

## Church, Pastors and Churchyard Regulations

### The Church

Guben's account book of the years 1556/57 by Hugo Jentsch:

As far as the activities of the previous years are concerned...(building of the dike near **Niemaschkleba**), the erection of the church steeple was ended, however without being completed at the same time as above the square part clearly visible rises a 2.5m octagon, and instead of the expected apex or – as preferred in our area – pyramid above its surrounding... These showed similar looking and built shortly afterwards church steeples in the neighboring villages **Fürstenberg a.O.** and **Niemaschkleba**, whereas the transition from octagon to octagonal pyramid gives a shapely impression.<sup>1</sup>

The building, closed 5-sidedly in the east, belongs without doubt earliest to the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, especially when considering the structuring of the alcoves within the church as well as the design language of the steeple which unfortunately was brought down in 1900 because of supposed dilapidation. This steeple here – together with among others the steeple of Starzeddel – belonged to a group of buildings typical for this specific construction period.<sup>2</sup>

### The Pastors<sup>3</sup>

**1387 / Benediktus:** In 1387 there was a dispute between farmers and tributaries of Bomsdorf and Steinsdorf. The communities handed over both settlement of the dispute and the verdict to the four pastors Nikolaus in **Bresin**, Petrus in **Grunow** (Grano), Johannes in **Schenkendorf** and Benediktus in "**Nimaschklibe**"<sup>4</sup>

**1549 / Martinus:** pastor of Niemaschkleba

(took part in a meeting of all Lower Lusatian pastors in Lübben on 31 July 1549.

"Church news out of Guben's oldest city books by Hugo Jentsch"

NM Volume XIII; magazines 1-8, 1914/1915, page 9)

**1631 – 1632 / Förster,** Ulrich \*23 January 1604 in Crossen, + 26 April 1648 in Guben

1632 – 1648 deacon of the city church and Wendish vicar of the monastery church in Guben

**1635 – 1642 / Stein,** Georg (also see academic Gubeners)

**1642 – 1664 Bucovius,** Christianus (also see academic Gubeners) \*?, +24 June 1664 in Niemaschkleba

**1664 / Fielitz,** Caspar (Survey from Guben's Church Books 1650 – 1700, NM Volume VI, magazine 8, 191, page 421: a number of pastors around Niemaschkleba are either registered as godfathers in the baptism registry or upon their marriage in the marriage register, e.g. among others Caspar Fielitz from Niemaschkleba, 1664)

On 12 August 1664, the parish of Niemaschkleba complained to the consistory that Guben was trying to force a pastor on them not knowing the Wendish language. In Niemaschkleba more than 300 people were unable to understand little more than a few bits of German and

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<sup>1</sup> Lower Lusatian Messages, Volume 5, 1898, page 277

<sup>2</sup> Heimat calendar of the district of Guben, 1928, page 40, „Remains of medieval clerical art in the district of Guben"

<sup>3</sup> Lutheran pastors' book for the Mark Brandenburg

<sup>4</sup> Lower Lusatian Messages, Volume 26, 1938, page 97 ff

therefore a pastor would be needed able to talk and understand their Wendish. However Guben's counselors referred to the fact that all Niemaschklebans except for perhaps "2 or 3 old women" were able to understand German and that the namely pastor was capable of Wendish and had already held Wendish sermons. Furthermore they stated that it was not known that more than 200 people could be found in Niemaschkleba without knowledge of German, unless all small children were meant to be counted, they however being unable both of Wendish and of German at that time."

The parish must also have sent a complaint to Merseburg because on 24 September, Duke Christian requested a report from the consistory in Lützen, demanding information whether all of or the majority of the parish was able to understand German as was stated, how many were unable to speak/understand German at all and whether the consistory held the pastor capable of administering his duties successfully and faithfully. As a result of this, the official administrator Hutten together with the consistorial protonotarius and the Wendish speaking pastor of Ratzdorf (district of Guben) went to Niemaschkleba on 26 October. After the sermon, each parishioner was questioned as to their language abilities with the following outcome:

- \* 30 persons who had only recently come from German villages to now live and settle in Niemaschkleba, therefore being completely unacquainted of the Wendish language;
- \* 19 persons born Wendish, having learnt to speak German but understanding and speaking Wendish better, however being able to confess and pray in German;
- \* 19 persons speaking and understanding a bit of German, however being unable to confess and pray in German;
- \* and 125 persons not being able either to speak nor to understand German.

Therefore the consistory resumed that the proposed pastor, Caspar Fielitz, was not suited for the job. The duke thus decided it indictable and sinful to send a pastor unacquainted of and probably unwilling to learn the Wendish language to such a numerous parish of churchgoers, endangering their spiritual salvation. Therefore, the choirmaster of Vetschau who had also applied, shall be given the position. The Guben counselors feeling their patronage deeply infringed tried to defend their rights on 29 December. "It was obvious that Niemaschklebans being able to understand German good enough had done as if they were neither capable of speaking nor of understanding German. This had freely been admitted by George Badacz, as he and others had done so. The elder, when asked in all conscience, admitted that the least part of the villages population (14-15 adults and about 30 children) were solely capable of Wendish, the rest however, 123 persons, able both to speak well or at least understand German. Nevertheless, the duke commanded the Gubeners on 20 February 1665 under threat of punishment to appoint Vetschau's choirmaster to being pastor of Niemaschkleba.<sup>5</sup>

**1665 – 1686 / Cnophelius**, (Cnöphel) Johann \*Cottbus, +Wittmansdorf

**1687 – 1705 / Kapke**, Christian \*Niemaschkleba, +20 February 1705 Niemaschkleba, son of miller Kapke

**1705 / Kapke**, Christian (founding member of the preachers' widows society of the old Guben district, 1705, NM, Volume VI, magazine 5, 1900, page 241

**1706 – 1734 / Krüger**, Georg, \*Niemaschkleba, +24 July 1734 Niemaschkleba

**1735 – 1742 / M. Kuntschke**, Johann Georg, \*c1686, +8 March 1742 Niemaschkleba

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<sup>5</sup> Berlin, Federal archive, complete older files on church, parish and school issues, Specialia Section 21, Sorau diocese Litt. N No 1 and Rep. 139 L No 1518

**1742 – 1756 / M. Hellwig**, Christian, \*Guben, +23 Mai 1756 Niemaschkleba,  
oo Marie Elisabeth Klingmüller

**1756 – 1797 / M. Breßler**, Christian Gottlieb, \*1731 Guben, +8 March 1797 Niemaschkleba,  
oo Sophie Karoline Hellwig. His father was Johann Gottfried Breßler, \*1682 in Friedland, +23  
June 1756 in Guben, he was preacher in the monastery church<sup>6</sup>

**1797 – 1834 / Rohde**, Johann Friedrich, \* 22 September 1767 in Klein-Döbern, + 27 August  
1834 in Niemaschkleba, oo 1798 Christiane Mielisch, daughter of the bailiff M. in  
Niemaschkleba. 6 of his 10 children survived.

On 15 September 1799 Rhode held the funeral sermon for Samuel Friedrich Grimm, organist,  
teacher and sexton.<sup>7</sup>

On 27 August 1834, pastor Johann Friedrich Rohde of Niemaschkleba/distr. Guben died at  
3.30 a.m. and was buried 4 days later on 31 August. His father had been a merchant and  
trader in Guben, was married and had 2 sons and 2 daughters. Johann Friedrich was the  
second son, born 22 September 1767. Early he showed wit and intelligence and his parents  
decided to let him study, best of all theology. From 10 to 20, he attended the Lyceum in  
Guben. In 1787 he went to the University of Wittenberg. After his academic studies, he spent  
6 years as a private tutor and in 1796 was appointed by a magistrate in Guben to work as a  
“collaborator” (= assistant) for the church and the school. On 7 April 1796 he took his exam  
before a clerical consistory in Lübben and was confirmed and ordained on 7 May. After  
working 1 1/2 years as a “collaborator”, Niemaschkleba’s pastor M. Christian Gottlieb Breßler  
died and he was recommended to succeed. On the 13<sup>th</sup> Trinitati-Sunday 1798 he gave his  
sample sermon, attended his colloquium on 21 September and was ordained again. On the  
17<sup>th</sup> Sunday p. Trin., he was introduced to the Guben parish by the prime pastor Lauriscus  
and on the 18<sup>th</sup> Sunday p. Trin. he gave his initial sermon before the Niemaschkleban parish,  
thus his original sphere of activity. 36 years he administered his post faithfully, marrying Miss  
Mielisch, Niemaschkleba’s bailiff Mielisch’s only daughter, and had 10 children with her, 6 of  
them surviving. Most of his life, he enjoyed a sturdy health, enabling him to fulfill his duties  
unhampered. Nevertheless, he was not save from insults and harm caused by his family.  
During the last years of his life, he was stricken by a very painful disease. Unfortunately, there  
was no appropriate remedy against his pain and sickness and he finally had to face death.  
Albeit his wife and his children – part of them still unprovided for – stood around his death bed  
and cried bitter tears, they and nothing were unable to save him from dying. He died at the  
age to 66, 11 M. 5 T. Further to his wife and his children, who mourn his death deeply, the  
parish for which he worked the last few decades and which respected him, were full of sorrow  
because of his demise.<sup>8</sup>

Voluntary Sale, Country and City Court of Guben

The vineyard no. 242 belonging to the inheritance of the late Niemaschkleban pastor Rohde,  
estimated value through the court at 100 Rthlr shall be sold on 7 June, 10.00 a.m. The  
documents – together with the relevant mortgage certificate and taxes – can be looked at  
beforehand at the court offices of Guben.

Guben, 19 February 1836<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> New Lusatian Magazine, Volume 24, Görlitz 1867, page 31

<sup>7</sup> Heimat calendar of the district of Guben, 1926, page 15

<sup>8</sup> Lower Lusatian Magazine, Volume 1834, pages 585/586

<sup>9</sup> Official journal of the Royal Prussian Government, Frankfurt/Oder, No 22, 18 May 1936

**1835 – 1858 / Gräfe**, Samuel Justus, \*12 April 1809 Guben, + 18 November Niemaschleba, oo 29 December 1844 in Guben, Pauline Emilie Schreiber, +10 November 1857 oo 1858, Luise Schreiber, sister of his first wife

**1858 – 1880 / Gräfe**, Theodor Bernhard, \*20 April 1829 Guben, + 14 April 1910 Potsdam, oo 6 April 1851 in Cottbus, Marie Luise Burscher

**1881 – 1909 / Ehrlich**, Otto Leberecht, \* 27 November 1851 Müncheberg, +? oo 23 November 1880 in Berlin, Wilhelmine Theodore Auguste Villaret

**1909 – 1915 / Rohr**, Walter Gottfried Martin; \* 18 April 1884 Havelberg, + 2 February 1936 Jauer, 1910 member of the Lower Lusatian Society for Anthropology and Archaeology (NM, Volume XI, magazines 1-4, 1910, page 328, also 1912/1913 Volume XII, page 333) oo 14 December 1909 Maiden Sophie Gertrud Müller, sole daughter of factory director Hermann Müller in Guben, \*12 November 1884 (city archive Guben, Niemaschleba, personal data, page 193)

**1916 – 1918 / Kesten**, Günther Gustav Heinrich, \*6 April 1888 Seelow

**1919 – 1929 / Dr. Anspach**, Friedrich Wilhelm, \* 20 April 1868 Rees a.Th., +15 December 1929 Guben; 1925/26 member of the Lower Lusatian Society for Anthropology and Archaeology (Volume 17, page 368, also 1927/28, Volume 18, page 463) oo 1892 Katharina Barnad, oo 29 September 1918 Frida Gaedcke, born Kohler

**1930 / Burscher**, Ludwig Franz, \*9 February 1869 Cottbus, +? oo 16 August 1927 Erna Ahlbrecht



Parsonage around 1930

## **The Churchyard**

### **Community decision of 4 July 1896<sup>10</sup>**

The community Heideschäferei as well as the estate district of Niemaschkleba and the city forest have to pay for each grave on the new churchyard the following:

\* 4 Marks for the dead body of an adult,

\* 2 Marks for the dead body of a child younger than 14 years.

Thus having the same rights as the community members have or else they shall be buried in their old churchyard.

Kunze/community leader, Gromm and Donath/jurors, Brüll and Heilenz/representatives

### **Negotiated, Guben, 7 December 1896<sup>11</sup>**

Kunze, Niemaschkleba's community leader appears and states for the records: The joint churchyard belonging to the parish of Niemaschkleba which was opened in 1809 has been closed about 2 years ago because there was no room left for more graves and the parish had refused its expansion. As a result of this, the community of Niemaschkleba now decided to set up a new churchyard, property size about 4 "Morgen" (\*) and adjoining to the old churchyard. The new churchyard included a pump and a surrounding fence. 2 of the 4 "Morgen" the community bought for 300 Mark (without court fee), the remaining 2 "Morgen" were already community property. The pump cost 75 Marks and the fencing 166 Marks, whilst the necessary wood being taken from the community forest at a price of at least 300 Marks. In order to save Heideschäferei, Niemaschkleba and Guben city forest to build its own churchyard, joint usage was reported on 4 July 1896 and decided to take 4 Marks for the burial of an adult corpse and 2 Marks for a child (younger than 14 years). Compared to the asset costs, these compensation prices neither are high nor did the involved parties (Niemaschkleba, Heideschäferei, city forest) claim that they were. A permit through the police for the building of the new burying grounds, however, was not given (Kunze)

On 13 November 1897, the mason and master carpenter W. Karnapky developed a site plan of the churchyard, community of Niemaschkleba, district of Guben.

(\*) Morgen = Morning; Size of a property that could be plowed during a morning by a plow and either 1 horse or ox.

### **Terms & Regulations for the Niemaschkleban Churchyard<sup>12</sup>**

At the expense of this community, a churchyard has been built for the rural community of Niemaschkleba. The community of Niemaschkleba has permitted the villagers of Heideschäferei as well as the outlying estates of Niemaschkleba and the Guben city forest a joint use of the churchyard and its facilities as long as the terms and regulations thereof are obeyed by them.

The community of Niemaschkleba has set the following terms and regulations as far as the maintenance and use of the churchyard are concerned. If of any interest to you, please contact Günter Lehmann, [info@niemaschkleba.de](mailto:info@niemaschkleba.de)

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<sup>10</sup> BLHA, Rep. 6B, District Administration Guben No. 254

<sup>11</sup> dito

<sup>12</sup> to be found there

**(Notification) To the Royal District Administration of Guben**<sup>13</sup>

Augustwalde, 1 March 1906

Attached notification to report duly to the Royal District Administration that the royal signalman of Augustwalde, Wilhelm Hensel, has buried his wife on 23 March 1906 (*The original shows the date 23 March, however as the notification dates 1 March, probably a typing error has occurred, the burial thus took place on 23 February instead of March*). He was ordered to the churchyard to show the place, however rejected with the words "You cannot tell me what to do. The churchyard belongs to everybody, everyone has the same rights. It is of no concern to you, where I shall bury her". The ordered coffin bearers who had prepared the grave were quiet except for one.

I had already left the churchyard and was standing on the street when the colonist Gottlieb Kauschke from Augustwalde called after me "You are not to order anybody around her. This is of no concern to you. Piss off, asshole!"

I want to report this in order to sue Kauschke and – if possible – Hensel also. In case witnesses are necessary, the rest of those present will remain quiet and keep the truth secret.

Present were the following persons further to the signalman Wilhelm Hensel, who directed the place and the works to be done:

1. colonist August Blau,
2. colonist Wilhelm Krug,
3. colonist Gustav Gast,
4. retired signalman August Freund,
5. colonist Gustav Kockejey,
6. colonist Gottlieb Kauschke

Kockejey came to the churchyard belatedly, when I had already been at home; he therefore doesn't know anything about the event.

(Community leader Gromm)

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<sup>13</sup> BLHA, Rep. 6B, District Administration Guben, No 254