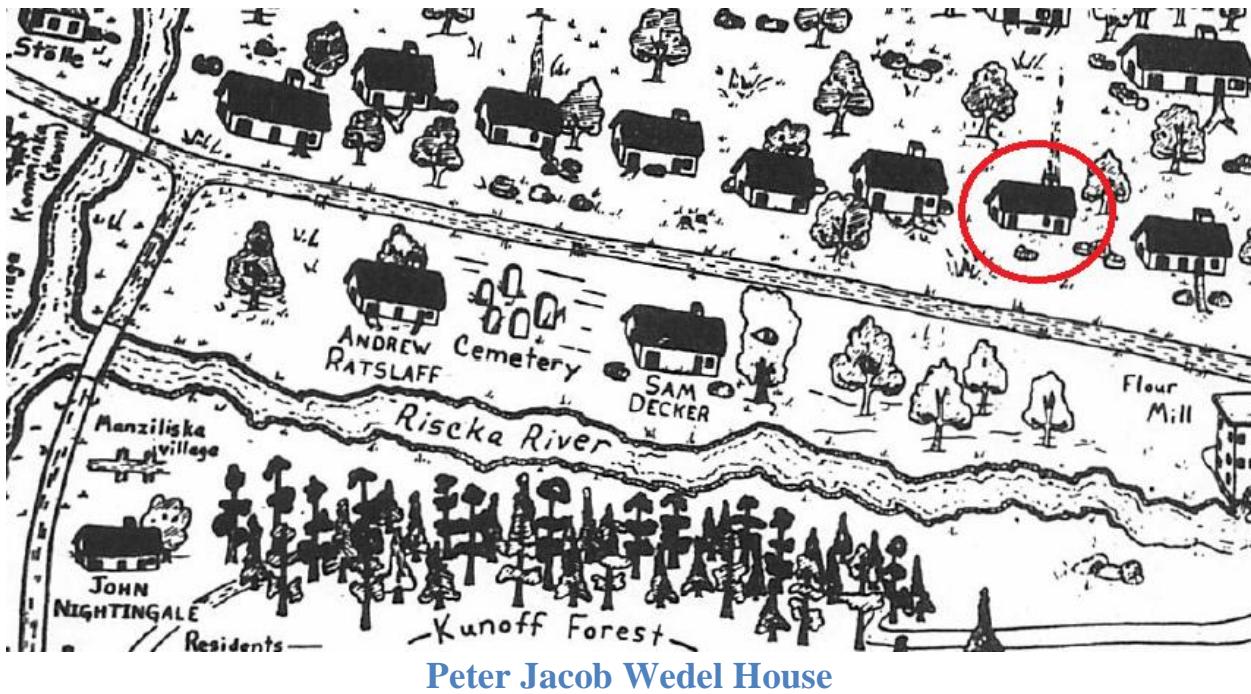


# Leeleva Online Map

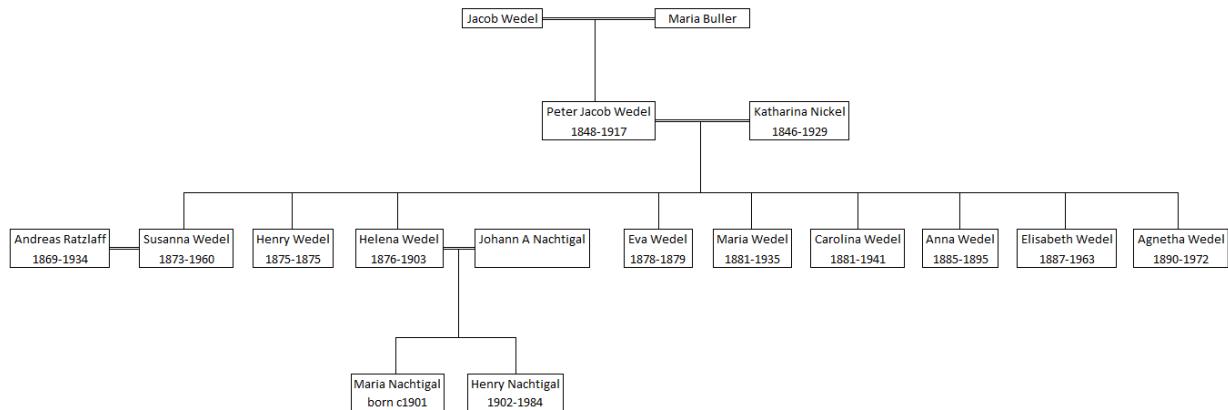
## Peter Jacob Wedel

The Peter Wedel Family lived near the east edge of the village, next door to the Benjamin Unruhs. Peter Wedel was Benjamin Unruh's uncle. The Wedel's oldest daughter, Susanna, was married to Andrew Ratslaff (Ratzlaff). Another of the daughters, Maria, was married to Andrew Nightingale (Nightingale), oldest son of John Nightingale.



Peter Jacob Wedel was born in 1848 in Karolswalde. His Wedel family had probably been in Volhynia since around the year 1800. We can trace his mother's family, Maria Buller, back to Przechowka in West Prussia.

Peter married Katharina Nickel in Karolswalde in 1864. Katharina was the daughter of Johan Nickel and Susanna (Litke) Nickel. Susanna's ancestors may have been of Swiss origin.



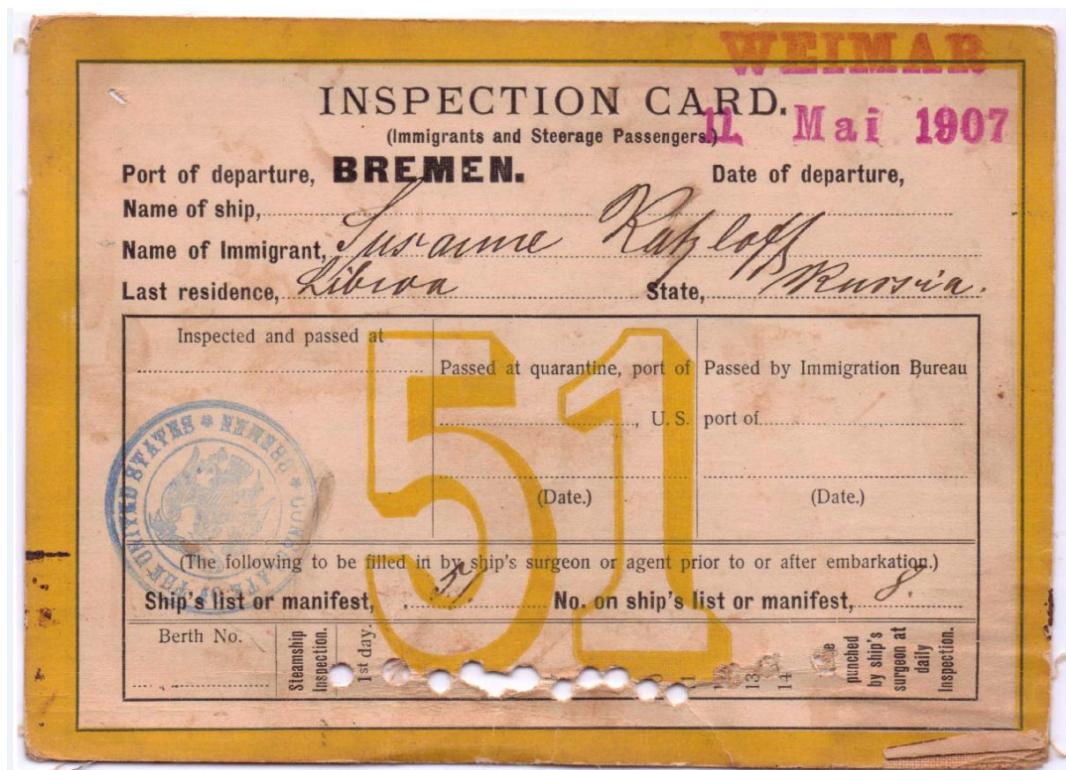
### Peter Jacob Wedel Family Tree

Peter and his wife Katharina lived in Leeleva with their seven daughters. The oldest, Susanna, married Andrew Ratzlaff in 1895. The second daughter, Helena, was married to a Johann Andreas Nachtigal. Johann and Helena had two children, Maria and Henry, who were born before Johann left Leeleva to complete his compulsory forestry service for the Russian military. While Johann was away, Helena died, leaving the two small children in the care of their grandparents, the Wedels.

In May of 1907, the Wedel Family left Leeleva for America. They travelled along with the Benjamin Unruh and the Andrew Ratzlaff Families. The two little grandchildren, Maria and Henry, came along with them. Their father, Johann Andreas, later remarried and settled in the village of Pordenau in the Molotschna Mennonite Colony. He later remarried and had children with his new wife. It is not known at this time if he ever left Russia. We do know that in 1922 his brother-in-law, Andrew Ratzlaff, sent food to Johann Andreas and his family via American-Mennonite Food Relief, as the Ukraine was undergoing a severe famine at that time.

In a similar fashion to the several of the other Leeleva Families, the Wedels, Unruhs and Ratzlaffs paid smugglers to help them sneak across the Russian border by night. The children were told to watch their step to avoid crunching leaves in the forest. Marie Ratzlaff (whose married name was later Penner) remembered hearing the jingling of the coins which were sewn into the smugglers clothes as they struggled through the forest, probably near Brody, Austria-Hungary.

After crossing the border, the families boarded a train that took them to Bremen, Germany where they waited a couple weeks until the ship upon which they had booked passage, the S.S. Weimar, was ready to depart. The ship sailed from Bremerhaven to Baltimore, a trip which took 15 days. Marie Ratzlaff, the oldest daughter of Andrew and Susanna Ratzlaff, remembered thinking that if they began to sink, she would climb upon the tall ship smokestack and thereby be saved from drowning.



**Susanna Wedel Ratzlaff's Daily Inspection Card from the S.S. Weimar. Note the Indication of her Last Residence, Liliva, Russia**

Also left behind was the third surviving daughter, Maria, who was married to Andrew Nightengale. Maria and Andrew, along with their families, as well as Andrew's brother Abraham and a sister of Andrew Ratzlaff, the widow Eva Nightingale and her children, all came to America in 1909.

In America, the Wedel family lived in Marion and McPherson Counties, most of them becoming members of the Lone Tree Church Congregation near Canton, Kansas. Peter died in 1917 and Katharina later married Abraham Schmidt. Katharina passed away in 1929 and is buried at the Lone Tree Cemetery.