

Our family

Family Lineage, traced backward from Nora Klaassen

Klaassen & Thiessen

Compiled by James Steven Cost.

With special thanks to the contributions of Nora Mansfield, and many family members and friends.

For my son and my grandchildren
Dedicated to my wife, Sharon Blagowsky Cost

Book design and publishing © 2005 James Steven Cost

Designed using Adobe InDesign and Photoshop

James Steven Cost may be contacted:

6502 Alpine Lane, Amarillo, Texas 79109

phone: 806-352-5398

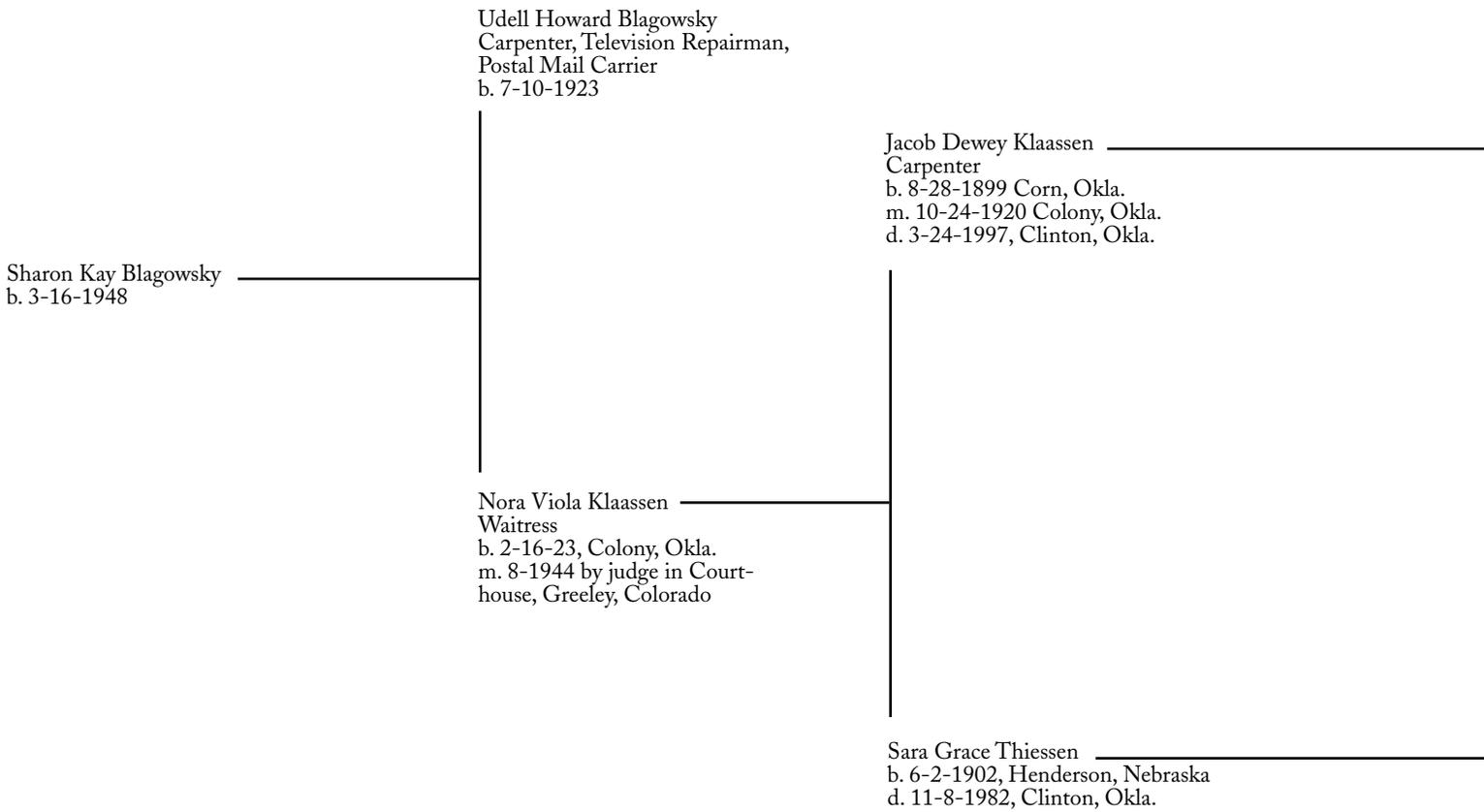
email: stevencost@cox.net

*Family Lineage
traced backward from
Nora Viola Klaassen*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Nora Viola Klaassenp. 4
History of the Mennonite Settlersp. 6

Klaassen



Peter Klaassen
 b. 10-15-1813 West Prussia, Germany
 d. Unknown
 Immigrated in entering Ellis Island
 with wife and family, New York City,
 New York.

Abraham Peter Klaassen
 b. 2-13-1871 Alta Kelenia, Ukraine
 (South Russia)
 m. 10-20-1898 Hillsboro, Marion Co.,
 Kansas
 d. 7-15-1958, Weatherford, Okla.
 Immigrated in 1880 at age 9 with parents
 entering Ellis Island, New York City,
 New York. Settled in Marion Co., Kansas,
 homesteaded in Corn, Okla. 1898, moved
 to farm in Weatherford, Okla. area in 1936
 and to Weatherford in 1939

Maria Niefeld
 b. Unknown West Prussia, Germany
 d. 1890?
 Immigrated in entering Ellis Island
 with husband and family, New York
 City, New York.

Jacob Zacharias
 b. 8-23-1847 Annenfeld, Crimea,
 Ukraine (South Russia)
 d. 3-15-1914 Weatherford, Okla.
 Immigrated in 1876 entering Ellis
 Island, New York City, New York. and
 settled in Marion, Kansas

Mary (Maria) Zacharias
 b. 9-5-1879 Annenfeld, Crimea,
 Ukraine (South Russia)
 d. 10-31-1961 Weatherford, Okla.
 Immigrated in 1880 with parents at age
 11 months, entering Ellis Island, New
 York City, New York. Settled in Marion
 Co., Kansas, homesteaded in Corn,
 Okla. 1898

Margaritha Wall
 b. 7-8-1855, Annenfeld, Crimea,
 Ukraine (South Russia)
 d. 2-14-1928, Weatherford, Okla.
 Immigrated in 1876 entering Ellis
 Island, New York City, New York. and
 settled in Marion, Kansas

Cornelius Thiessen
 b. 9-6-1856 Lansprone, South Russia
 d. 4-30-1929 Okla.

Suzanne (Unknown)
 b. 3-12-1868, South Russia
 d. 7-16-1946 Okla.

History of the Mennonite Settlers

In 1786, two Mennonites from West Prussia, Jakob Hoepfner and Johann Bartsch had come to Russia in search of a suitable site for the settlement of a large group of their Mennonite Brethren. In 1787, Catherine asked these two men to join them on her triumphal tour of the South, which included the Crimea which had just recently been annexed to Russia. These two men chose the first site for their village near Berislaw, on the Dnieper River, however, the Russo-Turkish war broke out leaving this region in the war zone. New land was then selected on the Chortitza River, opposite Alexandrovsk (now Zaporozhye) and the Chortitza settlement was founded.

In 1788 the first group of 228 Mennonite families left West Prussia and arrived in the Chortitza in 1789. From 1793 to 1796 they were joined by another 118 families from West Prussia. By 1824, a total of 400 families had been settled in 18 villages in the Chortitza settlement.

In the meantime, Russian agents continued to encourage the Mennonite families that remained

in West Prussia to migrate to Russia. A new land grant was set aside for these families in the Taurida, south and east of the Molotschna River. This was to become the largest and most prosperous of the Mennonite settlements in Russia and was called the Molotschna colonies.

The first group who migrated to this region consisted of 150 families who arrived in 1803 and wintered with the Chortitza Mennonites. In 1804, they arrived on their new land and formed 9 villages on the eastern bank of the Molotschna River. By 1806, another nine villages had been formed by an additional 161 families. By 1811 the total number of families had reached about 400 and the number of villages had grown to 19. Between 1818 and 1823 another 400 families arrived and founded 20 more villages. In 1833, another 40 families from Brandenburg arrived and formed the village of Gnadenfeld. From 1836 to 1840, another 68 families arrived from Volhynia and founded the village of Waldheim. By 1840, there were 44 villages in this area and immigrants were no longer accepted for settlement in the Molotschna.



Many more Mennonites remained in West Prussia who wished to immigrate. In the years 1854-1875 three to four hundred families migrated to the Volga region and founded the villages of Am Trakt with a total of 10 villages in the settlement, and another 10 villages in the Samara region.

As in all other German colonies in Russia, land shortages were becoming a problem by as early as 1833. In this year, the Chortitza colonies petitioned the government for new lands, and by 1839, 115 families were settled in new colonies in the Mariupol region. A fifth colony was added in 1852.

For a period of time, land that had been set aside for sheep grazing was used for the founding of daughter colonies. About 25,000 dessiatines of this land in the Chortitza region was still available in 1852, however, the Agricultural Society and the local government was in the hands of a "selfish few who leased the sheep land themselves and sublet it to the land less poor at exorbitant rates." (From Catherine to Kruschew.) Finally, the land less filed a complaint and the reserve land was divided up. However, it was too little too late, and the land was inadequate to meet the needs of the large numbers of now land less sons.

Conditions were much the same in the Molotschna region. By 1848 there were 45 villages and by 1863, there were 55 villages consisting of more than 4,000 families with a population of about 20,000 people. In 1848, an estimated 673 families were land less, as compared to 460 who had land. (From Katherine to Kruschew.) By 1862, a mass exodus from the mother colonies in the Molotschna had begun. The earliest emigrants went to the Crimea in 1862 where they founded five villages on crown land. Mennonite settlers also purchased land in the Crimea, many times with moneys collected by the mother villages to purchase the land for their land less sons. Many other daughter colonies of both the Chortitza and Molotschna colonies were formed in other areas such as the Don, near Nikopol, and in the cis-Ural region.

During the Crimean War, at which time the Molotschna Mennonites provided transportation for the Russian troops by hauling food supplies to the front in Sevastopol and bringing wounded soldiers back to Molotschna for medical treatment. It was after this time that word of the vast open steppe land in the Crimea was brought back to the Mennonite colonies. Soon after, Mennonite land scouts began to travel to the Crimea in search of suitable settlement sites. Land was still available in the Crimea at very low prices. Shortly after 1860, the first Mennonite settlement was formed and many others soon followed.

Most of the villages in the Crimea were quite small and were established both on rented and purchased lands. By 1926, it is estimated that there were 70 Mennonite villages in the Crimea covering about 55,000 dessiatines of land and a population of about 4,900. (Mennonite Settlements in the Crimea.) Most of these settlers came from the Molotschna colonies, the remainder were from the Chortitza colonies and other places in Russia.

Settlements in the Crimea differed from their mother colonies in that they consisted of many small villages and estates which were spread throughout the peninsula. This was quite different than in the mother colonies, where there were many close compact groups of villages founded in one area. Some of the so-called villages in the Crimea consisted of only four or five houses although some, like Karassan and Spat, were quite large.

The Mennonite villages mentioned in the book by H. Goertz, "The Mennonite Settlements in the Crimea" are listed below. As stated previously, there were eventually 70 villages, the book lists only 49 of them. Please refer to the village listing pages at this site for more village listings which may include other Mennonite village names. As this page progresses, I hope to have all of the lists dissected and all available Mennonite village names included in this one list.