# The Ancestry of Maria Krahn (1848-1916)

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Maria Krahn (1848-1916) and Johann Fast (1852-1920), who married in 1871, were my second great grandparents. They had eight sons, one of whom, Jacob Fast (1874-1939), was my great grandfather. Maria was the daughter of Cornelius Krahn and Helena Redekop (1822-1878), who were married in 1847 in the village of Rosenthal, located in the Chortitza Mennonite settlement in southern Ukraine [1]. There are no concrete genealogical records identifying the parentage of Cornelius Krahn. This article attempts to identify his ancestors.

In the absence of concrete records, one must rely on other information that points to a plausible hypothesis.

## The information that is available

Maria Krahn had a younger sister, Helena, who was born in Rosenthal in 1851. She also had an older half-sister, Katharina Rempel, born in 1846 in Rosenthal. Katharina was the only daughter of Helena Redekop and her first husband, Johann Rempel (?-1847).

We can extrapolate that Cornelius Krahn lived in Rosenthal as early as 1847, the year he married Helena Redekop. We can infer that he was born before approximately 1826, the age of twenty-one being on the younger side of the marriage age of most men in those days.

The Grandma Database [2] provides the names of two Cornelius Krahns living in Rosenthal in the early part of the 19$^{th}$ century. The elder of the two was Cornelius born about 1797, based on Chortitza census records. He was a son of Johann Krahn and Anna Andres, early settlers in the new Chortitza settlement. The other Cornelius Krahn was the son of the elder Cornelius. There are no genealogical records connecting either of these Cornelius Krahns to Maria Krahn.

## The elder Cornelius Krahn (1797)

Census records trace Cornelius' movements from 1808 to 1816 [3]. In 1808 he lived with his family in Rosenthal and his father, Johann, was still alive. By 1810 Johann had died and the 1810 census documents the widowed Anna as the head of the household, still living in Rosenthal. In May 1811 Anna still had the farm in Rosenthal. In November 1811, the property belonged to a farmer named  Siemens. Anna and her family were living as landless residents in Rosenthal. In May 1813 Cornelius lived on another farm, working as a servant or labourer in Rosenthal. By September 1813 Cornelius had moved to Osterwick, again working as a servant or labourer. He remained there in 1814. By May 1814 Anna had married Penner the tailor and lived in the village of Chortitza. By 1815 Cornelius had moved back home and was living with his mother and

Penner in Chortitza. In 1816  the census shows that Cornelius was working for Unger the blacksmith in Einlage. However, even though he worked in Einlage, the Household List of 1816 shows he was the head of a household in Chortitza where his mother and stepfather, Penner, lived. The 1816 Household List records both Cornelius and Penner as heads of households on the same property.

Meanwhile, Cornelius' older brother, Jacob, had been living in Rosenthal with his maternal grandfather, Jacob Andres, as early as 1801. In later years, after Grandfather Jacob died, grandson Jacob took over the farm. The Household List of 1816 records Jacob as the head of the household in Rosenthal.

After 1816 there is a gap in the records until 1847 when another household list is available. At this point Cornelius is the head of a household in Rosenthal. This household list does not include his older brother, Jacob. It is possible that Jacob died and Cornelius moved to Rosenthal to take over the farm. In 1847 Cornelius is the only person named Cornelius Krahn in the household records and the only Krahn family head in Rosenthal.

Is Maria's father, Cornelius Krahn (born before 1826), the son of Cornelius Krahn (1797)?

There is a Krahn Family Book listing the elder Cornelius Krahn (1797) and his wife, Anna Rempel (1817-1857) [4]. The book lists eight children and this matches fairly well with information recorded in the Grandma Database. However, there are two additional children listed in the Grandma Database as sons of Cornelius (1797) that do not appear in the Krahn Family Book: Jacob and Cornelius. The absence of these two boys in the Krahn Family Book suggests Cornelius (1797) had a first marriage and two children that the author did not document, possibly because they were unknown to the author. The twenty-year age difference between Cornelius (1797) and Anna (1817) also suggests that the marriage to Anna is a second marriage for Cornelius and that she is not the mother of Jacob and Cornelius.

The elder Cornelius lived in Rosenthal from the early days of the Chortitza settlement through the 1847 Household List, with brief periods of time spent working in other villages. It follows that if he had a son Cornelius, the son would have lived in Rosenthal. There is evidence there were no other Krahn families in Rosenthal around the critical date of the marriage in 1847 of Cornelius Krahn (before 1826) to Helena Redekop (1822-1878). These details support the hypothesis that this Cornelius is the son of the elder Cornelius (1797), and the father of Maria.

One question that is difficult to answer is whether the linkage of the two sons, Jacob and Cornelius, to the elder Cornelius, as shown in the Grandma Database, is accurate. Certainly, the Grandma Database contains considerable evidence that Jacob existed but his connection to his presumed parents is based on family records and submissions cited in the Grandma Database rather than definitive genealogical records. As for Cornelius, one submitted record is the only evidence.

## Conclusion

The data linking Maria Krahn's father, Cornelius (before 1826), with specific parents and grandparents is sparse. It seems likely that he was the son of the elder Cornelius (1797) mentioned in the Grandma Database. The consistent recurrence of Rosenthal in the records strengthens this line of thought. The single occurrence of a reference to a Krahn household in Rosenthal in 1847 supports this conclusion.

## Notes and Source References

[1] Maria Krahn's death certificate provides the names of her parents. The Chortitza Family Registers Vol. 2 found at https://mgr.mennonitegenealogy.com/russia/Chortitza_Family_Registers.pdf provides the information, including villages of birth, about Maria's half-sister and sister. Familienchronik des Johann Jacob Rempel, Gruenfeld MB, 1921, lists Helena Redekop marrying Johann Rempel and then Cornelius Krahn (p. 26) in Rosenthal.

[2] Genealogical Registry and Database of Mennonite Ancestry found at https://grandmaonline.org/gmol-7/login.asp. The elder Cornelius Krahn is #189693. The younger Cornelius Krahn is #668818. My ancestor, the Cornelius I suggest is the son of the elder Cornelius, is #174331 (and the same person as #668818).

[3] All of these records are in the revision lists and household head lists found at https://mgr.mennonitegenealogy.com/russia/.

[4] Origin and author unknown.