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Cover Illustration

Church in the Village of Graf. Photo provided by Olga Litzenburg.
To learn more, see page 1.

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GRAF

(Krutoyarovka, no longer in existence)

Written by Dr. Olga Litzenberger
English Translation by Alex Herzog
with editorial assistance from Dr. Nancy Herzog

Geographical Location and the Territorial/ Administrative Situation During the 19th and 20th Centuries.

The German colony Graf was founded on the left bank of the Volga and on the left bank of the Bolshoi Karaman River, about 42 kilometers [over 25 miles] from Saratov, 16 kilometers [ca. 10 miles] from the colony of Katharinenstadt and 179 kilometers [ca. 110 miles] from Novousensk, a county seat. Between 1871 and October 1918, the village was part of the administrative district of Karamanskiy, later called Tonkoshurovski (Marienthalskiy), the rural county of Novousensk and the Samara Gouvernement.

After the establishment of the "Work Commune of Volga Germans" and until 1941, the village Graf became the administrative center for the village *soviet* [Communist-style local council] Graf, Marienthal (Tonkoshurovska). In 1926, the Graf village *soviet* was comprised of the villages of Graf and Lesnaya Storoshka.

Brief History of the Settlement.
The German colony was established as a mother colony on July 10, 1766. The villagers were recruited and settled by two private agents, Pictet of Geneva and the Frenchman le Roy. The colony was named in honor of the 35-year-old miner Johannes Graf, from the city of Eckstadt, who had come to Russia with his 24-year-old wife Mariana and their one-year-old daughter. Its second official Russian name Krutoyarovka was assigned to the colony per an edict of February 24, 1768, reflecting geographical peculiarities of the landscape. It appears that not far from the colony was a steeply-banked gorge toward the precipitous and high banks of the Bolshoi Karaman River.

The name Krutoyarovka was used in correspondence by the Welfare Committee office even until 1915, when anti-German propaganda broke out in the country. [Translator's note: I wonder whether the original article may have used the German name instead of the Russian one in this sentence.]

That hostile attitude toward Germans began as a result of the 1914 start of the First World War, in which Germany was the most important military foe of Russia. Subsequently, a series of laws discriminatory toward the German population of Russia was enacted. In 1914, all German-language publishers and German clubs were closed down, and in many areas the use of the German language in official communication was banned. An edict of August 18, 1916, forbade the teaching of the German language at all public educational institutions of the Russian Empire.

Soon after, many German settlements were renamed. The Graf settlement received the name Krutoyarovka, but after the establishment of the "Workers Commune of Volga Germans" in 1918, the settlements once again reclaimed the use of their German names.

The founders of the colony consisted of 47 families (141 persons) who had arrived from such different German areas as the Kurpfalz, Zweibrücken, Holstein, Saxony, and others,

The very first lists of colonists contained immigrant names from France, Luxembourg, and Austria. The initial settlers were Catholics, but three Lutherans (Johann Wilhelm Stuhlmann, Johann Adam Schmidt, and Kristine Klepphorn) had to settle down in the predominately Catholic colony. Not all of the original 76 heads of household were farmers. Indeed, there were

14 tradesmen, six soldiers, a carriage driver, and a hunter. The others were indeed farming people.

The 1774 attacks by Pugachev's troops, accompanied by plundering, violence and murder, caused heavy destruction in Graf. Some colonists, voluntarily and involuntarily, joined the Pugachev army. The volunteers would later be cruelly punished. Those taken along by Pugachev against their will would on their return hope for pardon from the government. In November, 1774, the Welfare Committee decreed that the colonist Jakob Müller, who had collaborated with the Pugachev crowd during the attack, be subject to thorough investigation.

Church in the village of Graf, Photo by E. Moshkov, 2013

The situation for the colonists worsened even more following the attack by the Kirghiz-Kayzakh hordes of steppe nomads. In an attempt to protect the city of Saratov against Pugachev, the Welfare Committee office sent troops to guard the colonies. Between August 27 and 31, the nomads plundered nine colonies situated on the banks of the Bolshoi Karaman River, among which was the Graf settlement. Private possessions and foods of the colonists were plundered, and homes were partially damaged. In those nine colonies, 19 people were killed and 144 persons were taken away. The Boregardt colony's commissars distributed weapons, gunpowder, and lead to the colonists for self-defense while waiting for troops to arrive. It was only after the defeat of Pugachev's rebellious army that the government was able to take measures toward protecting the German colonies and to bring back colonists who had been dragged off. When in 1770 it was learned that the Kirghiz-Kayzakhs were planning another attack, the government dispatched 30 soldiers for the protection of the Graf settlement alone. Following the suppression of the rebellion by Pugachev and the scattering of the steppe nomads, the colonies experienced economic turbulence and natural disasters. As a result, for example, in 1835, the Interior Ministry received denunciatory protests from the colonists of Graf with a list of various deplorable conditions and alarming situations.

According to Census #10 of 1834, the male residents of the Graf settlement had each received 15 *Morgen Land* [15 acres of land], but the colonists, lacking sufficient arable land, would turn several times to the Welfare Committee requesting more land. For example, in 1837, residents of Graf asked the Committee office to grant them land from the neighboring Germans following completion of the commissioner's work for the establishment of the Eltonsk salt processing plant. In fact, lack of sufficient land often led to court actions between neighboring settlements. For example, in 1801, the colonist from Rohleder by the name Rohleder was called into the office of the Welfare Committee because his riverside mill was "impacting Graf's agriculture."

Graf residents had active trading relationships with Russian farmers, as documented in preserved headlines from otherwise lost archival documents of the Welfare Committee. Some examples: "Principal Serebryakov garnered 4 rubles from colonist Hein of the Krutoyarovka settlement" (1799); "Grain poisoning by a Russian of the Pokrovskoye colony at a colonist property in the Pokrovskoye settlement" (1799); "Sale of a sick steer by a Russian to colonist Schmidt of the

Krutoyarovka colony" (1805); "19 strips of hay reaped by Golyzin farmers on behalf of colonist Peter Bolicha of the Krutoyarovka colony" (1850).

By 1857, the Graf colony comprised 95 families. They owned a total of 2,944 acres of land. History has not preserved the names of all of the principals, but what is known is that the colonist Niederquell was a local chairman in 1850.

The Graf colonists sowed rye, wheat, oats, and barley, and planted potatoes, hemp, and sunflowers. Daily news from the German-speaking press reported on the quality and quantity of the harvest. In 1913, Graf settlers reported: "Shoots of wheat and other grains can only be lauded. It also seems that the potato growth is succeeding. We shall be heartily rejoicing if we can get a good harvest." Another article does mention the worries of Graf settlers. "We are very hopeful to produce a good harvest this year. We are expecting an especially large harvest of wheat and vegetables ... So now we must hurry to manage the weeds in our fields at the right time. There is one matter to regret, namely, the fact that there are many ground squirrels in the fields. The Graf community has decided to ignore the Welfare Committee office and to take the fight against ground squirrels into our own hands."

Former location of the village Graf, Photo by E. Moshkov, 2013

A concerted campaign against field pests was ordered by the government toward the end of 1870. Every colonist was required to deliver three pairs of ground squirrel paws annually to the state. Between the start of spring until May, catching of ground squirrels was required. Each lacking catch would cost a one-kopek penalty, and each ground squirrel caught above the quota brought in a kopek.

During Soviet times, there was an agricultural cooperative in the village, and co-op store was opened. The political period known as "Militant Communism" ended in catastrophe, becoming a national misfortune. In March 1921, residents of the village participated in an anti-Soviet uprising by farmers that had as its goal to free "the working people from the yoke and tyranny of the Communists and commissars." During the uprisings, strong fighting against the defenders of the Soviet power took place in the entire district. In March of 1921, rebels with M. Pyatakov as their leader encircled a dozen German villages, including the Graf settlement, where the farmer uprising between March 22 and 25 was victorious. The entire territory south of Marxstadt was in the hands of the rebels. However, by April 1, the rebelling villages were already occupied by the Red Army. During the fighting, hundreds of the rebels had died or were taken prisoners. By order of the non-local Commission of the Revtribunal, hundreds of the rebels were executed by shooting. The entire rebellion had started as a result of the agrarian polices of the Soviet government, which by the end of 1921 and the start of 1922 led to mass famine, during which hundreds of farmers fled to the cities or emigrated.

The famine that had resulted from economic and political causes and was exacerbated by natural cataclysms such as drought and bad harvests impacted the greater a part of the country by the summer of 1921. During 1921, 97 persons were born and 272 died. [I assume the author is referring to Graf.—Tr.] A great irony of the situation was that the Volga region was pressured and obligated by the authorities to continue deliveries of food materials to the state. Help from the Soviet government for the starving was slow and inconsequential, while the volume of assistance of benefactor organizations from abroad was ten times that of assistance from the state.

In 1921, 1,917 of Graf's 2009 residents (the number of which dropped to 1,092 by the summer of 1922) received assistance from the International Union for

Children's Assistance that was comprised of 67 world assistance organizations. At its head was the famous polar explorer F. Nansen. The Heidelberg Union of Germans Abroad sent to Graf 285 pounds of rye, 210 pounds of wheat. 33 pounds of rice, and three crates of clothing. The Red Cross sent an additional 144 boxes of food. During 1922, Graf and neighboring villages received from American Catholics a train car full of grain weighing 600 pounds.

Kruto Yar, for which the village received the name Krutoyarovka, Photo by E. Moshkov, 2013

After the effects of the famine were overcome, the economic and political situation of the German villages destabilized. Dispossessions, collectivization, the famine of the early 1930s contributed to the situation. Despite the establishment of the *kolchos* [collective farm] Kirov, farmers continued to be hungry. The secret report entitled "Concerning the Hunger and Political Situation of the ASSR of the Volga Germans" contained the following statement: "In the village of Graf, a group of rich farmers, referring to the nutritional difficulties, harvested horse cadavers, stating 'We are hungry, we don't want to die, but no matter what happens, we'll die anyway, if not today, then tomorrow.' Given the example of those with property, the poor and *kolchos* farmers have gathered in groups of fifty and have taken the horse meat home, and what happened with that was apparent on November 25 and 26. The *kolchos* orderly I.P. Hermann, after investigating the cause of the animals' death, determined on December 5 that the horses had succumbed to glanders, and the carrying off of horse cadaver meat was stopped."

In September of 1941, all Germans of the village were deported. Thereafter, the settlement became part of the *rayon* Sovietskiy, region of Saratov. According to a decision by the Soviet Deputies of the Worker Class of the Saratov region, the settlement was renamed Krutoyarovka.

The Schools and Education of the Children.
The first Catholic church in Graf was built during the year the village was established. The first instruction was held in the home of the schoolmaster. A separate church school building was erected in Graf in 1831. It was made of wood, 4 *klafter* (8.5 meters [= ca. 30 feet]) in width and 6 *klafter* (12,8 meters [= ca. 45 feet]) in length and was covered with boards. The school consisted of a professional hall, a teachers' room, and a hallway, and it had 14 windows and 24 school benches. Between 1820 and 1841, the teacher was Peter Wasinger, father of the future pastor, Johann Wasinger. The schoolmaster and sexton between 1841 and 1845 was Adam Komlovskiy, and during the latter part of 1841 he was joined in instructing by Jakob Schneider, who was the son of the Marienthal teacher Anton Schneider. The latter was a well-known collector of folklore and the author of essays, poems, and the book *Aus der Geschichte der Kolonie Marienthal an der Wolga* [*From the History of the Marienthal Colony on the Volga*]. From 1845 on, Johann Bach worked as the teacher. In 1840, the school instructed 60 boys and 65 girls; in 1844, it was 87 boys and 91 girls. By 1861, 175 boys and girls attended the church school.

In 1879, the community elder sent a report of an investigation instigated by himself into parish schools to the Roman Catholic parish of Raskatovka. In it he wrote that the medical department's inspector from the Samara *Gouvernement* concluded during a medical investigation that in nearly all colonial schools the

classrooms were too small for the number of pupils; that the pupils were attending in outer warm clothing, which contributed to the thick air in the classroom; that they were sweating for long periods, and that by the end of instruction they went out into the cold, which contributed to upper respiratory illnesses. Chest illness contracted in childhood would remain in a catarrh-like state for life. The report was accompanied by the recommendation, "How to remove tight spaces and sticky air." Also, the schoolmaster was directed to enforce order. In 1914, K. Baron was the schoolmaster and sexton. After 1917, the parochial school was reorganized and transformed into a public elementary school.

Religious Convictions of the Residents and their Characteristics.
Residents of the Graf settlement were of the Roman Catholic faith.

The Parish.
During the initial years after its founding, the Roman Catholic community of Graf was part of the parish of Mariental (Tonkoshurovka) founded in 1767. After the establishment of Jesuit Mission on the Volga, Graf became a branch of the Rohleder (Raskaty) parish. Other branches were the Rohleder and Herzog (Susly) communities.

By 1970, according to top regulations, only one priest could serve the Rohleder parish, and he had to conduct Masses town by town on weekdays as well as Sundays. In 1870, the entire parish numbered 3,643 members. From 1883 on, Graf became its own parish. On the contrary, Herzog remained a branch of the Rohleder parish for another twenty years. The Katter parish community numbered 2,153 members in 1919.

Date of the Erection of the Church and its Architectural Features.
The first church in the village was a provisional one, a simple prayer house. The subsequent church was built in 1824 "with the diligence and participation of the community members." The cathedral [sic] was consecrated by Father Kuprevich and dedicated in honor of St. John Nepomucen.

According to an1840 inventory put together by Vikenty Snarsky, the church in Graf was "made of wood atop a stone foundation and with a wooden roof, 13 *sashen* [27.7 meters [= ca. 85 feet]) in length and 4 *sashen* (8.5 meters [= ca. 30 feet]) in width. The tower was in the front and 6 *sashen* (12.8 meters [= ca. 40 some feet]) high, with an iron cross on its top. The church had 19 windows and 28 pews.… The altar was built simply. Inside the church was a statue of the Virgin Mary. The Graf village did not possess a separate pastor's home. Until the establishments of the village's own independent parish, the pastor was housed in the school building during his stays in the village.

The only preserved German cross in the cemetery of the Graf village. Photo: E. Moshkov, 2013

Following the establishment of Graf's own parish during the years 1883-1886, the old church was replaced by a new cathedral. It was erected in the so-called "bureaucratic architecture style of the Volga Germans" with typical classic characteristics; that is, a two-story lengthwise church building with a colonnade vestibule inside, and with a bell tower of receding stages. Another style designation, "Kontor style [literally, office style]," also continued to be applied consistently. This name was typical of the churches of the Volga Germans. It received its ironic designation from the office of the Welfare Committee because it forced the identical architectural style for all church construction. The required style was communicated to all *Gouvernments*. Required was a 4-stage bell tower with a cupola topped by a cross, the grand portal topped by a triangular gable, and side doors into the church behind the front pillars. On each side of the church were 22 windows arranged in two rows. The second level of the church interior had roomy balconies.

Population Numbers.
In 1767, Graf had 141 foreign settler residents; by 1773, it had 178 residents; in 1788, it was 196; 1798 –253, 1816–363, 1834–563, 1850–817, 1859–1,097, 1883–1,374, 1889–1,570 persons. According to data from the Common Census of the Russian Empire of 1897, Graf had 1,806 residents, of whom 1,801 were German. By1910, the population numbered 1,871 persons.

After 1917, the number of residents decreased under the influence of Bolshevik policies, also subsequent to the famines in the early 1920s and early 1930s, the *de-kulaklization*, many repressions, and emigration by some of the population.

Data from the All-Russia census of 1920 indicate that 2,062 persons resided in Graf, all of them Germans. The famine of the early 1920s impacted the population numbers of all Volga German colonies. Data from the Statistical Administration of the Volga German Autonomous Republic show that only 1,061 people lived in Graf by 1922. Numbers from the All-Russia census of 1926 show that there were 1,245 persons living in the settlement, of those 1,241 being Germans. By 1931, the place had 1,658 German-only residents.

Excerpts of the History of the Parish.
Between 1803 and 1820, the colony was part of the missionary post of Jesuits located in the colony of Rohleder. Nearly all colonies of foreigners established on the Volga at that time were formed on a religious basis. During the initial settlement times, it was observed that settlement of villages by people of a single religion was nearly impossible. Early on, a few Lutherans had to live in the colony Graf together with all the Catholics, and they even had to contribute to the living of a Catholic priest. The Welfare Committee office investigated a certain case in 1802 described as "Exempting the family Kober living in Krutoyarovka from paying the pastor." And, in 1803, the same office exempted the colonist Friedrich of Krutoyarovka from having to pay both a pastor and a priest.

Catholics and Lutherans got along peacefully for the most part. At certain baptisms, Lutheran communities turned to Roman Catholic priests, and Catholics at times turned to Lutheran pastors. The canonical law allowed marriage of persons of the Catholic and of the Lutheran faith to be married either in a Catholic church or in the churches of both denominations. Otherwise, the marriage was considered invalid. Additionally, the Roman Catholic Church insisted that the children of [such a mixed marriage] had to be baptized in a Catholic church. For example, in 1870, the Lutheran bride E. Hermann from the neighboring village of Schäfer (Lipovka) had to promise to baptize her children as Roman Catholics and to bring them up under the laws of the Catholic religion. She had married the Catholic A. Brandt from the colony of Graf.

Born in the colony of Graf were: The Catholic priest Johann Shamn (1841-1904), who served in the Ukrainian parish in Odessa and later became a deacon; also Johann Wasinger (1870-1901), who served in the colony of Gattung on the Volga in the Kuban area and would be buried in the Graf cemetery.

On April 18,1921, the last priest, Gottlieb Beratz, who served neighboring Herzog at the same time, was sentenced to death by the provincial military court of the Workers Commune on the Volga, falsely accused of being the "evil-minded organizer of the uprising, participating in beatings, and murdering Communists." The farmers' participation in the anti-Soviet uprisings of 1921 had led to reprisals against the population. Like G. Beratz, eleven Graf residents were found guilty and sentenced to death for having been responsible for the uprising. They were shot along with him, their sentences having been carried out immediately. Properties of the priest were confiscated even before the sentence was carried out. Decades later, a final report by the state attorney dated February 6, 2006 states: "Investigation of documentation in the case shows that the sentencing was not justified because the guilt of Mr. Beratz could not be proved, and in the decision, only his own statement was used, where he stated: 'Some residents turned to me during the uprising with the request that I set the date for burial of some Communists who had been shot dead and whose bodies had been pulled from the water. People wanted to bury them.' … He did not provide advice or orders to the uprising men. From the statements of Mr. Beratz, one cannot determine that he committed a crime." On May 11, 1999, Mr. Gottlieb Beratz, per the October 18, 1998, USSR law regarding

"Rehabilitation of Victims of Political Oppression," was officially rehabilitated by the state attorney of the Saratov region.

After Beratz was executed, the community no longer had its own priest. Masses in the village were henceforth celebrated by priests from Herzog and Rohleder.

In 1931, the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee (SEK – German acronym) of the ASSR of Volga Germans received a secret report from the regional commission responsible for investigating religious matters. According to these reports, the church community numbered 717 believers and 104 citizens who had been stripped of their civil rights. The Presidium of the SEK encouraged strengthening anti-religious efforts in the village. In the fall of 1935, the Commission for clerical matters of the SEK of the ASSR of Volga Germans received lists of believers in Graf, along with signatures of settlers who were willing to close the church in the village. 292 of 365 community members were in favor of destroying the church. Based on this vote, in December of 1935, the Presidium of the SEK of the ASSR of Volga Germans (per Protocol #19) decided to close the church. The Executive Committee of Mariental was told to close the church and to renovate it for cultural purposes.

Partial list of priests of the Marienthal parish who served the Graf community

1765-1774, 1778-1785	Johannes Moller Dedukla
?-1802	Sebastian Otto
?-1802	Aganshanov

Partial list of priests of the Rohleder parish who served the Graf community

1803-1807	Ignatius Zacharevich
1807-1808	Joseph Caffasso
1808-1810	Anton Posto(l)i
1810-1820	Franziskus Cornet
1820-e	Kuprewitsh
1839-1842	Joseph Markewitsch
1842-1846	Alexander Felix Dombrowsky
1846-1849	Antony Baranowsky
1849-1851	Antony Rudnizky
1851-1852`	Alexander Schadursky
1852-1854	Johann Gibusch
1867	Warpucciansky
1867-1870	Georgy Dobrowolsky
1870	P. Vorwusolsky
1870-1872	Peter Hermann
1872-1873	Johann Schnell
1873-1877	Balthasar Kraft
1877-1879	Jakob Dobrowolsky
1879-1887	Joseph Gütlein

Partial list of priests of the Graf parish

1887-1898	Johannes Gischitzki
1898	Johannes Schönfeld
1898-1901	Emanuel Stang
1901-1903	Andreas Brungardt
1903	Georg Baier
1903-1907 (?)	Alois Vondrau
1904-1905	Gabriel Gwamaradse
1910-1911	(no priest)
1912-1914	Adolf Braun
1914-1921	Gottlieb Beratz

The village today. Current condition of the objects of German architecture.

The village no longer exists. Today's unsettled area is located not far from the village of Raskatovo at the border of the Marksovskiy *rayon* and the Sovietskiy *rayons* of the Saratov region. The actual site of the former Graf settlement (Krutoyarovka) is easily found on the high, steep hill that extends along the Karaman River bank. Where Graf once existed, today one sees only fills, foundation ruins, piles of dirt, and holes where homes once stood. Not a single house remains.

Only memories remain of the German settlement. Adaption and everyday problems facing the population arriving there during the war, as well as the state's policy of "destroying villages with no prospect" carried out in the early 1960s, led to diminished agricul-

tural activity and the liquidation of former German settlements. At the village cemetery, which can easily be found due to its characteristic grave mounds, there is a lone cross on an old German grave.

Building foundation in the former village of Graf. Photo: E. Moshkov, 2013

Archival sources.

State Historical Archive of the Volga Germans (Engels, Saratov region), document set 163. A document collection of Roman Catholic churches of the rural county of Kamyshinskiy (Saratov *Gouvernement*), of the rural counties of Nikolayevskiy and Novousenskiy (Samara *Gouvernement*) covering the years 1789 to 1920. Documents 59-64. Also, circulars and directives from the Spiritual Consistory of Tiraspol; church records for the years 1886 to 1920; family lists for 1907-1910 and 1921; birth, baptism, marriage and death registers; questionnaire for bridal exams for 1886 to 1925. Metric church book for baptismal, birth, marriage and death certificates for settlers of the village of Krutoyarovka (Graf) for 1848-1863, where in document #9 one can find individual entries for births and baptisms of settlers in Krutoyarovka.

State Archive of the Saratov Region (Saratov), document set 637. Collection of metrical church books of the Saratov *Gouvernment* (1780-1917). Index 35, documents 30-35. Metrical church books for the settlement of Graf (Krutoyarovka) for the years 1882 to 1912, 1884 to 1918, 1896 to 1906, 1906 to 1914, 1912 to 1920, 1914 to 1920.

An interesting archival document.

Among the lost documents of the Welfare Committee Office for Foreign Settlers, an index showed a document regarding "Steady resistance of colonists of Krutoyarovka to perform penance," dated 1822. The document was destroyed or burned, but the title in the inventory listings demonstrates that punishment/penance was implemented in the German colonies. The German word *Bußе* comes from the Greek language and denotes legal punishment, and it also can be a prayer or a reading of Holy Scripture. There is public penance, and there are others given by a priest with the aim of forgiving sins, all depending on the gravity of the sin and the personality of the perpetrator. A civil court could also hand down a sentence of penance. If the state attorney or the court sent a court decision to the Consistory or to several dioceses, the church also made an effort to carry out the decision with the following punishments: ecclesiastical penance, forbidding church burial, etc.

During the second half of the 19th Century, in 1864, this rule in the charter for court proceedings was debated. Penance for settlers would be imposed for different sins, such as breaking up a marriage, public blasphemy, interrupting liturgy in church, slander, insult, attempts to commit suicide, and other cases prescribed by Russian legislation. In an edict of July 28, 1851, by His Majesty [the Tsar] entitled "Penance for religions without churches" there was the statement: "Penance is to be carried out only in parish churches and cloisters; it is to be forbidden in house churches and churches that exist in military and civil educational institutions."

The press on Graf, October 1903.

"On September 28 of this year, our Reverend Father Andreas Brungardt announced that, via a directive from our Reverend Bishop, he had received a new position and must therefore leave us. This was unexpected and sad news for us. During the brief parting speech, he gave, many could not contain their tears… following Mass, he bestowed his priestly blessing and, accompanied by several people and with the ringing of the church bells, he departed the village. Between September 29 and October 11, the parish was without a pastor ... Then came the awaited date of October 11, on which we expected our newly appointed pastor, the Rev. P. Aloysius Vondrau ... Around 3 PM, several

persons drove off to pick up the newly appointed pastor from the neighboring village of Rohleder, where the aforementioned pastor had arrived to meet with our interim pastor, P. Georg Baier. Following mutual introductions, the writer of this report offered the following address: 'With great longing, the community of Graf, H. Math. Silzbach, has been awaiting your arrival, and we have come to accompany you to our community … May God grant our new pastor many years of good health and successes full of blessing in his work in our community."

All that is left of the mill in Graf. Photo: E. Moshkov, 2013]. Photo: E. Moshkov, 2013

EDITOR'S NOTE: This continues the series of articles from Olga Litzenberger's "History of the Volga German Settlements." Thanks to Alex and Nancy Herzog for the translation, and Olga Litzenberger for provision of the photographs.

AHSGR RECORDS

AHSGR has a number of documents pertaining to Graf for research. These records are:

- Graf - 1798 Census
- Graf (Krutoyarovka) – 1850 Census
  Translated by Pavel (Paul) M. Leus, Compiled by Kevin D. Rupp
- Graf (Krutoyarovka) – 1834 Census
  Translated by Pavel (Paul) M. Leus, Compiled by Kevin D. Rupp
- Graf Family List (1895)
- Graf (Krutoyarovka) – 1895 Family
  Translated by Pavel (Paul) M. Leus, Compiled by Kevin D. Rupp

Influence of the Herrnhuter Brüdergemeine among the Volga Germans

By Fabian Zubia Schultheis

Fabian Zubia Schultheis spoke at the 2019 AHSGR Convention in Lincoln, Nebraska. This article is based on his presentation.

The purpose of this paper is to present within academia a new focus on the causes of the eighteenth century German emigration. The research conducted so far stated that the German migration occurred as a result of the wars which devastated Germany during the eighteenth century or occasionally as a result of armed conflicts known as the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) and Seven Years' War (1756-1763). This argument does not take into account that most of the immigrants came from the area currently occupied by the State of Hessen and not affected by the Seven Years' War. Also, it is unlikely that the inhabitants of that area migrated between 1740 and 1766 due to a war that ended in 1648.

Pietism was a Protestant religious movement that began in the mid-seventeenth century and developed until the mid-eighteenth century. It began as a religious renewal in German Lutheranism under the influence of pastor and theologian Philipp Jakob Spener (1635-1705). He founded his Collegia Pietatis, which consisted of small groups who gathered regularly to discuss Bible subjects, to share their daily spiritual experiences and mutually encourage a life of more enthusiastic faith and devotion. Those who frequented these Collegia Pietatis were called pietists. This new religious movement developed in the Lutheran Church and the Reformed Church.[1] This idea of a small group of people with greater devotion within a larger body, the church, already had developed in 1529 by Martin Luther under the concept of *ecclesiola in Ecclesia* (that means in Latin: *little churches within the church*).

Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf (1700-1760), godson of Spener, organized in Herrnhut in their domains in the kingdom of Saxony, a Collegium Pietatis with German refugees from Moravia. Later, Zinzendorf became the leader of a Protestant ecumenical movement that, under the motto in *necessariis unitas, in dubiis libertas, in omnibus caritas* (that means in Latin: *unity in the necessary, freedom in the doubts, love in all*), ended up creating a new religious group: the renewed Moravian Brotherhood denominated in German Herrnhuter Brüdergemeine and Latin Unitas Fratrum.

Count von Zinzendorf had to leave Herrnhut in 1736 because of his religious ideas. In 1738, he founded a new community in Herrnhaag, close to Büdingen, on land that was granted for that purpose by Count Ernst Casimir von Isenburg-Büdingen (1708-1749), whose mother-in-law Christina of Mecklenburg-Güstrow (by marriage Countess zu Stolberg-Gedern) belonged to the pietistic circle of Spener. Under the influence of pietism, Count Ernst Casimir proclaimed a Toleranzedikt (Edict of religious tolerance) for his county on 12 March 1712, and many refugees arrived in Büdingen and neighboring Wächtersbach from the Catholic states of southern Germany seeking a place to practice their religious beliefs without being persecuted. However, when the new count Gustav Friedrich von Isenburg-Büdingen (1749-1768) decided to expel the Moravian Brotherhood from his dominions in 1753, these people began to doubt about the future of the religious tolerance in the county.[2] The Emperor Joseph II proclaimed on 13 October 1781 a Toleranzpatent (Patent religious tolerance) for the entire Holy Roman Empire.

Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf favored the creation of Pietistic colonies with communal living and where German is used as a religious language. These communities where communal ownership displaced the private domain, where nobles and burghers lived together on an equal footing, were a new and controversial phenomenon for the society of the

eighteenth-century. In 1741, the first community in Pennsylvania (called Bethlehem) was founded and was followed by Nazareth in 1744. The expelled community from Herrnhaag founded Bethabara (1753) and Bethania (1759) in North Carolina that later gave rise to the Brüdergemeine Salem (1766).[3]

In 30 years, these communities expanded rapidly through Europe, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and Russia, as Craig D. Atwood says in his book *Community of the Cross*.[4]

> The success of the Moravians in the eighteenth century was indeed remarkable. In a thirty-year span missionaries went to North America, St Thomas, Surinam, South Africa, the Gold Coast, Greenland, Algeria, Russia, Ceylon, Persia, Egypt, Labrador, and Jamaica. In addition to missions to non-Christian peoples, the Brüdergemeine set up less formal groups of believers within the official churches in the Baltic region, Poland, England, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Germany, France, and Scandinavia. Tens of thousands were influenced through this "diaspora" ministry.
>
> The Moravians also established several carefully regulated Christian communities (called Ortsgemeinen) in Europe and America. In these communities, European noble joined their voices with Moravian peasants, German students, English artisans, African slaves, and American natives in singing about the glories and blessings of Christ ... Bethlehem was probably the closest approximation to egalitarian ideal in the Moravian Church, perhaps in the eighteenth-century Atlantic world.

Although the members of the Herrnhuter Brüdergemeine generally lived in peace, tensions within the Brüdergemeine were expressed at different times. The first question was concerning the second marriage of Count Zinzendorf with Anna Caritas Nitschmann in 1757 because she was not a noble. The second was at the moment of the death of Zinzendorf (1760) concerning the election of his successor because one group followed his son-in-law the Baron Johannes von Watteville (1718-1788) who married in 1746 to Benigna von Zinzendorf (1725-1789). Another followed August Gottlieb Spangenberg (1704-1792) who was considered the most important leader of the movement after Zinzendorf. Spangenberg was elected, and he transformed Herrnhuter Brüdergemeine into a more orthodox church within Lutheran and Reformed Cosmovision by removing the community life and restoring the family life and private property of the members of the Brudergemeine.

The Seven Years' War (1759-1763) that developed in the western territory of the British colonies was an obstacle to further migration to Pennsylvania; therefore, the Brüdergemeine decided to found the Brüderkolonie Sarepta on the Volga river on 23 August/3 September 1765 in the program of colonization initiated by Czarina Catherine II the previous year in the area. To provide for this community, it was necessary to have a German speaking hinterland. Thus arose after the founding of Sarepta some 27 Protestant villages founded between 1766 and 1767[5] with settlers (called Kolonisten) from the area of Wetterau, in the County of Isenburg-Büdingen, who initially were religiously assisted by the Herrnhuter Brüdergemeine, as Igor Pleve stated in his book *The German Colonies on the Volga*.[6]

> The first Reform preacher was Swiss pastor Johannes Janett, who arrived on the Volga from Herrnhut in 1765. Supported at that time by aid from Sarepta, he, his assistants, and followers made trips about the colonies.

Then other preachers of the Moravian Brotherhood came from Switzerland and Germany as evidenced by the list that Erik Amburger gives us in his book *Die Pastoren der evangelischen Kirchen Rußlands*:[7]

1779	H. v. Moos to Katharinenstadt
1784	J.B. Cattaneo to Norka
1786	Seyffarth to Grimm
1790	Blüher to Astrachan
1793	Otto to Beideck Buck to Dietel
1796	Hiemer to Galka
1798	Jauch to Sebastianovka Günther to Stephan
1803	Kohlreiff to Bettinger

Janett Johannes arrived in Sarepta in 1765 and from there began the attention of Protestant communities in the Wolga-Bergseite (mountainous western bank of the Volga River in its lower course). In Sarepta, in 1767, he married Anna Catharina Reuter (1732-1815) and settled with his wife in the Volga German colony of Messer. He was pastor there until 1798, passing away in this village in 1803.[8]

Johannes Baptista Cattaneo wrote his experiences in the book *Eine Reise durch Deutschland und Russland, beschrieben von seinen Freunden J.B. Cattaneo aus Bünden, gegenwaertigen Pfarrer einer reformierten deutschen Colonie zu Norka an der Saratofischen Statthalterschaft an der Wolga in der russischen Tartarei in Asien* which was published in 1787. This text lets us know the spiritual life of the parish composed of the congregations of Norka and Huck. His life has been studied by Holger Finze-Michaelsen who published the book *Von Graubünden an die Wolga: Das Leben des Bündner Pfarrers Johannes Baptista Cattaneo (1745-1831) und seine Zeit* describing the experiences and pastoral work of Johannes Baptista Cattaneo in the Swiss parish of St Antönien, where he served between 1772 and 1784, and in the parish composed of the Volga German communities of Norka and Huck, where he arrived in 1784, and where he died in 1831 after 45 years of service in these two Volga German colonies.

The Volga German colony of Norka was founded on August 15, 1767, had 772 inhabitants in 1769 (when the first census of the German villages on the Volga was performed), while the colony of Huck was founded on July 1, 1767, and had a population of 319 inhabitants. According to the census in 1798, Norka had 1,660 inhabitants and the population of Huck was 643 inhabitants[9]; so when Johannes Baptista Cattaneo arrived the parish had about 2300 members.[10] In the census of 1816, Norka had a population of 2,509 inhabitants, while Huck had 1,209 so the parish had about 3,700 members.[11]

The family of Johannes Baptista Cattaneo belonged to the Herrnhuter Brüdergemeine. His wife Barbara Johanna Thomas, whom he had married in 1768, died in Sarepta in 1808. Her daughters Ursula, Magdalena, and Catharina were Sisters (Schwestern), while their sons Johannes (1773-1835) and Thomas (1777-1831) were Brothers (Brüder) of the Community (Gemeine) of Brüderkolonie Sarepta.[12] In 1841, in Sarepta, his granddaughter Augusta Carolina Cattaneo (1814-1872) married Emmanuel Grunauer (1794-1850). He served as pastor in the colony of Messer, where both settled until the death of pastor Grunauer. After the death of her husband, Augusta Carolina Cattaneo returned to Sarepta where she died.[13]

Village of Sarepta, Photo from Wiki Commons

The census of the Volga German colonies of 1798 ordered by Czar Paul I recorded the movements of all settlers in the ten years prior to the census. Among these movements we can see single women, single men, and even entire families move to the Brüderkolonie Sarepta. All those people come from families who migrated from the County of Isenburg-Büdingen in 1766.[14]

Among the movements of the Volga German colony of Balzer was recorded that Jakob Borell and his family in 1792 moved to Sarepta. In 1796, also Eva

Elisabeth Grasmuck (daughter of Johannes Grasmuck) and Heinrich Wukert and his wife moved to Sarepta.[15]

Among the movements of the colony of Dietel was recorded that Elisabeth Simon (daughter of Nikolaus Simon) in 1795, and Friedrich Knobloch and his family moved in 1796 to Sarepta.[16]

Among the movements of the colony of Hussenbach was recorded that Johannes Pfeifer and his family in 1788, and Nikolaus Hornung moved in 1791 to Sarepta.

Among the movements the movements of the colony of Kutter was recorded that Stephan Huck and his family in 1793, and the sisters Katharina and Anna Margaretha Reifschneider (daughters of Andreas Reifschneider) moved in 1794 to Sarepta.[17]

Among the movements of the colony of Norka was recorded that Katharina Paulÿ (daughter of Peter Paulÿ) moved in 1794 to Sarepta.[19]

Among the movements of the colony of Scherbakovka was recorded that Elisabeth Dorothea Steinert and Friedrich Arn and his wife moved in 1796 to Sarepta.[20]

The religious assistance to German Lutheran and Reformed communities by pastors from the Herrnhuter Brüdergemeine had also been done in Pennsylvania as Aaron Spencer Fogleman expressed in his book *Jesus is Female: Moravians and Radical Religion in Early America*.[21]

> During this period, 148 Moravian (111 men and 37 women) worked in 171 communities in the "Pennsylvania field" (from New York to Virginia), and they heavily influenced the German Reformed and Lutheran congregations that were then expanding dramatically due to record levels of immigration. In 1742, there were 68 pastors working in 52-63 German Lutheran and Reformed congregations, and 46 of them (68%) were Moravian. By 1748, when the Moravians reached the peak of their influence among European colonists, 73 of the 112 pastors working in 108 German Lutheran and Reformed congregations were Moravian. Although their influence was waning by 1754, there were nevertheless 122 Moravians working in the Pennsylvania field. They also opened or worked in at least 22 schools for German children. In addition to German, the Moravians wielded significant influence in the small number of Swedish Lutheran communities in the Delaware Valley during the 1740s, and they worked in 27 ethnically English communities there and in New England.

This religious assistance by pastors from the Moravian Brotherhood to the Volga German colonies[22] continued until the mid-nineteenth century as seen in the lists of the pastors of the parishes in the German colonies area of the Volga. Here we see half of the pastors in some colonies (Frank- Hussenbach, Rosenheim), and in others (Beideck, Dietel-Merkel, Grimm-Dönhof, Katharinenstadt, Messer, Norka-Huck) all or almost all of them (names in boldface) had connection with Herrnhuter Brüdergemeine:[23]

Beideck

1767-1770, Georg Seiher/Seyer

1771-1778, **Laurentius Ahlbaum**

1793-1820, **Johann Martin Otto**

1821-1828, **Lukas Cattaneo**
Propst of the Wolga-Bergseite (1823-1827)

Dietel-Merkel

1772-1774, Gottlieb May

1780-1782, **Laurentius Ahlbaum**

1793-1798, **Johann Heinrich Buck**

1801-1815, **Karl Jakob Früauf**

Frank-Hussenbach

1768-1770, Johann Friedrich Mittelstädt

1771-1778, Johann Friedrich Heitzig

1778-1782, **Laurentius Ahlbaum**

1782-1788, Samuel Büttner

1788-1820, Franz August Flittner

1820-1837, Franz Bernhard Hölz

1831-1833, Franz Karl Hölz

1838-1866, Jakob Würthner

Galka

1771-1778, Johann Kaspar Brauns

1782-1788, Michael Toppelius

1792-1794, Johann Dorn

1796-1804, **Philipp Jakob Hiemer**

1807-1825, Friedrich Wilhelm Schmieder

1826-1847, Johann Hasthofer

1849-1856, Eugen Friedrich Georg Hinsch

Grimm-Dönhof

1767-1781, Christian August Tornow

1782-1786, **Laurentius Ahlbaum**

1786-1804, **Johann Kaspar Seyffarth**

1804-1814, **Philipp Jakob Hiemer**

1815-1819, **Karl Jakob Früauf**

1820-1857, **Karl Friedrich Conrady**
Propst of the Wolga-Bergseite (1827-1857)

Katharinenstadt

1768-1769, Johann Georg Herwig

1779-1803, Hartmann v. Moos

1807-1820, **Johann Samuel Huber**
Propst of the Wolga-Bergseite (1820-1823)

1820-1823, **Emmanuel Grunauer**

1827-1848, Abraham Haag

1851-1860, Heinrich Thomas

Messer

1765-1798, **Johannes Janett**

1798-1804, **Aloysius Xaverius Jauch**

1804-1818, **Joshua Graf**

1820-1822, **Johann Samuel Huber**
Propst of the Wolga-Bergseite (1820-1823)

1823-1850, **Emmanuel Grunauer**

Norka-Huck

1769-1782, Johann Georg Herwig

1784-1830, **Johann Baptist Cattaneo**

1817-1821/1828, **Lukas Cattaneo**
Propst of the Wolga-Bergseite (1823-1827)

1830-1841, **Friedrich Berner**

Rosenheim

1767-1785, Gottlieb May

1786-1788, **Laurentius Ahlbaum**

1788-1792, Cläs Peter Lunberg

1792-1815, Christian Friedrich Jäger

1816-1820, **Franz Hölz**

1820-1831, **Johann Heinrich Buck**

Stephan

1771-1778, Johann Kaspar Brauns

1779-1782, Michael Toppelius

1782-1798, Johann Dorn

1798-1811, Karl Adolph Günther

1812-1834, **Ludwig Heinrich Gottlieb Dietrich**

1835-1838, Theodor Hellmann

1839-1861, Robert Collins

In 1867, Czar Alexander II of Russia, within his plan of Russification, decided to expel the Herrnhuter Brüdergemeine from their domains.[28] In 1871, this expulsion was the impetus for the second migration of these Protestant Germans from their villages in the lower Volga area to the Americas where they settled in Argentina, Canada, and the United States.

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Dr. Michael Brown Appointed as Editor of the AHSGR Journal

By Jerry Siebert

Jerry Siebert, Chair of the Editorial and Publications committee, has announced the appointment of Dr. Michael Brown as Editor of the AHSGR Journal. He replaces Robert Meininger, who served in an outstanding manner in that position and asked to be relieved of his responsibilities.

Siebert acknowledged the many contributions of Meininger to the Journal and noted that his expertise and knowledge will be missed. However, he also noted that Dr. Brown who served as a professor at the University of Wyoming and is a member of the AHSGR Editorial and Publications committee will be an outstanding replacement.

Dr. Brown grew up in Buffalo, Wyoming, and is connected to his Volga German heritage through his grandfather (Brug) who was from the village of Bauer, south of Saratov. He received his doctorate from the University of Utah in 1994 and served as a professor at the University of Wyoming from 1994 to 2017. He specializes in media studies and spent several years as editor of an international radio research journal. Since 2012, he has traveled to Kazakhstan several times as a visiting professsor with the Kazakh National University. He used those opportunities to learn about German Russians there.

In his capacity as Journal Editor, he'll be working with Publications Coordinator Allison Hunter-Frederick.

Germans from Russia Settlement Locations Mapping America

By Sandy Schilling Payne

Sandy Schilling Payne, founder of the Germans from Russia Settlement Locations project, presented the following at the 2019 AHSGR Convention in Lincoln, Nebraska. She is 100% Black Sea German whose ancestors came from the Glückstal and Kutschurgan colonies near Odessa.

Our German ancestors helped colonize the Imperial Russian Empire beginning in 1763 when Catherine the Great issued her manifesto inviting foreigners to immigrate and colonize the fringes of her growing Empire. After German colonists' special privileges were revoked and military service was imposed in 1872 by Tsar Alexander II, they began leaving Russia.

One of the countries to which they immigrated was the United States. It has been nearly 150 years since the first German from Russia arrived in America, and generations upon generations of their descendants still live here.

The Germans from Russia Settlement Locations is a project dedicated to locating and mapping the places in the Russian and neighboring empires where Germans lived. A new branch of the project is researching and mapping the locations in the United States where Germans from Russia migrated beginning the late nineteenth century. The goal of the project is to bring up to date the maps that had been made in the early and mid-1900s by the likes of German cartographer Paul Langhans, *Dakota Freie Presse* editor Richard Sallet, and German Russian ethnographer Karl Stumpp.

History Leading to Emigration from Russia

In 1871, Tsar Alexander II revoked the Codex of the Colonists. This was a set of Russian laws written in 1841 that pertained to the rights, responsibilities, and privileges of the German colonists living in in the Russian Empire at the time. It was based on the promises of Catherine the Great's manifesto of 1763 and of Tsar Alexander I's manifesto of 1804. With the revocation of these laws, control over the local government in the German colonies was abolished and replaced with the same *zemstvo* system that was put in place elsewhere in Russia when serfdom was abolished in 1861. The Germans living in Russia were all now subjects of Russia.

In 1872, Alexander II issued an edict mandating military service from the German colonists. The manifestos of Catherine the Great and Alexander I included freedom from military service. Most Germans living in Russia were anti-military, having seen generations of war in the Germanic states beginning with the Thirty Years war (1618-1648) and continuing with the Seven Years War (1756-1763), the French Revolution (1789-1799), and the Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815). Mandatory service in the Russian military was of great concern and eventually was a deal breaker for the German colonists.

Initially, there was a grace period of ten years before military service would be enforced. This, too, however, would be abruptly changed in 1874 when the Russian Government announced that, effective immediately, all medically fit Russian male subjects who were of age would be required to serve six years in the Russian military.

Suddenly, things got very real.

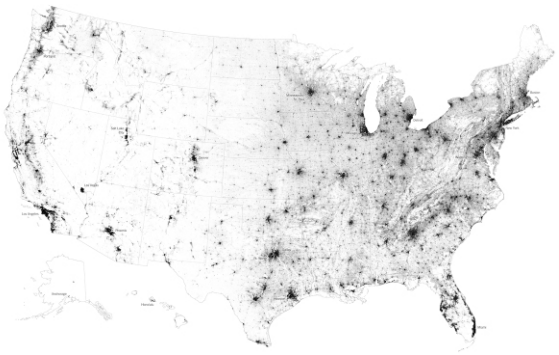
Some German colonists wasted no time and began emigrating from Russia, arriving in the United States as early 1872. Black Sea Germans settled in the Dakota Territory in what is now South Dakota around Avon, Freeman, Butte, Menno, Scotland, Tripp, and Tyndall in fourteen historical townships that were named after their German colonies in Rus-

sia: Dennewitz, Eigenfeld, Friedenstal, Heilbron, Hoffnungstal, Kassel, Klein Kassel, Kulm, Odessa, Postall, Rosenfeld, St. Petersburg, Wittenberg, and Worms. At the same time, Germans from the Volga, Bessarabia, and Volhynia settled in Mason City and Fort Dodge, Iowa.

All over Russia, German colonists began efforts to find a new place to live. Emissaries were sent from colonies in Bessarabia to investigate migrating to nearby Dobrudscha, in what is now Romania and Bulgaria, and at the time a part of the Ottoman Empire. Others migrated to recently opened areas in Central Asia and Siberia where, although still a part of Russia, there was plenty of land and the laws weren't strictly enforced yet.

Even more enticing was the propaganda coming from North America where there was cheap or free land thanks to the Homestead Act of 1862. A conference was held in the Catholic Volga village of Herzog in 1874. At the same time, a similar meeting took place in the Protestant village of Balzar. A year later, in 1875, the first group of settlers left for Topeka, Kansas. The counties of Ellis, Rush, and Russell would become home to many Volga Germans and, by 1879, there were several hundred Volga German families in Nebraska and Kansas.

The Need for a New Map



A Map of Every Building in America by the New York Times, October 12, 2019

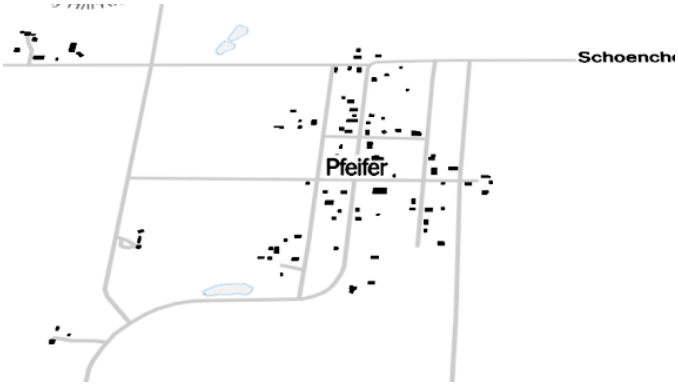
The idea for a new map of German settlements in America came from an article in the *New York Times* in October of 2018 entitled "A Map of Every Building in America." The article included an interactive map that showed the outline of every building in the United States. A neural network of computers was employed and trained to take satellite imagery and recognize blobs of pixels which it would turn into polygons representing building footprints. The majority of the data came from a project by Microsoft engineers who had compiled one of the largest and most comprehensive collection of these images, numbering over 125,192,184 from all fifty states and the District of Columbia.

Drilling down on the map deep into the heart of "German-Russian Country," the small towns in the Dakotas, Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, Colorado, and the rural areas around them looked much like old maps of Russia and the plat maps of German ancestral colonies. The old maps that showed blocks for the church, the school, the cemetery, and farmsteads neatly lining the roads through the colony were eerily similar to the towns on *New York Times* map.

Also similar was the fact that many Germans who immigrated to the United States settled on the frontier where there was nothing else, just as their ancestors did when they settled on the fringes of the Russian Empire generations before. In each case, they broke ground and started to build. In the case of those in the United States, nearly 150 years later, a neural network saw pixel blobs of some of what they built and generated a building footprint.

The overall map looked a lot like Karl Stumpp's *Karte Der russlanddeutschen Siedlungen in den USA und Mexico (Map of Russian-German Settlements in the USA and Mexico)*, published some forty years ago in the mid to late 1970s. Stumpp's map is based on another map by Dakota Freie Presse editor Richard Sallet, and his book *Russian-German Settlements in the United States*, augmented by the work of George Rath's *The Black Sea Germans in the Dakotas*. The focus of these authors have been entirely on the narrative of the immigrant and first generation descendants in the United States. Within the last 150 years, there have been up to five generations of descendants of Germans from Russia that haven't yet been represented a map.

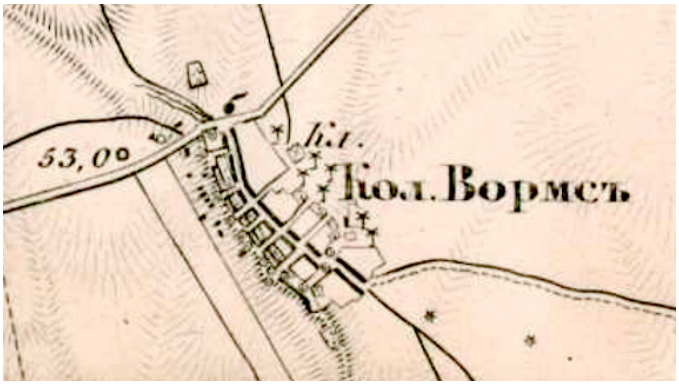
The Volga colony of Pfeiffer from a 1940 Red Army map.



Pfeifer, Ellis County, Kansas from the 2018 New York Times map.

The Kutschurgan colony of Straßburg from a 1910 Austrian map.

Strasburg, Emmons County, North Dakota, from 2019 NYT map.



The Beresan colony of Worms from and 1872 Austrian map.

Worms, Merrick County, Nebraska from the 2018 NYT map.

Karl Stumpp's Map of the Russian-German Settlements in the USA (edited to show the U.S. only). ASHGR Map #14

After spending a weekend playing with the New York Times map, it became clear that a new map of German-Russian settlements in the United States was needed. Some families have lived in the U.S. longer than their ancestors lived in Russia. History didn't end when the German colonists arrived in Russia, nor did it end when German-Russian immigrants arrived in America. Knowing how German-Russians like to migrate, I was curious: Where did everybody go?

The Research

While it would be much easier and faster to simply put a pin on a map using the name of the place as it is today and call it good, the maps that are a part of the Germans from Russia Settlement Locations project are more than two-dimensional maps that just happen to be online. They strive to be useful and dynamic research tools. This means taking the time to collect additional data for each place that will help current and future researchers with their genealogy research and with their overall understanding of their heritage in terms of geography.

The process for the map of German-Russian settlement in America follows the same process as other Germans from Russia Settlement Location maps. It is comprised of these broad steps, each of which are described below:

- Compile a master list of places where immigrant Germans from Russia and their descendants lived.
- Identify what data points will be collected for each place.
- Identify the major sources to be used for collection of each of the data points.
- Research and record the data for each place, adding sources as needed to complete the data.
- Create and populate the online map.
- Release the map and update the data with feedback from users.

Before the research began, a few terms needed to be defined.

For the purpose of this project, the term "place" refers to an exact physical location where Germans from Russia resided, or (in the case of those who lived on farm or in the country) where their post office was located. Unlike in Russia where groups of Germans founded colonies and lived on farmsteads within a colony in America, those who came for land homesteaded on farms of their own. Others were drawn to towns and larger cities where there was employment opportunity and also the opportunity to run one's own business. Therefore, a "place" can be any of the following: a city, a town, a census-designated place, an unincorporated community, a borough, a neighborhood, an historical post office, an historical township, an historical cemetery if the location of any of the above is in question, or a homestead that doubled as a post office in a rural area.

Another term that needed to be defined is "first generation." Because definitions of first generation can vary by researcher, this project defines the ancestral generations as follows:

- Immigrant generation: immigrated to the United States, born outside the United States.
- First generation descendants: children of the immigrant generation.
- Second generation descendants: grandchildren of the immigrant generation.
- Third generation descendants: great-grandchildren of the immigrant generation.
- Fourth generation descendants: great-great-grandchildren of the immigrant generation.
- Fifth generation descendant: great-great-great-grandchildren of the immigrant generation.

Generations are used to describe the German-Russian origins of each place. For example, a place may have had immigrant Germans from Russia residing there along with first and second generation descendants before the third generation moved elsewhere. Defining the generations helps standardize the language used to track this kind of data.

Master List of Places

The vast majority of the online maps from the Germans from Russia Settlement locations project have started with a paper map. Mapping America would be no different. It started with Stumpp's map of the United States with its several *Sonderkarten* (special

maps) of states and areas a larger number of places where German-Russians settled. Going state-by-state, a master list of places was compiled and compared with the map and text in Sallet's book. Neither map was much good for measuring out the coordinates needed, but the United States is young with a comparatively short history to other countries. It is also well documented and well mapped. Locating places wasn't going to be a problem.

What seemed to be problematic was getting a full list of places, not just for the immigrant German-Russian, but for all the subsequent generations that take us to the present day. The map was a good start but by no means complete.

Other sources were added to expand the list beginning with the Germans from Russia Heritage Society's (GRHS) Letters Archive and German language newspaper indexes <www.grhs.org/pages/Letter-Archive>. Letters to the editors of German language newspapers published in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries in America were a means for immigrant German-Russians and Germans who were still in Russia to communicate about their lives cheaply, frequently, and to a wide audience of readers. The newspapers circulated in both countries. The GRHS's Letters Archive is a collection of selected transcribed and translated letters from from some of those newspaper. The newspaper indexes were compiled by Edward Bischoff (*Die Eureka Post, Eureka Rundschau, Das Nordlicht, Mandan Volkszeitung,* and *Nord Dakota Herold*) and Michael Rempfer (*Dakota Freie Presse* and *Der Staats-Anzeiger*). The indexes were extremely useful because they provided three essentials pieces of information: the name of a German-Russian, the place from which they mailed the letter (town, county, state), and the date they wrote the letter. This effectively placed a person in a physical place on a particular date in time, saying quietly, and yet still for all of history, "I was here."

The places where Volga Germans settled the United States are better documented than Black Sea, Volhynian, and other lesser known groups of Germans from Russia. Two websites in particular are dedicated to tracking where Volga Germans originally settled in Russia, where they migrated, where they were deported, and where they immigrated after World War II. These sites are the Center for Volga German Studies (CVGS) at Concordia University in Portland, Oregon <cvgs.cu-portland.edu/> and the Volga German Institute (VGI) at Fairfield University in Fairfield, Connecticut <vgi.fairfield.edu/>. These sites as sources were incorporated into the master list of places.

The sources mentioned above did provide places where German-Russians lived in nearly every state and began to show where they lived up until about the 1950s when the newspapers ceased publication. What about after that? Genealogy as a hobby (and sometimes obsession) has been growing rapidly over the past ten to fifteen years as research on the internet has made it easier for novices to get hooked. The best way to confirm what is known about the earlier generations and expand on the later generations up to the present would be to simply ask the descendants of Germans from Russia who are currently involved in doing genealogy research of their families.

An online survey (Survey: Germans from Russia in America <bit.ly/surveyGRinUSA>) was written and released on May 1, 2019. It asked for information about the immigrant German from Russia in a family through the fifth generation or the three-times great-grandchildren of the immigrant. It was circulated through social media, over popular online genealogy sites, and through the email distribution list of the Germans from Russia Settlement Locations blog <www.germansfromrussiasettlementlocations.org/>. The purpose of the survey was to collect information about where immigrant Germans from Russia lived in the United States, where they came from in Russia, and where their descendants lived. The goal was to record as many generations as possible forward from the German-Russian immigrant. The survey was open through December 31, 2019. Within the first month, the survey responses generated a significant number of previously undocumented locations where German-Russians and their descendants settled in the U.S.

Data Points

The data points collected for each place on the map fall into five major categories.

1. About the Place.
    a. Place Name: This is the name of the place (post office, township, town, city, etc.) where Germans from Russia lived; spelling corrected if necessary.
    b. Other Names and Spellings: Other names the place went by including alternate spellings and misspellings from sources.
    c. Latitude, Longitude: Coordinates are used to position the pin on the place on the map. They are generally located at either the city hall, post office, library or other government building if there is one. For those places that no longer exist or are considered ghost towns, the coordinates of the historical post offices, townships, or cemeteries are identified and used.
2. German-Russian History of the Place
    a. Earliest known year of German-Russian habitation: This is the earliest recorded year that Germans from Russia lived in a place.
    b. German-Russian Origins: This is the area and place (chutor, colony, village, city, oblast, etc.) in Russia from which the immigrant German from Russia came. If subsequent generations are known, they are also recorded as descendants of the immigrant generation using the immigrant's origins.
3. General History of the Place
    a. Year founded: Settlement by Europeans may occur before official founding or incorporation, so for some cases the earlier date is used. At least in the West, founding often came about when a railroad was built through the town and/or a post office was established.
    b. County at Time of Founding: This is based on the year founded (see above). Sometimes counties were established prior to a state joining the Union. County lines changed in some states. Larger counties were broken into smaller ones as the population grew or the vastness of the area proved difficult to manage. This is recorded because some of the letters from the newspaper indexes have the older counties listed on them.
    c. State at Time of Founding: This is based on the year founded (see above). Many of the places Germans from Russia settled were in U.S. territories when they were founded and were still territories when Germans from Russia arrived.
    d. Country at time of Founding: This is based on the year founded (see above). The United States is a young country. Some of the places where Germans from Russia settled were subjects of other countries at the time of their founding. Does it matter in terms of the history of Germans from Russia? Maybe. In most cases, the history of the place did not begin with the arrival of the Germans. More often that not, they did not initially found the town in which they lived, unlike in Russia where that was the norm.
4. Current Information About the Place
    a. Current Name: This is the name of the place today.
    b. Current County: This is the name of the county (or parish in Louisiana, or counties/parishes if it spans more than one) where the place is today.
    c. Current State: This is the name of the state where the place is today.
    d. Current Country: This is the name of the country where the place is today.
    e. Cemetery: This is a link of the cemeteries in Find a Grave <www.findagrave.com/> for the place. For places that do not have cemeteries, the county link is given. A Google Map link is given for cemeteries that are not in Find a Grave.
    f. Images: Place holder for adding links to historic and current images of the place.
    g. Notes: Notes about the founding, incorporation, first post office, railroad, etc.

Sources

The sources used for data collection for this project include paper maps, general books on Germans from Russia in U.S, newspapers and newspaper indexes, and websites that contain either original research and/or digitized maps and books. Sources are continually being added as the research progresses and are too numerous to list in full here. A sample of maps, books, and newspapers used follows. The full list with links, including websites, can be found on the project's website, Germans from Russia Settlement Locations in America <america.germansfromrussiasettlementlocations.org/home>.

1. Maps
   a. *Karte der russland deutschen Siedlungen in den USA und Mexiko (Map of Russian-German Settlements in the USA and Mexico),* Karl Stumpp (no publication date, circa 1977).
   b. *Russlanddeutsche Siedlungen in den Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika (Russian German Settlement in the United States of America),* Richard Sallet, 1930.
   c. *Verbreitung des Deutschtums in Nord-Amerika (Dissemination of the Germans in North America)*, Paul Langhans, 1897.
2. Books
   a. *The Black Sea Germans in the Dakotas,* George Rath, 1977, Pine Hill Press, Freeman, South Dakota.
   b. *Russian-German Settlements in the United States*, Richard Sallet (1974).
   c. *The Volga Germans in Russia and the Americas from 1763 to the Present*, Fred C. Koch, 1977, The Pennsylvania State University Press.
3. Newspapers
   a. Letters from the *Dakota Freie Press* [sic] (7-May-1903 to 1-July-1916), Michael Rempfer, 2011, Germans from Russia Heritage Society. An index of letters written to the editor of the *Dakota Freie Presse*, a German language newspaper published in Yankton, Dakota Territory (later South Dakota) between 1874 and 1954.
   b. Letters from the *Der Staats-Anzeiger* (1907-March, 1956, Rugby, Devils Lake, Bismarck, North Dakota), Michael Rempfer, 2005, Germans from Russia Heritage Society. An index of letters written to the editor of *Der Staats-Anzeiger,* a German language newspaper published in Rugby, North Dakota and later in Devils Lake and Bismarck.
   c. Letters from the *Die Eureka Post* (Apr 13, 1904 to Jun 29, 1911, Eureka, South Dakota), Edward Bischoff, 2012, Germans from Russia Heritage Society. An index of letters written to the editor of *Die Eureka Post*, a German language newspaper published in Eureka, South Dakota.
   d. Letters from the *Eureka Rundschau* and *Das Nordlicht*, (3 Jun 1915 to 27 Dec 1929), Edward Bischoff, 2012, Germans from Russia Heritage Society. An index of letters written to the editors of two German language newspapers, the *Eureka Rundschau* (published between 1915-1927 in Eureka, South Dakota) and Das Nordlicht. The two merged under the title *Eureka Rundschau* und *das Nordlicht* and published between 1927-1928 in Winona, Minnesota.
   e. Letters from the *Nord Dakota Herold* (Nov 1907 - Mar 1937, Bismarck, North Dakota), Edward Bischoff, 2012, Germans from Russia Heritage Society. An index of letters written to the editor of *Nord Dakota Herold*, a German language newspaper published in Bismarck, North Dakota
   f. Letters from the *Mandan Volkszeitung* (7 June 1927 to 30 May 1928), Edward Bischoff, 2013, Germans from Russia Heritage Society. An index of letters written to the editor of the *Mandan Volkszeitung*, a German language newspaper.

Research and Record Data

This is where the bulk of the work happens. For each place on the list, the information for each data point is added to a spreadsheet using the sources along with any additional new sources required. The maps, books, newspapers, and websites used to derive the information for each field are listed in the sources. Doing the locate on a place can take anywhere from ten minutes to a few hours.

For example, there is an overwhelming amount of information about Lincoln, Nebraska, its location, and its German-Russian population. There is, however, no information about Kevhart, New Mexico, its location, and its German-Russian population.

The name of the place came from a letter written to the *Dakota Freie Presse* in April 1916. The letter was either written in or mailed from a place named Kevhart, New Mexico, by a man named Heinrich Schnell. This is commonly all the information there is to go on with newspaper letters. Kevhart doesn't currently exist, so ghost town registries were checked. It was not a ghost town. The next step was to see if

it was a historical post office. It was. It's name was Kephart (the misspelling could have occurred with the letter writer or the index transcriber) located in Goat Canyon, Union County, New Mexico. Using the U.S. Geological Survey topographic map database, two Goat Canyons existed in New Mexico, and one was in Union County. Checking its coordinates, it was near where other known German-Russian settlements were in northeastern New Mexico. Knowing that sometimes rural post offices were run out of homesteads, the next check was for a homestead claim with the surname Kephart. New Mexico is a public lands state, so the Bureau of Land Management's General Land Office records were searched, and there was a claim by May Kephart near the time when the letter was written. The last step was to take the legal land description from the homestead claim (township, range and section) and convert it into its centroid coordinates (center of the acreage of the claim) to pin on the map. The German-Russian origins have not been confirmed, but there is some evidence pointing to Volga Germans connected to either Kansas or Nebraska.

The above description multiplied by roughly 2,500 locations equals a fair amount of time and effort.

Create and Populate Online Map

There are several mapping programs available now for creating custom online maps. Google My Maps is free and customizable. No login is necessary to see the maps, and they work in any web browser.

To be able to present and update this large amount of data, location pins are never manually added to maps one at a time. A spreadsheet file specifically created to import data into Google My Maps is kept and used for creation of the maps and for any updates. This allows for easier input and analysis of the data prior to creating or updating a map, and it also enables mass updates to any set of data on a map.

There are some limitations to Google My Maps that need to be accounted for when designing any new map. Of note, there is a limit of ten layers. Each layer appears in the legend on the left side of the map, and for the purpose of this project, is used for grouping and formatting specific sets of locations. Each layer has a limit of 2,000 pins. Each location is a pin. When grouping locations in a layer, care needs to be taken not to exceed the limit, otherwise data will be dropped off the map. Finally, there is a limited number of colors available for pins. And while there are hundreds of different icons that can be used as markers, standard, old-school location icons (pins without dots in the center) are used. This was done to ensure the map is not too busy and difficult to look at for long periods of time.

To divvy up fifty states among ten layers, a number of different standard regional categories were evaluated. The U.S. Census Bureau designated regions and divisions made the most sense. They were descriptive and fit within the structure of Google My Maps.

- New England: Connecticut, Main, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont
- Mid-Atlantic: New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania
- East North Central: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin
- West North Central: Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota
- South Atlantic: Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia
- East South Central: Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee
- West South Central: Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas
- Mountain: Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming
- Pacific: Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, Washington

U.S. territories (American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands) are not included in the census regions. For the purpose of this project, Guam was added to the West Region. If research reveals Germans from Russia living in other territories, an additional layer may be added specifically for the territories.

Map Release and Feedback

The beta version of the map was released on July 2, 2019, in order to test the formatting and to get some initial feedback from users. The full map is expected to be released in early 2020 after the survey is closed and the data has been compiled and incorporated into map. Shortly after the full map is released, the data will also be released so others can use it for their own research projects.

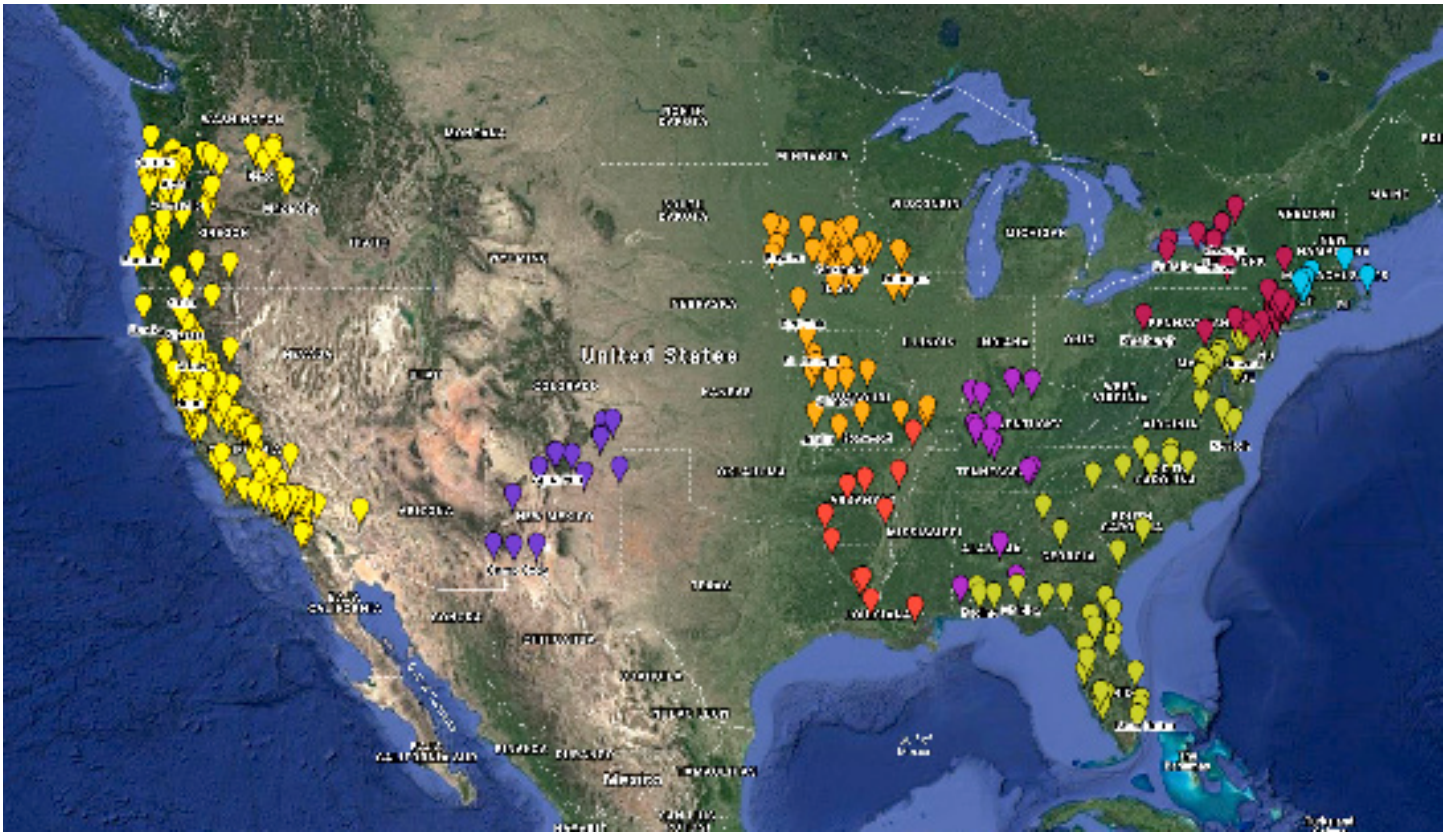
From the outset, all of the maps that are a part of the Germans from Russia Settlement Locations project are works in progress and living documents. This means that every effort will be made to keep the data current as new information is obtained and also as the world changes. That model applies to the map of Germans from Russia in America, too.

Summary

While some descendants stayed for generations near where their German-Russian immigrant ancestors first settled in America, others wandered. The ability to move where there was opportunity was never lost on the Germans from Russia who made the United States their home. While the heart of German-Russian Country remains steadfast today nearly 150 years after the first immigrant Germans from Russia arrived, many of their descendants have taken their German-Russian hearts on the road, went where there was opportunity, and settled all across the country.

So the answer to the question posed earlier "Where did everybody go?" may simply be this: everywhere. They went everywhere.

You can read more about the project, research, data, and view the map in progress at the website "Germans from Russia in America" <america.germansfromrussiasettlementlocations.org/home>



Beta version of the Germans from Russia in America map <http://bit.ly/mapGRinAmerica>

Drafting of Germans in the Russian Army after 1874

By Dr Olga Erokhina

Translated by Yulia Tsymbal

The following article by Dr. Olga Erokhina is the first one of the series of three articles summarizing the research results of the Military Draft Project, a successful collaboration between two AHSGR Board of Directors Committees and three enthusiastic Russian historians.

It all started in the summer of 2014 during the AHSGR convention in Lincoln. Among the foreign speakers were "two Olgas" from Russia: Olga Zubova, Deputy Director of the Central State Archive of Samara Oblast (TsGASO), and Dr. Olga Erokhina, History Professor at Moscow State Humanities University. Both of them had been working with AHSGR Board Historical Research and Archives Committees for several years. It was a great opportunity to brainstorm and come up with some new and exciting projects based on AHSGR interests and resources and the Russian historian's expertise and knowledge. Out of all this, the idea of the Military Draft Project was born.

Over the fall of 2014, the goals and strategies were discussed and defined. It was decided to involve another researcher and old friend, Dr. Ananyan from Volgograd, into the project. Elena Ananyan was to study documents from the Volga area archives and see how the introduction of the universal military draft in the 1870s affected the German population. Olga Erokhina planned to access records of the central archives in Moscow and St Petersburg and search for documents that reflected the new legislation pertaining to the conscription of German young men into the Russian Army.

To make a long story short, Olga Erokhina was in for a few surprising discoveries, especially in St Petersburg.

Dr. Ananyan concentrated on two collections of the Central State Archive of Volgograd Oblast (TsGAVO): Fond 216 (Kolb Village Administration) and Fond 253 (Medveditskoye Volost Administration) where she searched for information pertaining to the military draft. She was looking, in particular, for files that either contained various lists (draftees, discharged, wounded, or killed) or had data that helped to recreate the life of Kolb residents during wars and military conflicts.

Dr. Erokhina found that out of the central archives, two have the most information on the conscription of the Germans: the Russia State Military History Archive (RGVIA) in Moscow and the Russian State Historical Archive (RGIA) in St Petersburg.

Both researchers were regularly sending reports on their progress which were presented to the Historical Research and Archives Committees and can be found in the Military Draft binders which are now in the AHSGR library.

Several years of work including a number of research trips to Saratov and St Petersburg archives resulted in extensive material, the bulk of which are copies of original records. They are available for research at AHSGR library; the only problem being that they are in Russian and German and have not been translated. From this research project evolved three articles written by Dr. Ananyan and Dr. Erokhina. These I have translated, and they will be published in the current and future issues of the Journal.

I am happy to have worked on the Military Draft Project and want to thank not only "the two Olgas" and Elena for their contribution and hard work, but also the former long term Chairs of the Historical

Research and Archives Committees, Patti Sellenrick and Kevin Rupp, for their support, encouragement, and friendship.

Yulia Tsymbal, Former AHSGR Translations and Archives Special Projects Coordinator

The second part of the 19th century was the time of reforms and counter reforms in the Russian Empire. This was caused by a number of factors: the educated political elite was ready for the reforms and the government realized that economically Russia was far behind the European powers.

The defeat of Russia in the Crimean War (1853-1856) exposed all kinds of problems existing in the army. The program of changes was developed by D.A. Milyutin; it included a whole complex of long-term measures that took more than 20 years to be implemented.

As a result of the reform, the military forces of the Russian Empire underwent a complete transformation. It affected not only the technical aspect of the army, but also the system of administration and the way army personnel were trained.

The final step of the military reform was the introduction of compulsory military service. The issue of the exemption of German colonists from the military duty had been discussed in the Russian society since the first half of the 19th century. This privilege was granted to the colonists by Catherine the Great in her Manifesto that said: "Those foreigners who settled in Russia shall not be forced to serve in the army ... those who wish to go into military service will be rewarded with 30 rubles in addition to the salary."[1] Many Volga German colonists were even proud of this privilege and liked to mention it talking to Russian neighbors.[2] During the reign of Pavel I and Alexander I, this privilege was confirmed by additional statutes.[3] But since 1825 colonists were obliged to pay 500 rubles per every recruit exempt from the military service.[4]

When Prussian Mennonites settled in Samara gubernia in 1851 and 1859, a statute was issued releasing them from the military service. However, at the end of the 20 years grace period, they were to pay "recruit duty" of 300 silver rubles.[5]

On 9 November 1861, D.A. Milyutin was appointed as the Minister of War. He immediately started working on the reforms program and submitted it on 15 January 1862 for the Emperor's approval. In March 1862, on the War Minister's initiative, a special committee for the revision of the Recruits' Statute of 1831 was organized at the State Council. Privy Councilor N.I. Bakhtin was appointed the chairman of the committee.[6]

There were several foreigners among the committee members including Lieutenant General Count F.L. von Geyden, Privy Councilors N.A. Gerngross and A.K. Girs, and Hofmarschall Count Yu.I. Stenbock-Fermor. The issue of the exemption of colonists from the military duty was raised at one of the first committee meetings. Starting with 28 May 1863, eight meetings were devoted to this question.

The committee members reasoned that the colonists had been living in Russia for more than 100 years and were land owners. However, they were not sending recruits to serve in the army thus the consensus was that "... since the colonists were subjects of the state, it would be fair for them to be liable for the military service like the rest of the Empire population."[7]

The draft statute was presented to the State Council in April 1864. Foreign colonists were assigned to the III rank of recruit duty exemption. Bessarabian and Taurida settlers were included into the VIII rank. Foreign settlers were divided into three categories: the first one included colonists who had arrived after 1763 Manifesto, Grodno tradesmen, Belostock settlers, Solingen gunsmiths working at Zlatoust gun factory, cloth makers, artisans, and workers from the Kingdom of Poland who had resettled to the central Russian gubernias, as well as foreign sheep breeders, shepherds, and veterinarians; the second category included Rusnaks and Danube settlers of 1853-1854 who were exempt from the military duty with children for life; in the third category were Mennonites who had to pay instead of sending recruits when the grace period was over in 1871.[8]

On 13 and 20 November 1864 and 1 February 1865, the committee's draft was discussed at the Laws' Department and at the State Council general meeting.

Fourteen Council members voted for keeping the existing colonists' privileges, and in February of 1865 this decision was approved by Alexander II.[9]

On 10 February 1864, a law was announced that obligated all the foreigners to become Russian subjects. The law changed the status of German colonists to the same category as Russian peasants. The statute of 18 January 1866 implemented the same administrative system governing the Russian peasants and foreign colonists.[10] The latter were to identify themselves as peasants or representatives of another social class. If foreigners did not wish to become Russian subjects, they had to leave the territory of the Russian Empire.

The abolition of the "colonists" status was finalized with the issue of the "Rules on the governing of settlers-proprietors (former colonists) who settled on the state land in St Petersburgskaya, Samarskaya, Saratovskaya, Voronezhskaya, Chernigovskaya, Poltavskaya, Ekaterinoslavskaya, Khersonskaya, Tavricheskaya gubernias, and Bessarabskaya oblast". They became equal in their status with peasants and had to carry on the same obligations and duties, including the duty to serve in the Russian army.

Before the Rules were announced, the committee that was formed in 1870 for the discussion of the law on the universal military duty suggested dividing foreign settlers into three categories: the first one included those exempted for life from both physical and monetary recruiting duty; the second one included those exempted for life as well as their children; in the third one were Mennonites who had arrived in Russia before 18 December 1861 and "after 20 years had to pay a duty."[11]

A member of the committee, Colonel M.S. Maksakovsky, considered the issue on colonists controversial because "benefits and exemptions were granted to the colonists as part of the agreement … signed by the government at the time of the resettlement." He pointed out that colonists had been invited for the development of the southern territories of the Volga area and Novorossiya, but, according to Maksakovsky, the results achieved by foreign settlement were not very impressive. Consequently, "the existing situation is far from being normal and it cannot continue just because of the agreements that have outlived themselves. Thus there is no denying that applying the military duty law to colonists who have been living in Russia for a long time would benefit everyone." Colonists as "subjects of the Russian Empire…should be interested in protecting their country along other citizens. Allowing them to be a separate state within the state is out of the question."[12]

M.S. Maksakovsky insisted on imposing the military duty on Mennonites and abolishing monetary contributions. They were to serve in medical teams because of their faith.[13] Mennonites had a lot of concerns regarding the discussions of the "military question." Between the fall of 1871 and through 1873, they were writing letters and requests, and sending petitions to the local and central administrations and to the Empress and Emperor asking not to impose the military duty on their community. However, the head of the War Department, D.A. Milyutin considered those to be "individual claims which seemed unreasonable."[14]

Governor General of Novorossiya and Bessarabia P.E. Kotsebu's opinion was that if the government did not want to lose this hard-working people; they needed to release the Mennonite population from the military duty under some excuse and replace it by indirect payment. Besides, he suggested appointing Mennonites "as service personnel at hospitals in Southern Russia, as mechanics and technicians at the Naval Department units in Nikolaev, etc."[15]

At the end of 1873, after much deliberation, and taking into account Mennonites attitude towards the military service, the committee completed a draft of the "Statute on the Military Service" and sent it to the State Council for approval. The decision was to "to make colonists who used to be exempt from the recruit obligation, liable for the military service while ... preserving some benefits for Mennonites."[16]

On 1 January 1874, Alexander II signed the Regulations of the Military Service which made the duty to serve in the Russian army "a sacred obligation of every male Russian subject" irrespective of the social background.[17] From now on colonists had to serve in the army.

Mennonites were worried about the uncertain situation and started emigrating or moving to the eastern areas of the Empire. The rate of the emigration was steadily increasing and could result in the destabilization of the economy.

At first, the authorities did not pay much attention to this process but, in April of 1874, Adjutant General E.I. Totleben was sent to Mennonites. He visited more than 60 colonies of Tavricheskaya and Ekaterinoslavskaya gubernias and met with Mennonite representatives.

The next year the State Council amended article 157 of the Regulations of the Military Service which released Mennonites from carrying arms. But they still had to serve at repair shops of the Naval Department, fire brigades, or in special mobile teams of the Forest Department.

But even the granted privileges did not stop the Mennonites' emigration. Tavricheskaya gubernia governor A.A. Kavelin thought that "they could not get over the fact that since 1871 they have been under the same administration as Russian peasants."[18] It is also possible that Mennonites could not accept the idea of serving in the army.

At the end of the 1870s, Mennonites addressed the government with a request to serve only in Forest Teams because this went well along with their religious values and way of life. The authorities agreed to that under certain conditions. The Mennonite community were to: 1) provide everything necessary for the Forest Teams; 2) build six camps—two in Tavricheskaya gubernia, two near Ekaterinoslav and two by Kherson. The Rules on the conscription of Mennonites were issued on 25 May 1882 and confirmed by Forest Statute of 1905. Mennonites served in the Forest Teams under the jurisdiction of the Administration of Land Surveying and Management; in war time they were also to serve in medical battalions. Under the Rules, the term of the service was four years from 1880 until 1907 and was reduced to one year after 1907.

The first draft of German colonists according to the new Regulations of the Military Service took place in 1875. Recruits were drafted October through November of the previous year. Then they were allowed to return home until they were to report to their service location on 1 March of the following year. Mennonites started to be drafted in 1881.

According to article 103 of the Regulations, all the males who had turned 20 in the year before the draft, were included into conscription lists. To be drafted, the recruit had to be at least two arshin 2½ vershok tall.[19] If the recruit was fit to serve, but shorter than that, he either got deferment according to article 44 of the Regulations "to mature," signed for the home guard, or considered unfit for the military service.

In most cases, colonists' occupation prior to the draft determined the army branch they were assigned to. The majority of German recruits served in the infantry with some in the artillery and cavalry. The active military service was followed by nine years in the reserve.

Recruits for the active military service were selected by draw based on the conscription lists. The rest of the recruits were assigned to the home guard where they stayed till they turned 40 years old. They were to be called up in case of war or emergency.

Eligibility for the military service was determined taking into account family circumstances, the number of able-bodied, and the level of education of recruits. The term of service was reduced for those who could present a graduation certificate.

There were three categories of exemptions from the military service on the grounds of the family situation. The first class exemption was applied in the following cases:

- An only able-bodied son supporting a disabled father or widowed mother;
- An only able-bodied brother supporting one or several orphaned siblings;
- An only able-bodied grandson supporting grandparents in absence of an able-bodied son;
- An only son in the family even with an able-bodied father.
- The second class exemption was applied to families with only one able-bodied son, an able-bodied father and brothers younger than 18 years old.

Under the third class (article 45 of the Regulations of the Military Service), males close in age to their older brothers who either were serving in the army or had been killed were exempted from the military duty, but could be drafted in case there was not enough of eligible recruits.

During the first years of the conscription, dignitaries often visited recruiting stations. Thus, on 12 November 1874, the draft in Hussenbach (Linevo Ozero) was attended by Saratov Governor M.N. Galkin-Vrassky and Mayor General V.A. Rodionov, a member of the Imperial court overseeing the conscription of recruits in Saratovskaya gubernia.

The procedure of drafting German colonists was finalized by the beginning of the 20th century, after the end of the grace period.

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Sweeter Than A Double-Decker Cone

By Rebecca Bender

A fall day, a Jew, and a Richfield Lutheran Church

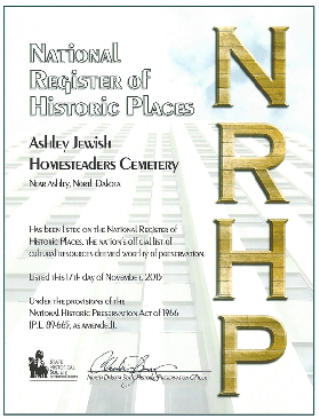
It was a brisk day—the kind of early autumn day when the falling leaves are still appreciated for their unique twirls from the trees to the ground. With my sister Nancy's help, I carried in the boxes of books I optimistically hoped to sell following my reading. There I was, a Jew, raised in St. Louis Park, the invited speaker at the monthly meeting of the Minnesota chapter of the Germans from Russia, at a Lutheran church in Richfield. To those who didn't know my family's history, it may have seemed like an unusual pairing. Far from it. I was right where I was supposed to be.

It all started in 2013, when my son Lincoln was with me, visiting the Ashley, North Dakota Jewish Cemetery, where my great-grandfather is buried. He began asking me questions about the community of Russian Jewish immigrants who arrived in the early 1900s with no farming experience to farm the North Dakota prairies. I didn't have sufficient answers. But the seed was planted for me to learn more— for my son, myself, our family, and people I had never met.

After much research in three states, a lot of "you'll never succeed, you're not a historian" advice, and one failed attempt, I was ultimately successful in achieving a listing of the remote Ashley Jewish Homesteaders Cemetery on the National Register of Historic Places. Mission completed or was it? What about the people who happen by this cemetery and wonder about the Hebrew writing on the monuments? I thought. These questions led to the second stage of this unplanned quest, fundraising to place half-ton boulders with explanatory plaques on the site to further preserve this Jewish community's history. Fortunately, the Jewish American Society for Historic Preservation agreed to match donations we received from descendants of those buried at the Jewish Homesteaders Cemetery and others with no apparent connection. I and the other two board members of the cemetery association sent out invitations to a rededication. I naively set the event for mid-May, figuring the weather would be welcoming.

Over 100 people arrived (Jews and non-Jews from seven states), most savvy enough to be wearing hats and coats to combat the cold wind, which promptly blew over my sister's and my music stands before our violin/flute duet of "Sim Shalom" ("Spread Peace"). We acknowledged the wind's power but refused to acknowledge its sovereignty. My nephews held our music, and the wind begrudgingly carried our notes over the tall-grass plains.

After the ceremony, I scheduled a reception at a nearby 99-year-old barn recently converted to a dinner theater, with an American flag painted on its weathered roof. I brought eight pans of buttermilk kugel (noodle pudding) I carefully prepared using my late mother's recipe, and the tables were decorated with Kosher chocolates and lilacs in old milk-jugs. The whole experience was a bit surreal for a city girl like me. At times, I felt like an actor playing someone else's part—with the big-sky venues and the wind machine on an enormous Hollywood sound stage.



Thus began phase three, as organically as phases one and two had commenced. In the course of my research, I had discovered so many inspiring stories regarding my family who escaped the Odessa pogroms that killed my grandfather's two older brothers. And shortly before my dad's death, he had handwritten stories that I typed into *From the Prairies to the Beaches*, the manuscript about his journey from the Dakotas to the beaches of Normandy on D Day +1.The common themes over five generations—of faith despite challenges, perseverance, trying to lead a good life, and gratitude for America's freedoms—were too overwhelming to ignore. And there was another unexpected theme that appeared and spoke loudly over 150 years—similarities and repeated acts of kindness back and forth, between groups of people who from outward appearances might not have seemed to have much in common.

When my Russian Jewish ancestors arrived in McIntosh County, North Dakota, from Odessa, Russia, by way of steerage on the Red Star Line out of Antwerp, Belgium, they landed at the base of the German-Russian Triangle (sometimes affectionately called "the Sauerkraut Triangle"). Over 75% percent of the population in the area was made up of Black Sea German Protestants, mostly Lutheran. They began moving from Germany to Russia to farm in the 1760s, based upon promises of Catherine the Great that they could own land and would be allowed to maintain their culture and language as well as be exempt from Russian military service. Gradually, these promises that induced them to move were broken. The increase in anti-German sentiment in Russia resulted in a great hegira of the German-Russians to the Dakotas.

Surprisingly, the connections between the Russian Jewish immigrants to the area and the German-Russians were not merely that they became neighbors once arriving in America. The Jews and German-Russians had worked together in Russia, developing a level of trust that continued over 5000 miles away, in Ashley, North Dakota. In Russia, Jews were not allowed to own land to farm, as a result of the 1882 May Laws. The fact that these decrees existed, restricting occupational choices based solely upon one's faith, resulted in many Jews earning a living working directly with the German-Russians. The German-Russians raised wheat, corn, and rye; the Jewish grain merchants bought the grain at the farms; and the Moldavian peasants hauled the crop by wagons to the train depot.

Also, according to old newspaper accounts, the Germans from Russia (and also the Jews) believed that living in Ashley would be somewhat similar to living in Odessa, as both cities had a 46-degree latitude. It was not. The immigrants didn't realize that factors such as distance to the nearest ocean and elevation affected climate, and that the depositing of Canadian Shield core bedrock by glaciers moving across the North Dakota land 12,000 years earlier affected the quality of the land for farming. Much of McIntosh County, North Dakota's homestead land was filled with rocks and stones, and the weather could fluctuate widely, between extreme cold and heat, not to mention tornados, blizzards, prairie fires, and drought. But the great majority of Jews and German-Russians had something else in common—they were willing to put up with tying themselves with a rope to their door, in case a blizzard would come up while they were feeding the animals, so they could find their way back, and filling their sodhouse coal stoves every two hours—in return for the religious freedom and independence that America offered.

I submitted my manuscript entitled *Still*, covering 150 years and five generations of my family's stories, to several publishers. Dr. Suzzanne Kelley at North Dakota State University Press shared my excitement over the subject matter, as did the anonymous reviewers of my manuscript and the Editorial Board of NDSU Press. After the book release came the book talks and the signings. Different venues called for different focuses for my readings.

At the Lutheran church in Richfield, over 100 years after the Jews and Germans had been farming neighbors, I began telling some of the stories of community between the groups. I told the story of my great grand-aunt Sarah, who, being fluent in English, Russian, German, and Yiddish, served as a go-between

for the American doctor when the non-Jewish German women were ready to give birth. Farmers would come to the door of the Auerbachs' house and knock at all hours, so Sarah would go with the farmer to get the doctor and stay to translate until the baby was born. A number of German mothers were so thankful they named their baby daughter Sarah after my aunt.

I told the story of Israel, my great-grand uncle, who owned the Ashley General Store, and would sell staples (flour, sugar, and salt) at cost to farmers down on their luck and would hold their bills until the crop came in, which eventually led him almost into bankruptcy. The morning Israel appeared at the bank to give them the keys to his store, his non-Jewish neighbors, appreciative of his kindnesses over the years, had lined up to cosign any note the bankers desired, with their farms as collateral, so their friend could stay in business.

And I told the story of my Grandpa Joe Bender, who lent money to a German man to purchase his first farm, on a handshake, asking him only to pay "as he could" and who with my Grandma Mary at Benders Farmers Cash Store in Eureka, South Dakota, had prices that frequently slid down to cost for customers in need of warm coats and boots.

Then it was the question-and-answer portion. A slight lady in the front row, who I later learned was 92-years-old, raised her hand, and was given the microphone. "I just have to tell all of you," the woman began, "that I have read this book. I have read the translations of the prayers the Jewish people recite. You should buy this book and read it all, even the footnotes. You will see what I discovered—we are all so similar." I thanked her and told her that one of my goals in writing *Still* was to show the similarities between people of faith, and that her comments were therefore very meaningful to me.

Next, a gentleman who I knew to be a well-known German translator took the microphone and asked if he could share a story. His family was from Mercer, North Dakota. He told a story of Alle Dakovna, a Jewish former hide buyer who used to have Mercer on his route and in 1915 put down roots and opened a general store there. Alle was known as an empathetic fellow, who would not demand payment immediately if the buyer could not afford the intended purchases. When the speaker's father was setting up a bulk oil/petroleum operation years later and checked with the speaker's grandfather for advice about dealing with late-paying farmer customers, the grandfather said, "Treat them like Alle Dakovna would—grant them credit until the crop comes in."

After this story, the member of the Germans from Russia chapter who had introduced me, took out a map of the villages in the Black Sea region of Russia in the late 1800s, early 1900s. Amazingly, the small town where her German ancestors had lived before emigrating, was about 35 miles away from where my great-great grandparents had their winemaking business, where my great-grandparents met and married, and where my grandfather was born.

I sold more books at that Germans from Russia meeting than at any of my other readings to date. One of the attendees even attempted to blow the shofar (ram's horn) I had brought—used by Jews at the High Holidays as in ancient times, to call upon us to examine our deeds and correct our ways. When I returned home, I emailed my dad's younger brother David in California, to tell him about the wonderful afternoon. He, as usual, summed it up perfectly, and succinctly. "Sweeter than a double-decker cone," my uncle said.

Rebecca E. Bender, who wrote this article, and her father Kenneth M. Bender are co-authors of *Still* (NDSU Press 2019), a non-fiction biography/memoir of five generations and 150 years of a Jewish family on three continents. *Still* is a 2019 Independent Press Award Winner (Judaism category) and is available through NDSUPress.org, ndsu.edu/grhc, Amazon.com, and other bookstores.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Timothy J. Kloberdanz earned a Ph.D. in folklore and anthropology from Indiana University. His master's thesis and doctoral dissertation dealt with the Germans from Russia. He has co-authored two books and published more than a hundred articles. He also wrote the script for a prize-winning television documentary. He retired from teaching in 2010 and is now professor emeritus at North Dakota State University in Fargo. He co-edited the award-winning book *Sundogs and Sunflowers: Folklore and Folk Art of the Northern Great Plains*, which included numerous examples of German-Russian family stories and other folklore.

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Jerome Siebert is a first-generation German from Russia whose family first settled in "Roosha" Town in Fresno, California. Both his parents were born in Russia and immigrated to the U.S. in 1907 (mother) and 1911 (father). His professional career as a Special Assistant to four U.S. Secretaries of Agriculture and as a consultant to various California Department of Food and Agriculture Secretaries frequently took him to various parts of the world in the organization of conferences and seminars on food production, distribution, and marketing. His travels have taken him to Russia, Germany, and Argentina where he has had active communications with Germans from Russia groups. He served as President of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia International (AHSGR) from his election in 2005 to 2012. He has also served since 1999 on the AHSGR Board of Directors and currently chairs the Editorial and Publications committee and manages AHSGR's investments.