

A Short Warkentin/Koop Mennonite Family History

Our history is bound to the **Mennonite-Anabaptist** History.
That history goes back nearly 500 years.

These dates may important:

When did Columbus sail the ocean blue?	1492
The first Anabaptists met (and were executed).	1527
When did the founders sign the Declaration of Independence?	1776
A few years later, Mennonites were invited to South Russia.	1789
When was the first trans-continental railway completed?	1869
Our Russian/Prussian ancestors began coming to Kansas/Nebraska	1874

Columbus sailed in 1492; Felix Manz sailed in 1527

- Felix and others believed baptism was for believers only. That defines the church. (This was not only ecclesiastical heresy: since the baptism list was also the military draft list, it was also political.)
- They took scripture as authority. Scripture forbids killing.
- City Council of Zurich disagreed and executed the leaders by drowning. Felix was first to be tied and tipped in the river.
- Soon the “re-baptizer” (Anabaptist) movement spread around Europe -- including to Holland.

*Only love to God through
Christ shall prevail.
Not boasting, denouncing,
or threatening.*

*It is love alone that is
pleasing to God:
He that cannot show love
shall not stand in the sight
of God.*

--Felix Manz

In Holland, Anabaptists faced the Spanish Inquisition!

Anabaptists were executed by Spanish inquisitors in the thousands.

Stories were immortalized in “Martyr’s Mirror”



Illustration of the account of the martyr, Dirk Willems, saving the life of his pursuer, taken from the Martyr's Mirror.⁷



Famously, Dirk Willems (left) escaped prison but returned to save his pursuer, only to be caught and burned at the stake afterwards.

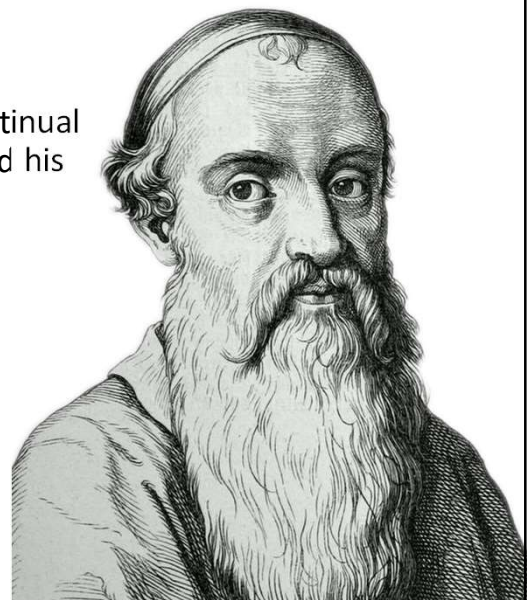
It's very likely that the Koop ancestors and Warkentin ancestors joined the Anabaptists during this period.

Where did the name “Mennonite” come from?

- Menno Simons was a converted priest from Holland. Though not the most important leader of the Anabaptists, he was a good pastor and leader.
- Menno had the distinction of surviving the continual persecution. Consequently, the public attached his name to this group.

“For true evangelical faith...cannot lie dormant; but manifests itself in all righteousness and works of love; it...clothes the naked; feeds the hungry; consoles the afflicted; shelters the miserable; aids and consoles all the oppressed; returns good for evil; serves those that injure it; prays for those that persecute it.”

-- Menno Simons, 1539



Escape to Danzig

Holland and Danzig (now [Gdańsk](#), Poland) were friendly trading partners.

Many Anabaptists moved there from Holland. They brought Dutch skills of draining lowlands.

The Vistula Delta and river valley were swampy, so they were welcomed.

The earliest records of our ancestors appear in this period.

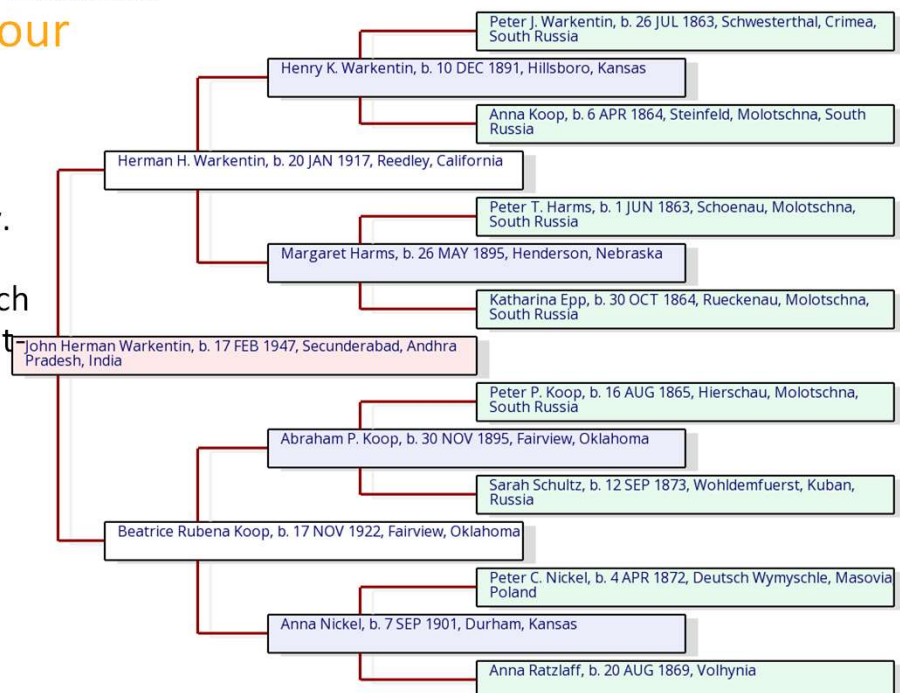
Note: The borders shown here are modern; they weren't there in the 1600s. This region became Poland, then Prussia, then Poland.



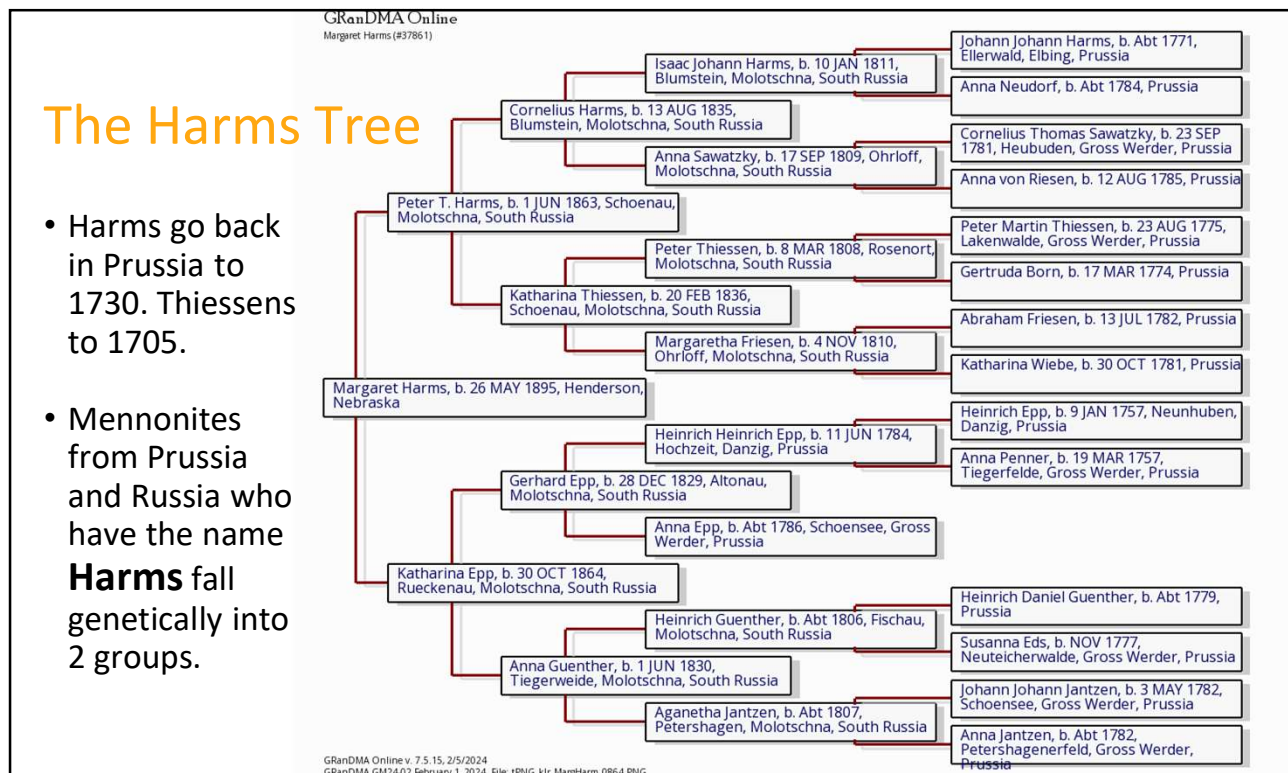
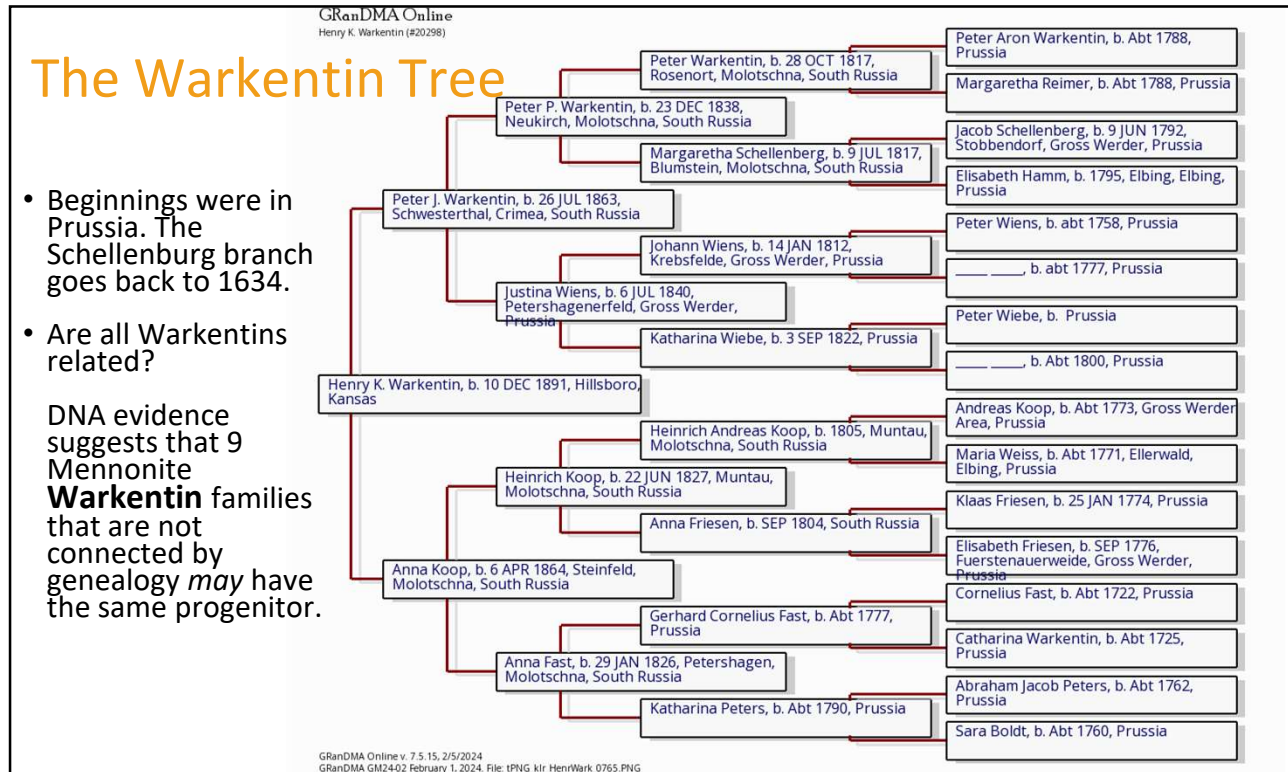
Let's look at our families

- Each family may have its own story.
- We will look at each pair of John's great-grandparents:
 - Warkentin
 - Harms
 - Koop
 - Nickel

GRanDMA Online
John Herman Warkentin (#10596)

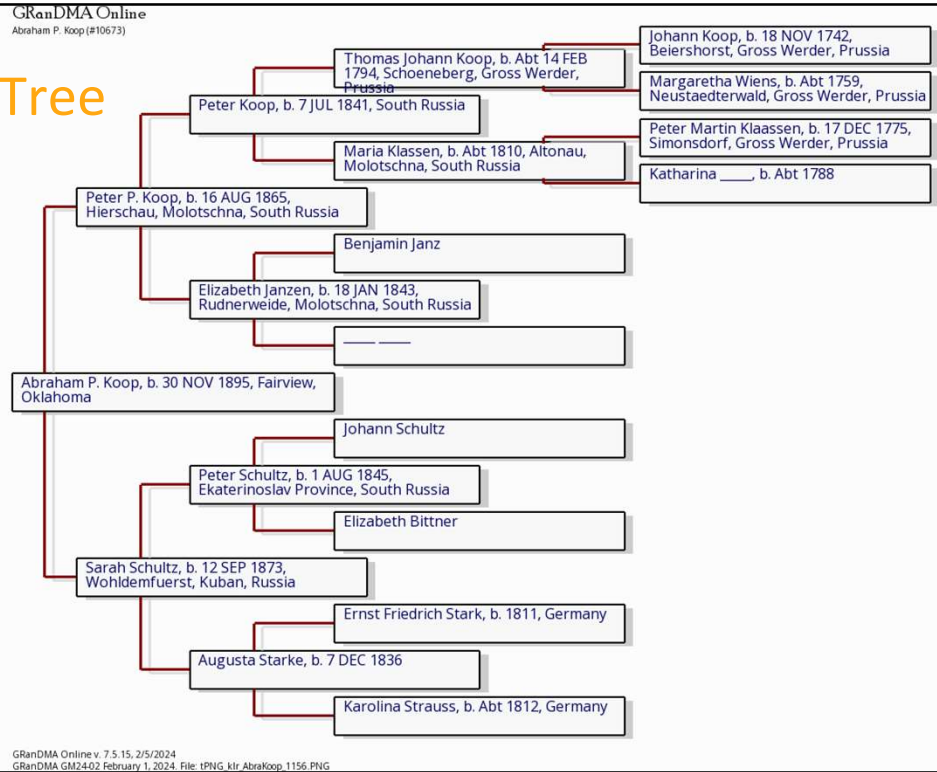


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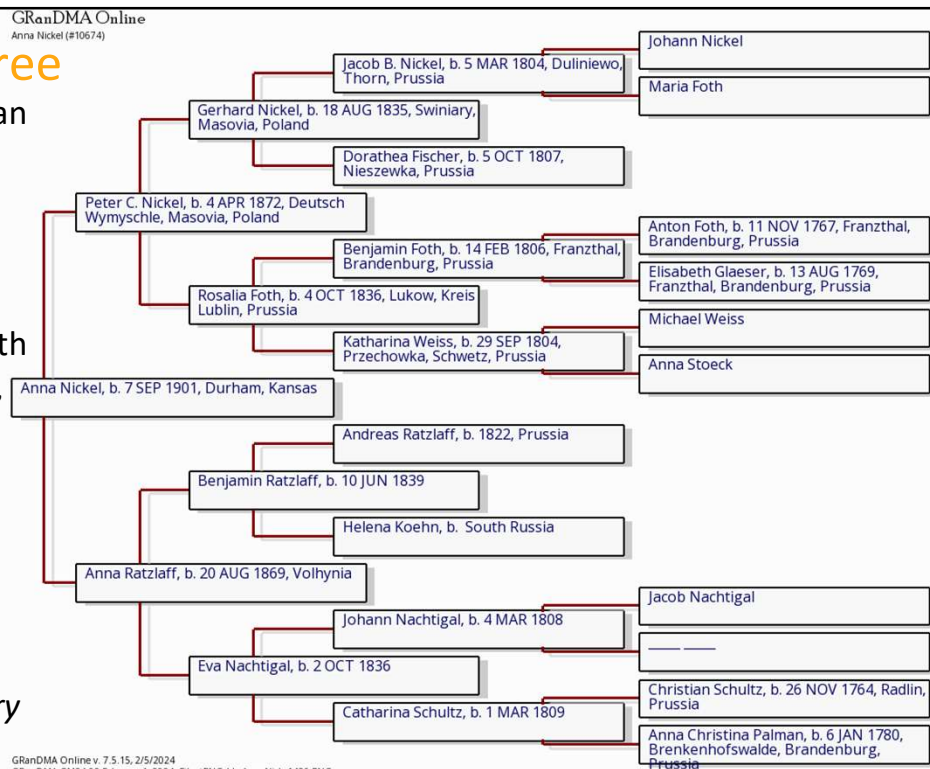
The Koop Tree

- Koops in Prussia can be tracked to 1701.
- DNA evidence suggests that all Mennonites with the **Koop** surname are related. They probably have a single progenitor.



The Nickel Tree

- The Ratzlaff side can be traced to the middle 1600s.
- There may be a common ancestor for Mennonites with the name, **Nickel**, but more data is needed.
- Those with the name, **Ratzlaff**, have a common ancestor (mostly) who is known. *Story here!*



Their Population Grew

Warkentins and Koops appeared in the lowlands (the Werder). They were part of the “Flemish” branch of Dutch Mennonites.

Mennos drained more swamps and farmed, but often they were not permitted to own land because they were not Catholic or Lutheran.

A big “Frisian” congregation developed up the Vistula in Przechowka. They included Nickel and Ratzlaff families.

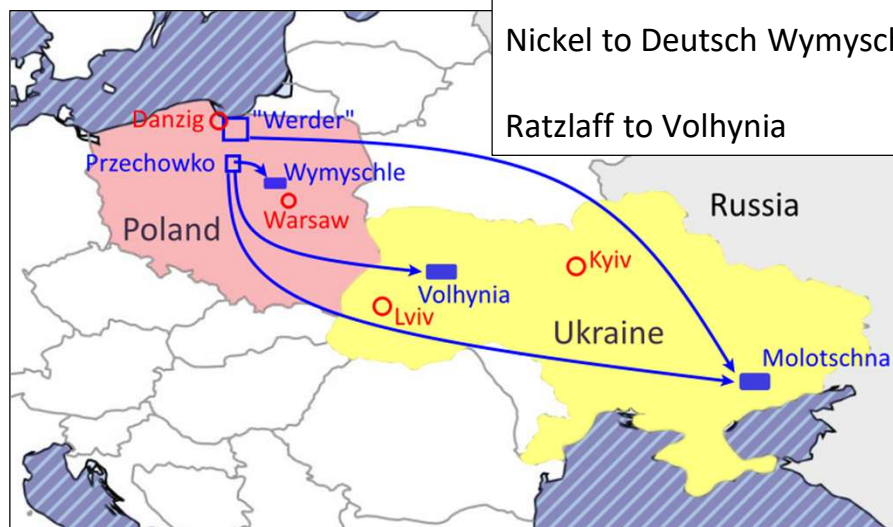
Mennonites spoke Low-German at home. They used Dutch in church until the late 1700s.

Mennonites were granted exemption from military service.



Expansion into new colonies in the later 1700s to early 1800s

- They needed access to more land.
- In the late 1700s, military exemption was in jeopardy.
- Volhynia was the hardest struggle to make a living.
- In 1789, Catherine the Great invited them to “South Russia.”
Molotschna was the biggest colony.



Warkentin, H. Koop, Harms, Epp, P. Koop to Molotschna

Nickel to Deutsch Wymyschle

Ratzlaff to Volhynia

Continued pressure for land in the 1860s

- Peter P. Warkentin tried different areas in Crimea. Peter later wrote of the extreme difficulty and poverty, getting started.
- Isaak Johann Harms bought the Borosenko estate with the "Kleine Gemeinde" Mennonites.
- The Schultzs went to Kuban Settlement in the Caucasus with other Mennonite Brethren.



Freedoms Change for Mennonites in Russia in the early 1870s

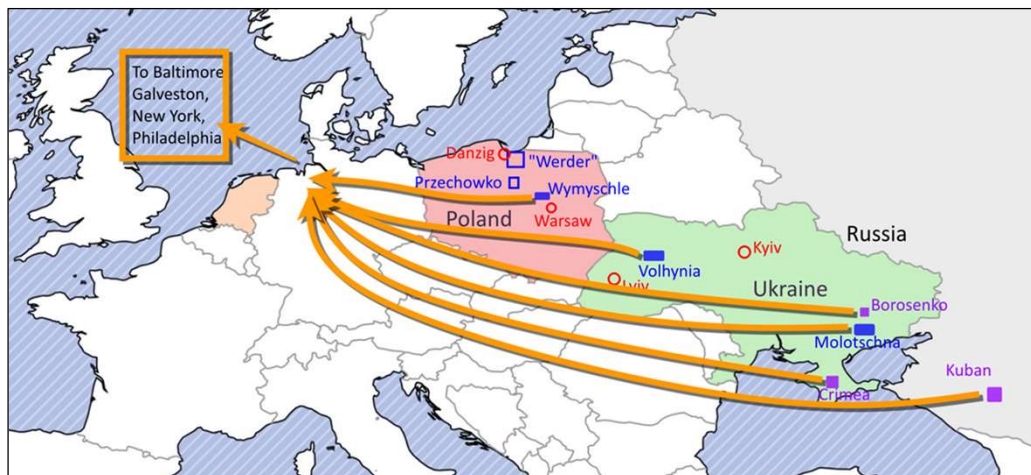
- Freedom from military conscription.
- Freedom to run their own schools in German.
- Also, many young families found it difficult to acquire farmland.
- Scouts were sent to North America.
- Santa Fe and Union Pacific recruiters came to Russia to market Kansas and Nebraska.
- Exodus of about 40% of Mennonites began in 1874.

Warkentin/Koop family immigrants

Migration Date	Name	Start	Ship	Destination
1874	Harms, Isaac Johann (3890), Sawatzky, Anna (3859)	Borosenko, South Russia	S. S. Hammonia; arrived New York, New York	Jansen, Nebraska
1874	Warkentin, Peter P. (20270), Justina Wiens (20271), Peter J. (10398)	Crimea	S. S. City of Brooklyn; arrived New York, New York	Hillsboro, Kansas
1874	Wiens, Johann (20272), Katharina Wiebe (20273)	Crimea	S. S. Switzerland; arrived New York, New York	Hillsboro, Kansas
1874	Nachtigal, Johann (70803), Schultz, Catharina (29770)	Volhynia	S. S. Vaderland; arrived Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	Kansas
1875	Nickel, Gerhard (20342), Rosalia Voth (20336), Peter C. (284438), Weiss, Katharina (20327)	Deutsch Wymyschle, Prussia	S. S. City of Paris; arrived New York, New York	Hillsboro, Kansas
1877	Koop, Heinrich (3147), Fast, Anna (3148), Anna (3153)	Molotschna, South Russia	S. S. Vaderland; arrived Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	Hillsboro, Kansas
1880	Ratzlaff, Benjamin (280075), Nachtigal, Eva (72833), Anna (280079)	Volhynia		Hillsboro, Kansas
1881	Schultz, Peter (10442), Sara (10644)	Kuban	S. S. Baltimore; arrived Baltimore, Maryland	Hillsboro, Kansas
1884	Koop, Peter (10429), Janzen, Elizabeth (10430), Peter P. (10431)	Molotschna, South Russia	S. S. Suevia; arrived New York, New York	Hillsboro, Kansas
1892	Harms, Peter T. (4495), Epp, Katharina (4499)	Molotschna, South Russia	S. S. Lahn; arrived New York, New York	Henderson, NE
1906	Harms, Cornelius (3892)	Molotschna, South Russia	S. S. Koeln; arrived Galveston, Texas	Dinuba, California

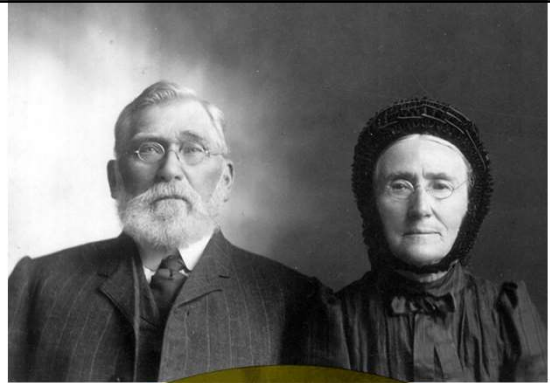
Emigration

- Most traveled by rail to Hamburg, Germany. Then by ship(s), mostly to New York. Then by rail to Kansas or Nebraska.
- For most, it was the first train ride, first big cities, first sighting of the ocean, and first ship ride.



Peter P. Warkentin & Justina

- Peter P. and Justina married in Molotschna, South Russia and farmed in remote parts of Crimea.
- They were not a part of the Krimmer (Crimean) M.B. Church, but they migrated together with them when that entire congregation moved.
- They bought land from a settler who had given up and farmed successfully a few miles south of Hillsboro.
- Peter P.'s son, Peter J., married Anna Koop and farmed nearby for many years. Peter J. later followed his sons, including Henry K., to California.



The Harms families

- In 1874, Grandma Margaret's Great-Grandfather, Isaak Johann Harms, helped lead an entire community from Borosenko to Jansen, Nebraska. Many of them were his children and grandchildren.
- His grandson, Peter T, brought his family to Nebraska in 1892. Grandma Margaret was born there. They were among the first Mennonites to come to Reedley (great story!) and lived by Windsor School.
- His son, Cornelius, didn't come until 1906 and ended up in Dinuba.



Henry and Margaret

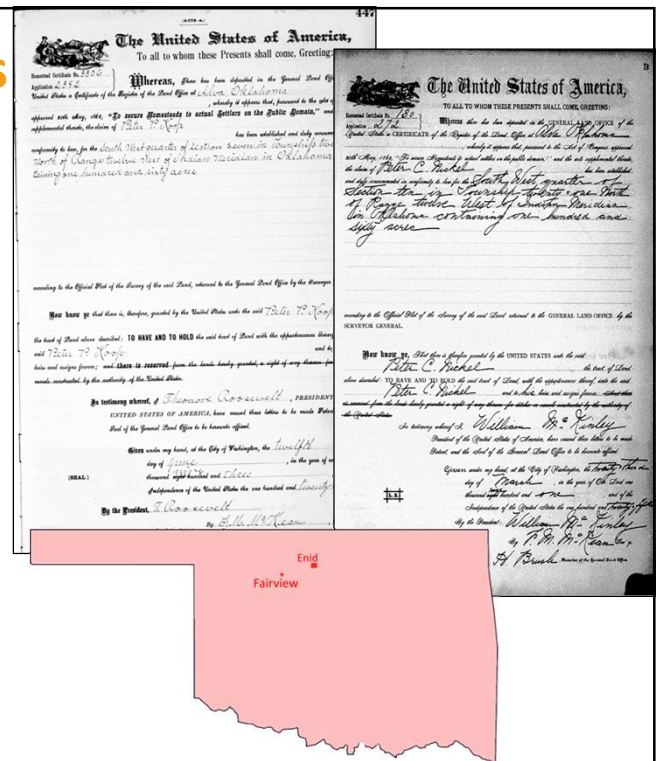
- Henry K Warkentin reportedly paid his Dad, Peter J., \$100 and left for Los Angeles where he worked as a gardener.
- Henry in Kansas had a reputation for riding his horse too fast and rode a motorcycle in California. Maybe the desire for adventure presaged his love of travel.
- Margaret's family came earlier to California. She reportedly was always sure to be milking in view of the road when HK drove by.



Koop and Nickel families

- A couple decades after immigration, land was still a problem. Mennonites were ready to start new communities. One was around Fairview, Oklahoma.
- The Cherokee Strip opened in 1893 as a result of the shameful Dawes Act.
- Land was available under the Homestead Act. Peter Koop settled 3-1/2 miles nw of Fairview; Peter Nickel was 2-1/2 miles north of Fairview, Oklahoma.

Homesteading by Mennonites had been rare in Kansas.



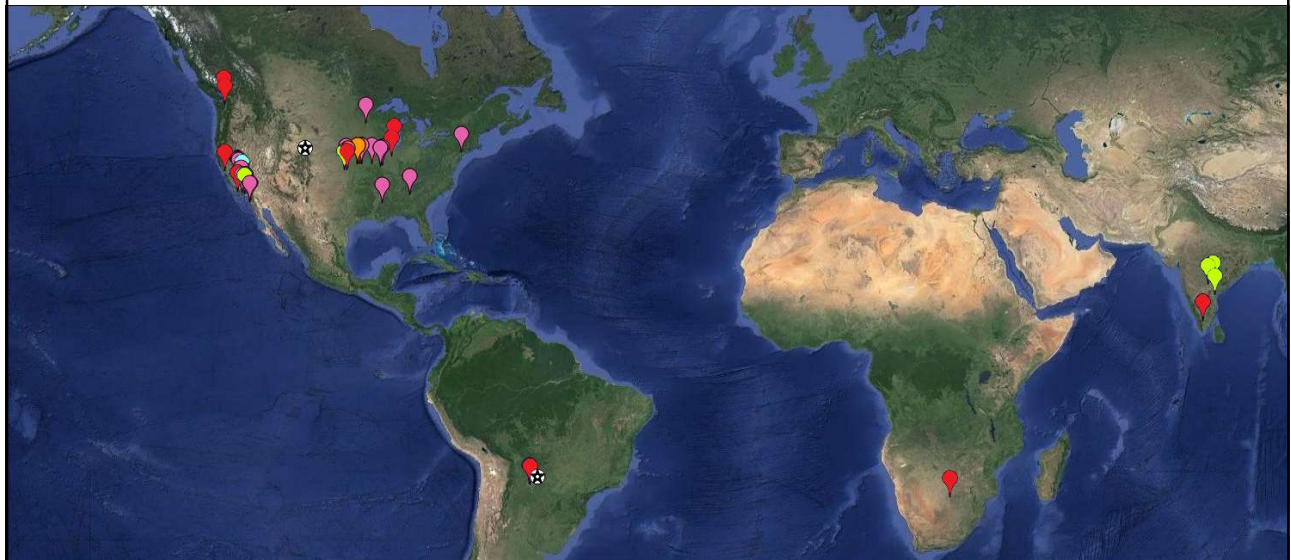
Abraham Koop and Anna Nickel settled around Fairview

They joined the North Fairview Mennonite Brethren Church

Name	Geburtsort	Lebenszeit	Taufdatum	Wanderungsjahr
Abraham Koop Ehefrau	Fairview Okla.	Nov. 30 - 1895	Apr. 29 - 1917	Dec. 21 - 1919
Anna geb. Nickel Ehefrau	Millboro Kans.	Sept. 7 - 1901	Jul. 23 - 1915	"
Luella Francis	Millboro Kans.	Dec. 26 - 1920		
Beatrice	Fairview Okla.	Nov. 17 - 1922		
Rosella Alice	"	Feb. 3 - 1926		

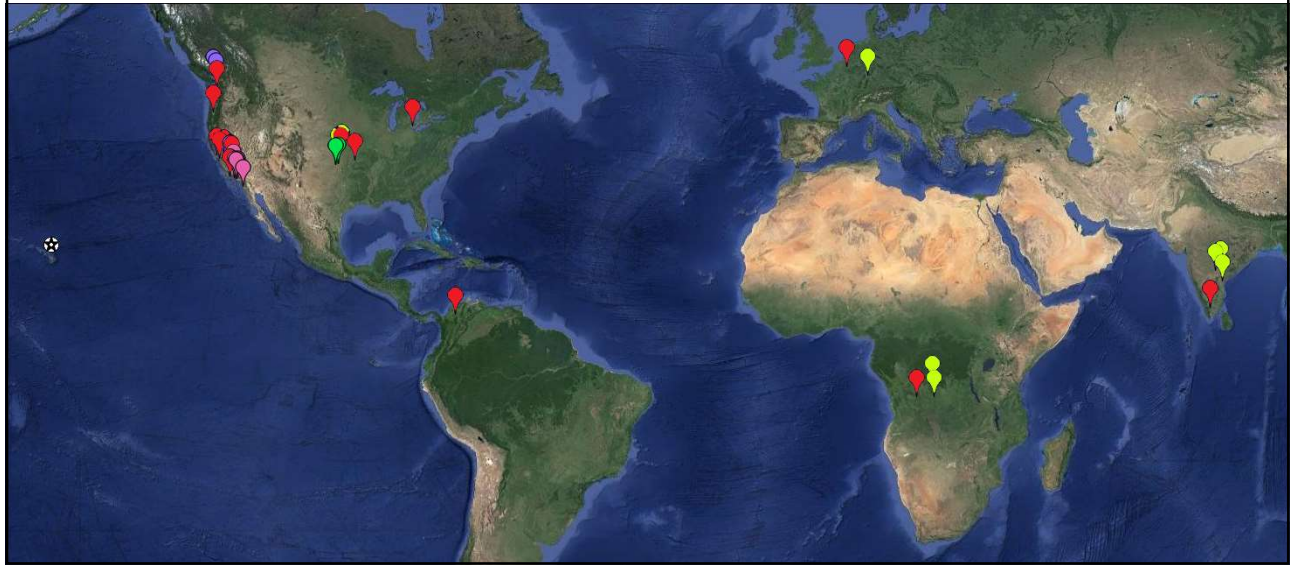
HK & Margaret Warkentin's Descendants Around the World

- Known Birthplaces



Abe and Anna Koop's Descendants Around the World

- Known Birthplaces



What happened to Mennonites still in Russia after the exodus?

- There was a period of unparalleled prosperity in the 1890s and early 1900s. Major manufacturing was developed.
- After the Russian revolution, a reign of terror: The Red Army, the White Army, Machno's bandits, and cholera killed and devastated the colonies.
- Mennonite Central Committee began by bringing soup kitchens and tractors to Ukraine.
- Stalin brought terror including intentional starvation (the "Holodomor") that killed *millions* of Ukrainians. Many others were shot or banished. By the 1940s, there were almost no men left.
- The U.S. mostly refused entry. Canada accepted some. MCC and others arranged for settlement of Russian refugees in Paraguay via Germany or via China.
- The last of the Mennonites in South Russia, mostly women and children, left near the end of WW2.

