

# Events in the Molotschna Mennonite Settlement: 1840

Odessa State Archives, Ukraine  
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Translated from Russian to German by Willi Friesen,  
Detmold, Germany; translated from German to English and  
Edited by Glenn H Penner, Winnipeg, Manitoba  
([gpenner@uoguelph.ca](mailto:gpenner@uoguelph.ca))

No. 70, The Ministry of State Property, by the Overseer of the Colonies in the 2nd District on December 22, 1839.

No. 2096, The colony of Molotschna. (*About the frozen Mennonite **Peter Regier** from Wernersdorf*)

To the Guardianship Committee for Foreign Settlers in the South of Russia.

The district administration of Molotschna has informed me that on the 17th of December of this year, not far from the village of Schoensee, Mennonite **Peter Regier** from the neighbouring village of Wernersdorf was found dead (frozen). About the inspection of the body of the deceased and about the proper investigation of the case was reported to the police officer in Melitopol G. Tverdochlebov. I, overseer of the colony, have the honor to report to the Guardianship Committee.

No. 2413, on April 27, 1840

The wife of **Peter Regier, Katerina**, has stated that on December 13, 1839, in the morning, her husband rode to the colony of Friedrichsdorf to the Mennonite **Johann Friesen**. He wanted to settle accounts with him for a sled. He didn't come back for a long time and she was already worried, also because it was very cold. When on December 16 his horse, with which he had ridden, arrived alone in the colony of Schoensee, some Mennonites went looking for him. But they didn't find him that day. On December 17, a hunter, Mennonite **Heinrich Hooge** from Liebenau, found him dead on the steppe near the Schoensee colony. The Mennonite Johann Friesen testified that on December 17, Regier was with him at noon to ask to postpone the settlement for the sled because he had no money. Then he rode away. His testimony was confirmed by witness Peter Voth. Four Neighbors of the Mennonite Regier testified that Regier and his wife lived a decent life and had no quarrels. During the examination of the body, no evidence of violent crimes was discovered.

No. 1364, March 5, 1840 (*On the fire in the house of Mennonite **Peter Dyck** from Pastwa*)

The Molotschna District Administration to the Guardianship Committee.

On January 25 of this year, at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, the house of Mennonite **Peter Dyck** (in his presence and in the presence of his wife) burned down in the village of Pastwa. Burned are: 2 horses, 6 cattle, 34 sheep, all the grain and other household goods and tools. In total, the damage was assessed at 3795 rubles.

No. 553, 18 April 1840

Peter Dyck testified (without oath) that on January 25, 1840, at lunchtime, he and his wife Margarita went to the neighboring village on business. Only the 10-year-old son Peter remained at home. Dyck does not believe that his son could have set the fire separately. The son **Peter** said that in the evening, before the parents come home, he wanted to heat up the stove. He filled the oven with straw and lit it. Then, all of a sudden, the roof of the house flared up. Neighbors came to the rescue, but they could not extinguish the fire. The neighbor, Mennonite Heinrich Wiebe, said that on that day at 4 o'clock in the afternoon he saw fire rising from the chimney in the house of the Dycks. He ran together with other neighbors, **Kornelius Friesen, Jakob Loewen** and **Jakob Thiessen**, to Dycks, but despite all the effort, they could not extinguish the fire. The neighbors do not believe that the boy Peter could have set the fire himself.

No. 672, on 6 May 1840

(*About the **Mennonite Wittenberg** found dead*)

The Molotschna District Administration to the Guardianship Committee.

On April 25, 1840, a body was found in a meadow behind the church of Prishib. He was identified as the Mennonite of the Colony of Lindenau, **Jakob Wittenberg**. No traces of violent crime were found on his body. The colony healer Herr has determined that the cause of death was a stroke. The relatives of the deceased said that he had traveled to Prishib for the Fair on April 23. The Mennonites **Heinrich Hamm** and **Leonard Sommerfeld** said that they had seen him drinking wine in a Balagan. Wittenberg was known as a drinker and as mentally ill.

No. 1202, on August 1, 1840.

(*About the fire caused by a lightning strike in the house of the Mennonite **Martin Born** from Liebenau*)

On July 31 of this year, during a strong thunderstorm, lightning struck the house of Mennonite **Martin Born** in the colony of Liebenau, which triggered a fire. Lightning also struck 4 of his children: 2 sons, **Martin** and **Jakob** and 2 daughters, **Katerina** and **Anna**. The children survived the lightning strike and are currently healthy again. But the house is completely burned down. In addition, 1 horse, 1 pig, 1 Spanish sheep, agricultural equipment, grain, hay and other household goods are burned in the fire, totaling 1646 silver rubles. The incident was reported to police officer Tverdechlebov.

signatures.

No. 1158, 25 July 1840, *(On the death of a newborn child)*

The Mennonite district administration of Molotschna to the Guardianship Committee.

The Elisabeththal village administration has informed me that a young state farmer Aljena Voloshina from Novogrigoryevka, who was on duty with the Mennonite widow **Lammert**, gave birth to a child on July 23 of this year at 5 o'clock in the afternoon, without the landlady and others noticing. Another Russian servant noticed that something was wrong with the Aljena and began to look for her together with the widow Lammert. They also found the child, but he died after two hours. There were signs that it was being crushed, probably intentionally, by the mother. She was therefore arrested but left in Elisabeththal due to illness. The child's body was temporarily kept in the open grave, which was covered with boards. I have submitted a report to the Semstwo court with a request to investigate the case.

The overseer of the colonies in the 2nd district: Pelech

No. 1480, 12 September 1840

*(About the colonist's daughter Duss, who tried to set fire to the house of the Mennonite **Epp** from Blumenthal)*

The Mennonite District Administration of Molotschna to the Guardianship Committee.

On September 7 at 8 o'clock in the evening, the roof of the house of the village school **Peter Epp** from Blumenthal began to burn. The colonist's daughter Margareta Duss from Lektershausen was the first to report the fire to her innkeeper **Wiens**, Peter Epp's neighbour, with whom she lived. He immediately extinguished the flames. The investigation showed that the aforementioned Duss put embers in the thatched roof and thus tried to set it on fire. She said that an evil spirit ordered her to do so. But then she extinguished the fire together with Epp and Wiens, and she doesn't know how that could have happened to her. She didn't want to harm Peter Epp.

The overseer of the colonies of the 2nd district: signature.

No. 2028, on December 16, 1840.

*(About the fire in the house of the Mennonite **Regier** from Gnadenheim)*

The Colonist District Administration Molotschna to the Guardianship Committee.

On November 28 at 8 a.m. this year, for unknown reasons, the house of the landless Mennonite **Johann Regier** from Gnadenheim burned down. With the house, grain and household furniture are burned in total worth 86 silver rubles. ...

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