

# Mennonite Ministers in the Schönsee (Culm) Churches of West Prussia

Compiled by John D. Richert ([jdrichert@aol.com](mailto:jdrichert@aol.com))

There were two congregations of Mennonites at Schönsee near Culm as early as 1570, one Frisian (who were called Waterlanders) and the other Flemish who were subsequently aligned with the Groningen Old Flemish of Przechowka. The Frisian congregation was significantly larger and their meeting house was called the *Groß Schule* (large School) while the Old Flemish met at the *Klein Schule* (small School). Eventually the membership in the smaller Old Flemish congregation declined to just 39 and the two congregations merged in 1849.<sup>1</sup>

Early records of these congregations are scarce and the church books which were started in the 1770s were scattered or destroyed in the aftermath of World War II. The book of baptisms from 1862 to 1944 has survived essentially intact,<sup>2</sup> but any records of births, marriages and deaths have had to be extracted from Lutheran Church, Roman Catholic Church, and civil records in order to glean additional genealogical information.<sup>3</sup>

The following list of Mennonite Ministers was compiled from a variety of sources which are either found in the footnotes or in the Supplemental Sources which appear at the end of this document. Lists of Ministers in Poland (*Naamlijsts*) were begun in 1743 and issued from Amsterdam until 1802.<sup>4</sup> From 1805 until 1881 (*Namensverzeichniss*) were written in German and came from Danzig.<sup>5</sup> Another important source is the comprehensive listing compiled by Adalbert Goertz.<sup>6</sup> In all these records Elders are consistently entered as *Ältester*, while ministers (or preachers) are entered as *Prediger* or *Lehrer*. Deacons are clearly entered as *Diakon*.

In our listing we have entered lifespans, where known, in brackets while the span of service is enclosed in parenthesis. In many instances his village of residence has been entered. It is interesting to note the Frisian list of Elders is nearly continuous from 1750 to 1945 while the Old Flemish congregation lists only two elders, with Lohrentz Sperling identified as the first one. It is likely the Elder at Przechowka had served this congregation until 1760. It is not known if the Old Flemish Schönsee

---

<sup>1</sup> GAMEO, *Schönsee (Kuyvian-Pomeranian Voivodeship, Poland)*

<sup>2</sup> See: [https://mla.bethelks.edu/metadata/cong\\_315.php](https://mla.bethelks.edu/metadata/cong_315.php)

<sup>3</sup> See Culm church records: <http://www.mennonitegenealogy.com/prussia/#ChurchMarien>

<sup>4</sup> GAMEO, *Naamlijst der tegenwoordig in dienst zijnde predikanten der Mennoniten in de Vereenigde Nederlanden*

<sup>5</sup> GAMEO, *Namensverzeichniss (Yearbooks and Church Directories)*. The issues for 1805, 1835, 1843, 1857 and 1881 can be viewed at MLA online here: <https://mla.bethelks.edu/gmsources/books/> (they are indexed by year of publication). The missing 1823 issue was summarized nicely by Adalbert Goertz in Supplemental Source #4.

<sup>6</sup> *Mennonite Ministers in Prussia*. See: <http://www.mennonitegenealogy.com/prussia/prediger.htm>

congregation had any Elders between 1779 and 1820.<sup>7</sup> Finally, the inconsistencies between some of these records can be frustrating and although we've tried to resolve these inconsistencies, several remain.

## **Frisian, aka Waterlanders (*Gross Schule*)**

### **Elders**

- Cornelius Frantz [-] (abt 1750-1758)
- Heinrich Siebrandt [-] Schoensee, (1764-)<sup>8</sup>
- Cornelius Frantz [-1792] Minister (1763-1776) Elder (1776-abt 1788)<sup>9</sup>
- Jacob Frantz [1747-1822] GM-858189 Jamerau, Minister (1791-1794) Elder (1794-1822)<sup>10</sup>
- Siewert Goertz [1788-1833] GM-859646 Gogolin, Minister (1813-1824) Elder (1824-1833)
- Heinrich Frantz [1801-1838] GM-1333846 Schoensee, Minister (1831-1834) Elder (1834-1838)
- Jacob Wichert [1796-1861] GM-858636 Schoensee, Minister (1833-1838) Elder (1838-1861)
- Heinrich Bartel [1812-1874] GM-139393 Rossgarten, Minister (1841?-1861) Elder (1861-1874)
- Johann Stobbe [1839-1901] GM-830813 Klein Lunau, (1875-1901)
- Heinrich Bartel [1851-1905] GM-1334222/860301 Rossgarten, (1902-1905)
- Johann Bartel [1866-1945] GM-828815 Schoensee, (1906-1945)

### **Ministers**

- Derk Wichert [-] (bef 1719-after abt 1730)<sup>11</sup>
- Isaac Goertz [-] (bef 1719-?)<sup>12</sup>
- Heinrich Nickel [-bef 1744] GM-1123357? near Schoensee, (1727-?) [Expelled from Lithuania]
- Gabriel Frantz [-] near Schoensee, (1727-?) [Expelled from Lithuania]
- Peter Dirks [-] (bef 1743-abt 1758)
- Gabriel Tiaht [-] *1743 Naamlijst*
- Sievert Tiaht [-abt 1772] GM-1121716? (-)
- Jan Siebrandt [-] (bef 1743-abt 1750)

---

<sup>7</sup> The 1787 list did not list an Ältester. (See Supplemental Source #3) No Ältester listed for either 1787 or 1805.

<sup>8</sup> See comment in footnote 12.

<sup>9</sup> He was at Schönsee in the 1772 and 1776 West Prussia censuses.

<sup>10</sup> The 1823 source states: "The Office of Ältester vacant since 1822 due to the death of Jacob Franz."

<sup>11</sup> He was mentioned in H.B. Hulschoff's 1719 diary as "server of the word from the other Mennonites".

<sup>12</sup> *ibid*

- Peter Nickel [abt 1729-abt 1780?] GM-1123359? Schoensee, (bef 1743-abt 1780)
- Andreas Goertz [-1765?] (abt 1750-1762)
- David Bartel [-] (abt 1752-1765)
- Hendrick Cornels [-] (1757-1759)
- Peter Tiaht [-] (1757-1762)
- George Knop [-] Jamerau, (1759-abt 1781)
- Peter Balzer [-] Jamerau, (1771-abt 1796)
- **Claas Franz [-] (1773-)**
- Jacob Goertz [-] Grentz, (1775-abt 1796)
- Heinrich Siebrandt [-] Gross Lunau (1786-)<sup>13</sup>
- Heinrich Tiaht [abt 1739-1802] GM-785078? Grentz, (1788-abt 1802)
- Timotheus Bolt [1748-1802] GM-859654 Rossgarten, (1788-1802?)
- Dirk Franz [1776-1833] GM-860028 Schoensee, (1801-1833?)
- Andreas Siebrandt [abt 1780-1829] GM-793509 Gross Lunau?, (1808-1829?)
- Peter Franz [1786-1846] GM-63010 Gross Lunau, (1820-1822?)<sup>14</sup>
- Peter Cornelsen [1794-1833] GM-286661? Schoensee, (1820-1833?)
- Peter Bartel [-1862?] Gross Lunau, (1829-aft 1857?)
- Johann Tiaht [1797-1853] GM-814412 Jamerau, (1829-1853?)
- Peter Wichert [abt 1795-bef 1857?] GM-858621? Klein Lunau, (1831-aft 1843)
- Johann Schroeder [abt 1800?-] Jamerau, (1833-aft 1835)
- Peter Bartel [-bef 1857?] Gross Lunau, (1838-bef 1857)
- Jacob Goertz [-bef 1881?] Gogolin, (1838-aft 1857)
- Jacob Knels [1817-1904] GM-1334220/1184772? Schoeneich, (1841-aft 1881)
- Jacob Frantz [1816?-1867] GM-none Schoensee, (1854-aft 1857)
- Jacob Knels [-] Gogolin, (1854-aft 1881)
- Cornelius Wichert [1821-1874] GM-448875 Schoeneich, (1863-1870)<sup>15</sup>
- Johann Wichert [1819?-1903] Rossgarten, (1871-aft 1881)
- Peter Balzer [1842?-1914] Podwitz, (1878-aft 1881)
- Heinrich Balzer [1864?-1902] GM-859769 Podwitz, (1889-1902?)
- Johann Bartel [1865-1935] GM-860036 Gross Lunau, (1903-1935?)
- Peter Balzer [1870-1952] Podwitz, (1906-1945?)
- Johannes (Hans) Kliewer [1888-1939] GM-859891 Schoensee, (1925-1939?)  
murdered in Poland

---

<sup>13</sup> The 1787 list states he was installed as a minister in 1764. Perhaps there were two Heinrich Siebrandts or there is an error here. (See Supplemental Source #3)

<sup>14</sup> Peter Franz immigrated to Liebenau, Molotschna, S. Russia in 1822. He died there in 1846.

<sup>15</sup> Cornelius Wichert immigrated to Liebenau, Molotschna, S. Russia in 1870. He died there in 1874.

## Deacons

- Abraham Nickel [1743-1820] GM-349391 Jamerau, (-)
- Heinrich Goertz [abt 1764-1836] GM-1030021 Rossgarten, (1812-bef 1843)
- Siewert Tiaht [abt 1792-1840] Schoensee, (1820-bef 1843)
- Johann Goertz [-] Schoensee, (1836-aft 1857)
- Peter Schroeder [1819-bef 1845] GM-284373 Schoeneich, (1840-aft 1843)
- David Bartel [-] Gogolin, (1846-aft 1857)
- Johann Wichert [-] Schoensee, (- aft 1881) Peter Tiaht [-] Gross Lunau, (-aft 1881)
- Jakob Goertz [1846-1920] GM-859898 Schoensee, (1883-)
- Peter Bartel [1866-1948?] Schoensee, (1904-)
- Heinrich Knels [-1941?] Schoensee, (1912-)

## Old Flemish (*Klein Schule*)

### Elders

- Lohrentz Sperling [1718-1779] P-900, GM-53766 Dorposch, Minister (-1760), Elder (1760-1779?)
- Tobias Jantz (1781-1851) P-526, GM-39746 Nieder Ausmaas, Minister (1813-1820) Elder (1820-1849)

### Ministers

- Hans Foth [-aft 1743] P-1047, GM-70362 Schoensee, *1743 Naamlijst*
- Jacob Isaac [-aft 1743] P-54VI, GM-38899 Dorposch, *1743 Naamlijst*
- Peter Ratzlaff [1689-1775] P-36, GM-34062 Przechowka, *1743 Naamlijst*
- Jacob Wedel [1698-1765?] P-206, GM-106649 Jamerau, (1747-1765)
- Peter Pankratz [1729-1791] P-712, GM-43046 Schoensee, (1760 [or 1762?]-bef 1786?)
- Peter Jantz [1744-1810] P-516, GM-39695 Nieder Ausmaas, (1762?-1773?)<sup>16</sup>
- Benjamin Wedel [1747-1812] P-244, GM-106665 Nieder Ausmaas, (1785-aft 1805)
- Tobias Jantz [1751-1813] P-518, GM-39697 Nieder Ausmaas, (1785-aft 1805)
- Benjamin Sperling [1798-1847] P-none, GM-860203 Dorposch, (1825-aft 1843)
- Peter Sperling [-] P-none, GM-896499? Dorposch, (1831 [or 1821?]-bef 1835)<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> Peter Jantz was a minister for 48 years and an Elder for 34 years. He served as a minister in Jeziorka, the Neumark and Nieder Ausmaas and then as Elder in the Neumark from 1776 until his death at Franzthal, Brandenburg, Prussia in 1810.

<sup>17</sup> There is a conflict regarding the date of election for Peter Sperling from two of Adalbert Goertz's lists: His "master list" and his 1823 list.

## Deacons

- Heinrich Wedel [1788-1846] P-none, GM-126121 Nieder Ausmaas, (1825-aft 1843)

## Supplemental Sources

1. *Przechowka, West Prussia, Membership Lists for 1715 and 1733 from the Travel Diary of Hendrik Berents Hulshoff*, by Glenn H. Penner.
2. *Przechowka and Alexanderwohl—Beginings of Alexanderwohl, Tabor, Huffnungsau and other Churches*, *Mennonite Life*, April 1955, by J.A. Duerksen, pp 81-82.
3. *Ein Predigerverzeichnis aus dem 1787*, *Mennonitische Geschichtsblätter*, 1962, by Adalbert Goertz, pp 42-50.
4. *The Mennonite Churches in 1823 in Prussia and Eastern Europe*, *Mennonite Family History*, October 1991, by Adalbert Goertz, pp. 146-147.
5. *The Story of Alexanderwohl*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, 1999, by David C. Wedel.
6. *The GRanDMA database (Genealogical Registry of Mennonite Ancestry)*, produced by the California Mennonite Historical Society (CHMS).

---

**Created 23 October 2022**

**Formatting by Richard D. Thiessen**

---

[Return to the](#)  
[Mennonite Genealogy](#)  
[Prussian Mennonite Genealogical Resource Page](#)