**Hayley Wickenheiser**, One Hundred Percent German-Russian!

There is no end to the stories and news reports one can find on-line about Hayley Wickenheiser. She has become one of Canada’s most famous athletes. Most recently, she led Canada’s national women’s hockey team to an exciting over-time Gold Medal victory over the USA at the 2014 Sochi Olympics. Hayley Wickenheiser has been a member of this team at five Winter Olympics, and in the process she has claimed four gold medals and one silver medal, a record for an individual Canadian Olympian athlete. Many consider her to be the world’s finest female hockey player. In February, 2014, Hayley Wickenheiser was elected to the International Olympic Committee’s athlete commission.

What you won’t find online in stories about Hayley is that she is one hundred percent German-Russian! And if I boasted that her parents and grandparents and great-grandparents are from Saskatchewan, that only serves to expose this writer’s bias! While Hayley’s parents now live in Calgary, her father was born in southwestern Saskatchewan where his grandparents homesteaded in the early 1900’s. Hayley’s great-grandparents are Franz (Frank) Wickenheiser (1860-1944) and Katharina Halter (1864-1956). Frank and Katharina Wickenheiser are buried in the St. Mary’s Catholic cemetery at Richmound, SK, the same cemetery where my maternal grandparents are buried. (My bias is showing again!) This Wickenheiser line comes from the German colony of Baden, in the former Kutschurgan enclave northwest of Odessa. Hayley’s maternal line is the Eberts family from Lumsden, Saskatchewan. This line also has roots in the Kutschurgan district (Elsass) of old South Russia.

Of interest, Hayley is a third-cousin to Doug Wickenheiser, of NHL Hockey fame. Doug grew up in Regina, SK. Doug’s genealogy stems from the prolific family of Peter Wickenheiser and Stephanie Sahli of Vibank, SK. And Peter’s father, Josef Wickenheiser was a brother to the Frank Wickenheiser (Sr.) who homesteaded near Golden Prairie, SK. Both were born in Baden, Odessa district, sons of Peter Wickenheiser and Katharina Maria Schwan. Peter (1826) was the son of Karl Wickenheiser and Maria Cecilia Eisenzimmer – see Stumpp for HH # 52 in the 1816 RL for Colony Baden.

Because the surname “Wickenheiser” is so easily identifiable, it is very likely that the Saskatchewan Wickenheiser families are related to the North Dakota Wickenheisers. Wendel Wickenheiser (1858-1944) died in North Dakota. He was also a son of Peter Wickenheiser and Katharina Maria Schwan, and thus a brother to Josef and Frank who are mentioned above, but Census and Ship records indicate that there were other Wickenheiser lines in North Dakota as well. More research is required to tie these lines to the original Karl Wickenheiser (Wickenhäuser) of Colony Baden, Odessa District.

Merv Weiss.
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