

Just Which Swiss Volhynian Families Were Originally Amish And Which Were Not?

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If you have comments or questions about this paper please address them to me at: jwkrehbiel@mchsi.com. The identifying numbers which appear after names are taken from those found in the book titled, Swiss Russian Mennonite Families Before 1874 available from: 1) the publisher Masthof Press, 220 Mill Road, Morgantown, PA 19543-9701; 2) on the internet at <http://www.mennolink.org/books/jameskrehbiel.html>; or 3) see on this web site under [SMCHA Store](#).

There is a puzzling question about the Swiss Volhynian Mennonites and their Amish background. That question is: which families were Amish back in the old country and which were not? Does the following chart answer your question? pique your curiosity? or raise your dander? First off, as you can see below, most of them were Amish. Just a few families were not.

Definitely Amish	Maybe Amish	Probably Not Amish	Definitely Not Amish	Became Hutterite	Galician Mennonite	Became Lutheran
1 Albrecht Flickinger Gering Gordia Graber Kaufman Lichty Maurer Mündelheim Prieheim Ratzlaff Riess Rupp 2 Schrags Schwartz Sutter Stucky Voran Wolbert	1 Albrecht Archelus Waltner	Dirks Krehbiel Sehner Strauss Wedel	Hubin Müller Ortman 2 Schrags Zafft Zerger	3 Schrags Wolbert 1 Zerger	2 Schrags	1 Schrags

Montbéliard

The families who lived in the vicinity of Montbéliard in the 18th century were Amish. Those families which left that area in 1790 and 1791 to travel to Michelsdorf (near Urszulin), Poland

and established the Littauer Congregation were Flickinger, Gordia, Graber, Kaufman, Lichty and Stucky. The signers of the Essingen Accord document in c.1792 which pledged that Littauer congregation to follow Amish principles were Johann Flickinger (Fk0), Christian Graber (Gr0) and Christian Stucky (St1.6). Moses Gering (Ge0) and his wife Maria Hablützel (Hb0) were Amish but didn't move to Urszulin/Michelsdorf. They instead moved from Montbéliard to Podolia which was south of Volhynia (quite a long ways from Michelsdorf, Poland). However, of the 12 children of Moses and Maria Gering only 2 did not marry into the Amish churches at Urszulin/Michelsdorf and Dubno/Eduardsdorf. So we will include the Gerings here.

Palatinate

Other families who joined the Urszulin/Michelsdorf Congregation within just a few years came from the Palatinate and settled in the villages of Einsiedel (in 1785) and Falkenstein (in 1784) in the area of Galicia, Austria. It must be understood that there are strong indications that there were 2 Mennonite Churches in Galicia in those early years. The one church (by far the largest) was non-Amish and came eventually to be called the Galician (or Austrian) Mennonite Church. The second church was Amish and was called the Lemberg Mennonite Church. The Amish families were Albrecht, Maurer, Mündelheim, Sutter and Voran. This church probably closed its doors when these families moved to Urszulin/Michelsdorf about 5 years after the congregation in Urszulin/Michelsdorf was founded. Voran did not come from the Palatinate but was a foundling who joined the Mündelheim household.

There were also other families in the villages of Einsiedel and Falkenstein in Galicia, Austria who were not (or probably not) Amish but who eventually joined what came to be called the Swiss Volhynian Mennonite Church. They were the families of Krehbiel, Müller, Schrag and Zerger. Included with the Heinrich Müller family were 2 Hubin girls who were raised by the Müllers.

When did the church stop being Amish?

There were men who joined the Mennonite Church when they married women from the church and families who joined the church. Whether they became Amish or not depends on the time they joined. Three Swiss Volhynian Churches were Amish. They were the Lemberg Church, the Urszulin/Michelsdorf Church and the Dubno/Eduardsdorf Church. The Dubno/Eduardsdorf Church was the last congregation in which the Essingen Accord was signed. This was in the year 1807. The signers of the Accord were Joseph Schrag (Sg1.7) and Hans Albrecht (Ac2.32). So sometime between 1807 (when the Dubno/Eduardsdorf church was founded) and about 1837 when the Horodyszczce church was founded the churches ceased being Amish. There was no Essingen Accord for the Horodyszczce Church. Exactly when that happened is unknown. But it is rather important in order to determine the status of the church if we are to determine who was Amish and who were not when others from the outside joined the church. Martin Schrag in his book *The European History of the Swiss Mennonites from Volhynia* (second edition, 1999) doesn't give any date for this non-Amish movement. He says (on page 83), "In Volhynia, because of the influence of Pietism and German colonists, especially other Mennonites, the Swiss-Volhynian Mennonites lost their Amish tendency." Was it around 1817? 1825? 1830? J. J. Krehbiel makes a statement that the Krehbiels, Millers, Schrags Zergers, and Wedels were living

in Wignanka, Russia and in 1817 emigrated to Eduardsdorf "...Again joining their brothers from France." Wignanka is in the Dubno area as is Eduardsdorf. Did he mean they physically moved to the village of Eduardsdorf in 1817 or did he mean that they joined the Dubno/Eduardsdorf Church at that time? If it is the latter then the Church must have become non-Amish just before then. Who knows? 1817 may be the date.

Those from outside who joined later

There was another Albrecht joined the Church at Dubno/Eduardsdorf; he was Johann (or Joseph) Albrecht (At0) who married Margareta Schwartz (Sw1.2) in 1821. He likely joined the church about the time of his marriage when it was still perhaps Amish (but maybe not).

Heinrich Archelus (Ar0) was raised Lutheran and married Barbara Gering (Ge1.7) in 1816 and probably joined the Mennonite Church about the time of his marriage. They were probably Amish living in Dubno/Eduardsdorf.

David Dirks (Di0) married Karolina Kaufman (Ka3.272) in 1837 and was undoubtedly non-Amish since he married at that late date. He was probably a member of a Low German Mennonite Congregation before that.

The Ortman family was also non-Amish since the first family to join the Mennonite Church did so in 1871. The Zafft (Soft) family was closely connected with the Ortman and they joined the Mennonite church even later.

Heinrich Prieheim (also Preheim or Priheim) (Pr0) married Maria Lichty (Ly1.1) in 1809 and she was undoubtedly Amish at that time but apparently he never joined the church at all. Their children were raised in the church by their mother Maria Lichty (Ly1.1). Thus the early Prieheims were Amish except for the patriarch of the family.

Peter Ratzlaff (Ra0) married Freni Wolbert (Wb0) in 1805 in the Urszulin/Michelsdorf Church. There were 3 children of Peter from a previous marriage in this family. They undoubtedly became Amish when they joined the church. A little over 5 years later the entire family traveled to Russia and joined the Hutterite Colony at Wischenka, Tschernikov, Russia.

The Riess (Ries) family was Amish as Melchior Riess (Rs0) married widow Elisabeth Lichty in c.1795 and they lived at Urszulin/Michelsdorf. It may be that Melchior was an Amish Mennonite from Alsace as the name Riess does occur there in Amish Congregations in the 18th century.

The widow Elisabeth Rupp (Ru0) joined the Urszulin/Michelsdorf congregation with her three daughters. There were 2 Rupp families in the Galician Mennonite Church but no connection could be found between Elisabeth and those families. She must have been married before the Palatines emigrated as her first daughter was born the year before the first 6 Swiss Mennonite Families came to Austria in 1784. The first marriage of the daughters was in 1804 when Freni Rupp (Ru1.1) married Paul Voran (Vn0).

The Schwartz family was originally Lutheran and the name was introduced into the Mennonite

Congregation in Urszulin/Michelsdorf. It is unknown whether the patriarch of the family Jacob Schwartz (Sw0) and his wife (her name is unknown) ever joined the Mennonite Church in Urszulin/Michelsdorf but 3 of their children did. Those 3 children are Jacob Schwartz (Sw1.1) who married Katharina Graber (Gr2.32), Margareta Schwartz (Sw1.2) who married Johann Albrecht (At0) and Barbara Schwartz (Sw1.3) who married Christian Graber (Gr2.51).

The names of the patriarch of the Sehner (Senner, Saner) family and his wife are also unknown. Five children married Swiss Volhynians with the first marriage being in 1827 (the other marriage dates were 1831, 1832, 1839 and one marriage date is unknown). Thus the Sehners may or may not have been Amish—depending on when the church dropped its Amish affiliation.

There is some indication that the Strauss family joined when the church was Amish as Johann Strauss (Ss0) and Barbara (maiden name unknown) married in c. 1808 and 6 of their 7 children married church members. It is likely that with such a high rate of marriage within the church that the children were members of the church. Most of the children, however probably married after the church was no longer Amish (they married in 1830, 1832, 1836, 1840 and 1844).

Joseph Wolbert (Wb0) undoubtedly joined the Urszulin/Michelsdorf Church which probably happened about the time he married Barbara Sutter (Su1.1) in 1802. Their family is listed in both the Urszulin/Michelsdorf Records of Elder Johann Albrecht and in the Dubno/Eduardsdorf Church Book. J. J. Krehbiel reports that he came from a Lutheran background.

So it is beginning to sound like everyone was Amish, right? Wrong! To start with, we can divide the remaining families into several categories. These categories are: 1) those who were definitely non-Amish Mennonites; 2) those who were probably non-Amish Mennonites; and, 3) the ubiquitous Schrag family which is a category all by itself--so varied as to defy categorization.

Definitely Not Amish

There are 2 families who were definitely not Amish. They are the Zerger and Müller families which consisted of Johann Zerger (Zr0) and his wife Anna Magdalena Eymänn (Em1.1) and Heinrich Müller (Mr1.2) and his wife Anna Eymänn (Em1.2) Johann Zerger and Heinrich Müller married sisters back in the Palatinate.

The book by Peter Bachman titled *Mennoniten in Kleinpolen*, published in 1934 is about the history of the Galician Mennonite Church which was originally established in the villages of Falkenstein, Einsiedel, and Rosenberg. These villages were built in 1784 and 1785 by the Austrian government and immediately inhabited by many families who were Mennonite. In this book Peter Bachman published a letter on page 141 from Jacob Müller dated May 1786 in which Jacob says, "...20 houses were built at the place [i.e., Einsiedel]. ...there were only 18 Mennonite families with 3 Amish [families] and 2 Lutheran families..." Among the Mennonite families who lived there were the families of Christian Albrecht (house #8), Johann Mauer (house #12), Heinrich Müller (house #17), Christian Sutter (house #3) and Johann Zerger (house #7). Three of those men (Albrecht, Mauer and Sutter) signed the Essingen accord for the Lemberg Amish Church which was in that area. Therefore the 3 Amish families who were living in Einsiedel can be clearly identified. Since Jacob Müller states that there were only the 3 Amish

families in the village the other 15 Mennonite families were non-Amish. Therefore Heinrich Müller (Mr1.2) with his wife Anna Eymänn (Em1.2) and Johann Zerger (Zr0) and his wife Anna Magdalena Eymänn (Em1.2) along with the other 13 Mennonite families living there are presumed to be not Amish. The other 13 Mennonite families generally remained with the Galician Mennonites and were 2 Brubachers, Gengerich, 2 Huwens, Kintzi, Linscheid, Merk, 3 other Müllers, Rupp and Schmidt. A great deal is unknown about the children of Johann Zerger (Zr0) and his wife Anna Magdalena Eymänn (Em1.1), however, a little is known about 3 of their children. The oldest daughter Anna Maria Zerger (Zr1.1) married Kasper Tittle and joined the Hutterite Colony. The 2 other daughters married a Schrag and a Krehbiel. Of the 2 Müller children, one married a Schrag and the other a Krehbiel. Along with Johann Müller (Mr1.2) and his wife Anna Eymänn (Em1.2) and their 2 children are included their 2 nieces Maria Hubin (Hu2.31) and Anna Hubin (Hu2.32) who were raised by the Müllers after their parents died. Their mother was a Müller (a sister to Johann Müller Mr1.2). The Hubin girls went to Russia and one (Maria Hubin Hu2.31) married Daniel Schrag (Sg1.8) and the other (Anna Hubin Hu2.32) married Johann Albrecht (Ac2.23). Anna Hubin (Hu2.32) must have joined the Amish church as the marriage was in 1810 and she married Johann Albrecht (Ac2.23) who was a minister and later an elder in the Dubno/Eduardsdorf Amish Church.

Probably not Amish

Peter Krehbiel (Kr0) and his wife Friederike Charlotte Nahrgang (Na0) were probably not Amish. They were living in the village of Falkenstein in Galicia along with the families of Joseph Mündelheim and Johann Schrag and not in Einsiedel. Peter Krehbiel's wife Charlotte Nahrgang was raised in a Lutheran family and there is one significant fact that seems to indicate that they were not members of the Amish Church in the early years in Dubno/Eduardsdorf. The Krehbiel families headed by a male Krehbiel do not appear in the early records of the Ursulin/Michelsdorf Church or the Dubno/Eduardsdorf Church Book. There are only 2 of the female children of Peter and Charlotte who married into the Amish Church. Susanna Krehbiel (Kr1.7) married in 1816 Johann Sutter (Su1.3). In the entry in the Eduardsdorf Church Book on page 11 it is simply stated about that marriage, "Johann Sutter, died 19 February 1858, married (first) 1816 Susana, died 6 November 1836, married (second) 1837 widow Maria Krepel, died 13 September 1841."

Note that in the 2 marriages the surname of Susana (i.e., Krehbiel) is not given (a common occurrence in the book if the wife was not raised Amish) but in his second marriage the surname of Maria Krepel is given (they were married in 1837 after the church ceased to be Amish). And again on page 12 in the Eduardsdorf Church Book in the marriage of Andreas Waltner (Wa1.2) and Magdalena Krehbiel (Kr1.8) in 1822 the listing is, "Andras Waltner, died February 1852, married 2 April 1822 Magdalena, died 28 February 1848." Again Magdalena's surname (Krehbiel) is omitted.

Then unexpectedly in the Dubno/Eduardsdorf Church Book beginning on page 43 and running through page 50 there are family listings (one after the other) of 8 Krehbiel grandsons, 1 Krehbiel great grandson, 2 Schrag grandsons (sons of Johann Schrag Sg1.4 and Susanna Zerger Zr1.4), 2 Zerger great grandsons, and a Dirks (Low German) family. There are 1 (sometimes 2) family entries per page and the entries appear as if they have been "copied in", i. e., added later.

In general most church books have families arranged in chronological order according to the date of the marriage except for “copied in” entries. If a family moves to the village and joins the church, their entry is “copied in” the next page of the church book from records brought by the family and if the husband and wife were married much earlier this shows up as a break in the chronological marriage date sequence. They may have been married 10 years ago but they show up on a page immediately after a couple married perhaps within the past year. It appears that (when the church was no longer Amish) the Krehbiel, Schrag and Zerger families (as well as one Low German family) joined the church en masse and their names were entered into the church book one after the other. It may have been that a non-Amish Mennonite Church (which existed close by) closed its doors at that time and many (if not all) of the church members joined the Eduardsdorf Church at one time and these were those church members.

The Waltner family was definitely not Amish in their early years before 1817. Andreas Waldner (Wa0) and his wife Katharina Schrag (Sg1.6) were living with the Hutterites and certainly belonged to that church. When Andreas died in 1817 the mother Katharina Schrag Waldner (Sg1.6) returned to Volhynia with her six Waltner children. She likely returned to her parents in Wignanka, Volhynia near Dubno. It is not known when her parents died but Katharina probably lived with family members until her death in 1839. Her death is listed with her daughter Katharina Waltner’s (Wa1.6) family in the Dubno/Eduardsdorf Church Book on page 2 indicating she was probably living with them at that time. Two of the 7 Waltner children married Krehbiels and were probably not in the Amish church; other children married Amish youth (2 Gerings, Graber and Albrecht) but the marriages were in 1824, 1827, 1832 and 1848 and the Eduardsdorf Church may not have been Amish at that time (or at some of those times—certainly not in 1848, probably not in 1832). Another Waltner daughter (Elisabeth Wa1.3) married Johann Wedel (We0) in 1821. See the next paragraph for the comments about Johann Wedel.

Johann Wedel (We0) probably did not join the Amish Church. He moved from Prussia to the Dubno/Eduardsdorf area about 1817 and married twice: 1st) in 1821 to Elisabeth Waltner (Wa1.3); and 2nd) in 1823 to Anna Schrag (Sg2.43). It is difficult to determine whether the early Waltners were Amish or not and Anna Schrag’s parents (Johann Schrag Sg1.4 and Susanna Zerger Zr1.4) were undoubtedly not Amish. If Johann Wedel was living at Wignanka as J. J. Krehbiel reports with the Krehbiel, Müller, Schrag and Zerger families he was probably not Amish.

The Ubiquitous Schrag Family

The problem in determining the Amish membership of the Schrag family is that they were everything, everywhere. In contrast to most of the immigrants to Austria and Poland the Schrags were older. Their oldest son was 18 at the time of the immigration to Austria. The family register of Johann Schrag (Sg0) and Elisabeth Albrecht (Ac1.1) is neither listed in the Urszulin/Michelsdorf Amish Records nor in the Dubno/Eduardsdorf Amish Church Book. Note that the wife of Johann Schrag (Sg0) was Elisabeth Albrecht (Ac1.1). She was the sister of Christian Albrecht (Sg1.2) and he certainly was Amish. It is not known whether Elisabeth Albrecht (Ac1.1) might have broken with her Amish background when she married Johann Schrag or whether her brother Christian Albrecht (Ac1.2) may have joined the Amish Church when he married Barbara (maiden name unknown).

The oldest son of Johann (Sg0) and Elisabeth (Ac1.1) was Jacob Schrag (Sg1.1) and he certainly was not Amish. He married Katharina Bergthold 2 years after arriving in Austria and remained in the village of Falkenstein in house unit #15 until his death in 1824. After his wife Katharina Bergthold died in 1795, he married in 1796 Eva Bachmann and when she died in 1811 he married in 1817 Barbara Kinzi. He certainly belonged to the Galician Mennonite Church.

The 2nd oldest child in the Schrag family was Andreas Schrag (Sg1.2). He undoubtedly joined the Amish Church when he married Barbara Albrecht, the widow of his uncle (his uncle was Christian Albrecht (Ac1.2), the brother of Andreas' mother Elisabeth Albrecht (Ac1.1)). Andreas and Barbara went to live in Urszulin/Michelsdorf in 1896.

The 3rd child of Johann Schrag (Sg0) and Elisabeth Albrecht (Ac1.1) was Elisabeth Schrag (Sg1.3) who married Michael Ewy and spent the remainder of her life in the Galician congregation as did her older brother Jacob.

The 4th child Johann Schrag (Sg1.4) married Susanna Zerger (Zr1.4) and went to Russia with his parents, the Johann Schrag (Sg0). They went to join a Hutterite Colony northeast of Kiev, along with the Peter Krehbiel (Kr0) family, the Johann Zerger (Zr0) family, the Jacob Schmidt (Sd0) family and the Heinrich Müller (Mr1.2) family. They didn't stay long with the Hutterites but moved back west to Wignanka, Volhynia which was in the Dubno area.

Magdalena Schrag (Sg1.5, the 5th child) married Kasper Schmalenberger and they remained in Galicia. He may have been a Lutheran and she may have joined the Lutheran Church.

The 6th child is Katharina Schrag (Sg1.6) who married Andreas Waldner (Wa0) and is discussed with the Waldners above.

Joseph Schrag (Sg1.7) definitely went to Urszulin/Michelsdorf and joined the Amish Church. He was elected a minister in the newly founded Dubno/Eduardsdorf Church in 1807 and signed the Essingen Accord which pledged that church to follow Amish principles.

The 8th child Daniel Schrag (Sg1.8) married in 1808 Maria Hubin (Hu2.31) the niece of Heinrich Müller (Mr1.2) and Anna Eymänn (Em1.2). Heinrich Müller and Anna Eymänn were not Amish and it is highly unlikely that Daniel Schrag and Maria Hubin were.

The 9th and 10th children were Anna Schrag (Sg1.9) and Maria Schrag (Sg1.a) and they married Hutterite men (Jerg Waldner and Johann Wipf respectively) and lived the remainder of their lives with the Hutterite colony.

Thus of the 10 Schrag children, 2 became Amish, 3 became Hutterites, 2 were members of the Galician Mennonite Church Community, 1 probably joined the Lutheran Church, and 2 undoubtedly remained with the small non-Amish Church with the Krehbiels, Schrag, Müllers and Zergers who lived near Dubno.

An enigma with the Schrag family is that so many of them are found in the Amish Church Books

even though they were not Amish. The 5 families of Jacob Schrag (Sg1.1) Andreas Schrag (Sg1.2), Johann Schrag (Sg1.4), Joseph Schrag (Sg1.7), and Daniel Schrag (Sg1.8) are all listed in the Urszulin/Michelsdorf church records found on pages 17 through 23 of the manuscript of J. J. Krehbiel in the Bethel Library. At the beginning of the collection of families in those pages J. J. Krehbiel writes, "Church Book # 1 of Elder Johann Albrecht of Michelsdorf, Poland." This appears to be the families of the early Urszulin/Michelsdorf Church. Of course Jacob Schrag (Sg1.1) and Johann Schrag (Sg1.4) never lived in Michelsdorf and were never members of that church and undoubtedly Daniel (Sg1.8) was not either. Then why are they listed in the church book? The only explanation of this is that Joseph Schrag (Sg1.7) was an early minister in the Dubno/Eduardsdorf Church as was Johann Albrecht (Ac2.23) who is supposed to have collected the family data about the early Urszulin/Michelsdorf Church. Thus Joseph Schrag may have written down data about his siblings and included it in the church book even though they were not members of the church which the data is purported to be about. This is very unusual in that apparently some family members he includes in the church book were not even Amish.