-scions all on apple stocks.
10. I wrote the funeral message for D.H. which he will send to Dietr. H.
14. Today was mother's birthday celebration, to which we were all invited. She is 71. May the Lord be praised that she has reached this higher age and according to circumstances finds herself quite well and healthy, even though she cannot keep up with father's sturdy constitution. May the Lord keep her and allow her to live through her old age without worry. Amen.
15. Today is my birthday again—(44). God and Lord of my life! I too have reached over half of the highest age, and you know how few or how many days there will yet be. Thanks be to You for each one of my former days, yes for every hour in which you have shown me inexpressible mercy, even when so often I grieve you with my sins, when I am so loathe to do good, especially also in my prayers. Oh! may my heart and mind be turned to you, so that I may bear fruit to your praise. Bless also my dear ones in body and soul, so that your name be glorified here and in eternity. Amen.
19. **Easter Sunday.** Rev. Joh. Claassen preached here.
20. Yesterday P. Horn preached the sermon in Hahnsau, for which he apparently got little support. He had got stuck several times, and had to quit before the end. This will give him many struggles again.
22. Today the carpenters began working on the church.

26. Sunday. Right after the Mission Study, father, Dietrichsen and I went to Peter Dycks, where many young people were gathered for a farewell for Joh. Rahns, who left on their trip to Prussia. Yesterday the last immigrants: the Family Thiersen, Abr. Esau, Joh. Wiebe and others were sworn in.

27. Today school began with 10 little children added.

The bricklayers have begun with the front hall of the church.

## **May 1864**

1. The carpenters have begun to put on the roof. It is very cold today.

4. Today, because of not being thoughtful, I had a very unpleasant experience. One of my pupils, D. Penner, who has been a foster-child at the D. Dycks for some time, got himself into a bad situation through lies against his foster parents. Therefore, I confronted him today and punished him harshly. Then I sent word that his mother was to punish him as well. That was not taken kindly by his mother and stepfather, and they are quite angry with me. I admit that in my disgust about the whole story, I have done wrong against Krueger, and am willing to ask for forgiveness from them. However, if they think of my actions in terms of deliberate malice, they are wrong; the Lord knows that I had nothing against them personally. I trust that they will forgive me.

Neighbour Mrs. Peter Esau has passed away quietly, after a lengthy illness. I was there during her last hours. She is well taken care of. May the Lord comfort the sorrowing spouse and their only daughter. When we departed from there, I thought of the last verse of the song: "O sacred head now wounded": "Be near when I am dying, O do not part from me..."

5. I wrote funeral letters. We had a lovely soft rain, which was much needed.

8. Today at the suggestion of Teacher Dietrichsen, we had an outing with our schools, across the Steppes to the "Thieves' Field" ("Spitzbubengrund"). Unfortunately, we encountered bad weather—a strong storm from the west—which put much stress on the children. Also, for the little ones the outing was much too long. We arrived home at 6:30 p.m.

9. Today our dear neighbour, Mrs. Peter Esau, who is a distant relative of ours, was buried. Thus one after another we sink into mother earth, till finally it will be our turn. Oh! may then the bereaved in truth be able to say: "He rests in peace!" that is, reconciled with God in this life through Jesus Christ as the only and true originator of peace. Weather-wise it was not a good day. There was such a violent storm that while the coffin was carried one feared it might be blown away.

16. The church building is proceeding speedily; the roof is finished and has been painted, the bottom and upper posts are standing, and the front hall almost finished.

24. Sunday. This morning the Articles of Faith were read. In the afternoon the examination of the baptismal candidates took place.

26. Today we were invited to D. Klaassens where mother Hamm's 66th birthday was celebrated.

28. Ascension Day. Today for the first time Holy communion was celebrated by the Evangelical (Lutheran) members. Pastor Hoelz from Warenburg came for the occasion. First he gave a confessional message, then an Ascension Day message, followed by the actual communion message. There were 70 communicants, besides many who attended the service. The place was overfilled. Pastor Hoelz together with his assistant teacher Weigand was at our house for dinner. After dinner he had to visit a sick woman in Fresenheim. Then he went to Hahnsau to Dietrichsen, where the rest of our teachers, were invited. I was there too.

31. Sunday. The Articles of Faith were read again, and the baptismal candidates had to give their testimonies. The baptism itself has been postponed until after the church building is finished.

## June 1864

6. We are having a warm, dry spell.

28. I haven't written any notes since three weeks ago, so I must make up for this. Since May 5th, (2 months ago) except for a few sprinklings, we have had no rain. The result was a crop failure; added to that the grasshoppers have appeared in sizeable swarms, and done a lot of damage.

Yesterday we had our school examinations here. We experienced a rather new phenomenon of a grasshopper swarm. It began around noon while I was still busy and lasted until 5 p.m. with changing strength in the direction from Hahnsau (from the south) through Koepenthal between school and church. They moved in such a large swarm, that it appeared like thick snowflakes, driven by the wind. Here and there, as they settled, they have done great damage, especially in our garden, where a great number were temporarily quartered. They have stripped the carrots and parsnips of their greens.

Since May 12th we have had no days under 20 degrees warm, and 11 times 20 to 25; 31 times 25 to 30, and 5 times over +30. Because of this drought the idea was brought up that there should be general prayer sessions. These have been held here in Koepenthal, led by David Hamm, and in Hahnsau by my father, both times towards evening. We are hoping for blessings to result, especially that many may be comforted, and set their hopes on God, the Almighty Lord and Helper. May the Lord not turn his face away from us; and even if our coffers may not be filled this time, at least our souls may be richly filled with food and joy.

On the 15th the corn harvest began, which is now in full swing. Today again +29. Yesterday morning we heard the sad news that Mrs. Jacob Martens in H-Au, while chasing a strange horse off their yard, suddenly fell over and died immediately. This again amidst hard times of drought, a possible harvest failure, and death a reminder of the words: "Teach us to remember that we must die, so that we will become wise..." Oh! may we all heed the sermon: "Land, land, hear the word of the Lord!"

30. Today we have had the first real rain since May 5th (8 weeks ago), lasting almost all day. The soil will have been thoroughly soaked. The Lord be praised for this blessing. Even though the grain may not profit from it, at least the potatoes, pasture, etc., will benefit.

## July 1864

1. Today we have begun to practise a song for the church dedication, for which various people with a love for singing were invited.

4. Today I made and finished an inscription, the verse Ps. 100:4, to be placed in the front hall of the new church.

5. Sunday. Today the service was held in the school room at Hahnsau for the last time. Rev. Joh. Claassen preached on Ps. 39:13. After that our Elder, D. Hamm gave a message in regard to the farewell of the worship services in the schoolrooms. Following that we had a choir practice for which a large number were present.

Marie is suffering from an infection in her left eye, which seems to have spread to her right eye. May the Lord grant that she will be able to attend the Church Dedication next Sunday.

6. Brother P. Dyck and I are working on an inscription for the empty places for both sides of the pulpit. We had rain in the afternoon.

12. Sunday. Dedication of the Church in Koepenthal. After the construction of our house of God was finished, and all further arrangements made, the **Dedication** of the church took place today. The church was beautifully decorated for this celebration. In the front hall in large letters was the Inscription: Ps. 100:4: "Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and His courts with praise! Give thanks to Him and bless His name!" After the congregation had



gathered in front of the schoolhouse, and the ministerial at Rev. Joh. Epps, the congregation walked to the Church, between an alley of trees which had been placed for this purpose. After the congregation had lined up in front of the front steps, the men to the right, the women to the left, then the ministerial (with two guests, Pastor Glitsch and candidate-Pastor Langenfeld), stepped onto the front steps. After the singing of verse 1 and 2 of Song No. 89 of our Songbook, our Elder David Hamm held a talk based on the words of Ps. 26:8: "O Lord, I love the habitation of Thy house, and the place where Thy glory dwells". Then the 3rd verse of #89 was sung: "Open, Jerusalem, your gates...", whereupon the building representative, Chief Administrator Hamm received the keys to the church and opened the door. As the ministers walked in, the congregation followed, the women first, then the men. After singing the song: "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of Creation", our Elder gave a Dedication message at the Altar table, thereby solemnly dedicating this House of God, the Pulpit and the Table for future holy purposes. A very meaningful prayer of praise and dedication, during which the whole congregation knelt, closed the celebration, and the actual worship service began, which today included the baptismal service. The song, No. 605 was sung: "Lord Jesus Christ, be present here", after which father read the statement of faith at the communion table. Then the song: #623, v.1-3 were sung: "God, I promise faithfulness to Thee", after which our guest, the Elder Toews stepped behind the pulpit and gave the festive sermon, based on 1 John 5:1: "Whosoever believes that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God". Then followed the service of baptism, followed by song No: 124, v.1,2: "I am baptized in Thy name." At the close Pastor Glitsch gave a message about both celebrations, especially the dedication service. The choir sang the song: "All that has life and breath, praise ye the Lord". Closing prayer by Rev. Horn held at the communion table. Then the closing song: "Now thank we all our God".

Thus far the faithful God has wonderfully helped us, to Him be praise, honour, glory and thanks. O gracious God, may you hear the prayers of your servants that they together with the congregation may be built up to be a living temple of your Spirit, in which you may live and work, as also our children and children's children. Amen.

Our guests for this day were: Teacher Dietrichsen, Teacher Phillipsen and wife, Teacher Schaefer of Weizenfeld and the Gerh. Walls. In the morning there was a threat of rain, but it did not materialize, so we had a beautiful day.

19. Sunday. Today for the first time we had a regular Sunday worship service in the new church. Father preached. In the afternoon we had Mission Study in the church. A heavy rain today. **Yesterday our Michael said his first word to me.**
20. Today a beginning was made with remodelling the school. The foundation for the schoolroom was dug.
- 23-24. I began to arrange the desk and platform. We had a continuing hurricane, as we have seldom seen one. There was rain with it.
26. Sunday. Today we had the first communion service in our new church. The following ministers were present: Horn, David Hamm, Joh. Epp, Joh. Toews, Joh. Suckau, father, and Joh. Claassen; Toews and Suckau as guests.
- 27-28. Today the chimney of the kitchen was broken down, while the bricks for the walls were being laid. I moved in with my school things. The foundation for the new kitchen is finished.

## **August 1864**

1. Today the Hamm's little Cornelius, who had been sick for so long, was buried.
2. Sunday. Today the second communion service took place. There were 88 communicants; last Sunday there were 237; in total 325.
13. Today the Dietr. Klaassens had a baby boy, named Dietrich.
20. Today the guests, Rev. Toews and Elder Joh. Suckau left for Prussia.

- 25–26. Quite cool these days. The oven was put into the living room by the potters. Mother Hamm is quite sick.
27. After school Mich. Hamm was here. While we were having Vesper, Herm. Epp suddenly called from the schoolroom: “The widow Froese's house is burning!” It was only too true. I grabbed my cap and ran out, but the whole house was already in flames, except the back corner. Only a few persons had shown up, so not much was saved. The poor widow! May the Lord comfort her, and speak to many people to help her out. It sounds as if the fire was started by a burning pipe.
29. Marie was at the Esaus all day, where she helped to prepare for their silver wedding with baking, etc. I am fixing various things in our house: doors, windows, etc.
31. Esaus celebrated their silver wedding today. We were also invited.

### **September 1864**

6. Sunday. Today we had deacon elections. Brother Dietr. Klaassen and Joh. Toews were elected with majority votes of 42. The last decision was made by lots. Dietr. Kl. being older had to choose first, and he drew his own name. May the Lord fill him with the faith and spirit of Stephen, the first deacon in the Christian church. A Church Chairman was also chosen. Again brother Dietr. and Peter Esau had the most votes, and Esau had to make a choice by lots, again picking his own name. May the Lord also grant him the necessary strength to fulfill his obligations, in spite of failing health.
12. This morning I carted manure into the garden. In the evening we had a number of young people here for the first choir practice.
20. We went along with H. Jantzens after church. Rev. Joh. Claassen held his first sermon in the new church.
26. This week the rooms are being stuccoed and cleaned, so we had classes only in between. On Tuesday we were at D. Hamms to celebrate his birthday. This week has been most unsettled; rainy and cold, what with the dirt from the whitewashing and stuccoing.

### **October 1864**

1. After school I had a visitor, Colleague Voth, who came back from Samara yesterday. He is a very intelligent and well-read man, who concerning knowledge would be a good person for the school in this area. However, there are all sorts of rumours as to a less than desirable life-style.
2. In the afternoon I tied up the trees, assisted by my students. In the evening we had choir practice again.
4. Quite unexpectedly this morning we experienced the Lord's gracious help through the birth of a baby daughter. She arrived at 6:30 a.m., very soon after Marie had been taking care of the needs of the other little ones. The daughter has been given the name of **Helena**. We praise you, O Lord for your gracious help in the hour of need, and especially for the gift of this little child. But may you, who has given her life, also grant her the spiritual life, which you have brought to sinful people. May your spirit at this point begin with the work of new birth to life with God, and receive again as reward for your pain. Amen.
5. Today we had a lot of snow, so that sleighing can begin.
10. Marie and the little one are well. People are beginning to slaughter pigs, since feed is too scarce to wait longer. In the afternoon I went to the ravine to get a few rose branches.
17. Today we slaughtered our pig. D. Kl., H. Jantzens, J. Bergmanns, M. Esaus, and M. Hamms helped.
19. The weather has suddenly turned to winter with alternately lots of snow, hail and rain and sleet.
20. Last night we had a hurricane-like storm which broke off the wings of Braun's windmill.

- 25. After 3 weeks Marie came to church with me, where we thanked the Lord for His gracious help with the birth of our child.
- 28. Today we held a Lutheran worship service in our church.
- 30. Choir practice as usual.

### **November 1864**

- 6. All week we have had dull, wet weather, with a great deal of muck because of the rain.
- 14. Thursday I went to the H. Jantzens to visit their Jacob, who has been very sick lately, but is somewhat better now. After I came home C. Froese came to see me. I had a long discussion with him about child baptism, with regards to whether there should be re-baptism for people joining our congregation from other confessions. I tried to give my reasons for believing that it is not absolutely necessary to re-baptize those who have had infant baptism with the argument, that if God recognizes infant baptism, we should not reject it.
- 26. Today brother Dietrich and I went to Penners in order to talk first of all to sister-in-law about the concern of her husband, who is still outside the church. We tried to speak to her in love, showing her that if there could be repentance, the matter would be closed, and the past wrong-doings would be forgiven. However, we received no answer to our discussion, so are leaving the matter with the Lord.

### **December 1864**

- 11. After Choir practice D. H. stayed here a while and I discussed the idea of organizing a prayer group for "Prayer in the closet".
- 13. Today we had communion. Oh! may the meal have been a blessing. But unfortunately there are many among us with whom the Lord is not pleased; how much animosity and accusations there are among individual members. O Lord, send "Peace", and may the enemy not have his way, who only wants to destroy our fellowship with one another. May Your Spirit lead us until we are all your own. Amen.
- 20. Sunday. Second Advent. Yesterday I visited my colleague, Mr. Giesbrecht, at Hahnsau for the first time.
- 23. Yesterday we closed the school, and today we cleaned up for tomorrow's Christmas Eve program. It is -10 today.
- 24. **Christmas Eve.** We celebrated Christmas Eve as usual: Song: "O holy night", then a short message to the children; then "O Du Froehliche"; then another message; Telling of the Christmas story; more singing; another message about the real Christmas joy by D. Hamm. May the Lord be praised that we could celebrate again.
- 25. **Christmas Day, first holiday.** Snow all day, with storm, but mild. We were at home all afternoon.
- 26. **Second holiday.** Again snowstorm.
- 28. More snow and snowstorm. Dietrichsen was here for a visit. For coffee my family was at my parents.
- 31. Today we again celebrated New Year's Eve (Sylvester) with the school children. A few guests had also come: Ab. Froeses, D. Klaassens, Suckaus and my parents.

## **1865**

### **January 1865**

- 1. A beautiful, clear day. D. Hamm preached on the text, Amos 4:6,7,11,12; a sermon we might do well to remember, take to heart, and do accordingly.
- 6. Epiphany. Joh. Claassen preached. Mission Study in the afternoon.

15. Today office accounts were settled, to which I was invited. At our house there is sickness among the children. Jacobus is suffering from abdominal pain for several weeks, which could be tape worms. Yesterday we had to give him medicine again. Michael and Maria are also sick with a cough. Little Helena is well. May this experience serve to bless us in patience and trust.
- 28–29. Jacobus looks so poorly that he has not attended school for a while. He and his mother had to stay home from a visit to H. Jantzens.
30. Last night Jacobus had extreme abdominal pain. He has become pitifully weak. I spent most of the night at his bedside, praying to God for him. During the day it was somewhat better.
31. Sunday. Marie went to the service today, while I stayed with Jacobus.

## **February 1865**

2. Jac. had a very restless night. Somewhat better during the day. I went to office for accounting for a while. In the evening Jacobus had more pain.
3. Jacobus had a hard night, and is getting weaker. We are really concerned whether he will make it. If he keeps on getting weaker, he may not make it for long. This morning I tried to help him to prepare for the worst, as well as ourselves. Last night his mother and I fervently prayed to the Lord for our dear son; yet submitting to His will. During the day it was much better. He sat up in bed, and ate his food, though his appetite is very poor. His bowel movements are regular and normal, but this great weakness! This morning I wrestled alone for the life of our child. May the Lord's will be done.
4. These days the only thing that is on our minds is the condition of our Jacobus. Last night he slept very well, and seems rested and strengthened. He is alternately reading and playing with his toys, that is, in bed.
5. Another restful night for Jacobus, and quite hopeful until noon. But unfortunately, just at noon he was wracked with abdominal pains again, which lasted until evening. Mother was here for the afternoon. Also we called D. Hamm. Since his condition has grown so much worse we had the idea that we should consult the Warenburg Doctor, Mr. Reh. So I went to the administrator to ask for a vehicle, which I was promised. This evening, Jac. is very weak, but fell asleep peacefully. Before he fell asleep we prayed with him.
6. Again Jac. had a restful night, and seems refreshed, so we postponed the trip to Warenburg. However, this afternoon the pains were even worse than yesterday, although not for so long, but he is very exhausted.
8. Jacobus had a few light attacks, otherwise his condition the same.
10. This evening my parents were here with a Hungarian Doctor, Andreas N. He diagnosed Jacobus's condition as being bloodworms. (Leukemia?)
13. All week Jacobus had no attacks, no pain, and is quite cheerful, but he still cannot be up and around.
15. Today Jacobus was out of bed for a few hours.
17. This evening J. quite sick again. Who knows what the outcome may be?
21. Sunday. Today Marie went to the service, while I stayed with Jacobus. My parents and D. Hamms were here in the afternoon.
22. This evening J. had a lot of pain again. He is getting weaker all the time. I was at Esaus in the evening, where J. Hamm was visiting. J. H. shared his concern for Penner, whom he and Horn had visited. The results were very sad. Penner had expressed himself in very bitter words against the church, his family; in other words, had cut himself off from all further fellowship and communication with the same. No words of comfort or warning made any difference. It seems he has an influential scandal-monger, since it seems he always speaks as from someone else's mouth. Human counsel and help seems in vain; if the Lord does not convince him, he is lost for time and eternity. Lord Jesus be merciful to him!

25. The day before yesterday Corn. Froese went to Warenburg with me, where I saw the Doctor. He seems to think the pains are due to colic and has given drops for relief. On our way home we stopped at the Straubs and Gottlieb Frisch.
27. We slaughtered our calf this evening. J. feels better this morning.

### March 1865

1. Today the Doctor from Warenburg was here to see Jacobus. He thinks the sickness is not dangerous, though perhaps lengthy.
3. Father's birthday today, for which we were invited. He is now 72 years old, and as usual is well, although in certain ways he is beginning to have less appetite, less wish to travel, and as a whole a slow loss of strength at his ripe old age of 72. What he feels most keenly is his loss of hearing, though he still takes part in various events. May the Lord preserve his wellbeing!
11. Since Saturday Jacobus seems to feel quite a bit better, though today again not so well.
12. Funeral of Maria Wall. Since morning there is a big snowstorm, which made it difficult for the sleighs to keep from getting stuck.
20. The last Mission Study message which brother Dietrich held, has brought on some dissatisfaction, since he spoke rather harshly. Some individuals, including father, criticized him for this. However, we hope that the matter will not cause further disagreements. May the Lord keep us in love and harmony! As a result, however, I am withdrawing from my part in the Mission meetings, so as not to cause any more offences.

Jacobus has had a few spells of fever, and is weaker again.

27. Jacobus is weaker since a few days ago. Yesterday he asked me to sing for him: "Who knows how near my end may be".
30. The canal is flowing hard today, flooding the bridge already.

### April 1865

1. At +9 degrees today the flow of the canal is at its highest. In the evening the bridge was taken up and placed elsewhere. School was closed yesterday.
2. Good Friday. We went to the service, although Jacobus wanted us to stay home. He is having pains again, and seems bloated. However, altogether he seems better and has a better appetite. His sickness actually has been a blessing to us; we have felt a great need to pray, become patient, and put our trust in God and devote our thoughts heavenward and to the hereafter.
6. This morning we had a brotherhood meeting at which the Church regulations were read. In connection with this a few comments were made with regards to the gossip and rumours.
7. Yesterday I went with father to Fresenheim to J. Klaassens, then to Is. Epps in the afternoon to a Brotherhood meeting, where various concerns were discussed. Everyone is in favour of reconciliation. For personal reasons I tried to be generally passive in the discussions.

Spring seeding has begun today.

The verse which I drew from the card-box today said: "Sin is a reproach to the people" Proverbs 14:34. Truly a real sermon of repentance.

9. A hard rain almost all day, which delays the field work. One wishes to be able to begin and finish spring seeding, since there is little feed left for the cattle. Grass is growing slowly.
10. This morning I went to D. Hamms to discuss the continuing misunderstanding. However, I met father there for the same purpose, so I gave up my part, and listened to their conversation. The sad misunderstanding between Horn and my parents could not easily be solved, since the Horns insisted that whatever was said about them, came from my parents, whereas father cannot quite see it that way. Later father called on me, and we discussed

the matter. The parents were quite excited about the whole matter, especially my mother. So the matter was not quite resolved yet. In the evening I spoke with D. Hamm about this, and we are hoping that the disagreement can be resolved soon. May the Lord grant this.

11. Sunday. Jacobus is worse again, with more pain. I stayed with him, while Marie went to the service. Mother Hamm is here since noon. She had a near-accident while walking out of church. There was a very strong storm and as mother came out it hit her with such force that she fell and rolled down the steps. Fortunately, she was wearing her fur coat, so she was not injured too much. Another woman guided her to our place. She is feeling only a bit of pain in a few spots.
13. Early this morning brother Dietrich was here to talk to the parents. They were both in a good mood, so things look better. Ps. 13:2: "Praise the Lord, O my soul...etc."
14. Jacobus is weaker again. For 11 weeks already we have lived between hopes and fears. At present he is more in bed than ever, showing little interest in what goes on around him. He does not even feel like playing with his horses. The only natural hope lies in the coming of warmer spring days. Otherwise, our hope lies only in the Lord of Lords, whose we are in days of sickness as in days of health; yes, in dying as in living. May He in His counsel of love also determine the future of our child.

Today we are celebrating my mother's 72nd birthday, to which we were invited. However, Marie, because of Jacobus and sister-in-law D. Kl. because of the sickness of their Catherine, could not be there. The Lord be praised for His faithfulness to our dear mother, who has reached such a high age. May the Lord take her to her eternal bliss some day.

15. Today is my birthday again (45). One year touches another in this life of grace; and if one looks back to the ones that have passed, it seems as if they have flown away. The number of my years too have surprisingly been added one to the other, and soon enough the year of departure will be there. The past year has also been one of many blessings. You, O Lord have powerfully drawn me closer, even though I have often not followed, as I should have. Oh! lead me daily with your inexpressible love, so that your martyr love may live in me and reign with the same love. May this new year be one full of grace for me and my house, to Your praise. Amen.

Jacobus is very weak. Because of a hurricane-like storm we could not do any work in the garden.

20. Today a telegram arrived which for the kingdom of Russia was very disturbing. On the 12th of April, His Royal Highness the Grand Duke and Crown Prince Nikolai Alexandrowitsch died in Nizze<sup>64</sup>. After giving my wife this message I went to my parents to pass it on to them. At the same time we received the message that D. Klaassen's Catherine is at the point of death. At 3:30 we heard that she had just died, so we walked over immediately. Remembering our own sick child, I inwardly blessed this little one, and after a few arrangements we went home.
24. Jacobus is getting visibly weaker and weaker. It may not be too long before we travel the same road as we will with Catherine. Oh! how difficult it is to think of the departure of our child, and yet how blessed he will be! Forever free of all suffering and sorrow, especially free of the temptation to sin, eternally at home with Jesus his loving Saviour! I am quite resigned to the will of our God. May He do according to His counsel and lead us to this wonderful blessedness. Amen.

After breakfast I went to D. Klaassens to help with a few things. At 10 Marie went over with little Michael. Since I was alone with Jacobus, I took the occasion to talk to him about his condition, and to introduce him to the idea of his parting from us. He said that he was willing

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64 This is Tsarevich Nicholas Alexandrovich Romanov (20/8 September 1843 – 24/12 April 1865) who died of meningitis in Nice, France.

to die, if it was his Saviour's will. I comforted him with the wonderful promises from God's Word, and tried to prepare him for the blessed event in order to allay his fears of death. He accepted all of this with childlike resignation. Then I knelt at his bedside and prayed with him, and in his stead called on the dear Saviour, telling Him of his lengthy sickness, and his going home so near at hand. I prayed for the forgiveness of sins, joyful anticipation of a blessed departure, and a resurrection into His kingdom. Jacobus with folded hands prayed silently with me, and in a flood of tears surrendered himself to the Will of his Saviour. O dear Saviour! May you graciously hear our prayers, and grant to our child according to your word and promises. Amen.

After dinner we buried little Catherine Klaassen. Who knows! the next time we will go this way with our dear Jacobus. Lord, may we in spirit go the way of Golgotha, then it will be a blessed way for us. Amen. Otherwise, Jacobus seems quite cheerful today, for which we praise the Lord.

26. Today is the first really warm spring day. I went to D. Penners today to speak with sister-in-law Penner. She seemed quite willing to speak to me. She said that her husband was very negative about the matter, and she had to be very careful when she discussed his concerns with us. She also admitted that he suffered from outside influences, but hopes that some day he would realize this.

Jacobus is quite a bit better today.

27. Today the administrator was here together with a man by the name of Friedr. Maier. Mr. Maier had been working in the California gold mines and had been wounded through an explosion. He was on his way back to his home after travelling from California to Japan, Batavia, India, Aden, Alexandria, Marseille, Rotterdam, Petersburg, Moscow, and Saratov.

30. Jacobus is much worse since yesterday, so our hopes are vanishing.

## **May 1865**

1. Today I grafted small trees almost all day: 44 and 3 cherry branches.
3. School opened again today. Jacobus is very weak and unperceptive. He is losing strength. It may not be long before his hour of passing, and Oh! how we dread this.
4. Today Jac. somewhat better. His mother even carried him around for a while. After school I went to the field and noticed some rare birds, similar to a green plover.
5. Jacobus is quite cheerful today, but for some time he has lost his appetite. He has begun to drink rye tea. His pains have somewhat increased, but perhaps this is because of the cold weather. In the evening he had a spell of debility but it passed after a while.
7. In the afternoon mother came to visit Jacobus. He was sitting up mostly and feeling quite cheerful. Mother carried him around to the summer room, the porch and the schoolroom, all of which he hadn't seen since his illness.
8. I did some carpentry work. Later I went to D. H. to talk about Jacobus's condition. We checked the medical dictionary for the rye cure, but found only the "Molken" (whey) cure mentioned. I went home in a happier mood.
9. The humid atmosphere weakened our patient so much that he was in bed most of the day, except at coffee time when his mother held him on her lap. D. H.'s and mother Hamm were here for coffee.
10. Today we came to the decision to get more advice from the Warenburg Doctor. I ordered a vehicle, but because of the storm, postponed it for the next day.
11. Brother Dietrich took me to Warenburg, but unfortunately the Doctor was not at home, so now we have to wait until Market day. My brother and I had a very meaningful discussion about what it means to be a child of God. I was able to speak about this with great joy, since I had recently had the experience in a greater measure, of receiving the inner assurance, through the testimony of the Spirit, that I, though poor and sinful, am a child of God. May

the Lord be praised eternally that He has had mercy on me "the greatest of sinners", to become His child. May the Father, who in Christ Jesus has accepted us as children, together with our families, also establish, strengthen, and prepare us more and more, to the praise of His most glorious Name. Amen.

12. Jacobus is quite cheerful, except that he, as well as our two other little ones are plagued with a cough. Little Helena alone is quite well.
14. At the request of my students I took them out to the ravine today. On my way back I stopped at D. H. and brought some "Kiselircka vodka" home with me. We are giving Jacobus this as medicine.
16. Sunday. Marie went to the service today. At Vesper we had a big rain shower which was much needed for the fields.
17. I went to the market with brother Dietrich, where I spoke to the Doctor again. He described the illness as a liver condition, probably gallstone, which would explain the pale stools. He gave us some drops for Jacobus, and assured me that Jac. would not die from this illness.
21. Today I had to go to the site of the new local office building, to re-measure the adjoining wing. The bricks had already been brought, and the hole dug for the building.

After being more hopeful for 14 days with regards to Jacobus' illness, he is experiencing a setback. Since yesterday he shows signs of less appetite, and although he was out of bed quite a bit for a number of days, and even came to the table to eat, which he hadn't been able to do for many weeks, he is very much weaker today. What really concerns us very much is that though he doesn't eat very much, he still has massive, very pale stools, which really weaken him. It seems that the recent medications are not the right thing. We are quite discouraged. May the Lord give us advice.

22. Today I had some local business at the office (Russian language), and I also cleaned the garden.
24. Pentecost Monday. Baptism today. D. Hamm had a wonderful sermon about the love of God to humanity.
25. Pentecost Tuesday. Today the local Lutheran members celebrated their communion. Pastor Hoelz had come for this occasion. I was asked to lead the singing. Again a wonderful sermon and a nice celebration.

Today there was a big general wolf hunt, but without even sighting one of these vicious animals. But they are there, and have even attacked some of the cattle here in Koeppenthal.

29. I finished the examination booklets and pasted up the blank sheets, then filled them in with new material.

Marie is in bed today with a severe headache.

30. Sunday. Jacobus has had severe pain in his left side almost all night, so he did not sleep much, but whimpered a lot. Marie finally prepared a mustard plaster, which gave him relief. He slept soundly the rest of the night and slumbered almost all day today. He has eaten nothing and remained quiet, but took liquids a few times. I stayed home with him since our girl is also sick, and had gone home. We had a hard day during which we spent much time lifting our heavy hearts to God in many sighs and prayers. We became aware that our son has been sick for **17 weeks** already, and has lost weight even since Pentecost. And how many times we have had to entertain the thought that he will not be with us much longer. Even recently we had hoped that he was improving. May the Lord do according to His loving kindness. He will not leave our many prayers and sighs unanswered.

31. After the pains subsided, Jac. is feeling a bit better.

## June 1865

2. Marie has had fever for the third time.



5. Jac. has been quite cheerful these last days, but his strength is ebbing. Today the grasshoppers were brought under control on all the colonies. I am sketching the plan for the local business office.
8. Jacobus's condition is getting worse. He cannot raise himself or turn over without help. He is mostly slumbering, often with dull eyes which, however, are bright and alert when he is awake. Otherwise, he looks extremely thin and poorly—it is almost too hard to see him like this. We had much company today.
9. This night we began to keep watch, since we feel that Jacobus may leave us anytime. It is hard for him to talk. Today we showed him the Christmas stories, which he appreciated. He hardly plays anymore.
10. This morning, since our sick one, rather our dying one, seemed to be somewhat better, I suggested that he pick a verse from the verse box (“Ziehkaestchen”). With a weak hand he drew one which said: “The Lord will rescue me from all evil and save me for His heavenly kingdom.” 2 Timothy 4:18.

"Only a little more pain; soon all grief will be gain.  
 Only a little more cross; soon death's door will be bliss.  
 Only a little more yearning; soon night turns to morning.  
 Only short time to endure; soon my heaven is here.  
 Only a very short time, the Prince of Peace will come,  
 Yes, His kingdom of peace will reign, Forever and ever, Amen.

11. All day Jacobus is more cheerful, and is playing again, even sitting up and looking at his books and pictures. He even made some requests and ate some cream soup for dinner with some appetite. However, at night he was very restless again, and with his many stools he is losing more weight. So we feel we cannot really hope for much improvement in the long run. May the Lord grant us patience and resignation to His will. May we not give in to false hopes which try to overwhelm us from time to time. Recently Jacobus is also suffering from sores in his mouth, which makes it hard for him to eat. In the afternoon sister-in-law J. Wall and Mrs. F. Epp were here to see Jacobus.
12. This morning again Jacobus is quite happy and has been playing with his things since early morning. There has been a change in his condition: after he had a few stools, which developed into diarrhea, he felt much better, although rather weak. He even wanted to see the herds of sheep passing by his window, so his mother carried him to the window to see them. He was quite alert until late evening.
13. Sunday. Last night Jacobus hardly slept at all. Anna Hamm sat up with him. Late yesterday evening he asked me to copy a song for him: “Was haett' ich, haett' ich Jesum nicht?” (What would I have, if I didn't have Jesus?), and early this morning another one: “Sei getrost, O Seele.” (Be of good cheer, O my soul). He is sitting up now and watching the people go to church. The first communion is being held. During the day we had much company. Though Jac. seems to be feeling a bit better, yet his symptoms continue, and his strength is ebbing away. Who knows whether this might be his last Sunday here on earth.
14. This morning after a fairly good night Jac. is sitting up and paging through his songbook. During the day he slumbers a lot, but eats almost nothing. My parents were here this evening.
15. No change. We are considering getting more medicine for him from D. Hamm. Besides the herm. medicine, he has ordered some “Moos”. This afternoon I had to sing at a wedding, so Joh. Quiring sat with him. J. asked him to copy some songs for him, but he didn't seem to take much interest in them.

In the meantime I am working on my Bible Study notes and Prussian History.

16. Today J. ate nothing, except some liquids. He is completely in bed and slumbers intermittently, not saying anything.
17. Today again J. is sitting up and playing a bit. His mother carried him around in the house and to the schoolroom for a while.
18. Today Michael also was sick and in bed. Gretchen too, who is here since Lenchen got sick, is not feeling well. So there at our house were four sick in bed today.
20. J.'s condition unchanged, except that his speech is clearer today. In the evening Marie and I attended the communion service.

J. slept some in between. Sister-in-law Mich. Hamm and Barbara Jantzen stayed with Jacobus. In between I copied songs for him. His speech is somewhat slurred. Our little Helena quite sick today. We had some rain today.

21. Last night Sister-in-law J. Klaassen stayed with Jac. He felt so good that he sketched 19 horses into his book, and later also played with his things. We had some visitors. Anna Hamm and cousin Suckau were here for night. Our little Helena is very sick.
22. Last night Jac. slept fairly well, though it is no restful sleep, but rather like one of increasing weakness, more like a slow dying away. It seems it cannot be long, almost every hour we can expect his passing.

**Evening. 11 p.m.** He is not here anymore, the darling of our hearts, our dear firstborn! The dear Saviour has released him from his suffering, his 20½ weeks of slow death, and taken him into His glorious home in heaven, where he is resting in the bosom of his Saviour, singing: "Amen, yes my joy is great!" (Amen, ja mein Glueck ist gross). Today at **8:30 p.m. he breathed his last**, among our prayers which commended him and his life of 8 years, 6 months and 12 days into the Saviour's hands. Today he has not shown the slightest interest in anything, but kept on slumbering, except that off and on he drank a bit of milk, his only nourishment for 8 days. His mother carried him around during the day for a while. He has not spoken a word, except to call "Mama" in a very weak voice; nor has he stirred at all even when we turned him on his bed. At 7 his struggles with death began, which, thank God! were not too long or too hard. Dearest Saviour, Lord Jesus! The long-dreaded, yet at the last fervently hoped for, hour of the departure of our beloved firstborn has struck! His earthly pilgrimage, according to your counsel, has been short. Soon, Oh too soon he has laid down his little pilgrim's staff. What has happened, has happened according to Your will, as we have so often prayed. We give You our heartfelt praise for the thousand joys which You granted us through this child; praise for the affliction which we have experienced lately, and by which You have mightily drawn us to You. He is well and content at Your bosom now, to which You have drawn him so early. He has been Your little lamb during the short time of his life, Your redeemed lamb, since—"You have in these short days, Oh! so soon carried him home, Lord into You loving arms, Amen, yes, my joy is great!" Help us, dear Saviour, that when our hour has come we might follow him, together with those you have left us, to see your face in eternal joy and bliss. Until then comfort us, O God of all comfort, especially now when our hearts are bleeding, and the eyes overflow with tears in seeing the body of our beloved child, which we have had to give up so soon. However, we grieve, not as those without hope, but as those who are rich in hope above all else; for we know, that we too belong to You and that You will also take us home and grant us joy and bliss, and to receive again our loved ones whom You have given us here. Amen.

25. Today accompanied by many mourners, we have committed the wasted mortal shell of our dearest Jacobus, to mother earth, in which it may rest in God's peace until the day of his blessed resurrection. The 17 families invited to the funeral were represented by 73 souls. We had also invited my students, 31 in number (some were guests), so that the total number attending the funeral were 100, including two of our children. Little Helene is still very sick. The body of our dear Jacobus had kept very well, except that his deeply sunken eyes

showed the effects of his illness. However, his mouth and forehead were angelic in the state of bliss, in which he now rests as Jesus' lamb. Seen from the side his profile was still that of our dear Jacobus. The head of the coffin of this resting child was decorated with a wreath of 12 small wreaths around the name of our deceased, against a white background.

The funeral service began with the song #40 "Geh hin, der Herr hat dich gerufen", (Go, the Lord has called you), after which D. Hamm gave a comforting message, followed by the reading of the obituary of our beloved deceased, which I had written. At the close we sang the song # 42: "Wie Augenblicke fliehen" (As moments flee). The order of the funeral procession was as follows: In front of the hearse were the students of my school, led by brother Dietrichsen. Then followed the hearse decorated with garlands, drawn by 2 stately Prussian horses, over whose "kumante" (shoulders?) hung thick garlands, and another one hung over their backs. The horses belonged to Mr. Thiersen). This was followed by the children of the relatives, led by former students, Anna and Maria Hamm, and Agathe Claassen. We followed these together with our children, the grandparents and the siblings; behind them the rest of the guests, 100 in number. The pallbearers were: H. Horn, H. Goerz, H. Albrecht, Jac. Hamm jr., H. Riesen and Peter Jantzen. After the coffin had been placed near the grave, D. Hamm pronounced the blessing. When we had given the precious child the blessing with a farewell kiss, the coffin was lowered into the grave, decorated with wreaths of the flowers which the girls had carried. Finally the grave was closed. Barely had the grave been closed and the seal placed on the mound, when loving hands (Anna, Maria and Agathe) covered it with many garlands, including those with which the horses and wagon had been decorated. Painfully grieving, yet wonderfully comforted, we left the cemetery in which our dearest, which we had received on this earth as a heavenly gift, was placed as a seed for eternity and for the day of the Lord. Dear child, may your body rest in peace, but may your spirit rejoice in the Lord and your Saviour, whose possession you were so early in life. One day, and who knows how soon? we too will be taken home to be with the Lord, to whom we also belong, and we will find you and together praise Him more gloriously than in weakness we were ever able to do. This consolation is our comfort now.

All day we had the most beautiful weather.

26. We have spent most of the day cleaning up. We had not arranged for a "Nachbegrabnis" (After funeral).
28. School is open again, which is not easy for me, especially since little Helene is still sick. From time to time she seems to have a lot of pain. This evening I went to Jacobus's grave with Michael to lay a wreath. My concern now is to get more of Michael's attention to fill the gap left by Jacobus. The fields to the graveyard are thick with grasshoppers.
29. Little Helene has had a hard night. Since she is so little and so innocent, it is almost more painful to see her suffer. However, we are experiencing God's presence. First thing this morning I went to D. H. to get more medicine.
30. Little Helene has lost a lot of weight. Today for the first time I took Michael and Maria along to Hahnsau without their mother.

## **July 1865**

1. Last night little Helene was very sick again, so we slept very little. Better during the day. In the evening Marie and I went to visit Jacobus's grave.
2. At noon today the first grasshoppers came from the churchyard to our garden. After Marie had ashes strewn over the area, they left again. At Abr. Froeses the grasshoppers chewed off the potato leaves and stripped a few completely. Very warm this week: +25-27.

3. This morning I fixed the pyramid and did some writing. Little Helene still quite sick; she hardly sleeps at all, just lies and groans. Today the grasshoppers came again, chewing off the carrot leaves.
4. Sunday. Last night I sat up with little Helene, then went to the service. Mission Study in the afternoon. Later I went to D. Hamms where Anna is sick. The grasshoppers are doing much damage in the cornfields. The harvest could be quite poor because of this.
6. Today there were school examinations in H-Au. The student attendance was 92. J. Hamms tried out their new corn mill, somewhat early because of the grasshoppers.
7. Examinations in Fresenheim. I went along with the two teachers, Diedrichsen and Giesbrecht, with Hoerke. For dinner we were all at the Philippsens.
8. Today we had a very pleasant surprise by a visit from Prussia. The young Bergmann, who came back from a visit, brought with him a friend, David Froese. He came to see us this afternoon.
9. Today Teacher Foth has the examinations for his LindenAu School at the Hahnsau School with 30 students.
11. Sunday. This afternoon we stayed at home, because little Helene is still not better. Towards evening I went with Michael to lay a wreath on the grave of Jacobus.
14. This morning we had the two Prussian guests here for a while. Little Lene's condition has not changed—from early till late she groans and whimpers. She has not cried for a long time.

Wednesday we began to build on the local business office.

18. Sunday. Marie went to the service while I stayed with Helene. Her groans seem to be a little less, but she is still quite sick. Who knows what the Lord has in mind concerning her?
20. Today Marie went to visit my parents; her first visit there since March. I stayed with Lene, but went for tea in the evening.
21. Our little daughter no better. Though her groans have stopped she has developed a dry cough, and shows signs of fever, her breathing short. Otherwise, she takes some fluids.
22. Our wounds over the death of our dear Jacobus have not healed yet, before the Lord's Hand in His divine counsel has sent the second, almost as painful, in taking our youngest, beloved daughter Helene at the age of 9 months, 18 days, quite suddenly and unexpectedly to grant her inheritance of eternal life without having to taste of the burdens and sorrows of life. Yes, Lord Jesus, even in this little child so small and delicate you have given us so many joys and pleasure, for such a short time. Even though our tears flow to see this little angel, yet our hearts overflow with praise and thanks that You are letting us taste of Your love. We thank You that You have so soon taken this sweet little child from this life into the glorious kingdom where we will one day see her. May this sorrow bless our hearts. Amen.
23. This morning we made some arrangements for the funeral. In the afternoon we attended the funeral of J. Epp's youngest little son, Johannes.
25. Today with the Lord's help we have again planted a seed beside the grave of our dear Jacobus. There they rest, the two darlings of our hearts, both of whom gave us so much joy during their short pilgrimage. There they rest in blessed communion with the dear angels, their earthly companions and guardians for the dear shepherd, Jesus Christ, who loves His lambs so inexpressibly. Your thoughts are strange and incomprehensible, yet they are thoughts of peace. Dear Lord! May nothing, nor joy, nor sorrow separate us from Your Love. Amen.

Exactly 5 weeks little Helene has suffered amidst groans and sighs, with intermittent slumber. Only the last 8 days her groans subsided, and we hoped for improvement. At 7 p.m., the night before last, her breathing suddenly changed, and we saw that her end was near. After closing her eyes a few times as in slumber, she opened them once more, looking up, then closed them softly and without a struggle fell asleep, never to awake again, amidst

my audible prayer commending the soul of this delicate little lamb to the Hands of the loving Shepherd.

We had Esau's horses to take the coffin to the grave. D. Hamm held a short graveside service. We went home strengthened and comforted.

27. Early this morning I went to the gravesite to fix up the graves of our blessed children.
31. For the last few days it has been very hot: +29–31 with some rain and storm. The Froeses little Abram is very sick. They are not expecting him to live very long.

### August 1865

1. Sunday. Early this morning we went to the cemetery to decorate the graves of our dear children. Later we went to the service. In the afternoon we went to the D. Klaassens and later to D. Hamms for coffee. The Hamms also had other visitors.
2. Today we had visitors again. For the afternoon we were invited to the Dietrichsen's for a birthday celebration. The weather has become cooler.
3. Marie and the children went to D. Hamms today. Anna is quite sick. +15 today.
4. This morning I went to see mother. I took Michael along, **who is feeling less inhibited towards me, and is at least answering with yes and no.**
5. Mr. Krueger is very sick. Since he really asked for medicine, and D. Hamm had gone to Warenburg, I had to get him some from D. H's and give it to him. I also read to him and prayed with him.
6. Since our dear guest, D. Froese will be leaving for Prussia soon; I am writing a long letter to the Schulzes describing the sicknesses and deaths of our children. I also sketched in pencil, the profiles of our three children, to send them along.
7. Today we were at the farewell which the Froese family arranged for their uncle, David Froese. We were also invited. D. H. gave a short farewell message, and Rev. Horn a farewell poem in which there also were birthday wishes.
9. Today our dear friend and guest left for Prussia. About 11 persons accompanied him as far as Saratov. For quite a number of us it was the first trip on the steamship.
10. All day I ran around making purchases. At the Bookstore where D. H. and I wanted to get library books, we saw some goldfish. At Printer Braun's we had a look at the "Damkerpress"; however, unfortunately the press was not printing just then. We also went to the theatre where we looked at the construction work being done. In the evening our guest boarded the ship. We accompanied him into the steamship, where we sat down to drink a cup of tea together. Then we sat on the deck for a while until the call was given for the ship to leave at which time we left the ship. It was a freighter called "Sirmoslaw." Froese intends to stay in Samara for 14 more days.
11. We got up at 5 a.m. today and were taken to the Volga. Here I bought a gravestone for our dear deceased children. We crossed over at 6 a.m. We drank coffee at Kosakenstadt and left at 11 a.m. At 6 p.m. we were back home, where all was well. My parents were there for a visit. Praise God all went well!
14. I made arrangements for school. In between I am writing Prussian History. At this point I make note of the lack of faith at the time of Friedrich.
15. Sunday. After the service we had a Brotherhood meeting concerning Jac. Engbrecht, Hohendorf. The results: excommunication. He is very obstinate. May the Lord grant him repentance and enlightenment. We had frost at night with some damage to the garden.
16. School has begun again, but poor attendance.
21. I wrote the Geography tablets today. I have been rather unwell all week.
25. Today Michael Hamm's little Anna died. Oh! how beautiful the little children's voices will resound in heaven. "Oh! that I were already in heaven! Yet I will stand and wait, Until Your call bids 'come', Away to the heavenly home!"

- 26. Today a man was here with a lot of photographs of plants, which the children enjoyed seeing. He is a certain Schlichting from the Prussian Mennonites.
- 27. I am continuing to write World History, and am now at the time of Napoleon.
- 28. Funeral at Michael Hamm's today. Since he was not well, I had to function at the graveside.

### **September 1865**

- 3. I am at the point of the Russian military campaigns.
- 5. Sunday. Unexpectedly we had a dear visitor from Prussia, namely, HE. Sudermann and his wife from Kladowe, who arrived late yesterday evening from the Molotschna. Rev. Sudermann preached here today.
- 15. Father and A. Froese were here today. We discussed many things, but especially the concerns regarding the engagement parties (Polterabende).
- 19. Sunday. Rev. Horn preached today. In the first part of his sermon he mentioned the occurrences at the wedding and got very passionate about the "Polterabend" (engagement party) and the serving and drinking of alcoholic beverages. It looks as if a big storm is brewing with regards to this matter. D. Hamm sees the problem as it is, but probably not quite as large.
- 30. Winter weather today; cold with snow, later rain with sleet.

### **October 1865**

- 1. Tonight we began our choir practices again, but attendance was meagre.
- 2. This morning the beautiful fall morning beckoned me outside to walk to the graves of our dear children, where I spent some time in prayer, as I have done fairly often.
- 4. The birthday of our dear little Helene. I took a few wreaths to her grave this morning.
- 6. Snowstorm and rain these days. Much fruit has been spoiled.
- 9. Today I took mother Hamm home to H-Au. She had been here for 8 days.
- 13. Bible study at Joh. Epps; small attendance, but lively discussion.
- 15. Good attendance at choir practice. I found opportunity to remark on the frivolous singing at engagement parties, and the suggestion not to participate. May the Lord bless!
- 17. Sunday. Father preached. J. Klaassens here for dinner. In the afternoon P. Dyck was here and we went to look at the new business office. Father also came with us. From there we all went to the cemetery, and later to our house for coffee. We sang a few songs, and altogether had a very enjoyable time of fellowship. We thank the Lord for this beautiful day.
- 25. Today I witnessed a most beautiful sunrise in which I took much delight and praised the Lord in my heart.
- 28. Evening service at D. Hamm's. The topic of discussion was "The value and blessing of Christian private meetings with fellowship in prayer".

It has come to our attention that our servant-girl will have to be incarcerated. For some time there have been all kinds of mischief and disturbances done by hired help, as for example, windows broken, the decorations cut off a horse's harness, and in general a lot of loitering around, which has gotten out of hand. The district office and business executive has forbidden the hired help to go out evenings and made the employers responsible for their whereabouts.

Now last Sunday evening while we were visiting at D. Hamm's, having left the children in the care of our girl, Catherine, she left them alone in the early evening, with the house open, and went to the village. Other hired help has testified to this, and so she has been put behind bars in the business office for 24 hours.

## November 1865

6. After receiving our roast beef, we slaughtered our pig today. The neighbours helped.
7. Sunday. J. Epp preached. Mission Study in the afternoon. Anna Hamm is quite sick again, so Marie went to be with her.
9. This evening we all went to the gravesite to visit our deceased children, perhaps for the last time this year.
- 10–12. Evening service at our house—good attendance. I went to visit Esau, who is quite sick. Who knows how near his end is?
14. Sunday. I went to church for a while, then to Esaus, where we held a small house service. We went to Michael Hamm's in the afternoon.
17. Our Lutheran members held communion in our church today. Pastor Hoelz stayed with us. He came for night already and left after coffee. He had Teacher Wiegand with him.
21. Sunday. All Saints' Day. D. H. preached about the blessedness of eternal life. Our choir sang: "Blessed are the heirs of heaven", which was a complete disaster, and made a very poor impression.
- 23–24. Nature has put on its winter attire. Evening service at D. Klaassen's. Marie is suffering from the humid, cold weather.
25. Marie was called to the D. Hamms at 2:30 a.m.; Anna is very sick. She had another stroke.

## December 1865

1. We attended a wedding at the Horn's. Not many guests were invited.
2. We have been copying Christmas wishes in school all week.
4. I stayed with Esau overnight. He has much difficulty breathing.

This morning I assembled examination booklets. Sister Froese was here, with whom I discussed the concerns of her husband.

5. Sunday. Early this morning we received the news that old Mr. Esau passed away. I went to their house immediately and found the family gathered around his deathbed. I thank the Lord for his friendship, may He reward him for it. His memory will be a blessing for a long time to come.

Father gave the message for the Mission Study this afternoon. Later we went to the Esau's to talk about the funeral of their father. We had a big snowstorm all day.

10. Today is the birthday of our dear Jacobus. Mr. Esau's funeral was held in our church today. A song: "Lebt nun wohl, ihr meine Lieben" (Farewell, my loved ones) was sung while the coffin was carried out, driven to church, and carried into church with the song: "Jesus meine Zuversicht" (Jesus, my confidence). It was then closed. After a short introduction by D. Hamm, the song: "Du Tod fuehrst uns zum Leben" (Death leads us to life) was sung, followed by the actual funeral sermon and the benediction. After this two songs were sung: "Geht nur hin und grabt mein Grab" (Go, and dig my grave) and "Er schaut nun was wir glauben"—(Glaubensstimme), (Now he sees what we believe). Then the coffin was carried outside and the interment followed. The weather was mild.
14. The birthday of our blessed little Michael.

The election of an administrator was held. With a majority of only 5 votes, the former Adm. was elected. Will he accept it?

He is being accused of many things. Would to God it were not so, otherwise, things look grim. May the Lord help us and be gracious to us.

18. Several of us started to make an artificial Christmas Tree.
20. Today is the German Year's Day. We were 20 of us working on the Christmas Tree, and have almost finished it.

22. Yesterday we had a general choir practice for Christmas Day. Today we had an accident in school. One of my students, because of an insignificant shove, fell against the edge of the stove, breaking a leg. The sad thing is that the parents of this boy have for a while already experienced many hardships. I for my part had to take part of the blame, since it happened at a time when school should have been in session already. Joh. Dyck was called who set the boy's leg. May God give healing!
24. Today with God's help we again celebrated Christmas Eve. It was enhanced by the home-made well-decorated Christmas Tree, and a very good presentation of the Christmas story. We had also practised several 2- and 3-part Christmas songs, which sounded quite good. At the close D. Hamm again gave a devotional message. The whole program turned out very well, with a good audience. The weather was mild. May the Lord bless the service to all!
- 25. First Christmas Day.** Horn preached the Christmas sermon. In the afternoon we were at Koppers.
26. Joh. Epp preached. In the afternoon we had 5 couples here as guests.
31. Today for the first time we celebrated Sylvester in the new church with a regular service. The choir had practised several songs, among them also Psalm 90. D. Hamm gave the message. In between the sermon sections, several verses were sung. The whole service was very uplifting.

## 1866

### January 1866

- 1. New Year's Day.** Is. Epp preached on the verse: "Except You bless me, I will not leave You." In the afternoon we visited at H. Jantzens.
3. We visited at my parents. J. Hamms were also there. For J. Hamm this is a difficult time, since there has been some dissatisfaction with his administration, and he has been urged to withdraw from this position, even though, strangely enough, he had been re-elected again. May the Lord help him to decide what to do.
12. The evening service was at the David Hamms. We decided to have personal prayer times at home, and each day remember specific items or requests. May the Lord pour out His Spirit of prayer that we may fervently pray, and believe that the Lord will hear!
- The commission on the land-exchange is here today, which sets certain requirements on the district business office.
16. Sunday. The Bible colporteur, Mr. Pforchhammer of Saratov, visited us today. He is billeted at the Dietrichsens. Marie went to the H. Jantzens where a little son has arrived.
17. This evening Mr. Dietrichsen and his guest were here, as well as 8 other guests. We had a very interesting and lively discussion.
19. We have had a very mild winter so far. In the last 14 days the thermometer showed 0; today even +2.
22. At present we have a Russian doctor here, Ivan Mikayisvip, who is to check everyone in this area, young and old, for a certain disease. He started in Koeppenthal today. He also inspected D. Penner's leg, which he said was not broken, but the hip was displaced and perhaps fractured. Since we also had to be checked by the Doctor, we got to the J. Klaassens rather late.
23. Before we went to J. Klaassens, I had to translate a few legal items into Russian for the new Chief Administrator, Dyck, so that they can be sent to Saratov tomorrow.
25. Evening service at the Horns. The topic of the reading was a story from "The diary of an Evangelist": "Repentance and Faith".



27. After closing school early I went to H-Au with father to see mother Hamm. We found her seriously ill. Who knows what the Lord has in mind this time?
30. Sunday. I stayed home from church, since the children are still sick. We also received the news that mother Hamm's condition is worse, so Marie went along with my parents to H-Au. Michael has had heavy nose-bleeds a few times. After my parents returned from H-Au with the news that mother Hamm is deathly ill, I went along to see her. However, I found her still alive, although since morning she has been unconscious and breathing hard. From time to time her breathing stopped, and then started again. She lay there as if every breath would be the last one. At 5 p.m. it seemed her breathing became weaker, until finally at 5:30 she quivered convulsively, took a few short breaths, and (as we hope) her soul fled into the hands of her Redeemer Christ. Her life-span came to 67 years, 8 months and 4 days, and she survived her husband 3 years, 2 months and 17 days. She, too, is no more, the one who always cared so faithfully as a mother and grandmother, who always seemed to be quite robust and healthy. After 8 days of sickness the Lord has taken her home. May His name be praised! Yes, it is always a praiseworthy deed when the Lord according to His great mercy carries a soul from this earthly life, which can hardly be called life, to a real, eternal, blessed life, through His suffering on the cross. Therefore, also today: Bless the Lord, my soul, and all that is in me bless His holy name, for He has done great things; He has taken a soul from death to life. Amen.

### **February 1866**

3. Yesterday the fateful district financial accounting took place. The previous Chief Administrator, Hamm, has been justified before the district office by the public.
5. Today the funeral of our dear mother was held in Hahnsau. It was a very cold day -25 degrees, and a strong wind. We cannot remember as cold a day as this. Is. Epp officiated.
7. A very big snow storm all day; the school was almost empty. We were taken to the birthday of sister Froese.
10. Yesterday we had an auction of the remaining household things of our mother. Again the weather was cold and stormy. We also audited our accounts.
12. We have not had school all week, except Monday. In the evening we had company: H. Jantzens, G. Wall and Cl. Epps. The latter stayed quite late discussing the concerns of J. Hamm's attitude to the Church.
15. Today we had the first Church audit at D. Klaassen, to which I was also invited.
16. All of Marie's siblings were here this afternoon to discuss concerns of the Hamm estate. Toews, who intends to buy the place, was here for that purpose. The outcome of the meeting was that we do not sell the place at this time.
27. This morning I was involved in a somewhat peculiar occupation. Yesterday evening I met D. Dyck at my parents. Father and Dyck talked about the way in which the recent building materials for the church were to be paid for. Apparently, H-Au village has expressed the unwillingness to pay their dues to the church administrator, J. Hamm. Later I spoke to father about the attitude of Hamm to the church, but in particular to his God. I suggested that it would be good to confront J. H. about this. Father and Froese agreed, but who would be the one to do this? They both encouraged me to talk to J. H. So I consented, and invited J. H. over for this morning. After I had prayed about it, he arrived and I presented my concerns to him, as carefully as I could. He admitted a number of things, but said he had not will fully misused any funds as Chief administrator. The Lord alone knows his heart, may He grant that all may be out in the open, and that our conversation may have been a blessing.

## March 1866

2. After closing school somewhat early, I went to D. Penners, H-Au, with Marie. In the evening we had services again. We are reading tracts entitled "The blessing of home devotions" which are very edifying. Yesterday morning father went to the Chief Administrator and asked him for his support in trying to keep the peace concerning J. H. and his differences with H-Au. Dyck promised he would do his best. This afternoon there was a meeting at the Froeses with the Chief Administrator, Kopper, Froese, father and J. Hamm. The Adm. confronted J. H. with the serious accusations and J. H. admitted to all of them. Further results were that the Adm. would mediate between H-Au and J. H. to bring about a peaceful reconciliation. May the Lord bless this undertaking: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him, who brings good tidings ... of peace".
3. Today is father's birthday. Only his children were invited. Father's physical condition remains unchanged, even though his age begins to claim its rights. What great and praiseworthy grace has been given to him to reach such a high age with such good health! His spirit is as lively as ever, and interest and participation in all of life is as active as ever. Right now the concern about J. H. has his attention to the highest degree. May the Lord grant him strength as long as He ordains. Amen.

After coffee Chief Adm. Dyck, who had been in H-Au, stopped by to tell us of the results of his mediation attempts. He had talked to old Mr. H. Janzten and Cl. Epp, who had affirmed him in trying to work towards peace in this matter. O Lord, help us all to admit our shortcomings and guilt, and set our hearts towards reconciliation, so that we too may be reconciled, especially now that the days of Passion are upon us, when we think of Your love and Your death for us sinners in a greater measure! Amen.

11. It is +6 today and the canal is beginning to flow. In between I am writing Russian history.
12. Today the water in the canal rose so much that it almost reached the bridge. Great blocks of ice began to gather, pushing their way under the bridge, ramming it with hard blows. Soon most of the village gathered and began to disassemble the bridge. But one ice-block after another shoots against the bridge, pushed by the mighty force of the flowing river, finally crashing against it until it breaks. With great difficulty a small part of the bridge was rescued, the rest goes down the raging current in battered pieces. The street, as far as the middle road and beyond to both sides, is under water, as well as Suckau's yard. Farther on the horses walked knee-deep in the swelling water.
13. Sunday. There was a near-accident at the Warschina River. Corn. Froese and Kroeger, who were working at the church, tried to come back home on horseback at about 9 p.m. Since they could not cross at the usual place, they went to Middleberg to try there. Ordinarily there would be no problem crossing at this point. As they entered the stream, Froese's horse slipped and fell, Froese was thrown down, and the swiftly flowing water tore him off his horse. He was barely able to catch hold of a tree branch. Kroeger was able to get through and immediately went to Koppers, woke them up, and a rope was brought to the site. However, no one seemed to be brave enough to jump into the rushing stream. Goerz finally decided to get on the horse and waded in as far as possible, threw the cord to Froese, which he was barely able to catch with one hand, without letting go of the branch. He was thus pulled to shore by the others. The Lord be praised for this saving act. To Him alone be the glory, but also many thanks go to Goerz, for his unselfish love in daring his life for Froese.
17. When I came home from school today, I found Marie in bed with serious abdominal pains. Suddenly she bled profusely, which eased her pain, but caused her to feel very faint.
18. All night I stayed up with Marie. The slightest movement increased her flow of blood, which brought her near to fainting. She could hardly sleep for weakness. During the day she has

improved. She is still very weak, but could get up for a bit. In the afternoon mother was here, also Michael Hamms and H. Jantzens.

20. Sunday. Marie is doing better, but not well enough to be alone. I stayed with her all afternoon.
- 21–23. Seeding has begun. We had an evening meeting for the last time. Marie is somewhat better. I went to get some medicine from D. Hamm. I also visited our children at the cemetery.
24. At noon we closed the school. In the afternoon the schoolroom was cleaned and rearranged. Michael has been at the D. Hamm's since Marie is sick, but he also isn't well.
25. Good Friday. Elder Joh. Claassen preached. Marie is still very weak, so that she can only sit up in bed for her meals.
27. Easter Sunday, first holiday. Marie is feeling a little stronger. The D. Hamms were here in the afternoon. We had a big storm with +4 degrees.
29. Today Marie has been up for a short while. I am writing Russian Geography into the tablets. We had snow overnight.

### **April 1866**

1. This morning I was working on the gravestone; in the garden this afternoon. Marie is able to be out of bed more often now; however, little Maria is sick.
4. Marie has been out of bed mostly today and is beginning to do light housework. Little Maria is feverish. In the evening brother-in-law Froese was here, telling us that according to Pastor Hoelz a serious sickness has broken out, known as "the black death", which apparently was announced by a strange ringing of a bell at an unusual hour. When the pastors asked who had rung the bell, nobody seemed to know. An assistant was sent to the tower, and after some searching an old man was found there. Upon asking him why he had rung the bells, the old man motioned that he should look over his shoulder, where the assistant saw 3 coffins. Furthermore, Pastor Hoelz has related this story to his son Hoelz junior, and it seems that in Warenburg a similar ringing of bells has been heard. Finally, a Russian Doctor has requested that another Doctor be sent to this area, since in summer there would be an epidemic here.
5. I planted the first potatoes today. In between I wrote more of Russian Geography onto the tablets.
6. Anna Hamm is quite sick. The mystery of the bell ringing has been solved. It seems the last bell ringer had left the bell standing at a wrong angle, and whenever the wind caught it, the clapper would swing back and forth a few times.
10. Sunday. In the afternoon I had to substitute for D. Hamm in teaching the Youth Instruction class, since he is down with a high fever.
13. After dinner I walked to H-Au for the first time with Michael. We walked across the fields to the H-Au cemetery, where we met brother-in-law Penner, who was working on the graves of his parents. Anna Hamm and Barbara Jantzen also came to the cemetery, since it was the birthday of their father.
14. This afternoon we celebrated mother's birthday. Marie was also able to be there—her first outing. Mother has reached her 73rd year of life. Her health is still quite good.
15. Today is my birthday. Lord of my life, You have helped me thus far. Thank You for all the blessings for body and soul, for all the joys, for sorrow in the course of this year. We had many visitors in the afternoon: the parents, D. Hamms, Barbara Jantzen, Helena Froese, D. Klaassens and Suckau.
16. Because of the cold I worked mainly inside: I lined the examination notebooks. All week it has been stormy and cold.
18. Today school began again. However, this week I want to work in the garden quite a bit.

19. I planted 3 apple, 1 pear, and several cherry trees, as well as some bushes in the "Park". Otherwise, I am working on the Russian Geography tablets.
21. Today is little Marie's birthday. My parents and other guests were here.
27. For some time there has been a rumour that His Exc. the Governor would travel through here, but it didn't seem to come from an authorized source. In the evening I went to D. H's and then to the cemetery. Suddenly I heard a lot of ringing at the end of the village and really, I saw 2 vehicles stopping first at J. H., and then several men promenading around on foot, after which followed the wagons with His Excellency and several other dignitaries. Since no one had really expected this visit, there was hardly anyone home. However, the Chief Administrator and the Chief Inspector, Aron von Duesterloh, were in the village office, so they were hurriedly notified, and so everything fell into place. His Exc. visited first the Administrator, then the school, then Thiersons. Unfortunately, at both places the rooms were being cleaned and they were in a mess. Then the church was looked at, and finally they all had tea at the village office. They went on their way quite late. It seemed His Exc. was well pleased with everything he saw. He was also very affable and friendly.

### **May 1866**

3. After school we fixed the grave of our children, putting fresh earth on it, and Marie planted a few seeds on and around the grave.
9. I went to market with D.Kl. We had a terrible sandstorm while we were there.
13. Today we had a lovely continuous rain, but not enough to penetrate the soil. We thank the Lord for it.
15. Pentecost, first holiday. Had some more rain today.
16. Second holiday. Baptism today. There were 17 baptismal candidates. A lovely celebration. We had 110 communicants. After dinner we visited at the Joh. Epps, where we had a pleasant discussion with other guests. Unfortunately, the discussion turned into an agitated dispute between the two pastors on the one side and Teacher Dietrichsen on the other, on the usual topic of: Election by Grace and the New Birth.
19. D. Klaassen and I went to Saratov today. We crossed over by steamship at 3 p.m. Here we had the privilege of meeting Pastor Kartz, son of the Professor Kartz of Duestal, author of the book: "Bible and Astronomy." I had a good discussion with him on the steamship. He is a very kind and loveable young man.
24. Today I went to the ravine with my students, at their request, and later to the J. Hamm's where Marie and my family were also visiting.
26. Today the children of our deceased mother Hamm gathered at the D. Penner's in H-Au.
29. Sunday. The second communion celebration today.

Chief Adm. Dyck has talked with D. Penner reminding him of the consequences of his excommunication from the church, which also means that he is ostracized from the community. He seemed to have softened in his attitude, and there is hope for change. However, immediately following this he spoke with Isaak Epp on his own, and in very hard words indicated that he would never return to the church, as long as D. H. were the Elder, nor would he ever cross the threshold of any of his wife's relatives, even if he were forced to come back to the church. He might answer all the questions, but not with sincerity. However, D. Hamm and father have begged the Administrator to be patient with Penner, perhaps he might change his mind. May the all mighty God, who does not wish that anyone be lost, change the mind of this poor blind man, grant him repentance, while there is yet a chance. With God all things are possible, and He alone knows whether there is still some faith in the soul.

31. After school we went to LindenAu to the shoemaker, where Marie gave her measurements to have shoes made.

## June 1866

3. After school today Rev. Horn came to see us concerning Penner, who had come to Horn to tell him of his decisions with regards to his attitude to the church. Astonishingly, it was the opposite of what Penner had said just recently. On his own he admitted that a change had taken place in him, since he had talked to Rev. Horn. Also on his own he had gone to D. Hamm to ask to be reaccepted into the church. This will likely take place on Sunday before the service. May the Lord grant him grace and real repentance so that nothing may hinder reconciliation on both sides!
5. Sunday. The second communion service. One of my little students, Helene Jantzen was buried today.
12. I am continuing with writing the History of Russia.
- 18–21. The hot spell has dropped to +23. I have entered the Russian History, as far as the beginning of the Russian campaign, on 2 tablets. My next project is Nature Study.  
  
Finally, after a long wait, the Bergmanns have arrived hale and hearty, which gives the family great joy. I went to see them this evening.
25. Today is the anniversary of our daughter Helene's funeral. We visited together with the Peter Dycks at the cemetery while working on the graves of our dear children.
- 26–29. We visited at the D. Hamm's new house for the first time since they moved in a few days ago.

Little Maria has a fever.

I have finished the Nature Study Tablets about the mammals, the birds and the amphibians, as well as the story of the fishes in another notebook. I am now working on a Mental Arithmetic ("Kopfrechnen") tablet.

We went to see the Heinr. Jantzens, where their older girls, Tinchen and Lene are seriously sick. H-Au had a good rain today.

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## 1867

### April 1867

1. For two weeks we have had good thaw weather, so that the canal is flowing already. In spite of the heavy snowfall we had in February and March it seeped into the dry soil quite slowly. It is still rather cool.
2. Because of the uncertain passage of the Warschina, we had Mrs. Funk brought to our house for the expected birth of our child. The weather is intermittently cold, snow and rain.
3. Praise be to God, who answered our prayers and helped us in our need. Our household is now larger by one member, since the birth of a son, at 4:30 a.m. His name is **Jacob**. Lord, through the gift of this 6th child, You have deemed us worthy for renewed parental joys, but also parental concerns. For both we thank You, since both come from You. As to the joys—may our greatest joy be that of having given us a vessel into which Your grace can be poured out, and through which You can glorify Yourself, and through which we can glorify You. May our greatest concern be to raise this child so that Your Love can be demonstrated through him. We want to dedicate this child to You to live to Your honour here on earth and in eternity. Amen.  
  
Spring seeding has begun here; and I have done some work in the garden.
6. Marie and the little one are quite well.

- 9. Palm Sunday.** Peter Horn preached here. In the afternoon Mich. Hamms, D. Klaassens, and Peter Dycks were here. We had a short choir practice in the church.
- 12.** Marie has severe headaches. Father brought a letter from Renate Schulz, which held the sad news that our old cousin Corn. Dyck, a widower, has committed suicide. O God! How is it possible that a person rejects the Saviour and His grace, and thereby God's Spirit leaves him!
- 15.** Yesterday was my dear mother's birthday. She is now 74 years old. The Lord be praised for keeping our mother and carrying her to this old age. May He grant both parents at least one more year, so that we may have the joy of celebrating their golden wedding. Yes, Lord, if this is Your will, grant us this privilege, and may it be to Your honour and glory. Only we as children celebrated her birthday.
- 16. Sunday. Easter Day, first holiday.** Yesterday we had a very big fright, and as it turned out it was justifiable. A light which looked like flames of fire shone in the sky from the direction of Fresenheim, which without a doubt looked like a conflagration. It was D. Toews' back buildings which were destroyed by fire. There was no evidence as to how the fire started. Thank God that in spite of the strong north wind, no other buildings caught fire.
- We had a few visitors. Marie and the little one are well.
- 21.** I planted the acacia and cherry trees and helped to plant potatoes. Later I grafted 12 apple stems at Penner's, and the same at our place. Towards evening my parents came for Maria's birthday. She had a number of guests: children of H. J., D. Kl., and Suckaus.

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## December 1867

- 26. Christmas, second holiday.** Our dear father has been sick for a few days. On Advent Sunday he complained about tiredness from his walk to church. In the following days he complained about rheumatism in his back. On the 19th he stopped by here to bring us some Christmas presents. It looked as if he was suffering. On Wednesday he did not come to our evening meeting. On Friday morning I found him in bed. He seemed to be getting weaker. Because of the Christmas Eve program I could not stay with him. Yesterday, Christmas Day he had pain in his stomach, which increased during the day. All night they put on hot clover compresses. After taking medicinal drops, the pain subsided. Who knows what this will lead to; we are really worried. He completely lacks strength. We would so much like to keep him with us, since it is so close to their 50th wedding anniversary. We have all prayed earnestly for the return of his health, but as the Lord wills.
- 27.** Father is still not better. He has pain in his chest now, which affects his breathing. Mother is composed. D. Hamm has ordered "Blutegel" (leeches). 17 of them were set on his chest, and after sucking blood for a bit, the pain seemed to be gone.
- 28.** Towards evening father felt better, and he said to mother: "Mother, my sickness is taking a turn for the better." He also asked for a bit of plum mousse, which he ate while I was there.
- 29.** I stayed for the night with father. He slept in a deep slumber almost all night. He can now hold his drinking glass without his hands shaking.
- 30.** Father is really improving. He was shaved, and sat on the chair for 15 minutes; ate chicken soup in bed, which, having been homogenized, he didn't like all too well. However, he ate his apple mousse. May the Lord be praised for his recovery!
- 31. Sylvester.** We celebrated New Year's Eve in the church, with a good attendance.

## January 1868

1–28. Since New Year's Day father is making good progress, though slowly. His condition is improving day by day. The previous week we had fervently called on the Great Physician for help, so praise and thanks filled our hearts when father's condition improved. On Sunday he was sitting up for 4 hours already. As to the anniversary celebration, we decided that we would restrict it to the minimum, and have it in their home. However, on Sunday father felt so much better, that he again entertained the idea, that if possible he would like it to be in church. Since the whole congregation had shown great concern as to father's wellbeing, and were disappointed in the possibility of such an important celebration not being held in church, we again considered father's wish, asking the Lord to provide the strength. He has done wonders; in the last 8 days father has improved so much that we feel we could plan for a church celebration.

January 29th, 1868. Today, in the midst of a large congregation, our dear parents celebrated their **fiftieth wedding anniversary**. It was held according to the original plans. The weather was somewhat stormy, but not really cold. The celebration itself began at 8:30 a.m., in their home among the good wishes of their children, grandchildren and a few close friends. After these had gathered, we invited the parents to the living room, where they sat on the new couch at a table, both of which were gifts from the children. Then we all sang the first two verses of the song: "Lobe den Herren, den maechtigen Koenig der Ehren" (Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation). Then I faced them at the table and introduced the well wishes with a poem I had composed for this occasion, in the name of their four children, whereupon the grandchildren, then the grandnephews and grandnieces presented their poems and gifts. In the name of the ministerial, David Hamm presented them with a lovely Hirschberger Bible,<sup>65</sup> a very fitting and valuable gift. A number of friends then brought their well wishes and gifts (quite an impressive number). This part of the service was closed with the singing of the last verse of: "Lobe den Herren...", and a cup of coffee.

The church celebration, to which the whole congregation had been invited, was the climax of the festivities. It began at about 2:30 p.m. With respect to the condition of both my parents, their dear neighbour Thiessen had offered his sleigh, in which Abr. Froese, (brother-in-law) had bundled them up with fur coats and blankets and driven them to church. At this point the congregation was already gathered in great numbers. Sister Helena Froese, as the only daughter, and I as the eldest son escorted the honoured Jubilee-parents to be seated in their new couch which had been placed in front of the altar. The close family members were seated at either side, who, together with the congregation, were already waiting for them when they walked in. As they entered, a song written for this occasion was sung by the congregation: "Sei willkommen hier in diesen Hallen!" (Welcome to this hall of worship). After the Jubilee-couple and the family members were seated, the program began as planned. The main item of the program was the noble sermon given by Elder David Hamm, who himself was a very close family member from the days of his youth. He stressed the **Great goodness of God** which the couple had experienced so many times, giving thanks for the same. Then followed the solemn act of consecration. Finally, the presentation of the festive gift, which unfortunately had not arrived yet, a **Bible from Her Majesty, the royal widow Elizabeth of Prussia**.<sup>66</sup>

65 This is a large format German language Lutheran reference Bible published in Herschberg, Germany, by Immanuel Krahn.

66 This is Elisabeth Ludovika Wittelsbach of Bavaria (1801–1873) widow of King Frederick William IV of Prussia.

As the couple was escorted out, the congregation sang a verse of the song: "So kehr in Frieden in dein Haus..." (Now enter into your house in peace...). A number of relatives and close friends gathered at the home of my parents after the church service. Here again there was singing to the glory of God, who granted us this wonderful day of celebration. We had feared that this day with all its excitement and activity would be a setback for father, but this did not seem to be the case. Even the next day, as we held a small post-celebration with a small circle of relatives, he was holding his own. Both parents stayed with the guests yesterday until about 10:30. Today they are up and around, although father is somewhat tired. He lay down after coffee for a while, but came back to visit with the group of loved ones until 8:30 in the evening. Praise, thanks, glory and worship be to the Lord for what He has done for us! Amen.

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### May 1868

3. Yesterday we were at the C. Froeses for the farewell held for F. Froese. He left today accompanied by a few others for the Samara settlement. May the Lord be with them all.
4. Today I worked on the inscription for the gravestone of M. Peters. In the afternoon my parents visited us for the first time after mother's accident. Mother even walked over, though slowly. Since our hired help has had the fever for 14 days, and is in bed most of the time, we have had to do all the garden work ourselves, but have managed to finish it. Our little Jacob has fever too, so is rather restless.
5. According to the letter from Elder Toews, the great majority of our Prussian brethren have accepted the offered mediation with regards to noncombatant service. Some, of course will choose to emigrate.
11. We are having good rains this year, so that everything points to a good harvest. We have never had as much grass as this year. We thank the Lord for this.
16. Today I cleaned the garden and yard together with the oldest school boys. I also planted some beans, potatoes, and watermelon, and cleaned up in school.
19. **Pentecost, first holiday.** Father preached. Since our days are unusually long, I was really plagued with sleepiness, which is a usual problem for me, but not quite as much as today.
20. Marie went to church with the children for the baptismal service, while I stayed with little Jacob. In the afternoon we visited with my parents at the David Hamms.
21. As the last Pentecost holiday, Rev. Hoelz had communion here in our church, which many attended. I had to sing all the songs and the Liturgy. Pastor Hoelz stayed with us. We went to the D. Hamms to see the new sewing machine which Anna had received recently. While in H-Au the new Chief Judge Shaffranov arrived, with 2 wagons, together with the administrator. They stayed for one hour, then went on to Koeppenthal. He had also been in our school, while I was away. Mrs. Kopper was filling in for me. I was very sorry about not having been there.
25. Today I worked hard at Nature Study and finished the section about **light**.
31. After a long hard struggle Michael Hamm's little Dietrich died about midnight last night.

I went to the Joh. Epps, who had brought a few books along for me from Samara. Dietrichsen brought me a volume of writings from Saratov.

### July 1868

2. Today Marie and I attended the first communion celebration together. O Lord! be gracious to us, and may this meal have been a real blessing to us. Amen.
4. Yesterday afternoon our little Jacob had the same cramps from which Jacobus and little Helena died. He had to be carried around all afternoon.



10. After school today I went to the H-Au acreage ravine to do some studying; besides botanizing a bit. There is a great dearth of rain, as a result of which the fields are suffering; but the Lord is with us and will not leave us.

11. This morning I sketched the script on the gravestones of our children.

12. Sunday. Today Dietr. Penner was accepted again into the church fellowship after having been excommunicated for a while. The Lord gave him enlightenment to understand that he, as far as he was in the wrong, would admit it and repent, as well as sincerely try to walk worthily as a child of God.

Hahnsau had a good rain today, but Koeppenthal very little.

22. Today is the death day of our blessed Jacobus. He has been dwelling in heaven with his "dear Saviour" and is enjoying the fullness of bliss and happiness at His right hand eternally. Oh, who knows how soon his "Papa" will follow him.

In the afternoon we arranged our schoolroom for the coming school examinations.

25. Today, on the funeral day of our Jacobus, we held the school examinations. There were 39 students, and the results were passable.

In the evening my parents and Marie's siblings were present as we laid the gravestone on the graves of Jacobus and Helena.

It was +27 degrees warm.

29. This evening we heard the sudden news that the Hermann Janzens in Hohendorf had a fire, which destroyed everything except the clothes they were wearing. Today it is +33. We have not experienced this kind of heat even at the Molotschna.

### **July 1868**

5. Yesterday Marie was at Hahnsau all day. I diligently wrote Russian History. This morning I had classes in school with the smaller children. We had a small rain shower today.

16. Since April 1st we have had 31 days of rain.

20. Towards evening H. Albrecht and Heinr. Horn together with their wives finally arrived from Prussia.

21. Along with the Albrechts and Horns there were 20 to 30 persons, among them some who had recently immigrated. Doubtless, others would be immigrating later. The great majority of our congregations in Prussia seem to be deciding to go for full combatant service, instead of noncombatant service, which they had been offered earlier. Few will be those who decide to leave their fatherland for the sake of their confession.

22. Towards evening, on this day of the death of our Jacobus, we took the children to the graves of our deceased children.

We had a good shower later on.

30. Von Riesens visited us in the evening, staying until 12 p.m. They plan on leaving for Prussia in the near future.

### **September 1868**

29. Marie's siblings were here in the afternoon, to tell us that there was a buyer for our house in Hahnsau.

30. There has been a forcible break-in at the Peter Wiebes of Samara. It came almost to the point of murder. A month ago an incident happened at Marienthal at the Fr. Quirings, where someone was murdered.

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**April 1870**

14. This day was the birthday of our dear mother, who completed her 77th year of birth. Unfortunately, she had a fever in the morning, which caused her to go to bed. However, though she has aged significantly, and her strength is gone, yet her heart is strong and her spirit lively.
15. With my birthday today I am completing my **50th year** of life, which undoubtedly is over half of my remaining days of life. Yes, as the song says: "Wer weiss wie nahe mir mein Ende" (Who knows how near my end may be). When from this vantage point I stand still and look back on my past life, I am reminded to give thanks and praise. There are comparatively few who reach my age with the good fortune of having enjoyed mostly continuous days of good health. For a number of years, I must say "that literally not even a finger has given me pain". If I look at my domestic life, I must admit that though I cannot count myself as being well-to-do, yet never have I suffered want, but have always had enough, even to share some with the needy.

\*\* Concerning my family life, I must especially bow before the Lord in praise, adoration, and deep humility; who among thousands unworthy as I am, have been privileged to have received from the Lord a wife, who every day, yes every hour, again and again gives me great joy? The heaven of our marital happiness until this day has hardly been darkened even one day. If that sounds impossible, it is truly the case. Yes, there have been troubles in our household; even now my dear wife has been sick since the 18th of August, partly in bed. She hasn't been to the garden since 8 days ago. Even so the Lord has been very near with His comfort and presence in difficult hours, which have turned to great gain for the soul. Therefore, "Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits". The most wonderful of all, is that He has guided all my loved ones, so that we have learned to know Him. and have found in Him our greatest good, that we have found the Saviour of our soul, and learned to love Him; that we now know in Whom we believe, and have a sure anchor for the time when death takes us from here. Then we can confidently lay down our head, since Christ, our Saviour has died for our sake, and been resurrected for righteousness sake. He has prepared a place for us in His Father's house. To Him be the glory, praise and thanks eternally. Amen.

In the afternoon father, D. Hamms, Froeses, cousin Suckau and sister-in-law D Klaassen visited us. In the evening after we had finished our simple devotions of praise, a few more people surprised us: P. Dycks, Fast, Teacher Diedrichsen and Strempler. We are thankful for their love. There was no dearth of birthday gifts this time: a beautifully framed portrait of "Menno Simons", a writing case, a bootbox, and a pair of shoes. Many, many thanks for all the love and concern. After Vesper we had a lovely spring rain for which we too give thanks to the Giver of all things.

17. Today we planted the first potatoes. In the evening I took little Maria with me to get some medicine from D. H. for Agathe. After that I visited mother, who is very weak and completely in bed.
19. Sunday. Marie has been up and around for a while now. Her condition is slowly improving. On April 8th she was in the garden for the first time; since then almost daily.
21. This morning brother Dietrich brought me the news that both parents are seriously sick, and asked me to see them. I went immediately and found mother very much changed, a sickness in her eyes, and otherwise very weak and emaciated, her speech changed, often slumbering and breathing heavily. Father had an attack of weakness again, but had gone to the fields with Suckau. However, when he came home he had collapsed, in which condition

he was put to bed. I found him sitting on a chair, but feeling very sick and nauseated. When we put him to bed he was near to fainting. Since Sunday already he had complained of having cold spells.

Today is little Maria's birthday: 8 years old.

23. Today I found the parents both somewhat better. Marie had her first outing on a "Droschke" (wagon with springs) to see my parents. Late evening I went to stay with them for the night, but they insisted it would not be necessary.
25. Today father was walking to the Warschina already. Mother is still very weak, but is improving. However, she cannot walk alone, nor take care of herself in bed.
29. We had a conference here at which both new colleagues, Kuhrke and Strempler were present.

### **May 1870**

1. I went to Diedrichsen after school, where Pastor Hoelz jr. of Warenburg was visiting.
2. I went to the cemetery this morning. Towards evening I went to see mother, who is always getting weaker.
4. This evening we are almost expecting our dear mother to go home. We all gathered at her bedside, but the attack left her. Her hour had not come.
6. Today mother seems to be a bit better. I stayed the night with her.
8. Yesterday I found my mother much weaker. Dietr., Jacob and his wife, and I stayed with her for the night. At dawn she awoke from her slumber once more. She was given some sugar water from time to time. In the afternoon her pain seemed to lessen.

Michael has a fever for the sixth time. At night little Maria also had an attack, so that right now there are four in bed. The Lord is with us, and helps us, and keeps us with His strong hand. My sister is suffering as a result of mother's sickness.

10. 8 a.m. Friday to Saturday night I stayed up with little Maria. At 4 p.m. I went to see mother. At daybreak her condition had improved visibly; her pain almost gone. Her coated tongue was becoming normal, so that she could speak more clearly. Brother Jacob and Horns' daughters stayed with her for the night. However, next morning she had fallen into her earlier slumber again. I found her this way, slumbering with her eyes open, which seemed that her passing was near.
- 11. Monday, 5 a.m.** The condition of our dear one seemed to be unchanged, but her strength is fading away, as well as her speech. During the afternoon sister-in-law Penner gave her a few drops of water. Towards evening she began to groan off and on, which was interspersed with a throat rattle. Sister-in-law J. Klaassen, Margaret Horn and I were there this night. However, I slept from two o'clock until 4:30 a.m. Mother's condition stayed the same, until suddenly at 7:30 her breathing temporarily stopped, but started again. This was repeated 5 times. At 1 p.m. her breathing became weaker and more irregular. Suddenly she pressed her lips together, convulsively changing her facial expression, and **her last breath was taken**; among our many prayers our dear mother gave her soul into the hands of her Saviour, who redeemed her from all evil and accepted her into His heavenly kingdom. I was allowed to do the duty of her son in closing her eyelids. Present were: father, I, brother Diedrich and wife, brother-in-law A. Froese, (sister could not be there), sister-in-law J. Klaassen, Peter Horn and his daughter M. Janzen. We knelt down and Brother Horn prayed to the Lord, expressing our feelings in this solemn, emotional hour. Her sufferings are over, her struggles of life and death finished, she has overcome through the blood of the Lamb, standing righteous before Him. Amen.

After the dear body had been washed and brought to D. Klaassens, the funeral arrangements were discussed and undertaken.

12. Today I wrote funeral letters and the coffin plates.
13. Today we accompanied our dear mother to the grave. 46 families had been invited. David Hamm officiated at the service in the church. At home we sang only a few verses before the coffin was carried out. Rev. Horn gave a message at the grave. When the coffin was carried into the church 3 verses of the song: "Jesus meine Zuversicht", (Jesus Christ, my sure defence), and "Du Tod fuehrst uns zum Leben" (Thou death leadest us to life). Text of the sermon was: Revelation 14:13: "Blessed are the dead, who die in the Lord..." After the sermon, the song: "I know whom I have believed". There rests her tired shell, after her weary journey, while her soul, as we sincerely trust, in the arms of Jesus, secure and safe from all fear and distress. Our dear mother was sick for 4 weeks, less 1 day. She became sick on her birthday, April 14th. Monday on May 11th she passed away. She struggled with death for 4 days. Marie was able to be at the home funeral with some help; then after resting she came to the church for 3 p.m. for the actual funeral. 4 weeks before mother's sickness we brought her to our place with the sleigh; her last visit here.
17. Today we had an "After-funeral" commemoration.
18. After school father was here for the first time after mother's passing.

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## June 1870

1. Second Pentecost day. Baptism today. Only 3 baptismal candidates. Father preached in Hohendorf again yesterday. In the afternoon we went to the Froeses and to father' house. It is very warm: +29.5.
11. Following an invitation I attended our society meeting today, which was led by Cl. Epp. The topic of discussion was the construction of a District Secondary School. The building of this institute was already decided on at the last meeting. The question was, **where?** Unexpectedly, Rev. Toews offered his house to be used and renovated by the church for this purpose. This was enthusiastically accepted. The organization of a School Board was also discussed, which was to undertake all the concerns of the school. May the Lord grant His blessing for our project. Yes, Lord, help us, counsel us, and lead us with Your presence, then we cannot and will not go astray, and Your Name will be glorified among us. Amen.

## ***Martin Klaassen Diary of the Trek to Central Asia, 1880–81***

1880

### **August 1880**

After the preparations for the trip to Central Asia were made with the gracious help of God, there followed

On the 11. of August, 1880 the actual departure of the second train (group). At 10 a.m. the Henry Jantzens arrived at the Jacob Hamm's, where we had been living since the 12th of July. Many relatives and friends had gathered for our farewell, after which we left at 11 a.m. for Lysanderhoeh, stopping at sister-in-law Enss for a fellowship dinner. For the afternoon coffee we stopped at C. Pauls's, and after dark at Michael Hamm's, where Jantzens had arrived earlier. We stayed at the Hamm's the following day, adding the finishing touches to our travel-preparations with their help. On the following Wednesday, August 13th, again many friends and relatives came to say farewell. When all was ready and the people had gathered at the Michael Hamm's, brother Ehlers gave a farewell message based on Psalm 39:13, followed by the last farewell wishes. The actual departure took place at 11 a.m., with 13 families and 29 wagons. Many accompanied us for a stretch. The weather was partly cloudy, with the wind at our backs, blowing dust at us. At 4 p.m. we arrived at Gnadendorf where we spent the night. At dusk it began to rain, which kept on almost all night. However, it was quiet and mild.

14. Thursday. Cloudy and cool. Because of the soft roads we did not leave until 12 noon; arriving at Hoffenthal for night. It is beautiful, almost like the Prussian Trakt. At Gnadendorf they are building the Nova Usen Trakt.

15. We left at 5 a.m., arriving at the German colony, Strassendorf, at 8:30, where we are stopping for breakfast. The morning was dark and cool. This morning Joh. Jantzens and E. Froeses left us. Ehlers, Cl. Epp, Aron Claassen and Mich. Hamm accompanied us to N. Usen. The weather seems to be clearing. At 4 p.m. we arrived at Nobo Tuschkan, Kl. Usen. The road is good, only a bit dusty for a few verst. At 9 p.m. we arrived at a well, 15 verst from the road, where we will set up for the night. It is a quiet, starlit night. Ehlers held the evening devotions.

16. We left at 6 a.m. and arrived at the station about 10. The weather is dark and cool. To get to the water for the horses we had to put on the brakes for the first time. We are resting for the noon meal. At about 6 p.m. we arrived at Nobo-Usen [this is probably Novo not Nobo] and prepared to stay here for Sunday. We bought water (2 loads) and hay (3 loads) at 8 rubles per horse), before dark. The Lord be praised!

17. Sunday. The day dawned with a dismal sky and rain. However, during our morning service led by Cl. Epp, the sun began to shine, and we had good weather the rest of the day. Cl. Epp began the theme on Ez. 43 in the morning, then continued with chapter 44 in the afternoon, finishing at the evening devotions. The day proved to be a blessing otherwise, but I had an inner struggle about many of the interpretations of scripture by Cl. Epp, so that especially in the morning service the blessings were lost to me. Lord, teach us how to distinguish between what is Your and what is Our interpretation, and may the former be blessed to us. Weather wise the evening was beautiful and calm.

18. A beautiful morning. After morning devotions and breakfast the people who accompanied us: Cl. Epp, Ehlers, Ar. Claassen, Abr. Jantzen, Mich. Hamm, and Elis. Warkentin left. May the Lord be with them on their return. We left at 8 a.m., first making a few purchases in the town, so that we actually only got on our way by 9:45. (Here we bought our first "Schwarzbrot" (dark bread). We did not need to apply the brakes, and after passing over the F. Usyek, we could continue our journey without any more delays. The weather is cool, the fields look poor, but the road is good, the only downhill stretch is on the way to the well,

about 12 verst, otherwise even as a table. Here we stop for dinner. The water is good. At 7:30 p.m. we arrived at Nikolaka, where we will spend the night. The cool weather is good for the horses; also there are no insects to bother them. This place is very near the Sam. Gauwitz. Until now we have had only wells with a swinging bucket. The water is shallow, but salty.

19. Shilina Balka We have just arrived here for dinner. We had left at 6:30 a.m. and found ourselves in the land of the Ural Kosaks. The terrain is as yesterday; the steppes covered with haystacks, yet for verst no human being in sight, to whom they could belong, nor animals to be fed by them. The weeds with the pretty blue flowers are so plentiful, as if they were seeded. Weather is cool and cloudy. At 2:30 we move on. Night lodging at Potyika which is near a Balka (gorge) with stagnant water. We still had plenty of the salty water with us. Watering the horses was a chore after dark, and it was difficult to haul out of the Balka. At the previous station we had been warned to camp farther on because of the Kirigise tribe; however, we have not encountered any so far. The long stretch is a picture of a deserted wilderness: no human being, no animals, no birds, except a few swallows and a hawk; in other words, no visible life. The first part of this stretch is made up of reeds and plants which we did not know. About half-way along there was a dried-out salt-marsh. From there on an even steppe with a lot of saltpetre. No haystacks, no cultivated land anywhere.
20. We left at 7:30 this morning. It was cool and cloudy, really wonderful for the horses. We arrived at Fort Chikinyeki, a reasonably nice-looking place enhanced by a few clusters of trees. It is near some water with searoses, reeds. The water is better here. We are stopping here for dinner. Maria is not feeling well. To the left in the distance we see a blue hill, similar to the one at the Volga. In the evening we camped for the night near a street, 15 verst from Fort Chik. There is a well not too far away. Weather is mild, partly cloudy.
21. We left at 6:30 a.m. It was quite cool: +5. Again there is no life, no traffic on the dusty road. At 9:30 we arrived at Nobo Chik. Fort. and are now stopping for dinner. In this area the houses have flat roofs. We have fairly good water here, but our oat supply is gone. In the evening we arrived at the more impressive Kausak. Ft. It lies between a wide flat valley, surrounded by beautiful hills. 10 verst from Nobo-Tsch. the ground begins to rise. Here we see people again, busy with the harvest. 15 verst farther we are already in a mountainous area, which progressively rises in height. To the right of the road is a balka with a fountain. The soil is lime-like. In the hills there is more agriculture. We had a poor place for night, but the water was good.
22. The night was not as cold, in spite of the dew and ice which we saw on our travelling table. After purchasing oats, hay, and ground meat, we left at 8 a.m. and arrived at 12 at 2 nice-looking Chuter (estates) about 1 verst apart. We stopped for dinner near one of them. It is less hilly here. The estates are near the Dyerkul River, a few verst from Zpiyenolkya F. Twice we came to a parting of the road, both times we took the one to the right. The weather is clear and warm, but the road very dusty. We stop at the banks of the D. River. At sunset we arrived at 2 Chuters again and are camping near one for the night. A few verst back the main road suddenly turned to the right, but we took the lesser one which led us to the Chuter. We are encountering very much dust.
23. We left at 5:30 today in order to get to Uralsk, where our women wanted to do some laundry. We hoped to get to the main road, but realized we had gone wrong, so had to turn around to get to the main road. Now we are stopping near a well, where we also feed the horses and drink tea. We arrived at Uralsk at 5:30 p.m., just in time to buy the necessary provisions, as meat etc. and get to bed on time. The Lord be praised for everything.
24. Sunday. Near Uralsk. This is the second Sunday on our journey. Again it began to rain at dawn, and has rained all day, so it is not exactly very comfortable with all the mess. Yet, "No journey is without discomfort," and the assurance of our goal helps us to deal with all kinds of annoyances; yes, helps us serve our purpose. Our worship service this morning was cancelled because of the rain. Br. Toews, Esau, B. Jantzen, Bier and I sat in Toews's tent conversing with each other.

25. In order to allow the roads to dry, and to attend to some business, we decided to leave in the afternoon. However, the business delayed us until near evening, so we decided to stay for the night. Also it began to rain again at dusk. The evening service was held in the rain.
26. Some rain during the night. The sun came out early so we were able to leave at 10:30 a.m. This side of Dar. we had dinner; good water in the river. We arrived at Rub. at sundown, where we also found good water. Following bad advice, we went on, but finding no good water, we had to return to the village for night. This delayed us at least 2 hours, so that we arrived in full darkness, and had to do all our chores by lantern-light. There is a lot of sand at this station.
27. Today we left at 6 a.m., after we had breakfast. We met up with a number of sandy areas. At 12 we stopped at a nice little river Enbulatrowka. At Ruyek we bought hay from some Tartars. At 6 we stopped for night at Gyenbaerusb, near a fishpond with good water, bought a load of hay for 3 rble., and were ready to go to bed by 9 p.m.
28. We left at 6:30 a.m.; had much sand for 15 verst, so hard going. At noon we stopped at N. Astyemobyekin where we camped between 2 fishponds surrounded by poplar trees. During the afternoon the roads were very sandy. The horses finally found it too difficult, one horse simply giving up 6 verst before the station. After looking into the matter, we realized that one of the back wheels did not turn. Since we had enough horses, we stopped for the night at 6 p.m. It was a clear moonlit evening.
29. Next morning we arrived at Chorodinski, the second church since Uralsk. We bought hay, looked at the wagons, and repaired them. At this side of Choro. there was a deep gully, which we drove down without having to apply brakes, but it was very difficult and time consuming to climb up the other side. I talked to a Russian from Usmorkye, who had lived here for 7 years. We found a lot of hay before we reached the village. There was another deep gorge to go through, and while driving down, a sudden gust of wind tore off the canvas awning on our large wagon. We passed through one of the poorest villages yet, but there was good water, which we could draw from the bridge. The large wagon is much easier to pull after having been fixed and the two brown horses were able to get it through the gorge quite easily. Here we see pigs again. Just before the village we see a beautiful low-lying meadow, covered with a carpet of grass. We arrive at Stubyenvyi, a poor village, at 6:30. We had a good place to set up our night lodging, near a clear river, surrounded by clusters of trees, and above this the first quarter of the new moon. A mild evening.
30. This morning we drove through a treeless low area; the road well-travelled, but very bumpy, slippery and pot-holed. Just before the village, abominably, pot-holed swamp-like places in which one of the pack-wagons overturned, one wagon got stuck and altogether caused a lot of delay. At 10:30 we arrived at Isinka Shrob, after crossing a few bridges, and the Ural, and are stopping for dinner near some water. We are now in Asia. As bad as the morning was, in the afternoon the road is even—an endless steppe—only to the right the distant Ural mountains and wooded areas. This road led to the village Krasnobr. After buying hay, we went on to a broad road and after dark found a place with water near a river. It began to rain on our way.
31. Sunday. On awakening the rain clattered onto the overhang. The rain continued all day, at times coming down in torrents until about 10 a.m. During our noon meal it started again, but the women were able to do some laundry in between, but may not be able to dry it. We hung some horse blankets over our large wagon, which are quite rainproof. The horses are out to pasture. The sun set in a clear sky, which no doubt indicates a beautiful day for tomorrow.

## **September 1880**

2. Rain again last night. Even though the soil seemed very waterlogged, we prepared to leave, arriving at Kardainovka by noon. Before the village is a lake in the form of a sickle, overgrown with reeds, on the other side of which flows the Ural. The roads are drying, but the laundry and clothes which got wet are drying very slowly. We set out again, arriving at a

Chuter, 10 verst from the previous station, at 6:30. There was a good well. We camped in the open for the night. The weather dark, quiet and mild.

3. We left at 6:30 amidst a few sprinkles of rain, but good roads. We passed a large Church-village where the road was heavy. Penner's wagon got stuck, but we kept on going, passing through a few difficult ravines. We stop for dinner at the village Gorobiu for dinner. Since Sunday we are short of good hay. Water in the nearby bucket-well. At 7:30 we stop 1 verst before the village of Dadirovka at the shore of a land-lake. It was a good place, except that we got some Jewish hay; we had no more water, no oats, and there was no pasture: a depressing evening, but God's word refreshed us.
4. We had to look for feed very early. Until then the horses had to fast. Finally we got a load of hay, and some corn. We left at 8 a.m. on wet, soft roads. At 11:30 we arrived at Paviovka near a small flowing river, which we had to cross. With much difficulty we were able to get up the other side. Our large wagon, however, had to be hauled by an extra team of horses. The rest of the company crossed at a different place. Now we are stopping at a lovely place next to the village. The whole scene is quite picturesque with the tree clusters surrounding the village, the church, and in the background the Ural hills. The weather is finally clear. We arrived at Orenburg under a full moon at 7:30. About 1 verst before the village the road was horrible; only by the grace of God did our wagons not suffer harm. The area is sandy. A short distance before this, our black horse gave up, but after a rest, he was ready to go again. God helped us to get to this place. The front wagons are standing between the town and the Kosak camp about 1½ v. farther on.
5. The Lord has given us a happy day. The first joy we experienced was the arrival of two young brothers, H. J. and C. Q. accompanied by the two Molotschna men D.P. and P. Q. We thank the Lord for their safe arrival. Further, the dear Elder W. and his wife and their brother-in-law, C.W. surprised us; finally there were letters from those who went before us. During the day all this was processed as well as some business. With the help of B. F. I bought another horse for the freight wagon. Then we did some sightseeing of the town. H. Sch. held the evening devotions before we retired for the night. Praise God for everything.
6. This was a particularly busy day, since so many things had to be repaired. Son Michael, W. D. and I went to the town to buy a wagon with the necessary equipment. I couldn't do much since I needed a few materials and hands. However, I was able to repair the boxes at the back of the large wagon.
7. Sunday. This is the first warm Sunday. Dear old W. held the service in a tent built onto Toews's wagon. In the afternoon I went for a walk with several other men to see the wooded area near the town Ural. From across the bridge I saw the banks of this town.
8. All day Monday we were busy with repairing things and adding to our travel gear. We were going to leave early on Tuesday, but unfortunately F. Fr.'s son broke his arm, so we were delayed, and our patience put to the test. However, we had plenty to do, and everyone was hard at work not to waste time.
10. We finally set out, leaving Orenburg at 2 p.m., and arriving at Nazhinka at 6, where we camped for night. There is water near the road, but because of the high embankment not accessible. The road was very good.
11. We left at 6 a.m. From Orenburg a telegraph line followed the same road. The road leads past haystacks covering the low-lying area, gradually rising to a higher plane. For dinner we are stopping at a church village, near a fishpond covered with reeds and water-lilies. The weather is warm and beautiful. The area is getting more hilly. Going through a wide, deep gully, we had to apply brakes 4 times. At 5 p.m. we passed through the church village Vazovyekoia. After this the road was even and less hilly. We arrived at Ostrovna for night. The water is nearby in a fishpond, or a small river. This evening after watering the horses, we again experienced God's gracious protection. A horse kicked Jacob on the leg, but it wasn't too serious. Thank God for His goodness.
12. We had good weather today, and a lovely hilly road. About 3 verst after Krasnopora we stopped for dinner at a small river. From Orenburg on we have seen fruit in abundance, as well as oats in the fields. After dinner we had a natural gravel road, which was like a natural



Chaussee. About 2 verst through Galvodira, which is part of a Tartar village, we spent the night near a river. All the bridges have been passable, and mostly in good condition. The ground is stony. We bought hay again.

13. Our road today leads along a rising hillside, with a fence on the other side looking down on a steep ravine, as far as the Ural River. At the very top of this incline we met a Schumack-train carrying wool. We were barely able to pass them. Going down from there we had to apply the brakes. The road now leads through a wide low-lying area, surrounded by very high hills, some close-by, some farther away. The road is bumpy. At 10:30 we passed through the V. Ozyernaep, one hour away from a Tartar settlement where we will spend the night. They have hay, milk and eggs to sell. Since we left Orenburg, mother is suffering from diarrhea. May the Lord help her. We had good water at the place we stopped for dinner. Penner hurried ahead to climb the mountain from which height he had a wonderful view. Some of the young people wanted to try, but time did not permit. We arrived at a Tartar and Russian village, Donskap (between Orenburg and Orsk: 130 + 130 v.) at the top of the high incline. From this height the valley below presented us with a spectacular scene. In a rose-covered meadow, 1 verst from the village we set up our camp for the night. A lovely evening in spite of the cool weather and poor water supply.
14. Sunday. A lovely quiet Sunday morning. Even though I found a thick layer of ice on the table, it was quite mild when I got up at 6 a.m. Penner preached on the text: Phil. 3:12–14, referring to his yesterday's mountain climb. Later the young people mostly went for a walk to the mountain about 6 verst farther back. At 3 p.m. we saw them at the top, and at 5 they were back again. In the evening some of our group bought fish—to their disgust later on.
15. A cool morning, 2 degrees frost. We left about 6 a.m. The terrain was alternately low-lying, then higher. At 10 we passed Nikolska, and after about an hour we stopped for dinner at the banks of the swiftly flowing Ural. After dinner we had ever-changing terrain; stony, yet slippery. At sundown we passed lotnyek and after another 2 ½ verst we camped at the banks of the Ural for night.
16. A cool morning. We left at 6 a.m. arriving at a beautiful mountain scene. We had to apply brakes on the way down the embankment, then climb up towards the road from where we saw the river with its reeds and the beautiful trees around in their fall colours; below the level floor of a valley, through which the telegraph lines and our road passed in a straight line. At the end lay the village Pobporgorna, where we arrived at 9:30. We had to buy oats here, for which we paid 1.66. Just this side of Pobp. the road and the telegraph lines turned sharply to the right. We had our dinner at the end of the village near a fishpond with poor water. Here we also bought a bundle of hay from a Russian, which later we could hardly handle. On the stretch we travelled today we were blessed with beautiful mountain scenery; the road now rising, now falling, wide and even. Finally, after a steep decline to the left there is another valley with lovely clusters of trees, then turning right, steep stone walls after which we come to a wide level valley surrounded by ragged cliffs. We are stopping here for an hour, while Esau fixes his broken wagon spoke. We had to make up for lost time by travelling later into the evening. We finally settled down for the night at 7:30 on a stubble field. However, the water is accessible, and the weather is lovely. Towards evening we had some dust to deal with.
17. Today we left at 5:30 travelling uphill until 11:30. This road was wide and beautiful—high mountains to the right, deep tree covered ravines to the left, but the vegetation reminded us of the south coast of the Crimea. Later we had an abominable road between mountains, with a fountain trickling across it which had washed away the soil, leaving a stony bare bottom. This was most unpleasant for horses and people, and dangerous for the wagons. The fountain gushed out of the stones in the middle of the road. At 11 a.m. we stopped for a breather on a platform-like stone, from where we could see the mountainous area. To the east there was a still higher ridge, where we arrived at 12. The farther we climbed, the more level the plateau. From here we had to descend to a Chuter where we are now stopping for dinner. Unfortunately, there is only a small well here, not nearly enough water for all the horses. Before we left we noticed that our black horse could not use his right foreleg. In

spite of this he had to hobble along with us. Since we only left at 5 p.m., darkness naturally overcame us, so I could not see too well. But thanks be to the Lord, the road straightened out, and Geo. Wiebe went ahead of us until we finally arrived at the place where the other wagons were already camped for the night. We have a fountain for water, and the weather is quiet and mild.

18. The black horse was so lame by morning that he could not give us any service. M. Enns was so good as to lend us a horse. Fortunately, we met a group of Russian settlers to whom we sold the black horse for 5 rubles. From here the road took a slight incline, until we came to the Dam Orsk where the road slowly went downwards. At 11 we stopped for a rest near the bridge. Yesterday we had a few drops of rain, as well as today. Esau and Dyck bought a horse for 50 rubles., 7 years old, strong and in good condition, so that need was taken care of by my heavenly Father. In the evening Penner and I went to the town to buy felt shoes and bread.
19. Today oats was bought to send by transport to Karabutan. We were to leave in the afternoon, but the Ispravnik<sup>67</sup> asked us to see him, so H. Jantzen and I went. We met Esau and Toews there. The Ispr., on behalf of the Governor, General Kaufman, wanted to let us know that no land would be available, not even to purchase, and they could not undertake any unnecessary expenses. We would also have to serve in the military over there, so why hadn't we considered going to America, etc. etc. The men, however, were very discreet and friendly. We decided to continue our journey after dinner, but all the transporting of the supplies onto the camels took much longer, and so we had to spend another night here. It was windy, but otherwise quite pleasant.
20. We left about 8 a.m., after loading the appr. 200 pd. oats onto the Arabian camels. It was cool and stormy with a raw wind from the west, which blew the dust across the steppes, as sand in a desert. We took the caravan road to the left, which is to be ours for the next 50 verst. It is stony and almost like a chaussee<sup>68</sup>. The road rises to a higher altitude. We stopped at noon without having found water, except what we had along, allowed the horses to graze a bit, fed them oats and went on. At 5:30 we came to a pond, about 40 verst from Orsk, where we camped for the night.
21. Sunday. Br. Toews preached. Since we have very little hay, we allowed the horses to graze.
22. It was 2 degrees frost, and quite cold. After 2 verst we stop for dinner at a fishpond near a hill, where there are several little houses. The fishpond is covered with reeds. In the afternoon we bought a stack of hay from a Kyrgyz. We arrived at the river Or at sundown, but went on for 15 minutes, where our Kyrgyzs were camped with our oats. Here we found a pond with good water, and set up our camp for the night.
23. The caravan left earlier than we. We have cool weather. The area is hillier than yesterday, the road somewhat stonier and more uneven. At noon we stop at a salty fishpond surrounded by bare steppes. In the morning, after having driven for a half hour, the road turned left to the Postroad, on both sides of which are earthen pyramids. In the evening we camped at a shallow fishpond with poor water. There are quite a few of these in this area. In the evening there was wind and rain.
24. We had a cold and stormy day. Had dinner on the bare steppes, without hay or water, so we let the horses graze. For night however, we have a good well with lots of water near the road. These dwellings may belong to the Kyrgyz's as winter abodes. I am writing this at 9 p.m. under a cloudy sky, and some rain. Of course as Christ's disciples we are not promised only comfort, but much more, trouble and distress.
25. During the night the rain pounded on our awning amidst a raging storm which seemingly threatened to tear everything apart. But God protected us for which we are thankful. This kept on almost all day. After a stretch we got to a fishpond with greenish water. The horses refused to drink it. We had no hay left, so we had to do without until we got to Karadutok, at

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67 This is the local Chief of Police.

68 Chaussée is French for "floor." Here it probably means paved or cobbled.

the river by the same name, and set up camp. The houses here are all of wood and only one storey high, perhaps only 50 of them. 3 loads of hay were bought, but no oats was to be found. An ox was bought. We drank tea and went to bed. There are a number of Germans at this place. We buried W.P.'s little daughter here.

26. Today we had to wait for our oats, but we made use of our time for other things. We slaughtered the ox and shared it with everyone, and bought one for later on. We made the necessary repairs and did the odd jobs that had been neglected. At dusk the caravan "baesch" announced the arrival of the transport. We were not very happy about this since some of our company couldn't wait for it, and had to buy more expensively.
27. We could not leave until 8 a.m., since the oats had to be repacked. At 11:30 we got to the postroad Ashile Sai. This road was very good, rising and falling slightly; however the steppes are very bare. The ground is very stony, but less as we go farther. We caught up with our caravan. Weather is fair, +19. At 5:30 we arrived at the town of Chuolak Kairakt after dark. Since the water was not good, a Kyrgyz took us to a place 1½ verst west where we found a river, and set up our camp for Sunday. The water is somewhat salty.
28. Sunday. Again Sunday is here, the wonderful day of rest, which God through His grace has granted us in the midst of the busyness of our pilgrim life, and which we have in a real way experienced on this journey. May the Lord bless this day to us in His original purpose. Rev. Penner preached the sermon on "Carry each other's burdens". This applies to our household in particular, when I see how difficult it is for our 2 sons to be considerate of each other. In the afternoon the service was led by Br. Toews. Now after the service a bit of rain again. Outside the little girls are singing: "Praise the Lord, my soul".
29. Early this morning we slaughtered the other ox. The weather is dark, windy and cool. At noon we arrived at the river Akit Kapakt, where we find some mounds, as if they have been piled up by shovels. This morning we bought 2 loads of hay from a Kyrgyz. From here we have left the postroad, and took the caravan road. We arrived at the river Upruki where we are camped for the night. The water is good and easily accessible. It is raining again, so we had to put down our tent.
30. A cool morning. Right after we left, we passed over the Irgis, continuing on the left side. At 10 we arrived at a well, Karay Sai, where we watered the horses. The next stretch was very sandy and a lot of saltpetre in the soil. The steppes on this side of the Irgis are less stony and quite dry. At 12 we arrived at a meadow where the horses could graze. Since this area is completely unpopulated, we cannot get hay anywhere, so we have to depend on oats and grass. We tried to cut a bit of hay on the field, but it was so dry that the horses won't get much nourishment out of it. In the evening we got to the well Aisi. Near this is a dried-out salt-lake, the bottom of which is covered with a ¼ inch salt layer. Some of the young people went to get some of the salt, but it did not taste good.

## October 1880

1. It is cold this morning. We had the wind to our backs when we left at 6:30, so it was bearable. However, we soon noticed that it was getting cloudy, and soon we saw snowflakes, which gradually increased. At noon we stopped at the Siral, wells, which were dug out of the sandy soil in the dried-out river-bed. Some water was green and brown, but one well had clear drinking water. The soil on the steppes is beginning to get more sandy, and being wet also slippery. Two Russians came by on horseback. One of them, having come from Kazalinsk, said that the road ahead would not be bad if it was wet. The snow, wind and cold increased the farther we went, and by evening developed into a regular snowstorm. When we camped, we placed the wagons in rows in order to have more shelter. However, we felt sorry for the horses, who had to be fed only oats, and no hay. We also had to go to bed without a warm kitchen. The big wagons standing at the corner gave good shelter for the "tarantass<sup>69</sup>", even in this weather. We slept as warm as at home, even with

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69 Tarantass was a four-wheel horse-drawn vehicle on a long longitudinal frame (see: picture), reducing road jolting on long-distance travel. It was widely used in Russia in the first half of the 19th century.

the constant rocking of our wagons.

2. Praise be to the Lord, our God and Father, who thus far has graciously protected our animals, and pack wagons, as well as us through this stormy night. No misfortune has come upon us, nor the horses. We left at 7:30 a.m. It had only frozen 2 or 3 degrees, and the slippery sand wasn't even hard. The roads were very much softened by the



- rain, which had made a difference in the depth of the puddles. The road was full of potholes. At 12:30 we arrived at the Irgis again, where we got onto the postroad. The soil contains much clay, and sticks to the wheels when it rains, so we encounter clumps of clay which has fallen off wagon wheels. We can be fortunate that we did not need to travel this stretch in rainy weather, since the wagons would be so much heavier. At 2 p.m. we reached the Irgis ford just before the town of Irgis. We passed through the ford without mishap; the horses walking knee-deep in the water. We camped on the road between the river and the fields. We enquired about letters in the town of Irgis. We had a few: from Cl. Epp, Joh. Jantzen, Abr. Schorr, and Wilh. Penner. We immediately went about our business, buying oats, etc. The weather remains cold. Between Karp. S. we have seen very few people.
4. We had a lot of activities again today. Feed for the horses was bought for the trip through the desert, and the camels were hired. Since the tour guides did not want to load up today, we had to decide to stay here until Monday. However, shortly after dinner, the camels were suddenly there, and the supply of oats was loaded, after which we were able to leave at 4 p.m. We are camped for the night about 2 verst farther along the tributary of the Irgis River. This water is even more salty than that of the Irgis. Today we had the first clear day, but with a cold wind from the NW.
5. Sunday. A clear, quiet morning, but quite frosty. Later there was more wind, so we are walking around in fur coats. After dinner I wrote letters, which I continued during the afternoon service. Towards evening the wind died down, and it became quite mild. Oh that it might become quiet inside us, above all in me. Lord, grant us this quietness of soul.
6. **Monday. Our 25th wedding anniversary**. The morning dawned clear and mild. This is our Silver Wedding Day. At morning devotions Br. Penner remembered this day, also in his prayer. Quite unexpectedly, while we were having breakfast, we heard a choir in full harmony singing the song: "Es erglaenzt uns von ferne ein Land" (There's a land that is fairer than day), led by Br. Penner. Then we received a few congratulations. May the Lord bless this day to us. We prepared for our departure quite early, but had to wait for the camels, and they have not arrived yet at 11:30 a.m. But the "Basch" was here, and said they would be here by 1 p.m. So we will first have dinner. In the meantime it has begun to rain, but it is quite mild. Finally the camels arrived, but the drivers did not want to leave until tomorrow. So we are getting to bed in time, in order to get an early start tomorrow morning. In the evening the Jantzens and Penners were our anniversary guests. We drank tea together in our tent, while the choir sang a few songs, and joined us for tea. After that we took a look at the camels in the midst of our camp, saw how one of them was milked, and even tasted the milk as well as the millet soup made from the milk. Then we went to bed. It was the most beautiful evening we have had for a long time.
7. A beautiful morning. We broke camp at 7:30 with the camels leading the way. The roads were very soft after the rain, besides being full of pot-holes, crooked, waterholes, sharp turns, now sand-slushy, now clay sticking to the wheels; in short a very difficult road to the

lake at the station, where we arrived at 12:30 p.m. Here our camel-driver insisted that his camels could not make it to the next station, 25 verst farther on. So we camped in a circle for the night. Early morning the wind had picked up, and with a cloudy sky it was quite cool. The wind blew considerably high waves against the shore of the lake, near which we were camped.

8. Today it is 8 weeks since we left Medenthal. We prepared to leave quite a bit earlier, which was no problem in the bright moonlight. We left at 5 a.m. after the oat-cargo had left ahead of us. Thank God for the good roads. At 11 we arrived at the station Katni Kual, which unfortunately has no water, so the horses had to drink of the supply we took along. Since yesterday we have no hay. Little Maria saw a flock of swallows today. The crows are around too, and the seagulls at the water. We also saw an eagle. At 6:30 p.m., already by moonlight, we arrived at the station Dzhalavel. Soon after we stopped, the camel caravan arrived. The guide, however, demanded a day of rest, so we will have to camp here for a day. In the evening I went for a walk with Br. Toews, to discuss Br. B.'s acceptance.
9. We are camped at a river surrounded by willow trees. The water is quite good. Today is my dear mother's birthday. It is a warm day: +16. We made use of the day by gathering brush to use as firewood. The Kyrgyz also got us some hay, which, however, was very expensive. Jantzens and Penners were our guests again. My dear wife is suffering from a toothache. May the dear heavenly Father bless her today with a spiritual blessing. Amen. In the evening our Kyrgyzs are slaughtering 2 sheep.
10. Again we left at 5 a.m., by moonlight. The road is sandy and well-driven. Since 10:30 we are climbing steadily with a strong wind against us. The soil is more and more desert-like. The only thing we see are the waves, which follow each other intermittently verst by verst. The soil is mostly sand with low-growing bushes, called **Wermuth (wormwood)**<sup>70</sup>, the only nourishment for the camels. At 3 p.m. we arrived at Tokloko, the last station near the "Tornertansch" area. The wind has turned west, the sky is clear, temperature: +14½. At the last sand hill, we had deep sand to go through. The water from a well, at a distance from here, is quite good.
11. We left at the usual time today, but not quite as early. Until the postroad we had heavy sand, after that it was better. At 11:30 we arrived at Dzhulior, the first station in the Turkestan Territory, which lies in the midst of sand dunes, a real desert. We are camped to the left, near the station on a sand flat. Sister Schmidt, unfortunately, is expecting an early childbirth. Lord, may all go well.
12. Sunday. Today a real Sunday, day of grace and blessing. Even though the actual sun is not shining, yet the sun of the Triune God shines the brighter in our hearts. Yesterday evening Sister Schmidt gave birth to a pair of twin boys; both were stillborn. Otherwise she had a restful night. Today also the Biers and Corn. Quiring were admitted to the fellowship, Br. Toews officiating. Finally we celebrated Holy Communion, at which Br. Penner officiated.

Lord, bless this celebration to all our hearts.

In the afternoon in our thoughts we went to the graves of those who had gone on before us; Marie and I to those of our 3 children, as well as that of the Schmidt children this morning. On our way back, we stopped at the station house, where we met a man from Moscow, who told us that he had seen about 50 wagons similar to ours near Karabulak. This could be none other than our Molotschna people, who must have had more difficulty travelling, since the difference between there and here is only appr. 315–320 verst. I forgot to mention that the day before yesterday, we saw a man from Berlin in Terekli, who had heard the singing,

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70 Wormwood (Genus: *Artemisia*) is a large diverse genus of plants both hardy herbs, like tarragon, and shrubs, like mugwort or sagebrush. The aromatic leaves of many species of *Artemisia* are medicinal, and some are used for flavouring. The aperitif Vermouth, derived from the German word *Wermut*, is a wine flavoured originally with wormwood. In Russian culture *Artemisia* species are commonly used in medicine, and their bitter taste is associated with medicinal effects. This has caused wormwood to be seen as a symbol for a "bitter truth" that must be accepted by a deluded (often self-deluded) person. In Revelation 8:11 wormwood's bitter flavour poisons the water.

looked us up and we talked to him. His name is Graeber and he is on his way to Margilan, where he has a brother. This brother had written him, that the Governor had told him that 200 German-Mennonite families would be coming soon. We assume that this means the government is planning to grant us a place. May the Lord grant this according to His will.

This evening for the first time we celebrated a so-called "love-feast". May the Lord give us His blessing.

13. At 10:30 we are stopping for lunch because of the good water supply. Our good Father in heaven has given such wonderful weather (an almost cloudless sky, a soft south wind, and not a breath of cold air, so that we can work with only our underjackets). We have had 16 verst of very good roads, with only a few sandy places. The water is very sparse, so that the horses can drink only  $\frac{1}{2}$  a pailful each. At 2 p.m. we arrived at the station Konstantinovoka. This morning we saw in a distance a large inland sea which was no mirage, but a real lake. At 7 we reached the station Dungurnak. The weather is wonderful, as also the road. After this there was a sand dune again with much sand at the top, which made travelling difficult, especially after dark. Strange, that the last rain, about the time that we had the cold spell at the well, refreshed the steppes here, so that here and there fresh green sprouts have grown as if it is spring. At this station we had the well and the trough on the yard. And so the dear Father in heaven has cared for us, even for the horses, who had such a difficult time for the last 27 verst. We thank Him for this favour. The evening was so beautiful that we could set up the tent and do all our chores without any jackets.
14. Station Kulb. Kuduk. We arrived here in this desert-like place at 12 a.m. The station consists of one very primitive clay building, the back part of which has crumbled. The water is 2 v. farther on. At the last town before this, we had a lot of sand. We are now turning left off the postroad. This is to be a better road, not as sandy as the postroad. At 6:30 we camped at a sandy, low-lying place. Since the horses had only been given a pail full of water each, we prepared to take them to be watered immediately. However, our Kyrgyzs, who arrived earlier, knew of no water. But God sent us a Kyrgyz, who was at home here, and who rode with us to find water. A few wagons carrying water containers also went with them. The well was supposed to be 2 v. from here. However, when they stayed away quite long, 3 of our men went to look for them. It was dark, but quite mild. No whistling or calling brought any results, so they returned. Then Br. Penner and I followed their tracks for a few v., but again, no calling brought response. Suddenly there was a light in the direction we were going, probably a lantern. We hurried toward the light, and after calling again, we heard Br. P. answering. Then we heard the horses neigh, heard voices and singing, and soon we met the first of the company. The well had been 5 verst from our camp. We all returned; I felt ashamed of my fears.
15. It is quiet and clear. We left at 5 a.m. The road is firm with a few sandy places; farther on more places where the wind has swept the sand together into piles on which orpine<sup>71</sup> grows. This looks like a lot of graves with plants on top. The whole area is a regular desert, which of course we are getting close to. The typical tartar weeds, "Russian thistle" is found here, as well as a few plants of wild corn. At 11 a.m. we came to the place where there was supposed to be water, where we will let the horses rest before we begin our actual journey through the desert. At this place the water wagons arrive. They have found good water. Thank God for this precious gift in the desert. Near 10 a.m. already we saw the blue surface of the Aral Sea. In the afternoon several of us went out to see it. It seemed too far for me, so I accompanied Sister Froese to see the postroad.
16. 11 a.m. Praise be to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that He has heard our prayers, and has made this most difficult stretch easier for us. Last night it turned cloudy, and a strong wind arose from the sea, which was blowing hard when we drank tea at 7. While we had evening devotions the storm increased and rocked our tarantass very hard. Fortunately it did not blow from the side. This morning the wind is colder. The thermometer

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71 Orpine or crassulaceae is a large family of flowering plants that store water in their succulent leaves. The Jade plant is one example of orpine.

shows 0. We prepared for the difficult sand, but immediately we got to the postroad. At first we tried without brakes, and with some difficulty made it by taking rests off and on. Now the road leads about ½ verst away from the seacoast, which proved fairly easy. During the night there had been some rain and frost, which left the tracks open. This made travelling less difficult. The Lord helped. At 10 a.m. we got to the station Ak Dzhultas at which point the most difficult sand has been passed. Here we are camping over noon. Near this station there is another salt sea. After this camp we got to the postroad again. It is quite cold, about +2. The well is past the sand hill. It has enough good water. At 5:30 (the sun had set already) we arrived at the station Sovnak, situated in a waste steppe. Since it was still quite cold we used the tent again, which we had not taken down for a week. The water here is in a well out of which (as the Innkeeper said) 1000 (?) camels had already been watered.

17. Today we left at 6:30 a.m. The road is pure sand, more difficult than yesterday. At 11 a.m. we got to the station Andpsovokak. With the sand and going slightly upward, it has been a difficult stretch of 32 verst. This place has no water, so again the horses have to do with ½ a pail each from our supply. At 5:30 we got to the station Katile Chai, about 2 verst from the lake by the same name. We watered the horses and camped for the night. Our road had been pot-holed and some of it sandy. Half-way to this place we came upon a dried out seabed, about 1 verst long and ¼ wide. The bottom was as if poured over with asphalt. On the last few verst there were signs of habitation: piles of dried brush gathered together, as well as the first cattle herd. It is somewhat warmer here, but we are still using the tent.
18. We had hard going for a while with sandy stretches, and bumpy clay soil on the road. The road snaked between sand hills. After 9 verst the sand suddenly stopped and we found ourselves on the Chaussee, which led between small knolls dotted along on both sides of the level plain. It is cool, but the wind not too strong. At 10:45 we arrived at the station Gossovkaa, which again has no water. This place still has the character of the desert. We hurried with our noon meal, so that we could get to our camping place sooner. After 11 verst we came upon a refreshing scene: the first scene of human culture. I had already seen the wing of a dove—a sign of a human household—on the road, just before we came to a proper bridge and right after that a small body of water, where we could give the thirsty horses a drink. Beyond that a patch of natural grass, then stubble fields, probably sorghum, and near that the first primitive irrigation system. Br. Schmidt also found a sort of threshed straw of wheat, and farther along a dandelion blooming, haystacks and a herd of cattle. At 5:30 we got to the Chikdaul River, where we saw a small stream. A lovely evening, mild and still +8 at sundown. The clear sky, the setting sun, the clear lake with its birds flying around, the lakeshore and wildlife, high up a hawk, and the camels all over, makes a picturesque scene. Unfortunately, Sister Enns is suffering from hernia. Br. Froese is well again.
19. Sunday. The weather has changed for the worse. A cold east wind has brought frost, ice and shivering cold. Sister Enns is quite sick. At the morning devotions she was remembered in prayer. It was decided that she and her family go ahead to Kasava to find medical help. However, before they left, her condition improved. Praise God for hearing us even as we prayed. Br. Toews held the morning service on 1 Cor. 1:4–10; and the evening service on Ps. 36:1. All day it was windy and cool.
20. Sister Enns's condition warranted our departure at 6:45. The weather is quiet, clear and no frost. The road so far is good. The area is more and more inhabited, with Kyrgyz tents here and there, as well as camel herds. On the terrain are small hillocks and rising hills. As we were resting we noticed that a bolt had broken on the tongue of our wagon. It was easy to repair. While travelling suddenly the back axle of Jantzen's wagon broke. It was temporarily fixed with tree branches and rope, so we hope to get to Kazalinka before too long. We had another testing of patience, when suddenly in the middle of the road there was a small lake. Only by a long way around, could we get back to the postroad. However, this was covered with great difficulty, first of all going back and forth along reed covered roads alternately leading through meadows and salt stretches, past Kyrgyz kubitkes (huts?) and cattle, through irrigation ditches, and very bumpy roads, which could make a healthy person sick, and one feared for our sick travellers. Added to that, we often had stops which delayed us.

We only arrived at our destination at 5 p.m., shortly before sundown. We were reminded of always giving praise to God our Lord of Lords, who can also protect us from all harm. No one came to any harm, and weather wise it was a beautiful day. The children began to walk barefoot. This area is very level, not even a slight rise or hill. Kazalinsk is a beautiful town. Even from a distance the view is lovely with the willows and poplars surrounding it.

21. This time I too went into the town. It has a regular oriental character. The buildings, streets, stores are all made of clay, even the roofs are made of reeds and clay; but everything is very neat and clean. Then we see the Kyrgyzs, the Sarts, (hardly any Russians), and the masses of camels, which fill the market-place and the streets. Even donkeys play an important role here. The stores have everything one needs, and the goods are not very expensive, more or less as in Saratov. One average watermelon 20 R., one carp and one whitefish (without head and tail), 12 kopeke. The nationalities represented here are: Russians, Kyrgyzs, Tartars, Bukharans and Jews. In the evening I went to the Capt. Dakba. It was a cloudless, lovely day, +15. While we were unloading the barley, the attendant said, that they had word from the governor, that if we wished to stay here over a long period of time, they would not hinder us in any way. We believe this is an answer to prayer, and comes from the Lord, showing us that He is with us.

In the evening I began to write a letter in the open tent (naturally wearing my fur coat). I wrote until 12 p.m. It was rather cool, but I wasn't actually freezing.

22. We still had a lot of business to take care of today. We needed boxes, which seemingly were not available. Finally, just before departure a Buchar brought some to our camp with camels. Immediately after breakfast I went into town with Maria in order to show her the same. Brother-in-law J. and our Jacob came along when we went to the river. We were to leave at 12, but were delayed until 1:30. Besides, we had all kinds of problems the first stretch of the way: first we made a wrong turn, which delayed us at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  hour; then the front axle of our pack-wagon broke, which again cost us 45 min.; then we came to a bridge where a camel had broken through, lying there with his hind leg in the hole. We had to see that it got out and then fix the bridge, which again took us over half an hour. All this delay resulted in camping at the nearest station. The weather was beautiful, +15. In the evening one of our horses was sick.

23. We left camp at 6:30 this morning, stopping at the station Chapara at 8:15. Here we learned that the next 22 v. has no water and sand all the way, so we stopped for dinner at 11:50, at a village. From there on the sand was intermittently evident, but not quite as troublesome as we had feared. We arrived at the station Mailadat, where we found a good camping spot near the river. Thus, after only 20 verst we reached the banks of the River Syr [Syr Darya] and the high "Schmeel".

24. We left at sunrise in fog, which, however, soon lifted. For the next 17 verst we had the usual "desert-habitus": sand hills with intermittent pot-holes and bumpy stretches. At 12 noon we stopped at the station Az Suat, at the River Syr. This first station this side of Kazalinsk looks more inhabited. We see yards surrounded by clay walls, bridges, cattle, caravans etc. The area looks very monotonous. We travelled another 15  $\frac{1}{2}$  verst after dinner, then stopped for night at Az Dkar, between the road and the Syr River.

25. We left at 6 a.m., stopping at a station 2 verst farther on to buy clover at a Kyrgyz farm. This delayed us for almost 3 hours, so that we arrived at the next station at 2 p.m. However, we did not stop to eat dinner, or water the horses, since we had to get to the next station, 27 v. Ilakiday for night, and our Sunday rest. The road was fairly good, as well as the weather. At 15 v. from the previous station we had a road with no verstposts, so we stopped here for Sunday. We had to repair the supplybox cover and the doorframe.

26. Sunday. A beautiful day; quiet, clear, +12. I am sitting in my underjacket. The sun is sending its warmth through the canvas. In the afternoon I continued my letter, which I finished in the evening, after everybody had gone to bed.

27. The weather has suddenly changed. We had rain at night, and in the morning a strong, cold storm from the west. We had left at 7 a.m., and taken some water at a station 5 verst



farther on, stopping again at the Syr River for dinner. We arrived at Karatuquay at sundown, where we camped for night. A cold day!

28. The weather is clear, but cold: 8 degrees frost. We left at 6 a.m., arriving at the station Kurp Khut at 10 for dinner. The Syr River flows fairly swiftly between flat (12 ft. high) banks, with murky, slimy water. At sundown we arrived at F. Karkakai, after a cold day.
29. We had a number of things to take care of here: buying barley, and also feeding the horses reeds. I winterized the large wagon from the inside. We continued on at 2:30 for 22 verst to the station Viktornaska, where we arrived by moonlight. The weather still cool, but not actually cold.
30. We had little frost last night, since it was cloudy. We left at 6:30. The roads were sandy, but quite good. At 10:30 we arrived at the station Fyeodorovca where we had dinner. At noon the weather suddenly turned very mild: +14. The area is still rather desert-like. The well  $\frac{1}{2}$  v. farther on was good. At 6 p.m. we got to the St. Viadimiryeka. Here we had a brick-lined well.
31. It is cool, but no frost. The road is slippery in places. Our noon stop: Alokandrovyeka with water in a canal. We sit in the tent in our under-jackets. Partly cloudy.

### November 1880

1. The road is quite desert-like. Our noon stop is at the Pyetykovka station between sand dunes. We had wind which blew the sand around. Later in the afternoon fine hail turned to snow which gave the landscape a white blanket. We had enough water to cook at the station; water for the horses farther along in the sand-ravine. In the evening we arrived at the station Akontat. We had to go 1 verst back for the water in a brick-lined well.
2. We had 7 degrees of frost at night, a strong north wind sweeping across the leftover snow. We had a short worship service led by Br. Toews on Eph. 5. Today everyone came to the service in a fur coat. In the afternoon I added to my letter. In the evening Br. Toews took my turn at leading the devotions. We had snow in the evening.
3. After a cool night we had fog which left dew on the ground. The area is desert; the road sandy, but not too difficult. 2 stations before Fort Ryenak the soil suddenly changed; we saw irrigation canals, ditches, farms, even a windmill. At 1 p.m. we arrived at Fort Pyerobyek, stopping between the station and the Syr River. We had snow, but fair weather.
4. We bought a few supplies, as barley etc. We met a woman who said she was originally German, but had forgotten the language. At the camp a man asked me whether we knew where we were going. He had heard that General Kaufman had a piece of land ready for us. We left the town at sunset (4 p.m.), arriving at Chirnbay (at the Syr R.) where we camp for night.
5. We had -10 frost this morning, so it was quite cold. At the first station we had to make a detour around a broken bridge, through a ditch made by the Kyrgyzs. Here we broke 2 rods on our tarantass, which we temporarily repaired. At 9 a.m. we passed the station Chyer Kasan at the Syr, and stopped at a marsh 5-6 verst before the station Dzharta Kuk for dinner. The area has high tree-like shrubs and reeds intermittently growing in the sand. A sling-plant with wing-like seeds growing tall in the midst of these shrubs gives the appearance as if they were hung with tightly woven strands of wool. It is a spectacular sight. We arrived at our camp sight Sarn Gyeparok late—9:30 p.m. It is quite cool again. The marsh was already frozen at noon. We have a full moon, which helps us morning and evening.
6. This morning we first tied up our tarantass, then left at 7. We had 10 degrees frost; quite cool. At 11 we got to the station Tarms Tugau at the Syr. We are hurrying along, making use of the full moon during the late evenings. At 7 p.m. we arrived at the station F. Dkullsk, where we camp at the Syr again. In the evening one of H. F.'s horses got into the wheel, and G. Ens's and Braun's horses fell into the water from the high riverbank. Everything turned out well.

7. Less frost last night. Here again we need to busy ourselves with purchasing feed for the horses, and repairing the wagons. A Hebrew soldier from Odessa, known at the Molotschna, visited us here. We left at 1 p.m. in order to get to the next station in time. The last stretch of the road, by moonlight, was less slippery. Before sundown the thermometer showed +8. However, the dust was frolicking around all the more. Farther on the road was better, having been built up with straw and dirt. At 7 p.m. we arrived at the station Myetyelk where we stop for night near the road.
8. We left early this morning (4:30), under a clear sky, and almost full moon. We want to travel 49 verst if possible. We had a hilly stretch of road at first, but otherwise good travelling. Just as the sun sent its first rays across the plain, we heard the shout: "Halt!" Br. Fr.'s wagon had capsized because the driver had been sleeping. This delayed us about ½ an hour. Fortunately, nothing was broken, and no one injured. Right now at 9, we hear another "Halt". B. T.'s strong wagon has upset. Drivers! stay with the wagon, and don't fall asleep! At noon we arrive at the station Dzhaipak Tal at a tributary of the Syr. A tall military man, Adjutant Kauffman, waiting for us on horseback, asks where we are going, then leaves. Another one tells us that our friends are stationed at Tamkyent. They had left T. a few days ago. The Lord thwarted our hopes of travelling the 27 verst past the 2 stations. We bought some clover on the way. Just as the sun was setting we turned on to a road leading past the Syr tributary, which we follow for a while, then camp for Sunday.
9. Sunday. A beautiful clear day, though somewhat cooler. Br. P. preached on Luke 10:24. In the evening I read the same passage. On this clear, mild evening we celebrated a common meal for the second time, strengthening us all.
10. We left at 5 a.m. The road leads back and forth labyrinth-like with hilly stretches of bush. At 11 we stopped for dinner at the station Tolyen Aruk. We camped at Yan kurpam at the Syr at 6 p.m. The sun is setting under a partly cloudy sky.
11. Martini. Weather fair. At daybreak it began to snow and is quite cold and wintry. Dinner at Ak Kualk. With the cold weather we had to fix the window of our wagon door. Also the rod under the wagon broke again. At 6 we camped at the Syr for the last time. While watering the horses at the riverbank, one of Esau's horses tumbled into the river, but could be rescued. It was a starlit, but cold evening. All day we had travelled along on a level terrain, with good roads.
12. Today we left early again. It is difficult to get up in the cold early in the morning. We stopped at a Sart<sup>72</sup> settlement for night. On the way we had some snow which increased to regular winter weather. In the morning we passed a station near a fortress about a ½ verst in diameter, inside of which was an empty flat area. We also crossed a bridge built over a dry canal.
13. Today is Br. Schmidt's 75th birthday. We left at 6 a.m. It was frosty and cold, though clear and quiet. We passed Kom Puzpuyev at noon and arrived here at Turkyestanp at sundown. We went on to a newer Russian town nearby, where we camp for the night. We find water in a small canal. The weather is fair, but frosty.
14. Again we had to purchase supplies. The weather is good, though only +6. We had a pleasant surprise here with the news through F. Toews that the group was received well at Kapsonbyek. We decided to continue our journey tomorrow, so in the meantime I went to see the Sart-mosque. Later we ascended to the 100 ft. high, round "Erthueren" from where we had a beautiful view. We could even see the Tashkent mountains.
15. The weather is bearable. At 11 a.m. we arrived at the large Sart village of Ikinv, stopping at the station for dinner. A village like this is indescribable with its buildings of clay upon clay. A crooked street runs through to the postroad, as well as the telegraph line, which we see from our door window, once to the left, then to the right. The street is almost like Chaussee, in straight lines. At 7, after travelling in the dark for a while, and having seen the lights at station Chupur-Kopam, we finally arrive at this lonely place. There is a well nearby, behind the village, where we camp for the night and for Sunday.

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72 Sarts are an ethnic group in Central Asia.

16. Sunday. It is cool, but only -2. We are looking forward to the end of our journey, and reunion with our loved ones. They too will be waiting for us. God grant that we may celebrate together next Sunday. After dinner Br. J. and I went for a walk, discussing many things. The weather was rather raw and cold.
17. We left at 5 a.m. this morning. We have a long day of 45 verst before us. It began to rain and continued until evening. At 10 we stopped for dinner at a Sart-farm. We had hardly enough water for the horses from the small canal. We camped at a station, Chuguk for the night. Unfortunately, there was no water; we had to look for some by lantern-light; but at the Sart-village, where there was water, someone else had watered their horses, so there was none left for us. It was one of the hardest days on our journey. Michael watered our horses from the station well quite late.
18. We decided to go only as far as one station for today. The sun worked hard to dispel the fog, and finally between 10 and 11 a.m. she was successful, giving us a lovely fall day. We had a beautiful view ahead of us: the snow-covered Tareker mountains, surrounded by a shroud of fog. At about 11 we stopped for dinner at the River Ariye, which we now need to cross. We passed through this strong current at 3 p.m. under God's gracious protection and help. We praise Him for this! At the station Chugun the terrain changes. The steppes are hilly and grass-covered. There are more Sart farms with irrigation. We are camped for the night on the open fields.

Weather is mild, and we had good travelling.

19. We left at 5 a.m., and at 9 passed through the station Churzha. It is a very romantic-looking place in a valley-like gorge. We had to pass through two more deep gorges, which proved to be difficult for the horses, because of the rain-softened roads. At 1 p.m. we got to Ismkyent and stopped at a barracks surrounded by water on 3 sides. After the rain the fields are very green. We hurriedly finished our business in the swimming filth of this Turkish-looking "Chyekkyenn." The weather is spring-like. An official asked for the number of families in our group, so that, as he said, he could notify Tashkent to get lodging for us.
20. Elizabeth Day. This is the 100th day of our journey from Medenthal on. It is a mild day. The crows are scolding in the darkened poplar grove of the town, just as in Koeppenthal. At night dogs stole our meat from the pots in the tent. It behoves us to guard it! We left at 8:30. This side of Chyek. the area becomes hilly, and we drive along a valley, with soft hills on both sides. We arrive at the station Ak Tst. at 11:30. The weather is warm: +11. From here it seems only a few verst to the next mountains. At dusk we get to the station Chyeklop bok. The weather turned wet, cold and raw, with storm and rain. Inwardly I felt depressed. We had to go back a bit to camp for the night.
21. At 2:30 we heard rain pattering on the awning. When we got up it was snowing, and very dismal. We left at daybreak. We had hoped to pass the heights yesterday, but the bad roads delayed us. We did not go far before we found it necessary to apply brakes. At first we climbed to a height 1½ verst, then to 2½ verst. We could only travel 6 verst a day. All this time there was sleet and snow, so that the rubber overshoes were hardly enough. We camped for the night at a Sart farm. It was no less dismal this evening. All day besides sleet, it was foggy. That's the way I felt too. In the evening the frost set in.
22. When we woke up this morning we found the soaked clothes and other things frozen together in clumps of ice. We had hoped to arrive at our destination today, but the Lord has brought it to naught. We had dinner 1v. this side of Sharap Khana near a Sart farm. There is water in the valley, but hard to get at. We camped for Sunday at the station Dzhyer.
23. Sunday. All Saints Day. This time we had a very dismal Sunday. Daylight came late. The service was postponed for the afternoon. Br. P. preached on 1 Thess. 4:13-18. We went to bed early. In order to reach our destination tomorrow, we needed to get up at 2 a.m.
24. We actually left at 2 a.m. The weather was very good. By 8 we arrived at the station Akzhar where we had to turn right. At 10:30 we left for the last station. We were accompanied by a Kyrgyz-guide. The road is quite good. However, in order to reach the Kyenyas River crossing, we had to make a long detour through grain fields, across

unfavourable canals, bridges etc. Finally we had to cross a few bridges, one of which was sorely in need of repair. Our horse, Joster, fell through with one leg, but fortunately was able to get out. By a detour we were able to cross the river at a different place. Then we had to wade through many quagmire holes, one after another on a very crooked road. Finally under sunny skies and beautiful weather we arrived at our destination: **Koplanbek [Kaplan Bek]**. It was a great time of reunion. Praise the Lord, who reigns above, who has carried us to this first goal as on eagle's wings. Yes, praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me praise His holy name. Amen.

In the evening we had a common meal together. We remembered one person who had passed away, Maria D's sister, Catherine. However, she died in peace.

## December 1880

1. Yesterday we celebrated Holy Communion together for the first time. We had lovely weather all day: +13. Unfortunately, we still have very sick people among us: Sister Penner and Maria Kopper. The rest are improving. Today we received the good news: "The Molotschna settlers are here!", and sure enough, Br. Peters and Janzen were there. That was a wonderful reunion, even though not in but at least near Tashkent. After partaking of a common meal Br. Peters led the evening service on the text, Ps. 31.
- 2-3. A number of us went to Tashkent for the first time: F. Toews, Herman Jantzen, Pet. Dyck, Ed. Dyck & son, Bior, H. F. & son, Michael and I. On the way down I went with C. Wall, coming back with our Michael. On the way back we were told that the Molotschna caravan had arrived. Br. Wall and I went ahead to the place they were camped and welcomed them. Again a wonderful reunion with loved ones, whom I had met years ago. The town mayor, Mr. Keller had asked 4 members of the company to come for Tea. Br. Wall asked Peters, Wiebe and me to go with him. Mr. Keller told us that near Tashkent 5000 desitina of land was available for us, naturally not all at one time. Later we went to the place where the Molotschnaers were camped and stayed for their evening worship service. Then I went with Br. Wall where the house was crawling with night visitors. When we left the town we met His Excellency, the Lord Governor General Kauffmann<sup>73</sup>. Today Br. Herman Jantzen delivered the passes to the respective board (the "ugzdoshye pravilyeniye"), also noting that the passes of 4 people had expired. The district administrator (ugzdnoi napalvnaк) said they would have to be renewed, wondering why these passes were made out for such a short time. H. Jantzen responded that these passes were given only for a short time because the young men were to be registered by lot this year. The administrator answered: "Zdyel syelupsbye nyet, nazad V nye budyets, dorp dalska". That was the end of the discussion. This completely agrees with the hint we received from St. Petersburg last year, when the final word was given. The Lord opens the way, but it still remains a way of faith. Were we to receive everything to the letter of the law, we would no doubt also, as black on white, be legally accountable. A legal question requires a legal answer. To be quiet and trust the Lord, is the best answer. Therefore, in the future we want to use this as our motto. May the Lord be praised for His grace and faithfulness.

## 1881

### February 1881

19. Our members from Tashkent arrived this morning for an afternoon ministerial meeting, to which Br. W.P. and I were also invited. Br. Claas Epp's writings (Sendschreiben) were read and discussed.
- \*\* 20. Yesterday's discussion was continued today. The spirit of fellowship was evident, though no doubt the enemy was certainly lurking in ambush. The Tashkent settlers found

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73 Konstantin Petrovich von Kaufman (Russian: Константин Петрович фон-Кауфман; 1818–1882) was the first Governor-General of Russian Turkestan.

everything too new and strange, so they couldn't form a decision. But they expressed fear. Even Br. T showed some concern, and gave his view on the matter, namely, that he is in favour of a less dogmatic congregational leadership; while C. Epp's epistle is in favour of no human leadership, rather leaving the leadership solely to the Holy Spirit. Br. P. read 1 Cor. 12 and referred to Eph. 4:11–13; Heb. 13:17, which somewhat dampened the interpretation of Ezekiel 34:11. The idea is that those who were baptized after 1880 over there cannot be accepted without re-baptism, because their baptism through a union with the world is considered unauthentic. After dinner the Tashkent brethren went home. We had rain in the evening.

21. In the afternoon I went for a walk to the hills with P.D. Our purpose was to discuss the postponement of the Disser. about Cl. Epp's demands. I went away completely empty-handed, an evening meeting fruitless, a searching of the Scriptures foolishness, a slothfulness, vexation for the church. With respect to the first point, I feel myself absolved; the second, I cannot be led astray, the third I need to be discerning and heedful. Lord strengthen me.
22. Sunday. Br. P. preached on 1 Cor. 13. In the afternoon Br. F. on John 21:15–19. In the afternoon Marie and I, with little Lene, went for a walk along the canal. The weather is cool. During the common love-feast we read the letters from E. Riesen, W. Esau and H. Bartsch.
23. A meeting at H. F. regarding the teacher's salary. Again there was some dissension.
24. Letters on the last route, to D. Klaassen. In the afternoon we got the directions from the Governor of Tashkent with regards to the place of settlement. We are going to Aulie Ata. I mentioned this briefly in my letter.
25. I was at P. Duecks to sketch a few things on the map, since there is little room at home. For days we have not been able to see the mountains. Even though the weather is clear, the atmosphere is dull.
26. We went to Tashkent with H. Jantzen. At N. 123 we met the departing deputy. In the afternoon we went to a menagerie where we saw the following animals: an Ibis, 3 pair of buffalo, 1 bear, a pair of deer, a cuckoo, ducks, doves and swans. The apricots are in bloom, and many trees are budding. In the Dapa there is a nice vegetable house. Many are busy planting, cleaning, digging, also planting strawberries. We saw a 5-legged ox.
27. In the morning we went to the town and the market. A lovely mezzanine near the Gymnasium. On our way home I saw my first stork.

### March 1881

1. Communion today. Br. Mandtler gave the introduction, Br. Penner the sermon. The love-feast was held last night. Of the Tashkent ministers, Br. Nachtigal, Schmidt, Mandtler and Janzen had come.
2. I sketched a map of the surrounding area, where we would be settling. Michael rode to Tashkent. Besides a few letters he brought the terrible news of the murder of our dearly beloved father of this land, Emperor **Alexander II**<sup>74</sup>. On Saturday, Feb. 28th, at 2 p.m. the deadly shot (seemingly a hand grenade) hit him, possibly while walking in the summer garden. Lord reward him for that which he has done for us. Enlighten the new Emperor with the light of Your countenance, so that he may serve You in his new and high responsibility, and turn his heart to befriend us. From the Trakt also we had important letters. Four families: Fr. Abrahms, H. Nickel, Jac. Quiring II, and John Janzen have announced their intention of joining our group. At the occasion of the election of the Chief administrator, Joh. Esau has given testimony, as a result of which C. J. was threatened with excommunication; but it was not carried through. The church over there will likely come under the jurisdiction of the "Wollostamt".
3. I sketched the area between China and Aulie-Ata on the map.

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74 Alexander II (Russian: Александр II Николаевич, Aleksandr II Nikolaevich) (29/17 April 1818 – 13/1 March 1881), He was killed in Saint Petersburg. Three left-wing terrorists attacked him with two bombs. The second bomb killed Alexander II.

4. We celebrated Day of Repentance. Br. P. also remembered the deceased Emperor. In the afternoon and evening the last letters from Cl. Epp were read. He referred to the verse of the song "Es kann nicht Frieden werden" (There cannot be peace), presenting the whole work of Missions as Satan's work to send Christendom into darkness, and keeps them blind, etc.
5. C. Walls for a visit here in Kaplan Bek.
6. Towards evening I went for a walk with Marie to see the stork's nest. We are having spring now, and lovely weather. The Kyrgyz have settled in the hills with their cattle, and the actual spring seeding begins; we have seen 14 ploughs. Some swallows have also been seen.
7. I did some sketching on my map. At 10:30 H. Jantzen arrived home from his trip to Aulie-Ata. The area of land for which we are negotiating is between the tributary of Alatau, called Kimns tak and the Uyurl Marat, about 70 v. east of Aulie-Ata. It is supposed to be very level land. On the other side there are Russian settlers in a village called Ashki.
8. Br. Toews preached on Ps. 22; Br. P. in the afternoon on Matth. 15. We had visitors from Tashkent. Later I went for a walk with J. Penner to see the stork's nest. Beautiful weather.
10. Several of us went to town to buy horses. Br. B. worked on the tarantass. Evening service, Br. Penner.
11. I worked on the "Schurkasten". Everybody is working hard in preparation for the next trip. The Sarts are working on the fields behind the school. In the evening visitors from Tashkent, who brought the news that we would not be able to get wood over there. Another disappointment, but the Lord will give light, and will provide wood, when we need it. The Governor seems to want to have everything ready, when we come. Late evening Michael came home with others, bringing horses with them.
12. I finished my work on the box. Also the Kibitke were dismantled for transportation. After breakfast I went for a walk with Br. Toews, when I cleared up a misunderstanding.
16. I rode to Tashkent with Br. Toews. A petition was formulated and set up at an evening meeting. During the night I suddenly became very ill, so that someone had to bring me home.

### **May 1881**

16. A very important meeting took place this evening. The whole congregation met before the Lord in contrition, confessing its many deviant errors and sins of omission which it had committed since a year ago. The main item of confession mentioned was that the congregation had not given over the control completely to the Lord, but rather placed this responsibility on weak human beings, and so the heavy load was placed on the shoulders of one brother. For my part I too had the confidence that Br. P. was the person to carry this responsibility. After that the brethren prayed fervently for forgiveness. Praise God that I too could now say Yes and Amen to all this. In this way the whole congregation was cleansed from its various sins. Then the love-feast was celebrated. It is our prayer, that the Lord will grant us one heart and one soul, so my innermost prayer and wish has been fulfilled.
17. Sunday. This morning we are having a fourfold celebration. First of all 5 persons were accepted into the newly-formed Association of our congregation: H. Unger, J. Drake, M. Harien and Catherine. Then we had the baptism and acceptance of our nephew Jacob Janzen. Then followed Holy Communion, and finally the sacrament of footwashing at which Br. Toews officiated. No one was present of the Tashkent group. p. 36. How could a conviction have come to maturity so soon, after scarcely six years? Today's meeting shows that our emigrant congregation—so few in numbers, so weak in strength (Rev :8)—has entered upon a unique position, without parallel among the congregations of this world. Our congregation has therefore left the world behind to throw itself solely into the hands of Christ. There is no doubt that God has placed our despised, hated, and to some extent persecuted little group squarely in the vanguard of the Christians who will subsequently flee to this place. We had long believed that the Molotschna people would assume the leadership, but now God has granted it to us, without any effort on our part. If our

congregation will faithfully carry out its responsibilities in every respect, we will surely experience wonders of the grace of God. If God can raise up first fruits of his Holy Spirit, as we have already seen today in the fervent reconciliation and spirit of unity, what will be the spiritual harvest of deeds?

Lord, may it happen soon, for Your own sake! Amen.

18. I went to Tashkent with Br. Penner. Various things were talked about. Saw H. Keller. Mr. K. gave us the opportunity and time to give our witness, and seemed not completely without understanding. Whether this witness will be blessed to him, we leave to God.
19. Went to the market. After Vesper we went home. At the market we found ripe cherries, apricots, small carrots, and other useful things. The barley harvest is in full swing. All the potatoes had been dug, as well as the carrots.
20. Yesterday we set up the outline for a petition to General Kaufmann with regards to settlement of one of the Chanate [Khanate]. This morning I translated it into Russian and together with a Thank You letter it was sent to Tashkent with G. Esau and W. Penner.

[Note: between 20 May and 25 July 1881 General Kaufman died and with him his promise to Mennonites of exemption from military service]

### July 1881

25. I am writing this on our journey to Tashkent, 5 verst from Kaplan Bek. After we received our permission from St. Petersburg to settle at Bukhara, Hermann Jantzen and G Esau travelled from Kaplan Bek through Tashkent to Bukhara, returning in 8 days. Since Br. C. Quiring had to report once already, and received another order to report for military service, it was decided in the Name of God and trusting His promises, to leave before this date. However, we were not ready to leave until yesterday noon. Our real departure took place between 3 and 4 p.m. Many things caused delay, as new horses, so that it was late evening, yet bright moonlight, before we stopped for night at this side of the River Ayris. We intend to stay here until Monday morning, since 2 wagons each had a broken wheel, which had to be repaired in Tashkent. At 3:30 our old Mr. H. Schmidt passed away, after having been very sick for 8 days. He was the Pioneer of our congregation here. Among our brethren I am now his follower, and among the sisters old Mrs. Jantzen, who is 70; sister Wiebe being 68, and sister Enss, 54.
26. Sunday. After the morning service we read the newest letters from J. Jantzen and Esau. In the evening instead of the service we had a love-feast.
27. Early this morning 19 of us on horseback, accompanied our old Br. Schmidt to Kaplan Bek, where he was buried as the 12th member of the group in the new cemetery. We placed a stone on his grave, so now there are 12 gravestones. Now we are camping near Tashkent. Monday evening Br. Toews had a sudden attack, which looked like cholera; but the Lord has spared him, for which we thank him. The postroad is very dusty.
28. Since we had all kinds of business, we stayed here for the day. We had a number of visitors here from Tashkent, who bade us farewell with a service based on Ps. 99. Some of them are inclined to follow us. Br. Fast and Graf have joined our group.
29. We left Tashkent at 8 this morning, camping at Nikdat at the swiftly flowing Arys. The water is good. We will stay here until tomorrow.
30. We left at 7 a.m. arriving at the station St. Tatrseit stopping on the open street. The road is quite good.
31. We left at 7:15 and passed along an area with covered roads. From here an open terrain, with low areas. From here on Chaussee to Chinar, where we meet the Syr River again. After we had fed the horses and eaten our dinner, we left to cross the Syr. 12 wagons were taken across.

## August 1881

1. We were awakened at 3 a.m. today and at 6 we began to cross. At 12 the last wagons were over. We immediately camped for Sunday.
2. In the evening the second half of the Cl. Epp writings was read.
3. We left at 7 this morning, but stopped at a grassy area near the riverbank to wait for the load of clover. At 1 p.m. we left. The road leads back and forth between high reeds, after which we are in the "Hungersteppes." We took the road to the right, which is closer and has more water. After 4½ hours we found our well, with fairly good water, where we are camping for the night. The heat is bearable.
4. We left before 5 a.m. and arrived at the second well at 11:45, after covering 25 v. We have rented 2 wells, one where we are camped for 4 rbl. The water is a bit salty. We are dealing with a lot of dust.
5. In order to avoid travelling in the heat for 48 v. without water, we left at 12 midnight, stopped at 6 a.m. to water the horses and arrived at 10:30 at a well in the steppes, which had good water. We fed the horses, and went on.
6. We left again at 4:30. At 9:30 we got to a large meadow-like low lying area at a deserted Kirgise Aul with a shallow well. We stop here for dinner. 7 verst farther on is Dkizak where we arrived at 2 p.m. This place is near a swiftly-flowing river, Sanzir-Arys. We camp here for the night. From our camping-place at the Syr we have made: Monday, 16 v., Tuesday, 25, Wednesday, 48, Thursday, 27, in total 116 verst. Altogether 120 verst. Here the brethren, Esau and W.P. again had to see the "Nag" (local official) who, however, only asked them for the papers, and number of families. On the other side of the river the mountains began, as well as the telegraph wire to Samarkand accompanying us. A beautiful view across the many gardens around the Dkizak. After cleaning up, we left at 2 p.m. heading for the mountains.
7. We have Chaussee in a straight line. On the way we had to fasten one of the steel wagon tires, as well as a wheel of one of the tarantass. We are stopping at a place for night that is a regular Felsenthor (Rockgate). We have a lovely camping place, after travelling 72 W.
8. We left at 6 a.m. and arrived at the postroad at Anakripan by 9.

There is good water in a nearby stream, coming from 2 fountains. Michael is quite weak today, so he couldn't help us. Here we discovered that the Bukhara Government official had been sent to propose a reception for us. It has been decided to allow us to settle at the garrison fortress for the purpose of taking care of the fortress.
9. Worship service morning and afternoon. Michael feels a bit better, but Marie is still mostly in bed.
10. We had been told that we would not find water until 32 v. farther on, but suddenly we found 3 wells on a yard with sufficient good water. We watered our horses, then left. The terrain before us is hilly, up and down, some high, some level areas. The road is good and after dinner we have Chaussee. However, we had the wind to our backs, which kept us wrapped in clouds of dust. At 4:30 we arrived at the station Kansimost. Our camping spot is near a clay wall and a deep gorge into which a murky stream falls and bubbles on swiftly. The water in deep hollow, encircled by willows, is good.
11. Today it is one year since we left Koeppenthal. What experiences since then! Right now only 1½ stations from Samarkand. We left at 6 a.m. on a good even road. At 7 verst we went down a long Chausseed road, which led to a forest. The road had willow trees planted on both sides, the meadow covered with many plants, almost as between Marienburg and the Great Werder. The Chaussee was hard on the wagons. My left wheel again fell from the axle, and Br. W. P.'s wagon lost a tire. We are now 14 verst from the station Ukamdau. At 12 we arrive at the station Dkikdau, where we have dinner under the shade of a lovely mulberry tree. At 4:30 we arrived at a flat plain near the main stream of this area, the Zyeravtan, where we camp for the night.
12. Today we are to pass the Zyeravtan. Some of the men had gone on to see what road was best to take. When we left we found a crossing that was shallower, although wider. The first



3 families left at 10:45. So I got to be the last to go with my small wagon. We had 11 smaller and larger wagons to cross stretches straight across and also 1/4 verst long, sometimes with turns. Several Kirgises on horseback accompanied us, showing us the right fords. This way we finally arrived at the other side without mishap. The extra horses were taken back to be hitched to the second set of wagons, and finally these too arrived. The whole crossing took us only 4 hours, whereas we had counted on 2 days. We had packed a few of our belongings onto the Arbus. Praise God for helping us over this difficult passage.

13. It is a year today since we left Medenthal, and said farewell to the Trakt. We left at 7 this morning to be on our way to Samarkand. The region around here is like a garden of God. There are fields, gardens and many bodies of water, which of course makes the area what it is. The roads are narrow, only 2–3 “Faden” (14–21ft) wide, which shows that the land is of great worth. In the Zyeravman area there is much rice, sorghum and corn. Just before the town a policeman was waiting for us to show us our quarters, and to ask for a deputation to be sent to the Napalotk. At the town our guide took us to the right, to a yard enclosed by buildings. The buildings are actually prisons, from which the inmates were taken elsewhere only the day before yesterday. The salons where we were to be processed had then been cleaned. We will have 2 yards to ourselves. One of them is especially nice, with a pond in the middle surrounded by high trees. Although everything speaks of the particular custom of these people, it is still a very lovely place of which we may say, “It is good to be here”.

As soon as we had taken care of the most necessary obligations, we held a Praise service based on Ps. 105, with song and prayer, led by Br. P. Then we had dinner. Right after dinner the deputies, H. Jantzen and W. Penner had an interview with Napalotk. May the Lord's will be done. Thus, exactly a year after leaving the Trakt, we find ourselves at Samarkand, the distinguished old city of the famous Gatyestan,<sup>75</sup> whose grave, which Br. H., H. Jantzen, J. Penner, W. Dyck and I visited on Aug. 20. We are delayed here because of P.P.'s sickness. On Wednesday Br. Peter Pauls, who had been very sick for some time, passed away.

25. Br. Pauls was buried in the Russian cemetery in Samarkand. Now we had to hurry away.
26. Michael's 21st birthday. After we had finished all our business, we left Samarkand. In the morning the brethren, B. Toews and W. Penner went to the Governor to express our thanks for the well-planned stopping-place, and to bid them farewell. We were given heartfelt wishes and God's blessing for our further journey.
27. Esau's wagon caused us some delay, so we arrived at the station Daul only at 9:30. Since there was water in the area, we had our dinner here. We had a lovely view into the Saraf-valley. The road from Daul leads through a small patch of water with quicksand. We had a few minor complications: ornery horses, going down a ravine, our wagon wheel came off, falling into the ditch; finally H. J.'s wheel broke. We had to stop at this place until the wheel was repaired. Water in a ravine.
28. After working on our wagon and having devotions we left at 2 p.m. But another incident delayed us: after we had gone 1 verst Kopper's horses shied, and sprang aside so that the wagon toppled over and over. In the hollow road all the contents lay scattered, with damage to several things, and injuring the youngest child. Lord, what do You want to teach us with this? “Pray without ceasing”? A half hour before sundown we could continue our journey. However, we went only 3 v. farther, camping for the night at a forsaken Sart area. The water was in a deep gorge. It was a beautiful moonlit evening. The place was clean.
29. We left at 6:30. At first we travelled through gorges and tunnels, then open and level steppe roads. Just after the station Chindai we stopped for dinner. This morning we sensed God's grace to us in a special way. We left at 2 p.m., arriving at sundown without misfortune at Katta Kurpan, which lies in the Saraf valley, like a garden of God. The road was very dusty.

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75 This is most likely “Gur-e Amir” which is the mausoleum for the fourteenth century Asian tyrant Tamerlane, also known as Timur, and the most famous building in Samarkand.

30. Sunday. Br. P. preached on Ps. 32. It was a windy, cool Sunday, outwardly not very pleasant.

31. Today we stayed around, making some purchases, and preparations for our further journey. In the evening we received letters.

### September 1881

1. Today the rest of our group is leaving. The whole church is now on its way. We are hoping to reach the border about 7–8 verst farther on. However, a wagon mishap delayed us. We had terribly much dust because the wind was at our backs. At 2 p.m. we stopped for our last dinner in Russia. The water was at our right. At 5 we crossed the border to Bukhara at a wooden sign-post written in Russian. About sundown we arrived at an inhabited, vegetation-planted area. The road was bad, very narrow and rutty. Our wheel came off again, while Br. Bartsch's wheel broke. After it was completely dark, God showed us a stubblefield near the road, where we camped in Bukhara for the first time. Good water in the ditch.
2. We stopped here all day. Officials came to see us in the morning, and again in the evening. They are making note of some things, then ask Br. H.J. and G. Esau with Isyendau as interpreter, to accompany them to the Begum. The prayers of the group are with them.
3. The men returned at 8 a.m. They had been received in a friendly manner, but the Begum had asked in detail who they were and what their purpose was; then made a written petition to the Emir. The men had slept for a few hours, and then were told that the petition would be sent today. In 3 days we could expect to receive their decision. With this they were dismissed.
4. Today I finally feel a bit better since we left Samarkand. I have a better appetite, and feel like doing something. During our evening devotions, we suddenly hear the call: "The Molotschna people are here!" Some of the brethren immediately rode to meet them. Before it was completely dark 7 families on 10 wagons arrived to camp in our circle: B. Nachtigall, The brothers Unruh, two brothers Dirks, J. Dyck and Becker. That gave cause for great rejoicing and praise at our evening service.
5. During the evening we received a command to come to the Begum immediately. However, since it was Sunday next day, we decided to wait until Monday.
6. In the morning Satan tried to sift the church because of the discussion yesterday. We decided to meet the Begum. Our spirits are heavy, but we had 2 services at which Br. T., and Br. Nachtigall spoke. In the evening H.J. and D. Esau rode to see the Begum.
7. The men came back after breakfast. In 3 days we will receive further word. The outcome of the meeting was not encouraging, because of the suspicions and false conceptions on the part of the Begum. However, we are not despairing.
8. Br. Herm. Jantzen and Quiring celebrated their birthdays under the beautiful mulberry tree near the Jantzen wagon. Near the street is a huge market, and the crowd that gathers is almost overpowering.
9. At noon suddenly 7 armed officials appeared giving strict commands not to go one step forward, but to leave immediately back to the border by the way we had come. This was very unexpected. However, God strengthened us, so that no one despaired. I was rather glad that we had no choice, as to where to go, even though it seemed we were "coming from the rain into the baptism". So in spite of the dinner waiting for us, we hurriedly prepared to leave, and in one hour the procession began to move, accompanied by the same officials. The bad roads and bridges delayed us again, which made the Bukhara officials impatient, but without a word, they rode with us to the border, across it and to the first place where we could water the horses, about 10 v. before K. Kurgak, where we camped for night. Since we were on Russian territory again, we felt much more comfortable. May the Lord be praised for His guidance.
10. Br. Jantzen and W. P. rode to K.K. to see a peace magistrate, who seemed very considerate. He asked many questions, also the where to? how? and what next? After he realized that we in every circumstance were determined to preserve our faith, he said: he

could give us only one advice: About 6 verst near this place there is a piece of land about 16 v. long and as wide, which belongs neither to Russia, nor to Bukhara, but to the two large mosques in Samarkand. Naturally it would have to be leased, but no doubt we could settle there. The rent would no doubt be negotiable. We would not be able to buy it. He himself in discussion with the U. Nakalvna, would make the arrangements. Tomorrow we were to come again.

11. The men went to the magistrate today and with him to the Kagalv, where all details were discussed and considered again. They asked us to wait 8 days in which time the arrangements could be finished. O Lord Jesus Christ! be our counsellor in this very important matter; lead us in our concerns according to Your will. In You we trust and hope. Amen. So now we are in the school of patience. Bless this to us, Lord, Amen.

Tonight during the worship service our dear aunt Jantzen passed away. Because of a cold I am not feeling very well, and have lost so much strength during the past several days that I am thinking of my home going. Living or dying, I am the Lord's.

12. I was lying down most of the day. Unfortunately, Marie is also suffering and would rather be lying down. Michael too is not well, but improving. Unfortunately, a horse kicked him yesterday, so that he is limping around today.
13. The funeral of Mrs. Jantzen took place today.
14. This afternoon our two Mohammedan guides, Isyenbau and Abaraman went home. Brother Abrahms accompanied them. Marie is in bed.
15. Towards evening we received word through the Russian-sent deputy, Ibraimov (Buch.) accompanied by D. Jansen and Tatkojet on behalf of the Governor-General. First of all they wanted to know whether our situation had changed; secondly that we could not stay in this place on Russian soil, because we were still under Russian law. Furthermore, the Nakalnak was commissioned to do what was feasible for us; and what he had done he would not consider as wrong. We realized that Russia respected the Emir, and his decision would be final. The deputy would telegraph the Gov. Gen. today to see what could be done for and with us. We would be notified tomorrow. He would go to Bukhara to the Emir. The land would be sold; would we have money to buy? If not, what then? Winter was upon us and we had no housing. The Government is humanitarian, and they wish the best for us. However, the law stands firm, and if we stay here much longer the Govt. must take our young men again. Yes, God's guidance is strange, but with our waiting our help may ripen. The Government is God's servant, and it has to obey. They had to come to us, though diplomatically, and offer us their help. The name of the Lord be praised. Amen. Marie is very sick, her appetite is dwindling.
16. 3 policemen from K.K. arrived this morning, who ordered our brethren to go to the Napalyep tomorrow.

### **October 1881**

4. Maria Dyck came to us. Communion today.
6. Because of C. Q. we had to leave here and go to Bukhara for the second time.
8. Back again to the Russian border, really the Russian side.
9. With the permission of the Bukhara Board, we moved 1 verst farther into the Bukhara area, ½ verst from the border post.
10. Fasting and Repentance Day. In the evening Br. Abrahms arrived with the loads and 2 arbas. Letters from W. Prussia.
11. Worship service for H. J., H. P. and Abrahms. Love-feast in the evening.
12. Br. I. Wiens died this evening.
16. We moved about 50–70 faden (95–133 metres) farther to the crossroad.
17. To the K. again.
19. It has been decided to build our winter houses here.

21. We started with the digging for the Semljenken, as well as for the worship building and the school. At the same time we received permission to look for winter quarters in Samarkand and KK.

24. Saturday. Today we are on the road again since 3 months ago.

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The following is written by Michael Klaassen, oldest son of Martin Klaassen, after his father's death.

I will continue this diary at the request of my father. On the morning of Oct. 8th, after we had waited in Samarkand for a few days, my father and J. Penner went into town to buy some pears. After father had eaten 2, he felt very ill. A wagon had to be hired to take him home. He lay down immediately, but was able to get up soon. Since that day, however, he has not been well. He had a severe case of diarrhea with much pain. His strength diminished from day to day. On 12 November he gave us his paternal blessing. He was at peace and never had serious struggles. For the last 14 days we lived at the Ed. Dycks, until then we were in the tent or wagon. It was quite cold at times. We had almost finished our Semljenka—24 ft. long and 12 ft. wide. There was so much to do. On the 22th we celebrated communion in the Toewses Semljenka. On the 24th the Bukhara Becks told us that we should vacate our place. They turned off the water for the day. We were now living at the Hermann Jantzens.

**November 25. Wednesday.** Papa lay quite still all day. In the afternoon he asked for food, and also ate some. Towards evening I sat with him while he seemed to slumber. He did not awaken from this slumber. We heard nothing of a death struggle; he died peacefully. His longing was stilled; he can now rest from his labours.

The Bukharans were insistent. We had to demolish our Semljenkas today. On Thursday everything was quiet.

Friday, Nov. 27. The first wagons were forced to leave for Sarabulak. Towards evening we buried our father. The coffin was not quite ready, so we had to lay him on boards placed on a bed frame, and cover him with the lid of the coffin. Since we had to hurry, he was buried in a very shallow grave.

Saturday, Nov. 28. We all left today.

Sunday, 29. We had our worship service in a mosque. It was quite cold. In the afternoon Abrahms was married.

Monday 30. I brought all our belongings to this place on Arbas. We have very small, cold, drafty quarters here. While I prepared our rooms, we were at H. Jantzens. It was very much work. On Sunday we celebrated communion and the love-feast. On Sunday the 6th J. Penner preached. This sermon resulted in splitting the congregation.

December 24. Br. Wiebe and I rode to K. Kurgan notifying the Depesche, that the group would take winter quarters in Turkestan.

## 1882

### January 1882

1. I was at the Abrahms today. The weather is very good, no frost.

I have neglected to write from January 1st to April 29th, so will try to catch up.

The union of the church with J. Penner and H. Jantzen took place at Easter, however not with the 10 families. On April 12<sup>th</sup> Herm. Jantzen and J. Penner went to Turkestan to see the settlement there. On the 21st uncle Toews, uncle Heinr. Jantzen, J. J. and I went to

Samarkand, from there to Tashkent. Here we met Jacob Hamm and Herman Epp. On May 10<sup>th</sup> we had to come before the Vice-Governor with regards to J. Jantzen. He did not give us anything definite, but postponed the decision to later. At 3 p.m. J. J. and I rode to meet the travellers and found them 2 stations behind Tashkent. I was at the Hamms for night. On May 11th we went to Tashkent by train. There was a bad storm with rain. The travellers were in Tashkent for 14 days. 8 days after Pentecost they went to Sarabulak. On June 7th Jacob had to go to the Hospital. On June 21st the deputies went to Khiva, and came back on July 24th. They had good news from there.

On August 13th I got sick. On the 30th we left for Khiva.

September 27. We hired someone to dig the Arrak. On Thursday I was able to go to the evening service for the first time.

29. A year ago today B. and J.J. came to Tashkent. What memories!

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# Poems

Versuche in der Pösie (5tes Heft) Martin Klaassen

## Sehnsucht

O dass ich bald vollendet hätte  
Den Kampf mit dieser argen Welt;  
Dass erst mein Staub zu seiner Ruhestätte  
Dem Staub der Väter würde zugesellt;  
Mein Geist hingangen von des Lebens Träumen,  
Von denen er, ach, oft so schwer umschwebt,  
Empor sich schwänge zu den sel'gen Räumen,  
Wohin schon hier sein schwacher Fittig strebt;  
Dass erst mein Geist, von Sünd' und Tod entbannt,  
Heimkehrte in sein Vaterland. 1849

\*\*\*\*\*

## Glückwunsch zur Hochzeit

Unauflöslich, theures Paar, umwindet  
Dich nunmehr der Liebe zartes Band;  
Unauflöslich für die Zeit verbindet,  
Heute segnend dich des Priesters Hand.  
Drum zum Tage, da dich hohe Weihe  
Für der Ehe heil'gen Bund umschwebt,  
Und manch heisser Wunsch für dich voll Treü  
In den Herzen theurer Lieben lebt,  
Nimm auch die Gefühle heut entgegen,  
Die, geliebtes Paar, voll Innigkeit  
Heut des Freundes treues Herz bewegen,  
Der hiemit dir seine Wünsche beut:  
Wie dieses Blattes Zierde rosig golden  
Bedeutungsvoll vor deinem Blicke strahlt,  
Symbolisch schon die Zukunft dir in holden,  
In Wonnebildern vor die Seele malt:  
So möge wahrhaft deinen Band umkränzen  
Die schönen Rosen reinster Lieb und Treu',  
Ja Lieb und Treu in deinem Stande glänzen,  
Wie Gold im Sonnenstrahle täglich neu.  
Nichts trübe je den Himmel reinen Glückes,  
Der heut im Festgewand sich dir erschliesst,  
Und der den Quell des seligsten Geschickes  
In deines Daseins heitre Flur ergiesst.  
Dich leite freundlich auf des Lebens Wegen  
Die Hand, die Jeglichen zum Ziele lenkt,  
Dein stilles Tagwerk kröne Gottes Segen,  
Bis über dir sich mild der Abend senkt.  
Dann mög' das heut'ge Fest, an dem zu Ehren  
Dir rosig reine, holde Freuden blüh'n;  
Noch golden schön zu dir zurücke kehren-  
Und sanft des Lebens Abendroth verglüh'n.

3.5.53

## Tröstung

Wenn dich Kummer drückt  
Und dein Auge blickt  
Thränenschwer zu jenen Höhen,  
Trost und Rath dort zu erlehen,  
O dann zweifle nicht,  
Unser Gott verspricht,  
Allen Trost und Rath zu senden,  
Die zu ihm sich gläubig wenden.

Und dein armes Herz  
Wenn's den stummen Schmerz,  
Der an seinem Leben naget,  
Seinem Freund und Vater klaget;  
Wenn sich's ihm ergiebt,  
Der so treu es liebt,  
Findet Lindrung aller Schmerzen  
Und ruht wohl an seinem Herzen.

O vergiss sein nicht,  
Er vergisst dein nicht.  
Trübten deines Daseins Morgen,  
Auch so oft schon bange Sorgen,  
Er bleibt doch dein Gott,  
Der in deiner Noth  
Nimmermehr dich wird verlassen,  
Kannst du nur Vertrauen fassen.

Folge treulich nur  
Deines Jesu Spur.  
O, wie heisse Kampfesstunden  
Hat vor Allen Er empfunden,  
Eh' am Kreuz er starb,  
Wo Er denn erwarb  
Himmelsruh, die alle Treün  
Soll nach heissem Kampf erfreün.

Darum wanke nie,  
Ob auch ferner hie  
Dir noch wäre Kreuz beschieden.  
O, es strahlt des Himmels Frieden  
Von des Ew'gen Thron  
Übers Grab dir schon;  
Und nach heissen Kampfesthränen,  
Stillt Gott einst dein heisses Sehne

20. Juni, '53 A.S.  
Erfüllt 5. Januar 1873.

### Beruhigung

In dieses Lebens dunkle Pfade flechten  
Oft Räthsel sich, ach! wunderseltsam ein;  
Doch mit der ew'gen Weisheit drum zu rechten—  
Könn't wohl der Mensch, der Christ, so thöricht sein?  
O, einst wird ja ein heller Morgen tagen;  
Einst schwindet dieser Räthsel tiefe Nacht  
Und dann wird alle Welt mit Danken sagen:  
"Der Herr hat Alles, Alles wohl gemacht.

\*\*\*\*\*  
25. 7. '53 A.S.

### Ahnung \*

"Mein Erlöser ist nun da!"  
Sieh', er kommt mich heimzurufen;  
Bald sing ich Hallelujah!  
Dort an seines Thrones Stufen,  
Wo sein Gnadenantlitz ich  
Schauen werde ewiglich.  
Mein Erlöser trägt mich nun  
Heim auf seinen treuen Armen,  
Dass ich bei ihm aus mög' ruh'n  
Und an seinem Lieb'serbarmen,  
Wie es wollt in seiner Brust,  
Stets geniessen Himmelslust.  
Mein Erlöser! habe Dank,  
Dass nach langem Kampf und Leiden  
Ich nun, nicht mehr schwach und krank,  
Darf aus diesem Leben scheiden,  
Und befreit von Schmerz und Pein,  
Nun bei dir, mein Heiland! sein.  
Mein Erlöser! O wie wird  
Dort mein liebend Herz dich preisen,  
Und ohn' Sünd', mein treuer Hirt,  
Dann mein Mund mit süssen Weisen,  
Als er's hier in Schwachheit that,  
Rühmen deinen Liebesrath.  
Mein Erlöser! meine Sünd'-  
O vergieb sie mir aus Gnaden;  
Lass als dein erlöstes Kind  
Hier noch in dem Trost mich baden:  
"Dein Blut wäscht von Sünd' mich rein";  
Ewig darf ich dein nun sein.  
Mein Erlöser! lös' denn ab  
Nun der Seele letzte Bande;  
Leg den siechen Leib ins Grab,  
Der schon schwankt auf seinem Rande,  
Und reich mir die treue Hand,  
Und führ' mich ins Vaterland!

\*\*\*\*\*  
8. Juni. '65 Morgens.



Vierzehn Tage vor dem Heimgange unseres seligen Jacobus (am 8.Juni, 65)  
träumte Morgens die Mama, wie der damals schon 18 Wochen auf dem  
Leidenslager schmachkende Kranke dem eintretenden Dienstmädchen freudig  
entgegenrufe: "kath'rine, 'Mein Erlöser ist nun da!'" Dies der Ursprung obiger Verse.

### Vor der Prüfung

Jesu, Schritt vor Schritt  
Wall' du selber mit  
Heut' durch diese Prüfungsstunden,  
Dass wir mögen treu erfunden  
Werden nun vor dir  
Und den Zeugen hier.  
Lass uns feste steh'n,  
Und auf dich nur seh'n  
Unsre Augen voll Vertrauen,  
Dass wir deine Hülfe schauen.  
Ja, nur du allein  
Sollst uns Führer sein,  
Deine Ehr' allein  
Soll es auch nur sein.  
Die wir suchen heut' in Allem;  
Und dein gnäd'ges Wohlgefallen,  
Sei der höchste Preis,  
Herr, für unsern Fleiss.  
So erhöere denn,  
Treuster Heiland, wenn  
Deine Kinder so mit Flehen,  
Nun an ihre Arbeit gehen.  
Gnädig sprich dazu,  
Ja und Amen du!

\*\*\*\*\*

### Nach der Prüfung

Lobe den Herren, O meine Seele,  
Preis' ihn für seine Treu und Gnad';  
Rühme von Herzen nun und erzähle,  
Was Gutes er getan dir hat.  
Der freundlich seinen Beistand dir  
Verlieh'n in dieser Stunde hier.  
Hallelujah! :/:

Rühme den grossen und herrlichen Namen  
Des Herrn, der unser Helfer ist;  
Zu dem noch nimmer vergebens wir kamen,  
Ja seinem Sohne Jesu Christ.  
Ja, Herz und Mund ewiglich preist  
Gott, Vater, Sohn und heil'ger Geist.  
Hallelujah! :/:

66.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Zu einer Silberhochzeit

Sarans Blumenpracht ist hingeschwunden,  
Karmels hehrer Schmuck ist öd und leer;  
Dieser Kränze schlichtes Schön—nur Stunden,  
Kurze Stunden—und es ist nicht mehr.

Aber Eines währet, und vor Allem  
Tröstlich so die ew'ge Liebe spricht:  
"Ob auch Berge weichen, Hügel fallen,  
Meine Gnad', mein Friedensbund weicht nicht."

Ein erneutes Zeugnis seiner Gnade,  
Kehrt der Herr zu diesem Haus' heut ein,  
Dass im Silberfeste Er es lade;  
Dankbar sich auf's neue ihm zu weih'n.

Kehrt er dann nach gleicher Frist der Jahre  
Wohl auch gar zum goldnen Fest noch ein—  
O, dass jede Seel' es dann erfahre,  
Sein erlöstes Eigenthum zu sein.

O, dann mischt sich froh in unsre Chöre  
Auch die Schaar mit goldnen Harfen ein,  
Seinen Namen, seinen Ruhm zu mehren-  
Soll's hienieden, soll's im Licht, dort, sein.

\*\*\*\*\*

67.

### Sylvester 1867.

Jehovah! Preis sei deinem hohen Namen,  
Denn du hast grosse Dinge an uns gethan.  
Und alles Volk lobsing und rufe : "Amen"!  
Und bete dich in tiefster Beugung an.  
O, was sind wir, dass unser gedenkest,  
Wir Sünder, dass du uns so viele Huld,  
So viele Gnad, so viel Erbarmen schenkest,  
Und schenkest alle unsre Sündenschuld.

Ja, du hast gnädig unser Fleh'n erhöret,  
Und alle unsre Sorgen nun gestillt,  
Du, Herr, gebot'st, so ward der Noth gewähret,-  
Mit Speis' und Freude unser Herz erfüllt.  
Der unterm Himmel du die Vögel nährest,  
Des Feldes Lillen kleidest also schön,  
Der jungen Raben rufen gerne hörest,-  
Wie könnt'st, du "Vater", Kinder widersteh'n.

Drum lass dir unser armes Lob gefallen,  
Das schwach und matt empor vom Staube wallt.  
Einst wird es höher, herrlicher erschallen  
Im Chor, davon der Himmel widerhallt.  
Dort rauscht schon heut' dein Lob zu Millionen,  
Das ew'ge Hallelujah, dir, dem Lamm,  
Und alle Himmel neigen ihre Kronen  
Dir, Überwinder, dort, am Kreuzesstamm.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Zu einer goldenen Hochzeit

Fünf Jahrzeh'nde Hand in Hand zu wallen  
Hier im Pilgerland—O seltne Gnad'!  
Wie sie Gottes gnäd'ges Wohlgefallen  
Ihnen theures Paar, beschieden hat.  
O, drum wagen fröhlich auf und nieder  
Unsre Herzen heut' in Lieb' und Lust;  
Es entströmen frohe Jubellieder  
Der bewegten, dankerfüllten Brust.  
O, auch meine Wünschen, meine Bitten,  
Mischen ehrfurchtsvoll sich in den Chor;  
Vor dem Herrn sie kindlich auszuschütten,  
Schweben sie in früher Stund empor,  
Zu dem Herrn, der heut mit holden Mienen  
Huldreich auf Sie, Theu'rste niederblickt,  
Und, O, freundlich auf die Stirne Ihnen  
Seinen süßen Gnadenkuss nun drückt.  
O, so stärk er Ihre lassen Hände,  
Und die müden Knie, zu harren aus,  
Bis er, wenn der Pilgerlauf zu Ende,  
Heim Sie ruft ins schöne Vaterhaus.  
Da lass' er, versöhnt in seinen Wunden,  
Und entflöh'n dem Tode und Gericht,  
Ja, gerecht und los vor ihm erfunden,  
Sie stets schau'n sein gnäd'ges Angesicht.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Zu einer Silberhochzeit (von einem Kinde)

Jüngst hörte ich, Sie würden heute  
Ihr Silberhochzeitsfest begehn.  
Ei, wie ich herzlich mich drauf freute!—  
Das, dacht' ich wird mal wieder schön.  
Und hurtig ging's nun ans Studieren—  
Wie's doch nur billig war und recht,  
Recht herzlich Sie zu gratulieren,  
Ob's winzig würd' und auch nur schlecht.  
Doch, was geschieht? Vom Nogathstrande  
Heimlich ein Festgeschenk geht ein,  
Gar künstlich hat Cousine Anne  
Dies Kränzchen hier beschafft und fein.  
Und Namens ihrer überreich ich  
Dasselbe Ihnen kindlich hier,  
Und bitte: hören Sie noch freundllch  
Dazu als Glückwunsch dies von mir:  
Der Herr, der fünfundzwanzig Jahre  
Sie treu an seiner Hand geleit't,  
Der segne, hüte und bewahre  
Sie bis dies Fest sich golden nennt.  
Und goldet dann die Abendsanne  
Mit letztem Strahl das Silberhaar,  
Dann führ' Sie Jesus Christ zur Wonne  
Der seligen, erlösten Schaar.

### Beim Einzuge in ein neüs Haus

Ziehet nun ein in eure Hütte,  
Die Gott euch hier hat zugericht't,  
Und unser Jesus in eurer Mitte  
Durchleuchte sie mit seinem Licht.  
Es werd' dies Haus zum Heiligthum,  
Zu seines Namens Preis und Ruhm.,  
Für alle Zeit,  
Ihm heut' geweiht.

\*\*\*\*\*

10, Oktbr. 1869.

### Zum letzten Gange (Am 16. Januar 1870)

Geh nun, Geliebter  
In Jesu Namen hin,  
Und rufe fröhlich im stillen Kämmerlein  
In sel'gem Frieden  
Bis ans Ende,  
Dass du erstehest am Ende der Tage. (Dan. 12,12)  
Wir indess wollen  
Noch fort im Thränenthal  
Kämpfen mit Jesu den Kampf des Glaubens fort,  
Bis seine Gnade  
Auch uns vom Glauben  
Dann führt zum Schaün und frohen Wiederseh'n.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Weihnachtsabend

O seht, wie ob Bethlehems nächtlichem Feld,  
Ein himmlischer Lichtglanz das Dunkel erhellt!  
Hört, wie erfüllet der Engelein Chor.  
Der staunenden Hirten still lauschendes Ohr.

Die Klarheit des Herrn, die den Hlmmel umzieht,  
Der himmlischen Heerschar'n froh jubelndes Lied  
Den Hirten, den armen verkündet die Mähr':  
"Geboren sei Christus, ihr Heiland und Herr".

Des freu'n nun auch wir all' uns, Kleine und Gross',  
Das Kindlein, das holde, auf Mariens Schoss.  
Es hat uns in dieser hochheiligen Nacht,  
Heil, Friede und Freude vom Vater gebracht.

So ström' auch, in fröhlichem, kindlichem Sang  
Aus betendem Herzen empor unser Dank,  
Ihm, unserem JESUS, dem einzig geziert,  
Dass stetig Herz, Zunge und Wandel ihn rühmt.

\*\*\*\*\*

1868.

Am Sarge einer Schwester.

Selges Schwesterlein,  
O wie lieb und fein  
Ist das Loos, dass dir beschieden,  
Dass du gehen darfst in Frieden  
Schon so balde heim,  
Selges Schwesterlein!  
    Unsers Jesu Hand  
Engel hat gesandt,  
Deine Seel', die ihm gefallen,  
Heim zu führen in die Hallen  
Dort im Vaterland,  
An der Engel Hand.  
    Ja, du scheidest nun,  
Ewig auszuruh'n  
Von den kurzen Schmerzensstunden,  
In den theuren Jesuswunden.  
O, wie wohl wird's thun;  
Dorten auszuruh'n.  
    Dort auf jene Äü  
Darfst ihn selbst du schaün,  
Der die Kindelein, die Frommen,  
Heisst so liebeich zu sich kommen,  
Darfst ihn ewig schau'n  
Auf den Lebens Au'n.  
    Und wie treulich wird  
Dort der gute Hirt  
Dich, sein süsses Schäflein weiden,  
Tränken aus dem Quell der Freuden,  
Dahin dich geführt  
Früh der gute Hirt.  
    Dort wird er auch fein  
Selbst dein Lehrer sein;  
Von ihm selber wirst du hören  
Seine süssen Himmelslehren.  
O, wie wird er dein  
Treuster Lehrer sein!  
    Und wie wirst du schön  
Dort sein Lob erhöh'n,  
Mit der Lämmlein sel'gen Schaaren,  
Die vor dir schon heimgefahren  
In die ew'gen Höh'n,  
Sein Lob zu erhöh'n.  
    Schaü, dort am Thron  
Harren Schaaren schon,  
Dich mit seligem Verlangen  
Als die Ihre zu empfangen,  
Und selbst harrt am Thron,  
Selbst dein Heiland schon.  
    Und wir Schwestern, wir,  
Die jetzt thränend hier  
Um dein Ruhebettlein stehen,  
Und dich von uns scheiden sehen,

Folgen fröhlich dir,  
Wenn wir scheiden hier.  
Drum, so fahre wohl,  
Schwesterlein, man soll  
Deinen Leib ins Grab nun tragen.  
Wir mit stillen Thränen sagen  
Nochmals wehmuthsvoll:  
Schwesterlein, fahr wohl!  
\*\*\*\*\* Am 2. Febr. 1870.

### Dem Christkindlein

"Ehre sei Gott in der Höhe,  
Fried' auf Erd' :/: Fried auf Erden überall;  
An den Menschenkindern sehe  
Freundlich Er :/: freundlich er sein Wohlgefall'n".  
So tönt heut' in Aller Ohr  
Dort der Engel Jubelchor :/:

Holdes Kind zu deiner Krippe  
Nahen wir :/: Nahen wir mit Kindessinn.  
Möchten gern mit Herz und Lippe  
Dir zum Lohn:/: Dir zum Lohn uns geben hin.  
O, wir flehen, nimm uns an,  
Lass auch uns dein Heil empfah'n.:/:

Kommt ihr Kinder, kommt doch alle,  
Kommet doch :/: kommet doch von fern und nah,  
Schaut das Kind in Bethl'ems Stalle,  
Freuet euch :/: freut euch, unser Heil ist da!  
Gott mit uns Immanuel!  
Jauchz' ihm, jauchz' ihm, meine Seel'! :/:  
\*\*\*\*\* 1868.

Horch!

Horch, wie es tönt dort in den Höh'n;  
Es rauscht herab wie Harfenklang,  
Es schwebt, wie Psalmenton, so schön,  
Der Cherubinen Preisgesang.

Horch! wie es hallt und wonnig wallt,  
Wie's in den Lüften wiederhallt:  
Horch! wie sie klingt, die Schaar, und singt;  
Schau! wie sie sich fröhlich schwingt.

\*\*\*\*\*

1868

Lasset uns ihn lieben (Weihnachten 1869)

Lasset uns, Kinder, ihn brünstig lieben  
Der uns vor Grund der Welt geliebt;  
Den sein Lieb' ins Elend getrieben  
Zu Sündern, die ihn so sehr betrübt.  
O, fallet nieder, betet an,  
Was seine Lieb' an uns gethan. Hallelujah!

Rühmet, ja rühmet, ihr Gottes Kinder  
Des Vaters ew'gen Liebesrath,  
Der uns elende, verlorne Sünder,  
Zu Kindern angenommen hat.  
Ja ehrt und lobt und liebt den Sohn  
Im Stall und auf des Vaters Thron. Hallelujah!

\*\*\*\*\*

Am Sarge der Mutter d. 15. May 1870.  
(Melodie: Freu dich sehr, O meine Seele)

So geht's, Theure, denn an's Scheiden;  
Ein ziehst du zur stillen Gruft,  
Dahin dich nach Kampf und Leiden  
Nun das Loos des Pilgers ruft.  
Sieh, ins traute Kämmerlein  
Senken wir den Leib nun ein,  
Da ihn kühle Erde decket,  
Bis ihn Jesus auferwecket.

O, wie sanfte wird er schlafen  
Nach den überstand'nen Müh'n,  
Und wie wird bei Jesu Schafen  
Nun die Seele herrlich blüh'n,  
Da sie durch des Lammes Blut  
Als gerecht und schön und gut,  
Ja, als seine Braut erfunden,  
Ewig fest mit ihm verbunden.

Drum, wenn wir dich nun begraben,  
Steh'n wir nicht als solche da,  
Die da keine Hoffnung haben,  
Nein, wir rühmen: Gloria,  
Preis und Ruhm dem Lamm und Macht,  
Das dich siegreich durchgebracht!  
In ihm woll'n auch wir bestehen,  
Und bei ihm dich wiedersehen.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Zum neuen Jahr

Abermal ein Jahr ist hingeschwunden  
Hin ins Meer der Ewigkeit;  
Und in allen diesen Tag und Stunden,  
War des Heilands Gnad' bereit  
Mich auf allen Wegen zu behüten,  
An mir mehr zu thun, als ich zu bitten,  
Und als mein verstand gedacht.  
Er hat über mich gewacht.

Nimm Lob, Ehre, Preis und Dank mein Hirte.  
Heut' von mir zum Opfer hin.  
In mein Herz will ich auf's Neu Dir geben,  
Bilde es nach Deinem Sinn.  
Lass mich ferner Dir mit Treu anhangen,  
So ist mir stets wohl zu Muth,  
Denn ich hab's ja immer gut.

Denke nicht der alten Schuld, mein Vater  
Die ich hab' bisher gethan;  
Sondern siehe mich in Deinem Sohne  
Fernerhin gnädig an.



Lass Sein Purpurmantel mich stets decken,  
Dass mich weder Noth noch Tod kann schrecken.  
Heiland, mache mich bereit,  
Hier, auf jene Ewigkeit.

Segne, Heiland, auch die lieben Meinen,  
Alle, Alle, Gross und Klein,  
Lass sie Alle nur auf schmalem Wege  
Zu der ew'gen Heimath gehn.  
Sollte eins den breiten Weg hier gehen,  
So wollst Du Herr Jesus, vor ihm stehn,  
Dass Er Dir ans Herze läuft,  
Die durchbohrte Hand ergreift.

Stärk uns Heiland im Gebet und Wachen,  
Steh uns stets im Kampf zur Seit'.  
Ach, Du kennst ja alle unsre Schwächen  
Unsere Gebrechlichkeit.  
Hilf uns, liebster Heiland, treulich ringen,  
Bis wir alle einst zum Kleinod dringen,  
Und nach überstandnem Streit  
Elngehn zu der Herrlichkeit.

Bleibe bei uns, es ist Abend worden,  
Und die Mitternacht nicht fern.  
Deiner Zukunft Zeichen hier auf Erden,  
Zeigen sich schon Nah und Fern.  
Da ist Krieg, Pest, Unruh, Angst und Leiden  
Da ist Hass und Streit, und bittres Neiden.  
Satanas ist auch bedacht  
Uns zu ziehn in Todesnacht.

Darum halt uns fest in Deinen Händen,  
Lass uns weder Noth noch Tod,  
Weder Angst noch Trübsal von Dir wenden,  
Steh uns bei in aller Noth.  
Gieb uns Allen Deinen süssen Frieden,  
Und lass uns erfahren schon hienieden,  
Wer auf Gott den Herrn vertraut,  
Der hat nicht auf Sand gebaut.

Giesse Deines Heil'gen Geistes Gaben,  
Auf mich und die Meinen aus;  
Und lass Deines guten Geistes Wehen,  
Füllen Kirche, Schul' und Haus.  
Giess Ihn aus auf Ältesten und Lehrer,  
Schreib Dein Wort in einen jeden Hörer  
Triebe von uns Hass und Streit,  
Allen Zorn und Bitterkeit.

Lass, Herr, die wir uns beisammen finden,  
Schlagen unsre Hände ein,  
Uns auf Deine Marter zu verbinden,  
Dir auf Ewig treu zu sein.

Und zum Zeichen, dass dies Lobgetöne  
Deinem Herzen angenehm und schöne,  
Sprich Dein Amen und zugleich,  
Friede, Friede sei mit Euch.  
Amen.

Fr. Justine Esau,  
geb. Claassen