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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRESIDENTS LETTER.....	i
THE MIGRATION OF THE RUSSIAN-GERMANS TO KANSAS	1
<i>Norman E. Saul</i>	
THE EARLIEST VOLGA GERMANS IN SUTTON, NEBRASKA	16
<i>Pastor John Hoelzer</i>	
ADDITIONS TO THE LOAN COLLECTION	19
<i>Reviews by Marie M. Olson and Nancy B. Holland</i>	
THE AHSGR ARCHIVES	21
<i>Marie M. Olson</i>	
ONE HUNDRED YEARS IN HENDERSON	22
COMMEMORATIVE STAMP RECOGNIZES HARD RED WINTER WHEAT	25
<i>Raymond F. Wiebe</i>	
ANNA HAD A VERY IMPORTANT JOB TO DO	28
<i>Rosetta Hudson</i>	
VILLAGES IN WHICH OUR FOREFATHERS LIVED	30
<i>Dr. Adam Giesinger</i>	
BY WHAT NAME SHOULD WE BE CALLED?	33
<i>Emma S. Haynes</i>	
LOOKING FOR PROOF OF AGE - CITIZENSHIP - RELATIONSHIP?	35
<i>Gerda S. Walker</i>	
CAN YOU HELP?	36
<i>Phil B. Legler</i>	
CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTS	37
Kissing the Switch	38
<i>Timothy A. Kloberdanz</i>	
Beiznickel.....	40
<i>Timothy A. Kloberdanz</i>	
Christmas in Volhynia	41
<i>Paul Peltz</i>	
Two Siberian Christmases	42
<i>Christmas Far From Home by Leo Oks</i>	
<i>German Christmas in Siberia by Eugen Bachmann</i>	
Der Christbaum 1st Der Schönste Baum, A Poem	44
So Wie Es War ... Christmas on the Prairie	45
<i>Mela Meisner Lindsay</i>	
Liebliche Weihnachtszeit, A Poem	46
A Mennonite Christmas and New Year	47
Portzilka.....	47
Am Weihnachtsbaum and other Christmas verses	48
New Year's Wishes	49
CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE	50

Cover: How many of the international board do you know? See back cover.

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PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Greetings, AHSGR Members:

With this *Work Paper* we bring to a close another membership year in our society. It has been a good year for AHSGR in terms of growth. We are glad to say that we achieved our membership goal—in fact, we surpassed it. 1974 also brought us two new chapters and there is every indication that the ground work is accomplished for the establishment of several more local groups. We were pleased that the increased membership revenue made it possible for us to provide all our members with the bibliography of materials that are available for purchase. We hope you will find this a ready reference for some time to come.

This *Work Paper* is a little different from previous issues. The Christmas section should bring back many happy memories while enlightening all of us about the customs among the various groups of Germans from Russia. To highlight Christmas was Phil Legler's idea. He is also responsible for the art work on the covers. Nancy Bernhardt Holland did most of the editing and your crew in Lincoln saw the book through the printer's.

Enough of the past. Since it is that time of the year, won't you join with me in making a few resolutions? Every member can help make the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia the best organization, of its kind in the world. What can each of us do?

***Sign up at least one new member in 1975. Make a real effort to interest the young. We need them if AHSGR is to survive. Think what we could do in the way of publications by doubling our membership.

***Work on organizing a chapter in your area. There is hardly a location where you can't find 15 members to get a group organized. Those of us who are in chapters know what it means to have that fellowship.

***Tell us about your talents and skills. Our committees need more hands to do the work and on both the local and international levels there are jobs to be done.

***Start a museum in your chapter. Begin with one room, if necessary. You will be surprised how quickly your collection will grow and interest the local community.

***Send us your ideas for improving our program. Write us a letter, call us on the telephone, come to the convention—communicate!

Finally, I want to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your help and support during 1974. Every contribution of service is deeply appreciated. May all the blessings of the Christmas season be yours and may the New Year be filled to overflowing with whatever your heart desires.

Very sincerely,

Ruth M. Amen

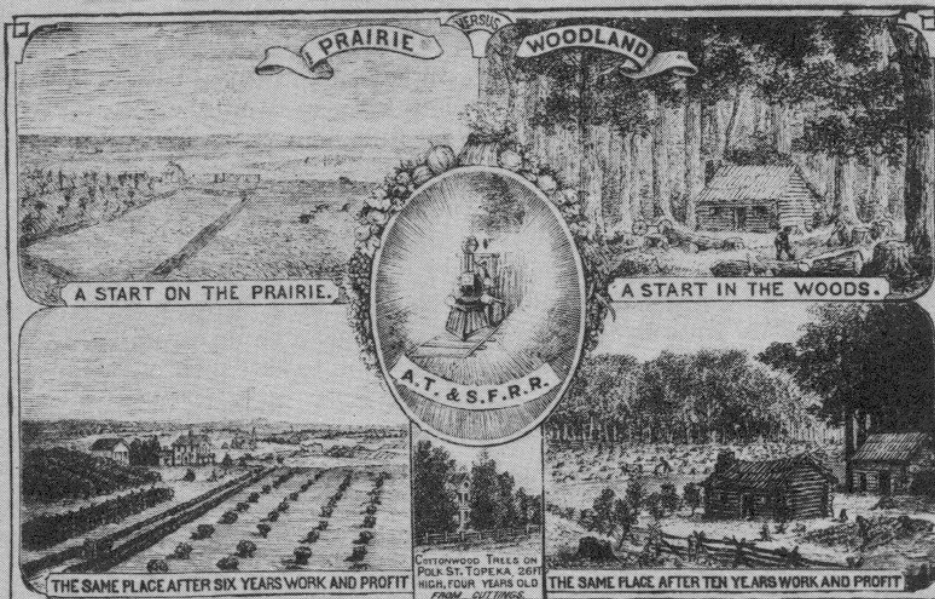
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THE MIGRATION OF THE RUSSIAN-GERMANS TO KANSAS

By Norman E. Saul*

One Hundred years ago several thousand German-speaking people from Russia settled on lands in Kansas and left a considerable impact upon the history of the state. The purpose of this article is to examine some of the reasons for the move from Russia, why Kansas became the chief host state, the distinguishing features of their settlement and reception, and their contributions to the history of Kansas. Since the scope of the subject and limitations of space will preclude a thorough analysis of all aspects of the topic, the focus will be on a presentation of a general outline of events, discussions of sources, and thoughts and questions concerning new approaches.¹

The Russian-Germans² who arrived in Kansas in the 1870's settled in two main geographical areas of the state that also correspond to separate places or origin in Russia and, for the majority, to different religious backgrounds. The first to arrive in large numbers, in 1874, were the Mennonites, mainly from the Tauride province of South Russia, who concentrated in Marion, Harvey, and McPherson counties. The other major area of settlement in Kansas, in Ellis, Russell, and Rush counties, was colonized by the Volga Germans of Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Baptist denominations. Of course, many counties of western and central Kansas became the homes of Russian-Germans, but many of these came later and often involved people who immigrated first to other states or to Canada, Mexico, or South America.

The Russian-German immigrants were distinctive in several respects from other newcomers to the prairie in the 19th century. First of all, they moved in large groups, settling whole areas, founding their own social and religious communities. Strong religious faith and attachment to particular customs gave these people greater ability to sustain the difficulties of a long trip and reduced the shock of adaptation. That is, unlike most settlers and immigrants, the Russian-Germans maintained, and perhaps even strengthened, their community consciousness. In this respect the Russian-Germans of all denominations resembled the Amish, Hutterite, Mormon, and other religious groups who made the North American frontier their homes.

The new arrivals from Russia were also similar to religious sects in the fact that they were separated from a developing national consciousness for so long. They had not lived in Germany during the 19th century, the age of nationalism, but in colonies within a particularly non-German society, preserving the customs and traditions of earlier centuries, but at the same time influenced by a number of Slavic social and economic institutions. Most of the Russian-Germans who came to Kansas could, in fact, speak some Russian as well as German. The differences in appearance, manners, and language from other German immigrants were so great that people on the scene quickly and easily referred to them as Russians or "Rooshians." To obtain a basic understanding of these people it is important to examine in some detail where they came from and why they left.

The Russian Background

The Russian-Germans were not the only people of Germanic ancestry residing in the Russian Empire in the 19th century. Germans formed an important part of the merchant population of Moscow and St. Petersburg, and another large German ethnic group was absorbed as the result of territorial expansion, particularly in the 18th century. The "native" Germans consisted mostly of the "Baltic" Germans living in what are now the Soviet republics of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. By contrast, the "Russian" Germans were those who migrated to Russia to farm, beginning in the reign of Catherine the Great (1762-1796) and continuing through the first third of the next century. The first territory to be settled by these Germans was on both sides of the middle Volga River near the cities of Samara and Saratov. Catherine the Great was interested in the agricultural development of this region and the pacification of an unruly frontier when she first issued the invitation for foreigners to colonize in 1762. A subsequent manifesto of July, 1763, promised free lands, expenses for the move, freedom from taxation for 30 years, and exemption from civil and military service for themselves and their descendants. The empress's agents recruited settlers especially from the poorer German states devastated by the Seven Years' War.³

Several thousand colonists, usually from towns rather than villages, both Roman Catholic and Lutheran, accepted the Russian invitation and made the long trek eastward across Russia to the Volga. Under haphazard military supervision and through the turmoil of the Pugachev revolt (1773-1775) they suffered great hardships, but by the beginning of the 1800's, under the more lenient supervision of a special office of

*Reprinted from *The Kansas Historical Quarterly*, Spring, 1974 (Vol. XL, No. 1), pp. 38-62.

the Ministry of Interior, the Volga Germans prospered, at least relative to the Russian peasantry in general. Others joined them, especially during the Napoleonic wars, and by the 1860's they numbered 250,000, approximately the then population of the state of Kansas, and dominated the economic life of two of Russia's most productive agricultural provinces-Samara and Saratov.

Another area, in South Russia, was opened to colonial settlement after Russian acquisition of the Black Sea coast and especially after the annexation of the Crimea in 1783-1784, by which a large expanse of thinly inhabited steppe became part of the Russian Empire. Prince Gregory Potemkin, Catherine's lover and favorite, was particularly interested in attracting farmers of proven industry to help develop the economic potential of this region called "New Russia." And in addition to Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbs, and other peoples from southeastern Europe, he invited a large number of Mennonites, particularly from the area around Danzig that had fallen under Prussian control as a result of the partitioning of Poland. Coming under heavy pressure from the modernizing ambitions of Frederick the Great to pay taxes and furnish recruits, the Mennonites there decided to accept the Russian conditions of 1763, which were even improved by negotiation to include a substantial subsidy for each family; many more followed after the disruptions of the Napoleonic wars in central and northern Europe. Unlike the Volga Germans, the Mennonites generally moved as religious communities with years of agricultural experience behind them. Many were, in fact, Dutch or Swiss in cultural and linguistic heritage rather than German proper.⁴

The two largest Mennonite colonial areas of South Russia were Khortitsa, on the Dnieper River about 175 miles northwest of the port of Berdiansk (now Osipnenko) on the Sea of Azov, and Molochna, centered around the market town of Halbstadt, about 90 miles from Berdiansk. Other settlements were scattered along the Black Sea coast, in the Crimea, in Bessarabia, and in Russian Poland. The total Mennonite Russian-German population of "New Russia" was about 40,000 by 1869, half of whom lived in the Molochna colony, while the number in all of the Russian Empire was probably not over 75,000.⁵ They fulfilled Potemkin's original expectations, developing a widely diversified agrarian economy that included orchards, dairying, sheep herding, silk culture, and, of course, the raising of grain. By the middle of the 19th century, their wheat production had become a significant part of Russia's Black Sea exports to Western Europe. Mennonite entrepreneurs were handling and processing their own products for the Russian or foreign markets, and the Mennonite "oases" of South Russia (as they were referred to in contemporary Russian accounts) were relatively prosperous.

Though much of the economic and social history of the German settlements in Russia remains to be written, major achievements appear to have been accomplished in those areas. Why, then, did many Russian-Germans decide to move to a new, unknown land? The reason most often cited is that the exemption, which all had enjoyed, from military service was being withdrawn and that the Mennonites in particular, as conscientious objectors, could not tolerate the change in status. It is true, and somewhat ironic, that the Russian government in a liberal-rational course of modernization after the Crimean War was attempting to treat all people living within the Russian boundaries equally, and the new military reform law, devised to create modern, efficient armed forces and which went into effect in 1874, did propose to make everyone, noble and peasant, Russian or foreign in origin, subject to the draft. The removal of the special exemption must be considered at least as a catalyst for the idea of emigration. The fact is, however, that only a portion of the Mennonites, and an even smaller percentage of the Volga Germans, actually left Russia at this time. In the case of the Roman Catholics and Lutherans there were no religious scruples against military service, and, of the Mennonites that remained, probably none actually served in the Russian army before the Russian Revolution, since, after several frustrating efforts to settle the issue with the government in St. Petersburg, the Mennonites obtained a compromise that made it possible for them to serve in alternate forestry work under their own administration.⁶

Those who could not claim a right to alternate service were subject to the new recruitment, and the first were drafted during the annual November processing in 1874. Hostility to service in the Russian army was quite high, however, because of the conditions that prevailed for recruits, perhaps, exaggerated by rumor, bias against advancement for non-Russians, and the predominance of Russian Orthodox religious services.⁷ Despite this situation, which would become much worse in the 1890's, the priority of the removal of military exemption as a cause of emigration needs more substantiation than has been offered in the past, and other political, religious, and socio-economic factors should be weighed. It is interesting to observe, for example, that the arriving immigrants in Kansas did not appear to include a particularly large number of recruitment ages.

Politically, the status of the Russian-German colonies was being closely examined in the middle of the 19th century by the imperial government, and the inhabitants could probably not avoid becoming

suspicious and restless when one Russian surveying team after another came through their territory. Beginning especially in the 1840's with their transfer to the new Ministry of State Domains, the central government began to treat the colonists more and more as Russian state peasants. The reform movement of the 1850's and 1860's shook the fabric of Russian-German society as well as that of the rest of Russia. Efforts to equalize landholdings among the agricultural population in the peasant emancipation (beginning in 1861) affected the Russian-Germans, especially the Mennonites, whose landholding statistics reflected a wide disparity—from the several thousand-acre estates of Jansen, Miller, Cornies, Shroeder, Peters, etc. to the many landless, poor families, who, according to Russian records of 1865, included one third of the total Mennonite colonists.⁸ By a series of government decrees, the richer colonists were being forced to contribute land and supplies for the less fortunate, despite the existence of relief programs within the communities, and Russian courts were examining titles closely for illegal alienation of land that might have resulted since the original grants. Speculation was current that a single family should have only the amount of the first awards, about 175 acres.⁹ In any event; the result was a marked increase in Russian interference in the internal life of the Russian-German communities in the 1860's. This caused particular concern within the central organizations in South Russia, the New Russian Mennonite Brotherhood and the Halbstadt Agricultural Society, and may account for the active leadership for emigration by prosperous leaders such as Cornelius Jansen and Bernard Warkentin.¹⁰ Separate schools and social and economic autonomy in general were being threatened in addition to the military exemption.

While new political currents were very much in evidence in Russia in the 1860's, religious changes were also occurring in a complex, interacting process. West European pietism reached the Mennonite colonies in the 1840's, and by 1870 a number of church communities had been fragmented by religious controversy. And the revival of sectarianism even influenced the more remote Roman Catholic and Lutheran colonies, where the German Baptist and Methodist movements gained converts. Disputes over church doctrine added to the impulse to get away and start over—to make a trek—which was already a part of the Mennonite tradition of founding daughter colonies. One group of Mennonites, the Hüpferites, left Molochna for a new territory in the Russian Caucasus in 1865, but initial reports on conditions there were discouraging.¹¹ A split in the Alexanderwohl church in the 1860's was apparently a prime cause of the transplantation of a large part of that Molochna community to Kansas. And the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren was another offshoot of the 1860's that joined the emigration. Perhaps a thorough analysis of the religious affairs of the Russian-Germans would result in the conclusion that they were the most important cause of emigration.

A Russian source (Klaus) emphasizes the relationship of the pietistic movement to poorer economic conditions. There may be an interconnection, but none is readily apparent in the Russia-Kansas migration. More relevant are the socio-economic conditions prevailing in Russia around 1870. That Russia at this time was a backward, agricultural country is generally recognized. The growth of rural population was quite rapid in the middle decades of the 19th century, caused especially by the lowering of the death rate, through, for example, decreasing the incidence of cholera epidemics. And few new frontiers were open in European Russia that could be cultivated by existing methods. Population pressure (or land hunger) affected the Russian-Germans perhaps even more than other inhabitants, since birth rates were probably higher and death rates lower due to better living conditions. One must remember in this context that the German colonists were not affected by military recruitment and the forced or voluntary labor migrations that relieved some of the pressure from Russian villages.

The colonies of South Russia, however, were generally in better condition than those of the Volga, because of their proximity to the Black Sea ports and larger *per capita* allotments of land. According to the Russian census of 1858, Volga villages such as Pfeifer and Herzog averaged 15 acres of land for each male inhabitant, while Alexanderwohl, a typical Mennonite community, had about 30 acres for each male. An average family holding in the Volga region was around 35 acres and in South Russia over 100 acres.¹² On the other hand, although wealthy landholders can be found among the Volga Germans, equality of farm size was much more prevalent there because of more widespread use of the Russian communal land tenure that provided for a re-division of village land periodically. By contrast, in the Molochna area, 32 Mennonite families owned 250,000 acres in 1860 and hired several thousand Mennonite and Russian laborers.¹³ The Mennonite landless complained to local Russian authorities about their situation, but the result was greater Russian interference and the setting up of more communal land associations, which probably frustrated both rich and poor.

Besides the land-population crisis, all colonists suffered from declining grain prices due to increased competition from the United States, tax rises (25% between 1840 and 1868), and the withdrawal of economic privileges such as exclusive licenses for the brewing of beer.¹⁴ Another factor that needs closer study is the effect of the death in the 1860's of Johann Cornies, long time patriarch of the South Russian

Mennonites who had considerable influence with the government in St. Petersburg.¹⁵

One escape remained open, and it may have been the Russians who first brought this to their attention. In 1864 an offer, directed especially to the landless Mennonites, of free land, reduced taxes, and guaranteed exemption from military service was made to those who would move to Eastern Siberia, to the newly acquired Amur River basin. Some, such as Bernard Warkentin, Sr., seriously considered this possibility and made an inspection trip to Siberia, but the remoteness of the land and lack of railroads for exporting grain discouraged further pursuit.¹⁶ Besides, the logistics of such a move would be just as great, perhaps greater, than a move to Kansas.

By 1870, before the terms of the military reform law were known, a number of factors stirred the Russian-German colonies and stimulated projects for movement, and leaders were beginning to discuss the possibilities—Canada, Brazil, the Near East, as well as the United States. German language newspapers circulating in both South Russia and the Volga region brought information about immigration, and the Russian government, still of a relatively liberal disposition, made it clear that those Russian-Germans who were not satisfied with their status (as confused as it was) were free to leave the country, an attitude that would later change. But with so much of the world open to them, how did it happen that a large portion of the first Russian-German emigrants came to Kansas?

Kansas on the Eve of Arrival

Political, religious, and socio-economic turmoil was certainly not alien to Kansas in the 1860's, and at first glance one would wonder why Russian-Germans in search of peace and quiet and a stable economy would move to an area notorious for its lack of law and order and infested with grasshoppers. In general terms the reason can be found in the achievements of that decade. America and Russia were both witnessing rapid population increases, but in the United States land was available and economic progress was remarkable. Kansas changed in the 1860's not only through the establishment of new frontier homesteads, but especially by the development of urban market centers and, in connection with this, the phenomenal advance of railroad construction across the state.

Acts of congress set aside eight and a half million acres of Kansas prairie to promoters on condition that railroads would be built through the territory. The successful accomplishment of this task by 1872 gave the two giants, the Kansas Pacific and the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe the right to claim seven million acres in alternate sections 20 miles on both sides of their rights of way. The railroads had not only acquired good agricultural land, but had also contributed in no small degree to the creation of a more civilized urban environment. The change that occurred in the unruly frontier cow towns was quite remarkable. For example, one of the wildest of them all, Newton, was quickly tamed by the combined forces of the Santa Fe, the *Newton Kansan* (beginning publication in 1872), and the Temperance League; a local reporter boasted of the progress achieved by August, 1873, just before a small delegation of Russian-German Mennonites toured the area under the guidance and care of railroad agents.¹⁷ Besides acres and acres of prairie grass, the visitors must have been impressed by the commercial bustle of the towns, the pace of new construction, and the efficiency and determination of both workers and officials.

But why did Russian-Germans choose Kansas over other possibilities? To answer that, perhaps other questions are relevant: what brought C. B. Schmidt and Noble Prentis to Kansas, and what inspired Boston capitalists to stick with a nearly bankrupt venture and pull the Santa Fe out of the 1873 depression?

Kansas was already well-advertised by this time, though, of course, not all of the publicity was of a favorable kind. The establishment of the Kansas Immigration Society in 1871, the collection and publication of information by the State Board of Agriculture, and the promotional activities of local newspapers, in particular by the *Topeka Commonwealth*, did much to extend and improve the image of the state as a suitable home for immigrants and a profitable place for railroads.¹⁸

With this encouragement the railroads, particularly the Santa Fe, began a gigantic advertising campaign to sell their recently earned land. They were motivated in the first instance by the need to meet payrolls and pay interest on massive floating debts, thereby avoiding collapse. Boston bankers, Joseph and Thomas Nickerson, in association with Kidder, Peabody and Company, manipulated the debts of the Santa Fe through the squeeze of 1873, while in Topeka, at 6th and Kansas, A. E. Touzalin directed the activities of the rapidly expanding passenger and land departments.¹⁹ In the latter, at the beginning of 1873, Touzalin set up an immigration office, headed by Carl Bernhard Schmidt, a native of Saxony who arrived in Kansas in 1868 and, prior to his joining the Santa Fe, operated a grocery in Lawrence.²⁰ Schmidt soon established communications with German ethnic groups in the country, and, through Mennonite colonies in other states, learned of the desire of Russian-Germans to emigrate. An American Mennonite leader, Christian Krehbiel, was particularly instrumental in guiding the reconnaissance mission from Russia to Kansas in the

summer of 1873. This delegation, which included Jacob Buller and Leonhard Sudermann, looked at land in several Midwestern states, but after their tour of the Santa Fe territory in the Arkansas valley, Schmidt committed them to a preliminary purchase agreement at the end of October.²¹

Railroad land sales went hand in hand with other efforts to sell the state of Kansas. Noble Prentis arrived in Topeka in 1869 to begin a long and distinguished journalistic career. He became well known throughout the region for his feature articles and editorial craftsmanship. It was either Prentis or someone inspired by his example that first brought an awareness of the Russian-German Mennonites to the people of Kansas. The following is an excerpt from the Topeka *Blade* of November 10, 1873, very much in the Prentis style:

The Russian Mennonites

The Mennonites are a class of citizens that will become more readily Americanized than many of our best classes of foreign citizens. They are liberal in sentiment, frugal and industrious in habits, peaceful from their principle, and can readily be brought to understand and adopt our American manners and customs. We may regard them as one of our very best classes of citizens. Added to this, though this is emphatically the home of the poor man, where all can get homes at a nominal cost, and by frugality, industry and perseverance, almost certainly arrive at a competence; yet it is no disparagement to this class of citizens, nor to our young and growing State, that these settlers are nearly all well off in this world's goods. Few of them have less than \$2,000 or \$3,000, while many are reported to be worth \$10,000, \$20,000 and even more. They will make the beautiful valley of the Arkansas blossom as the rose.²²

The writer assumes that Russian-Germans are coming to Kansas, that they will be good for the state, and that they have money, the beginning of an emphasis on the wealth of the Russian-Germans that persisted in the press through the 1870's. What began in 1873 was a two-sided publicity campaign, selling Kansas to the Russian-Germans and the Russian-Germans to Kansas.

This kind of exposure of the Russian-Germans prior to their arrival, no doubt assisted by more private and direct pressures from the Santa Fe, contributed to the passage by the Kansas legislature in March, 1874, of an act amending the militia law exempting those who objected on religious grounds from military service upon signing of a simple declaration in the county clerk's office.²³ Soon afterwards, David Goertz, a Russian-German Mennonite temporarily residing in Summerfield, Ill., published a pamphlet in German describing the Arkansas valley and including the texts of the new Kansas military exemption provision and the preliminary sale terms.²⁴ Most likely the emigrants did not receive any copies prior to departure from Russia, but they probably obtained them along the route before their arrival in Kansas.

The Move

During the winter and spring of 1874 the findings of the Mennonite delegation to the United States circulated through South Russia. The Krimmer Mennonite Brethren, the Alexanderwohl church, and other groups of Swiss-Volynian Mennonites living in Russian Poland prepared to leave for America. They were able to sell their farms, with crops in the field, at good prices to other Mennonites, and the sale of meeting houses, shares of mutual insurance funds, and other community property provided additional sources of funds. Packing personal belongings in trunks, baskets, sacks, etc., they made their way by caravans to the nearest railroad connection and from there by train to Odessa, the transfer point for the trip across Europe to Hamburg, and from there they sailed by ship to New York. Arrangements for the mass transit were made by railway and shipping agents in Odessa and Hamburg.

The first group of around 800, composed mostly of the Krimmer Brethren but including some Swiss-Volynian Mennonites, departed home in June and arrived in New York in late July, a journey of about five weeks by cart, train, and ship, which cost each family around 250 rubles (\$200).²⁵ Staying in New York only long enough to change rubles for dollars, most of the Russian-German Mennonites stopped along the route with American Mennonites in Indiana and Illinois. Only 200 were at first expected to settle in Kansas. A few families arrived in Marion county in the second week of August and settled in the vicinity of Hillsboro, while another group of 240 traveled directly to Peabody.²⁶ Then the main party, led by Jacob Wiebe, arrived in Topeka on September 8, where they spent one night encamped at the King bridge shops before resuming their journey to Marion county to found the town of Gnadenau.²⁷

A larger party of 1,100, mostly from Alexanderwohl in the Molochna colony, landed in New York in August on the *Teutonia* and stopped at Summerfield, Ill., before journeying farther west. They at first intended to settle in Nebraska, where they were offered lands by the Burlington railroad, but reports from those who had already arrived in Kansas, some unfavorable aspects of the Nebraska location, the



salesmanship of C. B. Schmidt, and perhaps the Goertz pamphlet persuaded the Alexanderwohl community to come to Kansas.²⁸ Arriving in Topeka on September 23, they were joined two days later by another shipload of 800. Not having made any advance arrangement for the purchase of farmland in Kansas, this party stayed in Topeka for a longer period, housed at the King bridge shops, while leaders inspected the terrain and bargained with the Santa Fe.²⁹ Several more smaller groups passed through the Kansas capitol in November and December, raising the total in the state at the end of the year to around 3,000, perhaps as many as 4,000. According to the *Commonwealth*, 6,356 Russian-Germans arrived in North America in 1874: 2,980 to Kansas, 1,000 to Dakota, 750 to Eastern states, 400 to Nebraska, 75 to Minnesota, and the remainder to Canada, but these figures probably did not include 600 who passed through Topeka on New Year's Eve.³⁰

If the number of Mennonites immigrating in 1874 greatly exceeded local expectations, that of 1875 fell far below an optimistic projection of 6,000³¹ as departure from Russia became complicated by drought conditions. In addition, the imperial government's decision to allow alternative service late in 1874 may have arrested the desire of many to leave. The departure of 15 percent of the Russian-German population of South Russia would have alleviated some of the population pressure, and there was a natural tendency to wait and hear how things were going in the United States. In fact, letters extolling the benefits of the new land did contribute to continued migration in later years. The disruption of communications in South Russia by the Russo-Turkish War (1877-1878), the difficulty of selling land to those remaining, the decline of the ruble, and increased restrictions by the Russian government also slowed emigration. The Santa Fe immigration chief claimed that by May, 1877, 8,000 "Mennonite and other Russian-Germans," had settled on Santa Fe land in Kansas, purchasing a total of 88,000 acres, but he also noted that additional Russian-German colonists were more likely to come from the Volga region.³²

By the time the first large groups of Mennonites arrived in Kansas, representatives of the Volga Germans were inspecting lands in the United States. After meetings in Herzog and nearby villages in the spring of 1874, a delegation was sent to survey settlement possibilities. Perhaps instinctively, these Russian-Germans concentrated their search farther north in Canada and the Dakotas, but some took soil samples from western Kansas in Russell county.³³

The trek of the Volga Germans was generally more difficult than that of the Mennonites, because they did not move in established church communities. In the case of the Roman Catholics, for example, parish churches were left behind in Russia and new ones had to be established under a local diocese in this country. On the whole they were not able to command as many resources since land holdings around the Volga were smaller and values lower than in South Russia. This is probably the reason why the majority waited until after the harvest of 1875 could be sold before departing Russia, but the delay added extra hardships of traveling and finding new homes in winter. Another problem was the slower and more awkward transport from the Volga region, and the Volga Germans did not have the opportunity to secure free lodging en route as did the Mennonites. But like their Russian-German predecessors in Kansas, the Volga Germans did tend to come from particular towns and villages—Herzog, Katherinenstadt, Liebenthal, Pfeifer, Schoenchen, Obermunztor—and founded towns of the same or similar names.

The first contingents of Volga Germans left Katherinenstadt in October, 1875, and, traveling via Bremen and Baltimore, arrived in Topeka on November 28. While the families lived in temporary quarters in North Topeka, the leaders searched for suitable lands to purchase. They first went with C. B. Schmidt to inspect Santa Fe territory around Great Bend but considered the price (\$5 an acre) too high. Then with the assistance of Adam Roedelheimer and Martin Allen they were attracted to lands of the Kansas Pacific in Ellis county.³⁴ Even there, however, many depended on homesteading rather than purchasing from the railroad.³⁵ Settlement began in February, 1876, with the arrival in Hays and Victoria of the first families.³⁶ Other groups followed the path of the first, arriving at intervals during the spring and summer, especially in August. By the end of the year about 1,200 Roman Catholic Volga Germans had located in Ellis and Rush counties, and another group of Lutherans had settled along Landon creek in Russell county.³⁷

After 1877 it is more difficult to distinguish large immigrant parties of Russian-Germans, either from South Russia or the Volga region. They were no longer as newsworthy, and, in fact, the paths to the new frontier were both numerous and well-charted, once the Russian border was passed. By this time, too, many were branching away from the first areas of concentration and finding homes in a large number of counties of central and western Kansas. The total number of Russian-German immigrants to Kansas in the 1870's can be estimated at about 12,000.³⁸

Kansas and the Russian-Germans

The first year of life in Kansas set a pattern for the Russian-Germans that would last for two generations and to some extent survives to the present day. In order to analyze this critical period one must examine how the people already resident in the state greeted the new arrivals as well as how the Russian-Germans adapted to a country with different social, economic, and political basis from Russia. What occurred was an interaction of factors that resulted in the community consciousness and exclusiveness being preserved in what one normally thinks of as a much more open society.

The language barrier was an important cause of the initial separation of Russian-Germans from other Kansans. Only a few could speak or understand English within the largest blocks of Mennonites and Roman Catholics, such as the Alexanderwohl community and the Volga Germans who arrived at Victoria in 1876. For the most part they had to rely upon local interpreters, but probably none of those could understand the conversational Low-German spoken by the immigrants among themselves. The language difficulty made it impossible for ordinary Kansans to carry on a conversation with the new arrivals, but it did little to impede business negotiations, in part because of the concern of railroad agents, but also because of the experience that most of these people had in Russia with non-German speaking neighbors. To the Russian-Germans, a language problem was nothing new, nor was it unexpected.

Unlike most other immigrants to Kansas, the Russian-Germans generally arrived in separate groups, often by the trainload. Debarking at depots in Topeka, Newton, Hays, and Victoria, they caused something of a sensation and attracted a great deal of curiosity. The Mennonites at the bridge shops in Topeka found themselves looked upon as animals in a zoo.

They were visited on Sunday by a great crowd of people, which, it may be suggested, must be somewhat annoying, as it would be to any one to have their domicile invaded without leave by a curious, gaping crowd of strangers.³⁹

But newspaper descriptions must have been partly responsible for this kind of turnout. For its initial reports the *Commonwealth* relied on the New York *Herald's* account of the arrival of Russian-German Mennonites.

They were all Germans, but having lived all their lives in Russia, their German has a curious Russian flavor, which did not at all improve the harsh Teutonic sounds. They were dressed in their primitive, homespun garments, which were usually of coarse wool, and of the most primitive style. Our crack tailors would have been puzzled at the droll appearance of these ancient dresses. The women and children—the young ones were all consuming huge pieces of bread and butter with a rapidity which argued well for their digestion—had funny old handkerchiefs tied round their heads, and certainly no Broadway milliner ever supplied one of the quaint bonnets which the fair Mennonite beauties wore.⁴⁰

At every step of the road the Russian-Germans attracted attention by their number and appearance.

For several days our streets and vacant grounds [in Newton] were alive with them, and they appeared to make themselves at home at once and prepare for business. A great many of those who brought no teams or implements with them, supplied themselves here, and a surplus team, wagon or cow is now hard to be found.⁴¹

The Hays City *Sentinel* described the arrival of the first group of Volga Germans, under the heading "Mennonites":

The whole outfit, wagons, horses, dogs, cows, women and children of the men folks of the Russians, who had taken claims in this county, arrived last Wednesday night, and a queer looking set they are. . . .

They are strong looking animals, and seem capable of any work, especially the women, who seem to perform as much menial labor as the children, which are numerous. It is refreshing to see one of these females with a small child slung to her in a pouch, in very much the same manner in which the American Indians carry their young, harnessed to a yoke with a bucket of water at each end get down to business!⁴²

And later that summer as immigration into Ellis County began to reach the level of an invasion, the *Sentinel* was even more condescending:

The New Comers

They are here; they are there; and at every corner they may be seen gathering, jabbering about this and that no one knows what. Their presence is unmistakable; for where they are there is also something else, a smell as pungent and potent as to make a strong man weak. What the material is,

from which that smell is manufactured, no one seems to know; but there is a striking similarity of opinion as to the existence of something. It is as penetrating as a west wind, and everything is pervaded with it. ... Even now our olfactory are protesting; and to our knowledge, there isn't a Russian within twenty rods of us.⁴³ But the *Sentinel* also noted redeeming features: "One of the pleasing features of the Russian presence in our town, is their singing. All have good voices, and none have any hesitancy in displaying their vocal accomplishments."⁴⁴

Such personal notes were part of the journalism of the day, especially in small rural towns, but even in the pages of the more urbane Topeka *Commonwealth* can be found items betraying prejudice: "If any one wants to read a history of the Mennonites, the most important is said to bear the simple and pleasing title of 'Gescheidens der Doopsgecindnen in Friesland, Overyssel en Oostvriesland,' etc., and is written by the eminent author, Blaufot Ten Cate." "Six hundred is a good many nites, but we can stand a few more." "Fred Fensky says a Russian can shovel more pure dirt in a day than a white man can in two."⁴⁵

But the overall impression in the press is that Kansas is lucky to have these people. *The Commonwealth* described the Mennonites before they arrived as follows:

They are the most peaceable foreigners that arrive on our shores. In their colonies there are no quarrellings, no fighting, no murders, no lawsuits, no lawyers, no juries, no courts, no police, no officers or governors; and crimes even of the smallest character are of the rarest occurrence. The expense of their government is trilling, because they have no government.⁴⁶

In Hays, the *Sentinel*, for all of its other real or pretended sensitivities, corrected its original impression that the "new comers" were Mennonites as follows:

The Russians who have settled in Ellis County, on Big Timber and north fork of Big Creek, resemble their Mennonite countrymen except in religion, they being Roman Catholics. Like the Mennonites they are industrious, can live in a frugal manner, readily conform to our customs and manners, and before long we will be obliged to class them as among our best citizens. Encourage them to come.⁴⁷

And several examples of Kansas hospitality can be cited. For example, during the stay of the largest group of Mennonites in Topeka, the city omnibuses were placed at their disposal for a grand tour of the city on September 28 that included a reception by the governor and other state officials.⁴⁸

Even this display seemed to go hand in hand with the knowledge that these people from Russia were not going to stay in town long but that they had money to spend on supplies before their departure. Without these inducements, the attitude of Topekans might have resembled that shown by the *Commonwealth* to a hundred Negroes from Tennessee who arrived in the spring of 1876:

If these people will only go into the parts of the state where lands are cheap or where homesteads can be procured, instead of trying to live in the towns and cities, they will prove a valuable addition to our populations. There is plenty of room in Kansas, but little of it about our towns and cities for those who must depend upon their labor exclusively.⁴⁹

Money, then, was another factor that eased the transition, improved the hospitality, and at the same time made independence and exclusiveness easier. They had the cash to buy railroad land rather than scramble for remaining homesteads. By dealing in volume and paying cash, they got a better price and other benefits from a happy railroad management. The Santa Fe provided free transportation for the Alexanderwohl community, not only for the trip from Topeka to Newton, but also for themselves and supplies for the remainder of the year. In Victoria complaints arose over the granting by the Kansas Pacific of a 50 percent discount on freight to a Volga German grocer.⁵⁰ The railroads also provided, as part of the package, free land for churches and schools, and in the case of some of the Mennonite groups temporary housing en route and at the places of settlement. The Alexanderwohl immigrants, for example, lived during the winter of 1874-1875 in two large "immigrant houses" that were built 15 miles north of Newton near the present church buildings.⁵¹ And another important contribution of the railroads was a supply of seed wheat for the first year.

Ready cash made it possible for the Russian-Germans to get a substantial start with horses, livestock, implements, and buildings. In this respect they had a much easier time than the average homesteader in Kansas. Some were able to contract the construction of homes and hire labor to plow the virgin prairie, while they supervised, shopped for implements, and made other arrangements. Community action produced a large bulk order of Russian threshing stones from a nearby quarry. At Gnadenau the Russian-Germans lived in distinctive A-frame dwellings initially, but within a few years these were either abandoned or converted to farm buildings.⁵² Some built Russian-style adobe houses themselves, a few of which survive

around Hillsboro and Buhler, while most settled down in the standard American frame house, erected for them by local builders.

It is also true that among the Russian-Germans were several people of considerable wealth, and their prestige and influence helped others in the community. They assisted particularly in the negotiations with railroad agents and local officials, in planning community buildings, in establishing mills and lumberyards, and in making loans to the less fortunate. Notable among the Mennonites were Bernard Warkentin and David Goertz of Halstead, Jacob Funk, and Jacob Wiebe. Among the Volga Germans were the Dreilings and Brungarts of Herzog and John Jacob Krug of the Landon creek Lutheran settlement. Perhaps the richest of all, at least in anticipated largess, was Andreas Meyer of Katherinenstadt, whose cash holdings were estimated at \$700,000 upon arrival. Though greatly exaggerated, Meyer's wealth did assist his fellow Russian-Germans and provide the capital to purchase five sections from the Kansas Pacific and set up a lumberyard.⁵³ But the wealth of the Russian-Germans was exaggerated at the time and only large in comparison with that of an average American homesteader. Frugality and care in making purchases made dollars go far. Many were quite poor upon arrival and others spent all they had in the initial investments.⁵⁴ On the whole the Volga Germans had fewer resources than those from South Russia, though they were able to benefit from the Kansas Pacific's policy of delaying title claims and thereby avoid paying taxes for several years.⁵⁵

Besides financial leaders, the immigrants from Russia also included people of intellectual stature, who were interested in preserving the cultural and religious heritage. They had been active in promoting emigration from Russia for that purpose, and it is no surprise to note how quickly schools, churches, and even printing presses were founded in the Russian-German settlements. The inauguration of a German newspaper in Halstead in 1875 by David Goertz is a remarkable achievement at a time when many Kansas towns of that size did not have a newspaper.⁵⁶ And the fact that several German-language newspapers were being published in Russian-German areas in the 1880's and 1890's attests to the high literacy rate of the first and second generations. But more important—this self-sufficiency slowed the adoption of English language and American customs and helped retain community integrity.

Schools and churches were obviously great strengths to the Russian-Germans. Settling on large blocks of railroad land and buying up or homesteading the intervening sections, they were able to monopolize contiguous areas and determine the religious and social institutions to be located there. The simple, well-kept churches of the Newton-Marion-McPherson region and the spires of the Volga German villages of Ellis county are lasting tributes to that heritage. Community bonds were also fostered by the land tenure system brought with them from Russia, concentrating homes in a village pattern with neatly arranged farm strips on the nearby sections, or, as was more common with the Volga Germans, living in larger villages but commuting to the fields either on a daily or weekly basis. This was a distinctive "un-American" practice, preserved still to some extent, especially in Ellis County. This village environment was a major factor in the Russian-German ability to retain their language and culture through the second generation.⁵⁷

With collective strength and with individual industry and leadership, the Russian-Germans were able to fulfill successfully the prophecy of the *Commonwealth*:

From the Cottonwood river to the Little Arkansas, a scope of magnificent prairie country fifty miles in length, is now *one* colony, composed of the thriftiest and most intelligent class of foreigners that ever landed upon our shores; and "in three years"—to use the language of one of their elders—"that ocean of grass will be transformed into an ocean of waving fields of grain, just as we left our Molotschnoi colony." Kansas will be to America what the country of the Black Sea and Sea of Azov is now to Europe—her wheat field.⁵⁸ Ironically, 100 years later Kansas had also become the wheat field of Russia.

The Impact of the Russian-Germans Upon Kansas

The first Russian-Germans arrived at a critical time in Kansas history, at the end of a depression, severe drought, and terrible grasshopper infestation. More people were leaving Kansas than coming in as discouraged homesteaders pulled up stakes and headed for urban employment or new territory. The business community and especially the railroads were becoming desperate, and the first special session of the Kansas legislature met in Topeka in September to deal with the problem. Many Kansans found solace in the arrival of the determined new immigrants and saw even more reason to advertise their presence. Where the Mennonites settle it cannot be bad was the message heard across the state and all across the country and to Europe in 1874.

Although the immediate impact of the Russian-Germans in dollars and cents cannot be easily calculated,

to the Santa Fe alone they paid \$332,509.72 between February 15, 1873, and May 31, 1877, according to C. B. Schmidt.⁵⁹ Most of it came in 1874 and may actually have saved the railroad from bankruptcy. But this figure obviously does not include the outright purchases of land from previous farmers. Even more immediately recorded, however, was the boost in local business, first in Topeka:

Notwithstanding the chronic complaint of hard times and scarcity of money, our merchants are now doing more business than at any time for the past three months... The Mennonites now here are very busy laying in supplies of all kinds, and their custom is very valuable to our dealers. They are also purchasing horses, cattle, wagons and agricultural implements as well as household goods, and their purchases will aggregate a very handsome sum.⁶⁰

And this picture passed on down the line to other towns:

We know of three one thousand dollar bills having been exchanged for smaller currency [in Newton] on Friday, and it is safe to say that a good many extra hundred dollars have been put in circulation by their appearance.⁶¹

In those localities there were reports that people who had lost crops and were preparing to leave the state were now staying because of employment opportunities afforded by the new arrivals. Estimating the purchases of equipment and new construction at double that of the price of land, the claim can be made that the Russian-Germans brought over \$ 1,000,000 into a nearly destitute state in the last half of 1874.⁶²

An article written by "Traveler," published in November, emphasized the surprising prosperity of that region of the state:

A ride over Marion County showed a very large breadth of fall grain in better condition than I have ever seen....

Commercially, Peabody is one of the most promising little towns on the line of the A. T. & S.F. road, and socially and morally is one of the pleasantest towns in the state...

From Peabody I passed on to Harvey County and found the same evidence of prosperity there that I found in Marion... The merchants in Newton say that their business continues good.⁶³

And on November 17, the *Commonwealth* quipped: "Anarchy has been revived in Arkansas, creation in Ohio, the crusade in Indiana, and business in Kansas."

Although the Russian-Germans were not the only immigrants to come to Kansas in 1874-1877, they were definitely among the first in key agricultural areas, and where they went others followed. Mennonites from eastern states, especially Illinois, joined the settlements in Harvey and McPherson counties:

For two or three days; past very many wagons filled with emigrants have passed through the streets of Topeka bound south. The tide seems to have turned; heretofore wagons were going out of the state; but there seems to be about as many coming in.⁶⁴

Obviously, some Kansans saw a connection between the arrival of the Russian-Germans and the wave of other settlers coming into the state.

The *Chicago Tribune*, after reprinting a long article on the Russian-German Mennonites from the *Commonwealth*, added;

The importance of this valuable accession to the wealth and industry of Kansas can hardly be overestimated.

The emigration will probably be completed next year, and will add to the population of Kansas two thousand of the most skillful, intelligent and thrifty farmers upon the face of the globe, who will bring into speedy cultivation 100,000 acres of wild and rich prairie land, which will be broken for the first time this fall.⁶⁵

And a tendency to carry this to romantic extremes also prevailed:

The mowers that had been laid by for the season are brought into requisition again to cut the waving grass for the thousands of work horses, oxen, and milk cows to subsist on during the short winter season; car load after car load of breaking plows and other implements are sent down the road, and it seems as if the working season for the farmer had just begun. The wild prairie is to be broken doubly deep in October, yet to receive a dressing of wheat and rye. No one thinks of drought and grasshoppers—everybody is happy and energetic, and hope and energy will find their reward.⁶⁶

But the immigration wave and accompanying capital investment were transitory phenomena. The Russian-Germans are most famous for having brought wheat to Kansas, or more specifically the red, winter, hard wheat, called Turkey Red, a strain that was particularly suited for the Great Plains and became the major export of the wheat belt of the central and western states. The real origins of this wheat are obscured

by legend, but it is not true that any quantity of significance was brought directly to Kansas by the Russian-German immigrants of the 1870's. In the first place it was logistically impossible for them, burdened as they were with families and belongings, to bring enough wheat to plant many of the 200,000 acres that they brought under cultivation in the first years.⁶⁷ Secondly, the Russian-Germans were accustomed to planting spring wheat in Russia, in the case of the Molochna colony a soft wheat called *girka*.⁶⁸ Only very small quantities of a spring, hard, red wheat, called *arnautka*, were planted in the Berdiansk exporting area.⁶⁹ The *arnautka* or one of the "utka" varieties such as "White Turkey" (actually red grained), which was grown in the Volga region as a spring wheat, was probably the kind that was adapted for winter planting in Kansas within a few years after the Russian-German arrival.⁷⁰

The kind of wheat to plant was actually a subject of much debate in Kansas prior to the Russian-German arrival⁷¹; most natives preferred corn, however, for its greater household use and as feed for livestock, especially pigs. Land promoter T. C. Henry was one of the first to plant winter wheat on a large scale, in virtual plantation style, near Abilene in 1873. The question of which was to be the dominant grain for Kansas was actually being settled upon the Russian-German arrival, and the grasshoppers deserve some of the credit for wiping out the corn crop and most of the spring wheat. Only winter wheat was generally successful in 1874.⁷² And at the time the Volga Germans were settling down around Victoria, the Hays City *Sentinel* proclaimed that the question was now resolved: winter wheat was the kind to plant.⁷³

But the Russian-Germans undoubtedly increased the pace of adoption of wheat and helped make possible the rapid expansion of the wheat export and milling industries in the state. They were accustomed to dry, prairie type agriculture—the only settlers in Kansas of such background—and to the raising of wheat for export. And it so happened that most of the Russian-Germans arrived in Kansas in late summer or early fall anxious to commence planting. The railroads also had a vested interest in their early start and arranged the distribution of large quantities of winter seed wheat. The new arrivals also planted corn and spring wheat the next year and went on to try other crops, such as mulberries for silk culture, tobacco, and even cotton. Strangers to corn foods, but already conscious of the importance of wheat exports, the Russian-Germans quite naturally devoted a large percentage of their ground to wheat.

The most lasting and important gift of the Russian-Germans to Kansas, however, was their determination to stay. They brought families, invested all their resources, and immediately began the construction of substantial houses and churches, whole communities, many of which have survived for a century. In Ellis County in 1875 only four out of 72 farmers had families.⁷⁴ This unstable situation changed drastically with the arrival of the Volga Germans. While many other settlers drifted on from county to county, from state to state, as itinerant homesteaders or tenant farmers, the Russian-Germans stayed on through good times and some of the worst droughts in American history to cultivate the Plains and establish their own particular "good society."

Notes and References

1. For general information, insights, and encouragements the author is indebted to many individuals and institutions. Among those who were generous of time and assistance were: Dr. Cornelius Krahn and John Schmidt of the Mennonite Historical Archive and Library, North Newton, August Dirksen and Martha Unruh of the Goessel Historical Society, John Dinkel of Herzog, and Irwin Staab of Catherine; special appreciation is also extended to the cooperative staffs of Bethel College Library, Fort Hays State College Library, Hays Public Library, Kansas State Historical Society, Regional History Division of the University of Kansas, and the Lenin Library in Moscow. Curtis Rohland and Cobb Rogers, graduate students at the University of Kansas in the Department of History and Slavic and Soviet Area Studies, respectively, provided valuable research assistance. The study was supported by the General Research Fund of the University of Kansas.
2. The term "Russian-German" is used in this article because it is the one most often found in historical literature, but it is not entirely satisfactory. One alternative preferred by many descendants is the more awkward "Germans from Russia," and some think that "German-Russian" is more appropriate. For a discussion of this problem see the June, 1973, *Newsletter* of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia.
3. The German historian, Karl Stumpp, is the chief authority on the Volga Germans. One of his major works, *Die Russlanddeutschen: Zweihundert Jahre Unterwegs* (Freilassing in Bayern, Pannonia-Verlag, 1965) has been translated into English by Joseph Height: *The German-Russians: Two Centuries of Pioneering* (Bonn, Atlantic-Forum, 1967). Stumpp has also compiled an exhaustive list of Volga

German immigrants to Russia: *The Emigration from Germany to Russia in the Years 1763 to 1862* (Tubingen, published by the author, c1972). The most complete treatment of the move to Russia is G. G. Pisarevskii, *Iz Istorii Inostrannoi Kolonizatsii v Rossii v XVIII v.* (Moscow, Snegirevii, 1909). Much historical and genealogical interest has been generated by the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia, whose Kansas membership chairman is Mrs. Esther Heinze Miller of Independence.

4. An old but still reliable guide to the Russian-German Mennonites is C. Henry Smith; *The Coming of the Russian Mennonites: An Episode in the Settling of the Last Frontier, 1874-1884* (Berne, Ind., Mennonite Book Concern, 1927). Also of great value are: *From the Steppes to the Prairies (1874-1949)*, edited by Cornelius Krahn (Newton, Mennonite Publication Office, 1949), and Karl Stumpp, *Die Deutschen Kolonien im Schwarzmeergebiet dem Fruheren Neu (Sud)-Russland* (Stuttgart, Ausland und Heimat Verlag, 1922).
- The best literature on the Russian-Germans, though indispensable to any serious study, is unfortunately not widely known and generally of an introspective nature and narrow in focus. Much remains to be done on comparative social analysis within the broader framework of ethnic studies. And for this the potentials of oral history and the collection of private letters, diaries, pictures, etc., must not be neglected.
5. This estimate is compiled from the best source on the Russian-Germans just prior to the emigration of the 1870's: A. A. Klaus, *Nashi Kolonii: Opyty i Maferialy po Istorii i Statistike Inostrannoi Kolonizatsii v Rossii* (St. Petersburg, Nusvalt, 1869), which is a collection of articles from the widely circulated Russian journal, *Vestnik Evropy*. Unfortunately, Klaus does not include Russian Poland in his statistics.
6. The new option was tendered by the Russian government only a few days before the departures of the largest groups from South Russia.-Newton *Kansan*, October 1, 1874.
7. "Grandmother Reminiscences," in Amy Brungardt Toepfer and Agnes C. Dreihng, *Conquering the Wind* (Garwood, N. J., Victor C. Leiker, 1966), p. 164.
8. Klaus, *Nashi Kolonii*. . . , p. 161.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 184-186.
10. The roles of individuals in promoting emigration needs more investigation. The biographers of Jansen emphasize his religious motivation and international connections, but he was -also a recent arrival (1850) in Russia who retained his Prussian citizenship. -- See Gustav E. Reimer and G. R. Gaeddert, *Exiled by the Czar: Cornelius Jansen and the Great Mennonite Migration* (Newton, Mennonite Publication Office, 1956).
11. Klaus, *Nashi Kolonii*. . . , p. 195.
12. *Ibid.*, App.II.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 154, 165.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 140.
15. Cornelius Krahn, intro., *From the Steppes to the Prairies*, pp. 3-4.
16. Klaus, *Nashi Kolonii*. . . p. 187; C. B. Schmidt, "Reminiscences of Foreign Immigration Work for Kansas," *Kansas Historical Collections*, v. 9 (1905-1906), p. 494.
17. Newton *Kansan*, August 14, 1873. *The Commonwealth*, Topeka, July 26, 1874. And even a Kansas City reporter was impressed by the change in Newton: "Four years ago it was the 'red-hot' town of Kansas. Its streets were witnesses almost daily of acts of violence and bloodshed."—Kansas City (Mo.) *Journal of Commerce*, December 29, 1875.
18. Thelma Jean Curl, "Promotional Efforts of the Kansas Pacific and Santa Fe to Settle Kansas" (M. A. thesis, University of Kansas, 1960), pp. 21-23. See, also, Cornelius J. Dyck, "Kansas Promotional Activities with Particular Reference to Mennonites" (M. A. thesis. University of Wichita; 1955).
19. Curl, "Promotional Efforts....," p. 56; Arthur Menzier Johnson, *Boston Capitalists and Western Railroads* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1967), pp. 290-293.
20. Schmidt, "Reminiscences of Foreign Immigration Work..." pp. 485-488.
21. Topeka *Blade*, October 31, 1873.
22. Prentis worked for several Topeka newspapers before joining *The Commonwealth* in the summer of 1874. — Caroline E. Prentis, *A Kansas Pioneer* (Newton, Kansas Printing Co., n. d.), pp. 14-15.
23. A copy of an early declaration is found in *Mennonite Life*, North Newton, v. 25 (April, 1970), p. 68.
24. *Die Mennoniten Niederlassung uaf den Landereien der Atchison, Topeka und Santa Fe Eisenbahn-Gesellschaft in Harvey & Marion Co., Kansas* (St. Joseph, Mo., David Goertz, 1874). A copy is in the library of the Kansas State Historical Society.
25. David V. Wiebe, *They Seek a Country: A Survey of Mennonite Migrations with Special Reference to Kansas and Gnadenau* (Hillsboro, Mennonite Brethren Publ. House, 1959), pp. 81-87.

26. *Marion County Record*, Marion, August 15, 1874; *Atchison Daily Champion*, September 10, 1874.
27. *The Commonwealth*, September 10, 1874; *Marion County Record*, Marion, September 12, 1874.
28. *The Commonwealth*, September 24, 1874.
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Ibid.*, April 25, 1875. A count of those registered in *The Commonwealth* as coming through Topeka in 1874 is 3,600; this figure may not include smaller parties who traveled directly to their destination, but on the other hand may contain some American (Illinois) Mennonites.
31. *Ibid.* Earlier, during the height of the immigration in 1874, the *Commonwealth* boasted that all 40,000 Russian-German Mennonites would settle in Kansas. -*Ibid.*, September 24, 1874,
32. C. B. Schmidt to A. S. Johnson, June 9, 1877, "Immigration (Foreign)," "Santa Fe Papers," Kansas State Historical Society. Newspaper reports of purchases of over 100,000 acres were apparently exaggerated or included options taken.
33. The chief sources on the Volga-German settlement in Kansas are: the Rev. Francis S. Laing, "German-Russian Settlements in Ellis County, Kansas," *KHC*, v. 11 (1909-1910), pp. 489-528; Sister Mary Eloise Johannes, "A Study of the Russian-German Settlements in Ellis County, Kansas," *The Catholic University of America Studies in Sociology*, v. 14 (Washington, D. C., 1946); and J. C. Ruppenthal, "The German Element in Central Kansas," *KHC*, v. 13 (1913-1914), pp. 513-533. Local historians such as Lawrence Weigel and Father Burke in Hays are building on the solid foundation erected by the above, but much remains to be done, especially in the collection of personal papers and analysis of state and local records.
34. Laing, "German-Russian Settlements." p. 494. *The Commonwealth*, January 15, 1876.
35. Hays City *Sentinel*, August 9, 1876.
36. *Ibid.*, March 1, 1876.
37. *Ibid.*, October 4, 1876; Ruppenthal, "The German Element . . .," p. 530.
38. The census statistics of 1880, which record 8,082 born in Russia, are misleading since many of the Mennonites who arrived from "Russia" were actually born in Poland, Prussia, Switzerland, or other German states. Nearly all of the 1,200 who gave their birthplace as Poland (which did not exist as a state) should be counted as "Russian-Germans."
39. *The Commonwealth*, September 24, 1874.
40. *Ibid.*, September 10, 1874.
41. *Newton Kansan*, October 15, 1874.
42. Hays City *Sentinel*, March 1, 1876.
43. *Ibid.*, August 16, 1876.
44. *Ibid.*
45. *The Commonwealth*, September 10, 1874; February 13, 1876,
46. *Ibid.*, July 29, 1874.
47. Hays City *Sentinel*, April 5, 1876.
48. *The Commonwealth*, September 29, 1874.
49. *Ibid.*; March 23, 1876. *The Commonwealth* also noted (March 29); "It is much less remarkable that the Mennonites of far-off Russia should have heard of Kansas than it is that the colored people of the rural districts of Tennessee should have got hold of the same piece of information. Special pains was /sic/ taken to induce the Mennonite settlers to come here, in fact all Europe has been traversed by active and intelligent agents, and a flood of reading matter about Kansas has been distributed; added to this, thousands upon thousands of letters are yearly written from settlers in Kansas to their friends beyond the ocean. The poor farm hand in Giles or Maury or Davidson counties in Tennessee has, as a rule, no Kansas friends to write to him, and none of the land grant railroads extend an invitation to him in the shape of a pamphlet, map or circular."
50. Hays City *Sentinel*, March 9, 1877.
51. *Newton Kansan*, October 8, 1874.
52. C. B. Schmidt published an illustrated pamphlet in 1878 that captured the life of the early Russian-German Mennonite villages. See C. B. Schmidt, "Kansas Mennonite Settlements, 1877," translated by Cornelius Krahn, *Mennonite Life*, V. 25 (April, 1970), pp. 51-58; illustrations, pp. 65-79. In a later edition, probably published in 1881, most of the A-frame dwellings at Gnadenau had disappeared—only one was left and that is apparently a barn.—*Neuestes von Kansas und Semen Hilfsquellen mit Besonderer Berücksichtigung der Landereinen der Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Ei-senbahn* (Hamburg, T. F. Richter, n. d.). A copy is in the regional history division of the University of Kansas Library.

53. Hays City *Sentinel*, September 27, November 15, 1876, and March 9, 1877.
54. Of the nine Alexanderwohl "villages," one, Gnadenfeld, consisted of poorer families, many of whom worked on other farms or in nearby mills.
55. Paul Wallace Gates, *Fifty Million Acres: Conflicts Over Kansas Land Policy, 1854-1890* (Ithaca, N. Y., Cornell University Press, 1954), pp. 264-267.
56. *The Commonwealth*, November 11, 1875.
57. A Kansas City reporter, covering the foreign settlement areas of Kansas in 1911, contrasted the resistance to adaptation of the Russian-Germans to others such as French, Swiss, and Bohemians. - "Foreign Feet in Kansas Furrows: The Russians," *Kansas City (Mo.) Star*, December 17, 1911, p.4B.
58. *The Commonwealth*, October 15, 1874.
59. C. B. Schmidt to A. S. Johnson, June 9, 1877, "Santa Fe Papers," KSHS.
60. *The Commonwealth*, September 26, 27, 1874.
61. *Newton Kansan*, October 15, 1874.
62. One example, Peter Wiebe spent \$320 of the \$ 1,000 that he brought to Kansas on land. He paid \$145 for a span of oxen and wagon. And with the remainder he hired a Negro to "break sod" and purchased winter supplies. - "A Voyage Report," in David Wiebe, *They seek a Country*, pp. 81-87. The Alexanderwohl community paid \$34,688 for the construction of 64 houses, and those leaving Topeka on October 8 required 30 freight cars for livestock and 12 more for household goods and implements. -- *The Commonwealth*, April 25, 1875, and October 8, 1874.
63. *Ibid.*, November 10, 1874.
64. *Ibid.*, October 20, 1874.
65. As noted in *ibid*, November 6, 1874.
66. *Ibid.*, October 15, 1874.
67. This agrees with Professor Malin's conclusion. -- See James C. Malin, *Winter Wheat in the Golden Belt of Kansas: A Study in Adaptation to Sub humid Geographical Environment* (Lawrence, University of Kansas Press, 1944), pp. 163-168.
68. I. Palimpsestov, ed., *Sbornik Statei o Sel'skom Khoziaistve Iluga Rossii* (Odessa, Frantsov, 1868), pp. 271-273, 311-312.
69. Klaus, *Nashi Kolonii* . . . , p. 164.
70. This is the opinion of a Russian agricultural expert. - See S. M. Bogdanov, *Illustrirovannyi Sel'skokhoziaistvennyi Slovar'* (Kiev, Barskii, 1895), p. 1087.
71. For example; "Will some of our experimental farmers who have tried wheat raising in this part of the State, give the *Kansan* their ideas upon the best season to plant the same, and what quality to plant. " - *Newton Kansan*, August 14, 1873.
72. *Kansas City (Mo.) Journal of Commerce*, November 18, 1874.
73. Hays City *Sentinel*, April 12, 1876.
74. Fred C. Cook, "Settlement and Economic Development in Early Hays City and Ellis County, 1867-1880," typescript, Forsythe Library, Fort Hays State College, p. 19.



A NOTE ON THE FIVE CATHOLIC SCOUTS FROM THE VOLGA

This picture appeared on page 12 in *Work Paper* #15. We are indeed indebted to Father Blaine Burkey, Historian of the Ellis County Historical Museum, and AHSGR member, Lawrence A. Weigel of Hays, Kansas, for making it available to AHSGR.

THE EARLIEST VOLGA GERMANS IN SUTTON, NEBRASKA AND A PORTION OF THEIR HISTORY

By General Mission Pastor, John Hoelzer

- From the *Illustrierter Kirchenbote Kalender*, 1927;
published by the General Conference of the
German Evangelical Congregational Churches of
North America (Redfield, So. Dak., 1927) pp. 43-
49. Translated by Arthur E. Flegel

The following may serve as an explanation to the reader. I was requested by the Directors of the American Volga Relief Society at their recent Conference meeting on 27 June 1926 at Sutton, Nebraska to tell something about the first Volga Germans who came to Sutton some 50 years ago. Thus, I am writing and addressing myself to this topic exclusively. It would please me greatly if someone would also write something about the South Russian Germans and their arrival in Sutton.

Unfavorable conditions in Germany and the misleading but attractive promises of Catherine II of Russia, who was the daughter of a German prince, brought about the situation which drew many German families especially from south Germany to Russia. It was the year 1764 when the first colonies were established in the provinces of Saratov and Samara. The journey from Germany to the Volga where they were settled was, according to reports by historians, very involved and difficult; and during their early years in the region, they were forced to suffer greatly from a variety of bands of robbers. But they went courageously and resolutely to work, and brought the expansive steppe-lands not only under cultivation, but also changed them into attractive fields of grain. The original colonies soon became recognized as "Mother" colonies. Throughout this first century, they had loyally held to their German language, as well as the culture and customs they had brought along from Germany.

Eventually, following the passage of 100 years, an announcement came to the colonies from Petersburg, declaring, "The hundred years of freedom from military service are now fulfilled; the Germans must now also serve in the military!" This caused tremendous agitation within the colonies, for it was very difficult to accept this new regulation. Therefore, the government extended an interval of ten years to the Germans during which time those who so desired might emigrate. That brought the initial inducement to immigrate to America. The first emigrants were apparently Mennonite Brethren who resist bearing the sword, and who therefore have been obliged to suffer to a greater or lesser degree from military rulers-as we experienced during the time of the recent Great War, World War I. They may have come to America as early as 1866. For the most part, they settled in Marion and McPherson counties, Kansas. Near Newton, Kansas, a large immigrant house was erected which provided shelter for a period of time. Among these was Heinrich Ehrlich, a well-to-do man who brought along a number of poorer families. He returned to Russia and reportedly died there.

Various villages sent representatives to America during 1873 and 1874 who returned with glowing reports which encouraged the desire for emigration. Those from the colony of Norka were Johannes Nolde and Johannes Krieger ("Lekaie Hannessi") who later arrived in Sutton with their families. Both finally died there. Some of their children still live at Sutton today. (September, 1926).

But why Sutton, Nebraska, became the arrival point for many Volga Germans is impossible to determine precisely. In that regard; Pastor J. J. Ballensky discovered that the Burlington, the Missouri Pacific, and the Union Pacific Railroads had committed nearly one million dollars for the purpose of enticing settlers to Nebraska. A certain Fritz Hedde, appointed by the state of Nebraska, distributed some 21,000 maps and 10,000 pamphlets in the German language among the Mennonites; whether among the Volga Germans as well, is unknown. According to these articles, Nebraska appeared to be a veritable Paradise. He distributed not only maps and materials, but had received \$15,000 expense money from the state for this purpose, according to Ballensky. That he was responsible for and instigated the settlement house at Sutton is not definite. It appears, however, as a possibility, since an immigrant house was erected at Sutton.

In 1875, the first single persons and families to come to Sutton were: Jacob Bender, Georg Bender, Heinrich Weber, Johannes Reis, Jacob Eirich, H. Weber, John Weber and John Volz. They had come from Balzer in Russia to Iowa where they found neither friend nor employment. One day, a certain German asked Jacob Bender what he expected to do and where he planned to settle. He replied that numerous Germans from Russia had arrived here and finding no work, did not know where to turn. Whereupon the

German advised, "Go to Sutton, Nebraska. A number of people from South Russia arrived there several years ago along with others and including a family named Groshans." Mr. Bender recalled that he had seen the name Groshans in a publication from America while still in Balzer. This gave them the basis to move on to Sutton.

In 1876, the following families from Alt Norka arrived here: Christian Pauly, Johannes Spahn, and Heinrich Hoelzer ("Hanskorte Hennerche"), Heinrich Jost, Heinrich Sinner, John Doering and "Hanpeter" Nagel. On 20 July 1877, Konrad Popp, Heinrich Giebelhaus, Konrad Schnell, Heinrich Heuser, Wilhelm Schleicher, and Konrad Brehm arrived. Shortly before Christmas of the same year, Heinrich Schneider, Johannes Koch, Georg Koch, Hanwilhelm Sittner, Adam Sittner and Johannes Schwabauer also arrived.

Heinrich Jost, Chritian Deines, Ludwig Jost, Nikolaus Hinkel and Johannes Traudt came to Sutton in 1877. They, however, came from Wisconsin where they had settled previously. Friedrich Joerg, Heinrich Trueber, Konrad Reuscher, and Johannes Traudt arrived in Ohio in 1875 and later came to Sutton.

In 1876, Heinrich Urbach, Wilhelm Krieger, Melchior Krieger, Heinrich Schaefer, Helfrich Lichtenberg, Heinrich Goettman, Heinrich Repp, Johannes Schnell and Georg Schnell arrived at Bluffton, Ohio. Most of these also came to Sutton in 1878.

On 11 June 1878, 11 o'clock at night, 27 families comprising an entire trainload, arrived in Sutton. They were: Johannes Nolde (the previously designated representative from Norka to America), Adam Bauer, Nikolaus Sauer, Heinrich Spahn, Johannes Ensel, Hanpeter Jost, Konrad Koch ("Klerkoch"), Philipp and Jacob Hamburger, Johannes Ross (the old father), Konrad Deines, Adam Deines, Heinrich Schleiger, Johannes Ross, Adam Hein, Johannes Burbach, Johannes and Georg Jost, Heinrich Reusbich and Heinrich Pauly. The train stopped Sutton and the people stayed in the cars until the following morning. Some were met by their relatives who had come there earlier. Certainly, things did not move as rapidly as today, since people used horse and oxen drawn wagons. Many moved into the immigrant house which was situated near the railroad station and which served as their living quarters for a time. Later it was destroyed by fire - one may suppose because of dislike for the numerous immigrants.

In 1879, Johannes Claus, Philipp Sinner, Johannes Knies, the old father Traudt, Heinrich Kleiber and a Mr. Knopp arrived.

Most of those who arrived in Sutton during the years 1875-1879, found work in the area. For the most part, they settled on the land. At first, they worked for wages. Soon, however, they had acquired animals and equipment and leased their own land. Some continued to work on the railroad as it moved westward where eventually they established permanent homes.

In 1876, the following persons came from Eckheim where Pastor Sterkel was serving as the minister and encouraging the emigrants with his counsel and support. For a time, he had been active as a pastor in Wisconsin and was therefore able to give the people excellent advice. These Eckheimers, however, did not come to Sutton, but landed at Russell, Kansas, instead. They were Friedrich Riffel, Friedrich Keil, Georg and Jacob Steinert, Konrad Zwetzig, Peter Meng, Adam Kraft, and Peter Schneider. All, with the exception of Mr. Keil were single persons.

In the fall of 1876, additional families arrived at Russell, Kansas from Eckheim: Gottlieb Yauck, Peter Becker, Georg Steinert, Mr. Stoll, Mr. Schneider, Mr. Muehlberger, F. Borger, F. Mai, Mr. Karft, Mr. Keil and Friedrich Kretz. (The latter provided this information to the writer.) All of those with the exception of Mr. Riffel, came to Russell, Kansas. Mr. Riffel landed at Marion County, Kansas. The train stopped at Russell. On the following morning, some of those who had arrived earlier came and took their friends and relatives away. Women with little children were taken on horse drawn wagons. The luggage was loaded on oxen drawn wagons. Men and young people were obliged to walk in the four inch deep snow which had fallen during the night. It was an eleven mile trek across the Smoky River, south of Russell to Mr. Bender's land (Bender from Kratzke). Here they wanted to set up a colony similar to those in Russia, for which Mr. Bender had donated a portion of his land. This plan was, quite naturally, afterwards abandoned.

A new stream of immigrants followed in 1886. Among the numbers of families who landed at Sutton, the following were listed: Peter Repp, Konrad Glanz, Adam Schwarz, and Peter Koehler. In the fall of the same year, on November 13, Adam and Johannes Schleiger, Peter Penning, Johannes Hessler, Adam and Georg Hoelzer arrived. Heinrich and Georg Ross, Heinrich Block and Konrad Hoelzer landed at Christmas the same year. In 1887, a great many arrived, among whom were: Peter Bechtel, H. F. Schumann, Philip Hein, Adam and Johannes Mueller ("Nagelschmidts"), Peter Jost, Heinrich Bott, Heinrich Urbach, Adam Wolf and Konrad Wolf. During this same year the railroad was built between Sutton and Stromsburg, where many found employment. Many also went to Lincoln, Nebraska, where water mains were being laid

throughout the major portion of the town and streets were being surfaced. Others went to Denver where considerable employment was available.

From 1886 to 1914, the immigration never substantially reduced. However, people no longer came to Sutton to such an extent; instead, they went directly to those areas where their friends and relatives had settled because of ready employment. The stream of immigration became unusually large following the Russian-Japanese War, and lasted until 1914. Today, we find Germans from the Volga River region in practically all states of the Union as well as in Canada and Argentina.

Within the decade of 1890-1900, there was great unemployment, due in part evidently, to the political situation, when many of our people did not fare well. A laborer had to work for a very meager salary. For instance, a good industrious hand was required to work hard in the field during harvest and threshing season from early morning until late at night for one dollar. A man, whom I knew well, actually worked an entire day on the straw stack during threshing for only ninety cents. Sometimes, three to five men competed for one job. These were very difficult times throughout the land; day laborers were especially affected. With the advent of the sugar beet industry, conditions improved. For many, it became the first real opportunity to earn their daily bread. More and more, people moved into those regions where the government had established irrigation, and where they also made their permanent homes. How the poor farmers really fared during those days and years, we shall explore later on.

What have the Volga Germans brought to our blessed land?

I

They have helped to change, at least in part, the western Midwest from an empty wasteland into a virtual Paradise. Immediately, upon arrival here, they took up land, for they desired to hold true to the methods and customs of their fathers who had been lifetime farmers. Yet that was not a simple matter, for the majority lacked means to acquire the necessary livestock and equipment. In trust and dependence upon the dear, benevolent Heavenly Father, who led them into this strange land, they started out in the simplest manner. Dwelling places were created from caves dug out of the earth or huts built with sod. Oxen or horses were acquired; the prairie sod was broken and seed sown. How difficult and wearisome their beginnings were and how many tears were shed, can only be described by those who lived through the times. Of that, we who live in these advanced modern days and reap the fruits and blessings of those devoted and industrious pioneers, have no real understanding or impression. Therefore I will not attempt to write about it; only to mention that those were unspeakably difficult times! Dwellings were extremely small and primitive; many lived in "dugouts" that were sometimes so poor and inadequate that parents with children often had no protection from the weather and had to hold their loved ones in their arms during a rainstorm. People who lived through these experiences told me this. Life was of the most primitive order; often there was only cornbread and milk. Clothing was also meager. Recently, a church brother told me how he wore mismatched shoes. Many went barefoot during the summer. Also, there was no silk or satin for Sunday church dresses; instead, the women were happy if they owned cotton dresses. The men were happy if they had clean pairs of blue pants or overalls to wear. There were no automobiles in those days. Carriages were not affordable. A person was grateful to be able to drive with horses and oxen drawn wagons. A tall, husky Swede with conspicuously short pants legs and barefoot in summer would often come to Sutton on Saturdays with one horse and a cow hitched to the wagon. With these two animals he also did his farm work and even took milk from the cow. What would our spoiled people say to this today?

Thus, they existed not only in very simple houses which were lacking in any luxuries such as furniture, and so on, but they were also faced with numerous crop failures during the early years. That pertained especially to the states of Nebraska and Kansas where so many had settled. Many a tear was shed and many a prayer was raised to God on high. However, the people kept their good spirits and carried onward faithfully, industriously, and tirelessly, until through an amazing degree of perseverance, they had accomplished something. Only very seldom does one still see an occasional sign of the old sod houses which are reminders of the sad past. In their places, one now finds neat and to some degree very modern dwellings; good barns for the livestock, as well as modern field equipment. This is true especially of the states of Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Montana, Washington, and California. For the most part, these and other states boast luxuriant wheat, corn, and sugar beet fields that supply food for our people. In Washington and California there are orchards of which one can be proud. The Washington apples and the California grapes, figs, and other fruits, because of their great reputation and outstanding quality, are consistently exported. Anyone can be convinced on the Volga German's ability and knowledge of farming when he visits the wheat and corn farms and orchards of the above named states. If one is in California

during harvests, which occur practically throughout the entire summer, he gets the impression that he has arrived at the courtyard of Paradise.

II

Many have settled in larger cities, such as Lincoln, Denver, Portland, Fresno, Chicago, Sheboygan and other towns where they work in factories, on the railroad, and so on. Many are found in business; and one may affirm with assurance that most of these can be counted among the most capable business people.

A goodly number have directed themselves to the teaching profession and to education so that it is not uncommon to find "bachelor maids" as school teachers who help educate good citizens for Uncle Sam. Also, there are more than a few able doctors, attorneys, and judges, who have distinguished themselves through trustworthiness and ability. From among these, it is proper to single out the good and dedicated Dr. Wekesser who has earned an eternal reputation and fame not only through his prominent medical practice in Lincoln and the surrounding area, but also through the outstanding efforts he demonstrated among our people during the time of great need in Russia. Many have dedicated themselves to the ministry and are serving in a great variety of blessed fields for the Evangelical churches throughout the entire land.

So we find the Volga German involved everywhere and associated with anything of worth. He is an honest, dependable and industrious worker who is noted everywhere for his outstanding accomplishments. Early, he established a home and is devoted and loving to his family. As a rule, he is known as someone who willingly pays his debts. He is also devoted to the Christian religion, which he received from his fathers and he attends church and participates in the mission effort. He is also a law-abiding person who gladly adheres to the state's precepts. When Uncle Sam made his call to arms in 1917, not a few freely volunteered. Many returned wounded from France; others fell there and await resurrection. The Volga German belongs to a healthy, strong, honorable and God-loving people of whom we need never be ashamed. Instead, we have every reason to be justly proud.

ADDITIONS TO THE LOAN COLLECTION

Two new titles have been purchased for the AHSGR collection which is housed at the Greeley Public Library; Greeley, Colorado. Reviews of both these books by Marie M. Olson follow.

In the Fullness of Time: 150 Years of Mennonite Sojourn in Russia, by Walter Quiring and Helen Bartel;

Translated by Katherine Janzen and edited by A. Klassen. 3rd ed. 1974 212p.

This is a beautiful, large pictorial record, with portraits, street scenes, photos of homes, maps, etc., relating to the various Mennonite groups, their wanderings through Russia and the colonies founded by them, with a brief historical text about each migration.

Brothers in Deed to Brothers in Need: a Scrapbook About Mennonite Immigrants from Russia 1870-1885;

Compiled by Clarence Hiebert. 1974 469p.

The author, a professor at Tabor College, Hillsboro, Kansas, has produced a fascinating book of reprints from newspapers and journals, copies of U. S. and Canadian government documents, ships' passenger lists, letters and portions of diaries, all relating to the German-speaking Mennonites from Russia who settled in the U. S. and Canada during the years 1870-1885. It is illustrated with portraits and photos, including ships, and maps. Excellent source material for the historian and genealogist.

* * *

A third addition to the collection was donated by the author, Richard D. Scheuerman, an AHSGR member who is presently teaching in Cashmere, Washington. The review is by Nancy Bernhardt Holland.

Pilgrims on the Earth: A German-Russian Chronicle by Richard Scheuerman. Published by Ye Galleon Press, Fairfield, Washington, 1974; 89 pages.

In this brief book Richard Scheuerman has achieved both concision and a richness of detail by focusing his study on one group of German-Russians: the 269 Hessians who, in the late summer of 1767, founded Jagodnaja Poljana, one of the first German colonies in Russia. The book concentrates on several families in this group: the Ochs, Green, Scheuerman, Litzenberger, Schmick, Fox, Gerlitz, Bofus and Repp families, but provides much material of interest to general readers.

Mr. Scheuerman in this volume, which is well-written and carefully documented, first traces the background history of events in Germany during the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries which led to discontent among the small farmers of the fragmented German states: the devastation of repeated wars, an unbearable tax burden and religious persecutions. He describes the Manifesto of Catherine the Great and the work of her agents who made the 1600 mile, year-long journey to the Volga an attractive alternative to remaining in Hesse or joining emigrations from Hesse to North America then being undertaken by that group later known as the "Pennsylvania Dutch."

Chapter II begins with the reception of the immigrants by Catherine herself and the founding of the colony, named for the prolific wild strawberries that distinguished the area. The difficulties of the first winter when the colonists were forced to seek shelter in crude earthen pits and food was in such short supply that seed grains were consumed while marauding wolves and raids by pillaging nomadic tribes added to the immigrants' peril resulted in a high mortality rate. Chapter II also gives an interesting picture of life in the colonies during the later period. Customs, (especially wedding traditions), the governmental system, the church organization, the school curriculum and its administration, and the beginnings of industry are described. An amusing section explains the need for and proliferation of nicknames for individuals and families that distinguish our people. The rapid growth of population in the Volga colonies and the founding of daughter colonies are mentioned.

In Chapter III the author details how the abrogation of privilege under Alexander II and the energetic promotion schemes of railroad companies in the United States led the Volga Germans to leave their Russian colonies and once again experience the rigors of pioneering life on a new continent.

Approximately half of the book details the final migration of the descendants of the founders of Jagodnaja Poljana to the Pacific Northwest. The efforts of railroad mogul Henry Villard to effect the migration are the subject of Chapter IV. In the Palouse country of eastern Washington the immigrants first collectively purchased a tract of land and founded a village with out-lying farm lands, following the pattern established in Russia. The book describes early farming methods and gives some attention to the effects of the mechanization of agriculture and the growing demand for American wheat on the world market.

The final chapter gives a skeletal history of the founding of German Evangelical Churches (Congregational, Lutheran, Seventh Day Adventist) and a short study of political preferences among the German-Russians of the Palouse area.

Appendices to the volume include several useful sources of genealogical information for researchers with roots in Jagodnaja Poljana: the complete immigration list of settlers of Jagodnaja, giving religious affiliation, age, occupation, and village of origin in Hesse; a partial list of emigrants from Jagodnaja and the daughter colonies on the Jeruslan River to the United States between 1874 and 1916 which includes date of departure from Russia, route taken, and date of arrival in the Pacific Northwest.

The book includes an English version of the Manifesto of Catherine the Great, a three-page bibliography, eleven illustrations, four maps and a foreword by Emma S. Haynes. End pages are a facsimile of a 19th century Russian passport.

The volume is available in handsome simulated leather binding for \$6.00 postage paid from AHSGR, 615 D Street, Lincoln, Nebraska 68502.

Membership Roster Available

An alphabetized list of all AHSGR memberships as of November 1, 1974, is now available for purchase at \$2.00 per copy. Address your requests to AHSGR, 615 D Street, Lincoln, Nebraska 68502.

THE AHSGR ARCHIVES

by Marie M. Olson

The AHSGR collection at the Greeley Public Library continues to grow as do the requests for information and the use of the materials. All AHSGR members owe a debt of gratitude to Miss Esther Fromm in particular and to members of other staffs who are providing their services, gratis, to the Society.

The collection consists of several types of materials: pictures; maps; pamphlets; some tapes; excerpts from publications; continuations, such as the *Heimatbuch der Deutschen aus Russland*, *Mennonite Life*, *Work Papers*, to name a few, and books. The material covers all groups of Russian Germans: the Volga, Black Sea, Mennonites, Bessarabians, those in Russia, the United States, Canada, So. America and Germany.

Much of this material is in the German language, a few items of which have been translated into English. Others are in the process of translation.

Many of the items are out of print and some quite rare such as the early numbers of the *Heimatbuch* and cannot be replaced. Xerox copies of some out-of-print books have been obtained, most of which are unbound, loose pages in an envelope. These materials, understandably, cannot be loaned and are to be used in the library only. Also, since there are few duplicate items, to avoid losses, loans, of necessity, must be limited and those should be made through interlibrary loan.

What is interlibrary loan? It is a request from one library to borrow an item from another. This means that AHSGR members, wishing to borrow an item from the archives, should ask their public, university or college library to request the item from the Greeley Public Library addressing the request to:

Miss Esther Fromm
AHSGR Archivist
Greeley Public Library
Greeley, Colorado 80631

Most of these libraries will participate in interlibrary loans. The person making the request is usually expected to pay the postage, and such items are for use only in the library making the request.

Since many of the items cannot be loaned some few specific pages answering a question could possibly be Xeroxed for an individual at his expense.

There are several extensive collections of materials relative to the Russian Germans in libraries in various parts of the country which would probably permit use of the materials and might provide information. Some of these are:

The Hoover Institute Library
Stanford University
Stanford, California 94305

The Fresno State College Library
California State University
Fresno, California 93710

The South Dakota State Historical Society Library
Memorial Building
Pierre, South Dakota 57501

The New York Public Library
42nd and Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10003

The Library of Congress
Washington, D.C. 20510

Many items in the AHSGR collection have been reviewed in the *Work Papers*. If members will refer back to these they may determine whether an item might give them information they seek. Also, the Bibliographies of the AHSGR Collection contain an occasional annotation pointing to specific information in some of the items.

(Editors Note: *The Bibliography of the Loan Collection of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia in the Society Archives at the Greeley Public Library* is available in two volumes from AHSGR Headquarters, 615 D Street, Lincoln, Nebraska 68502. Volume I lists 34 pages of items;

Volume II lists 38 pages of materials added during 1974. Both volumes are paperbound and sell for \$1.00 each).



The official Henderson Mennonite Centennial Emblem designed by Donald Huebert and selected from 27 entries by the Fine Arts Committee for the Centennial, chaired by Mrs. W. E. Hieb.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS IN HENDERSON

Henderson, a village of about 2,000 people, on the south west edge of York County, Nebraska, is one of a chain of Mennonite communities stretching across the Great Plains of North America including Steinbach, Winnipeg, Mountain Lake and Freeman to the north, and Moundridge, Newton, Hillsboro and Pretty Prairie on the south.

The Mennonite settlers of York and Hamilton Counties, Nebraska, were part of a large group who left their homes in South Russia in 1874. Originally from Holland, these pacific people migrated to Prussia, from Prussia to Poland, from Poland to the Ukraine, and from there to the American plains.

Rather than conform to forced Russification policies and accept military conscription, these German-speaking members of the Alexanderwohl Mennonite congregation in the Crimea left Russia by train on July 22, 1874 for the German city of Hamburg. From there on August 16 they departed for North America on the S. S. *Teutonia* and landed in New York harbor on September 2, 1874, where the immigrants were registered at the Castle Gardens landing depot. A few days later a special Burlington and Missouri River immigration train brought the settlers to Nebraska. On September 8 they arrived in Lincoln where the railroad provided temporary lodging. In Lincoln, as at Castle Gardens, representatives of various railroads met with leaders of the group, hoping to induce the immigrants to settle on their land. Thirty-five of the families, upon the persuasion of Fred Grosshans, a Sutton grain dealer who had emigrated from Odessa, Russia, decided to settle northeast of Sutton. They purchased approximately 6,000 acres of land from the Burlington and Missouri River Railroad at prices ranging from \$3.50 cash to \$6.00 on credit, per acre.

While in Lincoln the immigrants bought horses, farming supplies, livestock and household goods. Those who purchased teams and wagons transported the goods to Sutton where they met the others who had come by train and those who had driven the cattle. From Sutton, they left for the immigrant house one mile east of what is now the village of Henderson. The building provided by the railroad sheltered the pioneers until individual homes could be built. By 1878, eighty families lived in the settlement. In 1887 a town named after David Henderson, an earlier homesteader, was established.

When irrigation was introduced in the 1930's, corn replaced the fields of Turkey-Red hard winter wheat the Mennonites had brought from Russia.

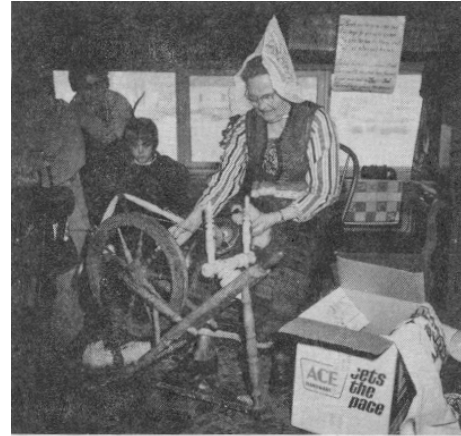
In 1937 a commemorative marker was placed at the site of the immigration house. Henderson has continued to preserve many elements of its Mennonite heritage. Several Mennonite churches preserve the spiritual traditions of the 16th century Anabaptists; Platt Deutsch is still spoken on the streets and in the shops, and verenike appear on the menu of the town's two restaurants. In an environment that continually reminds Henderson residents of their heritage, a celebration commemorating the arrival of the first immigrants became a project in which nearly the entire community took part.

As early as August 1973 a Centennial Steering Committee under the chairmanship of Gordon L. Schmidt was established which set up seven working committees, special coordinators and representatives from community organizations and planned a year-long series of events commemorating the arrival of the original Mennonite settlers. From January to December 22, various events attracted visitors from all over the United States and from as far as Saskatchewan, Brazil and Japan.

Highlights of the year-long celebration included the annual home show organized by the Cultural and Practical Arts Committee, under the chairmanship of Allen M. Friesen. Various displays and demonstrations illustrated traditional methods of home making. A hog was butchered, sausage made and lard rendered. Old-time methods of hand corn shelling, seed corn seed collecting, grain fanning, soap making, washing, spinning, butter churning, baking and cooking on an old range were demonstrated.



A prize winning float in the largest parade ever staged in Henderson. More than 160 entries competed in the parade which highlighted the centennial celebration community days. The float, depicting corn and Turkey Red Wheat, was entered by the Kroeker Grain and Lumber Co.



Demonstrations of traditional homemaking activities such as spinning and hand washing were part of the annual home show planned by the Cultural and Practical Arts Committee chaired by Allen Friesen.



A scene from one of the plays presented on August 10. The two productions, "Adee" and "Die Fria" were written for the occasion and were presented in the Platt Deutsch dialect. A ladies barbershop quartette sang several songs about Henderson between the two plays.

The annual Band Smorgasbord on March 29th featured the usual menu of German foods: cabbage soup, pluma mos, wurscht, ham and beans, noodles with onion gravy, cold beef, verenike, corn, rye bread, zwieback, priescha, portzilka, schnetcha, plautz and klops. On June 8, Reuben Epp of Dawson Creek, British Columbia, a student of the Low German dialect and author of poems and short stories, presented a program completely in Platt Deutsch.

The Centennial celebration climax came during community days, August 8-11, 1974. Old-time activities, games and contests, displays, a style show, quilt auction, special foods and a parade with over 160 entries and two plays in Platt Deutsch preceded "Homecoming Day" on Sunday, August 11, which featured special church services.

Other events included an antique show, a genealogy display, choir and band concerts, film showings, memorial services at local churches and cemeteries, antique car day, and the production of five appropriate plays: "By Faith They Went Forth," by the Rev. H. D. Epp, "Fiddler on the Roof," "Tomorrow has Roots," by Urie Bender and two plays in Low German: "Adee" and "Die Fria".

The year's festivities included lectures on Mennonite history and heritage by Dr. C. J. Dyck of Elkhart Seminary, Burton Buller of the M. C. C., Jan Gleysteen of Scottsdale, Arizona, Dr. Cornelius Krahn of Bethel College, Dean Wesley Prieb and Mrs. Kaethe Warkentin both of Tabor College and Dr. Henry D. Remple of Lawrence, Kansas.

Community clubs served "Faspa Tiedt" in the town hall every Monday and Wednesday afternoon, taking turns in providing home-baked goods and coffee.

A group, led by Mrs. Gordon Schmidt, completed the translation of early church records which had been written in German. Other enduring commemorations of the centennial year include a documentary film of "Henderson 1874" made between August 8 and October 8 which will be available for use by civic organizations; the dedication of a state historical society marker; and the publication of a centennial book.

Memorial and unveiling services of the state historical marker were held on Sunday, October 13. Although damp weather forced the ceremonies inside and the historical sign to be unveiled did not arrive in time, the program preceded as planned. The main speaker was Nebraska historian, Dr. Robert Manley. Shorter talks were delivered by L. G. Delay, assistant director of the State Historical Society; Henderson mayor Diet Ratzlaff; Willis Friesen, coordinator for the centennial committee and historical marker observances; and the Rev. Abe Krause, pastor of the Bethesda Mennonite Church in Henderson.

Plaques were presented to the Iowa Mennonite Churches and the Burlington Northern Railroad in appreciation of support given the original settlers of Henderson. Mrs. Arnold Lowenberg of Donnellson, Iowa, a granddaughter of Mennonite pastor Schowalter, represented the Mennonite Churches of Iowa, who, according to the plaque, "in the spirit of Christian Brotherhood sent to our pioneer forefathers, during the first winter of 1874, three tons of apples, 240 heads of cabbage, 175 sacks of flour, 82 sacks of wheat, 2 sacks of oats and 82 sacks of corn and potatoes." T. C. Whitacre, manager of the Burlington Railroad at Lincoln accepted a plaque as a symbol of gratitude for special services to the Mennonite pioneers such as the 24 foot by 80 foot "immigrant house, water wells, land at reduced prices, 50% freight reductions, road and bridge construction, and delivery at no charge of food and supplies sent by the Mennonite Churches of Iowa."

Ceremonies concluded with the burial of a fifty-year time capsule.

A book containing the early history of the Henderson Mennonites and their community, including many pictures is being prepared by a Centennial Publications Committee chaired by Mrs. Gordon Schmidt. Contributors to the volume include Stan Voth, Dr. Harold Friesen, Reuben K. Epp, Mrs. Don Peters and Allen Friesen. The book will be published in 1975.

Photos Courtesy THE HENDERSON NEWS, Henderson, Nebraska

COMMEMORATIVE STAMP RECOGNIZES HARD RED WINTER WHEAT

by Raymond F. Wiebe

The introduction of hard red winter wheat into Kansas and Nebraska was recognized by the issuance of a special commemorative stamp on Friday, August 16, 1974. Over two thousand persons, including dozens of stamp collectors and city postmasters, attended the memorable ceremony which took place in the Tabor College Auditorium-Gymnasium in Hillsboro, Kansas.

The American Historical Society of Germans from Russia Board of Directors contributed to the success of the program through their extra efforts to attend. Miss Ruth Amen, International President of AHSGR, was introduced together with the visiting postmasters and other dignitaries. The ceremony was sponsored by the Kansas Wheat Commission and the Hillsboro Arts and Crafts Association.

Hard red winter wheat was being raised in the Crimea and South Russia during the middle of the nineteenth century. Small amounts of this seed were brought along by Mennonite immigrants to Kansas and Nebraska beginning in 1874. This wheat slowly gained acceptance over the soft winter wheat varieties because it was acclimated to the dryer and more extreme weather of the Great Plains region. The Low German Mennonite families who settled in Central Kansas and South Central Nebraska in 1874 were able to bring some personal effects along including agricultural tools and seeds of various types. Complete congregations, led by their elders and ministers, settled in Marion, McPherson, Harvey and Reno Counties of Kansas and in Jefferson, York, and Hamilton Counties of Nebraska during the summer and fall of 1874.

The United States Post Office, through the National Commemorative Stamp Advisory Committee, accepted August 16 as the date for issuing the special stamp in recognition of the one hundred and sixty-four immigrants who arrived in Peabody, Kansas on that date in 1874. These thirty-four families were known as the Crimean Mennonite Brethren from Annenfeld village, Karassan Mennonite Colony, South Russia. They were chosen as a representative group since many other immigrants from South Russia brought agricultural seeds along including Turkey-Red winter wheat.

Postmaster General Elmer Theodore (Ted) Klassen of Washington, D.C., delivered the issuance speech as a highlight of the morning's program. He identified himself with the Midwest community of Hillsboro, reminding its citizens that it had been his birthplace 66 years ago. His grandparents came from the Molotschna River Colony, Taurida Province, South Russia and his parents built a early steam-powered wheat flour mill in Hillsboro, Kansas.

Klassen said that our county has always drawn its strength from the villages and farms of rural America. "Here the old fashioned virtues of hard work, thrift, and an unshakeable faith in God thrive as never before. These are the virtues which made our country what it is today. These are the virtues which will see it through to even greater achievement," he said.

"Our Mennonite brethren forefathers had few provisions, no shelter, and meager farm tools. Few of them spoke English. What they did have was a kind of confidence that left no room for self-pity or nagging doubt. They went into the fields and sowed the seeds of an industry that today feeds the world and adds billions of dollars to our national economy," he stated.

"As recently as 1940, the average farmer produced enough food for 12 people," he noted. "Today the total is 43 and is still climbing." Klassen concluded that the progress which the American farmer has made in just our own lifetime exceeds all gains agriculture recorded during the preceding one thousand years.

Having worked his way up "through the ranks," E. T. Klassen was elected president of the American Can Company of New York City in 1964. He had previously been a vice-president and on the Board of Directors of this large corporation. The American Can Company, in 1964, operated 100 plants, had more than 46,000 employees, and over one billion dollars of annual gross sales. He was asked to head the new United States Postal Corporation when it was reorganized a few years ago as an independent agency.

John Falter of Philadelphia, Penn., designed the hard red winter wheat commemorative stamp. Falter, whose paternal grandparents were Nebraska wheat farmers, has done 185 cover paintings for the *Saturday Evening Post* and has illustrated 25 books for *Reader's Digest*. Three days were required by Falter to jell the original concept of what he wanted to do for the wheat stamp. Completing all the art work to his satisfaction took another two days.

The stamp design shows a yellow and red field of ripe wheat extending to the horizon. It is enlivened by an early railroad engine puffing smoke as it pulls a tender and two cars. The stamp is printed in seven inks -yellow, red, blue, and brown by offset press and green, blue and black by the Giori press. At the top of the

stamp on a white panel is "Rural America" in blue, open face lettering. Across the bottom, in black, is "Kansas Hard Winter Wheat 1874-1974 U.S. 10 cents."

The stamp was modeled by Frank J. Waslick and engraved by John S. Wallace (vignette) and Kenneth C. Wiram (lettering.) All three are with the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. Each stamp is one and one-half inches wide and one inch high. There are fifty stamps to the pane, with one plate number. On the selvage are "Mr. Zip", "Use Zip Code" and "Mail Early in the Day."

Falter grew up in Nebraska and says he remembers spending much of his childhood looking over the countryside atop an old standpipe that stood near his home. He describes his concept or purpose for the stamp simply, "I was trying to communicate in the simplest possible way, the story of wheat I was supposed to illustrate. The old period train coming through the wheat field immediately communicated that this was a 100-year-old situation. The train served as a symbol of the time. The combine is shown being pulled by horses - again the time factor." Kansas Hard Winter Wheat is the first agricultural crop to be recognized by issuance of a postal stamp.

The presentation of nine special stamp albums by Postmaster General Klassen was a highlight of the ceremony. By tradition, the first album is for the President of the United States. Others were presented to Dr. Harley J. Stucky, Co-chairman, Kansas Wheat Centennial Committee; Mrs. Marguerite D. Pankratz, president, Hillsboro Arts and Crafts Association; H. Norton Goertz, vice-president, Hillsboro Arts and Crafts Association; Mrs. Thelma Dunfield Bray, chairman of the special Wheat Centennial Stamp Committee; Raymond F. Wiebe, Research Associate with the Kansas Wheat Centennial Committee; William G. Boothe, postmaster of Hillsboro; Dr. Roy Just, President of Tabor College in Hillsboro; and Creel Brock, administrator of the Kansas Wheat Commission. Mrs. Pankratz's husband Ben, Stucky, Goertz, Wiebe and Just are all descendants of German settlers of the Ukraine.

The strain of wheat, called "Turkey Red" when introduced by Mennonite immigrants, has for many years been known as hard red winter wheat and, in addition to Kansas, is grown extensively in Nebraska, Oklahoma and other wheat producing states. The Anabaptist Mennonites were pacifist, religious and hard-working farmers who descended from Hollander-German stock that settled some of the Ukrainian steppes beginning with 1789. They came to the United States and Canada in significant numbers between 1873 and 1883 as a result of having had their church schools made subservient to the Russian government and having been declared eligible for conscription into the Russian military services.

This introduction of Turkey hard red winter wheat into Kansas and Nebraska, beginning in 1873 and 1874, was hardly noticed at the time. The advantages and popularity of hard winter wheat over the soft winter wheat and soft spring wheat already being grown in these states took years to develop. Kansas harvested 310,000 acres of soft winter and spring wheat during 1873 with an estimated production of 4,340,000 bushels. The total farm value of this crop, at ninety-two cents per bushel and an average yield of 14 bushels per acre, was \$3,992,000.

Kansas became the leading wheat state in the nation during the early 1900s. An all time high of hard winter wheat was achieved in 1973 when Kansas harvested 384,800,000 bushels with a total estimated farm value of over \$1.3 billion dollars. Oklahoma harvested 157,800,000 bushels of winter wheat and Nebraska produced 93,800,000 bushels in 1973. An average bushel contains 60 pounds of wheat kernels. Approximately one-third of the wheat crop is exported. The multi-million bushel sale of wheat to Russia in 1972 and 1973 has helped to dramatize the importance of wheat to our economy. The Santa Fe Railroad has widely advertised its contribution in the first introduction of hard red winter wheat to this country in 1874. This railroad later carried most of the exported wheat to the ports of Galveston and Houston, Texas, and to Stockton, California. The Soviet Union imported this hard winter wheat for use in human consumption.

The wheat centennial commemorative stamp ceremony was followed by a noon luncheon in the Tabor College Dining Hall. Traditional Low German Mennonite foods were served to and enjoyed by the group of three hundred persons. The menu was prepared by Mrs. Glenn Wiebe and the Dining Hall staff and included:

Wurst Pastete (stuffed sausage), Gruene Bohnen (green beans), Kraut Salat (cabbage slaw), Saure Dilgurken and Apfel Ringe (dill pickles and apple rings), Roggen Wheitzen Brot (whole wheat bread), and Zitronen Mashkost (lemon dessert), all washed down with "Kaffee and Thea". Ladies from the Hillsboro Arts and Crafts Association, dressed in their long centennial costumes and traditional Mennonite bonnets served the meal.

A short, informal program was presented after the noon meal which featured a review of the planning and organizing which preceded this inspirational day by Dr. Roy Just and extemporaneous remarks by E. T. Klassen. A Hillsboro Wheat Centennial Stamp Committee had been organized during November, 1972 with

a membership of: Mrs. Marguerite D. Pankratz, H. Norton Goertz, Wayne Schroeder, William G. Boothe, and Raymond F. Wiebe. Each member of this committee had a special assignment and liaison activity as follows: Pankratz represented the Arts and Crafts Association of nearly one hundred members and handled statewide relations; Goertz had Arts and Crafts Association and the Hillsboro Chamber of Commerce; Schroeder was in charge of preparing a stamp design, the art work, and represented the Hillsboro City Council; Boothe communicated with the postal operating organizations; and Wiebe was responsible for the historical research and the preparation of the formal stamp proposals and recommendations to the Postal Department. Wayne Schroeder is a son-in-law of the present postmaster general. Ray L. Blozis of the Postal Service headquarters in Washington, D.C. came to Hillsboro a number of times to coordinate the preparation activities.

The Kansas Wheat Centennial Committee and the Kansas Wheat Commission granted \$2,000.00 for the support of the stamp ceremony. The hundreds of hours of donated time and work, and the non-reimbursed expenses, telephone calls, and car mileage furnished by Hillsboro residents largely contributed to the success of the project. Although one hundred and forty million stamps are normally printed for a commemorative issue, E. T. Klassen reported in his formal speech that four hundred and twenty million winter wheat stamps were printed. Commemorative stamps may be purchased at the special philatelic counters in the post offices of the major American cities until the issue has been distributed.

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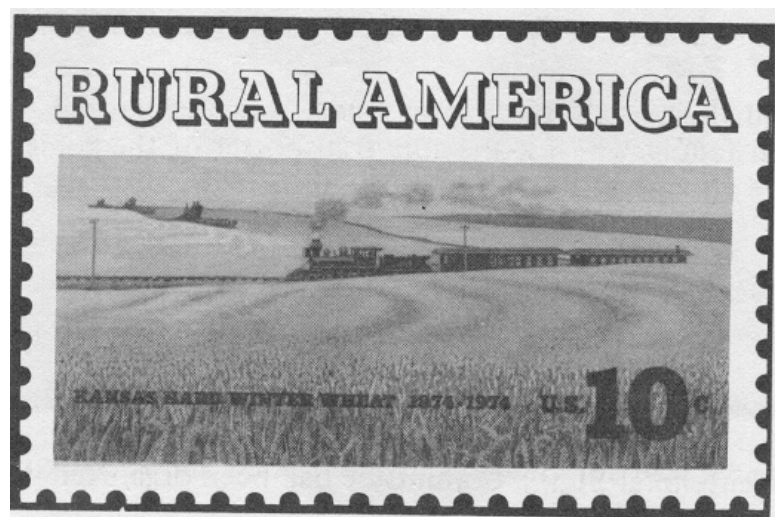
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ANNA HAD A VERY IMPORTANT JOB TO DO

How Red Wheat Came from Russia to America

By Rosetta Hudson

Photos by Jim Tucker

- Reprinted from *Farmland News*,
September 16, 1974 (Vol. 41;
Number 17), page 16.

Little Anna Barkman couldn't come out and play. She had a very important chore to do. In 1874 Anna and her Mennonite family were moving from Russia to America (Kansas specifically), and Anna's major job was to pick the very reddest, most plump and firm turkey wheat kernels for planting in Kansas.

"The Anna Barkman Story" was told in a road company play given in Kansas and Oklahoma throughout the summer. The play opened in Manhattan, June 6, and closed at Hillsboro at the Marion County Fair, August 21.

Jack Braun, director and writer of the play, wrote the script for children's theaters and planned a maximum of six performances. After the initial performance in Manhattan at an American Society of Agronomy meeting, publicity prompted other invitations.

The play, written for the Kansas Wheat Centennial, was based on a story from Bliss Isley's book, *Early Days in Kansas*. Braun used the original story, but "embellished it and took a lot of license" to instill human interest and family interaction.

Nine main characters comprised the cast, all Hillsboro residents. Smaller parts were filled in from communities in which the play was being given.

The Peter Barkman family (Anna's) was portrayed by the Charles Horn family of six, plus Anna. Horn is head of the Tabor College Department of Education in Hillsboro. Anna was played by Jill Wiebe, at least until the last day when she contracted strep throat and was denied her final curtain. Kathy Mendel, stage manager filled in after learning Anna's lines an hour before show time.

Other members of the cast were; Dewey Willis as Elder Jacob A. Wiebe, and Jannita Flaming, as Elizabeth Wohlgenuth, Anna's best friend. Two of the villagers were Jannita's parents, Lester and Naomi.

In addition to Braun and Mendel; the technical crew included; John Savoia, assistant director; George Ahlenius, technical director; and Dawn Wiebe, costume designer.

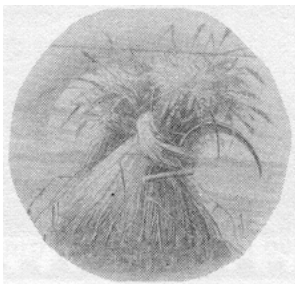
The play they produced dramatized the family's decision to move, the exodus from Russia and early life in Kansas.

An important prop in the play was Anna's wheat doll, Catherine. Anna's mama made the doll from cloth, stuffed it with wheat and gave it to Anna after she finished gathering the choice wheat kernels. If anything happened to the special wheat, the family could use wheat from Catherine for planting, Anna reasoned. Catherine accidentally produced wheat stalks when Anna's mischievous brother buried the doll to "teach Anna a lesson."

The troupe joined the cast with the idea that the play would be presented six times. When the schedule stretched to 24 performances in 15 locations, the original cast sacrificed their summer and stayed with it.

At Hillsboro play-goers received a treat that other towns had not had. Connie Wiebe Isaac, a Hillsboro native who now lives in Fresno, Calif., heard about the play and volunteered to write and sing some special music. One song, "Little Anna Barkman, Won't You Come Out and Play?" depicted Anna's important chore of gathering the wheat.

The hardy Mennonites and their hardy red winter wheat were recognized for their contribution in the play. Of course, the Barkman family was not the sole transporter of the golden kernels. But, as Anna told her papa, "someday we'll have enough to feed the whole world."





Audiences, often relatives of the Barkmans and Wiebes, visited the cast after performances throughout Kansas and Oklahoma. Here, Jannita Flaming, Naomi Flaming, Jeremy Horn and Lester Flaming visit with their audience.



Papa Barkman tells his daughter, Anna, that she must pick only the best wheat to take to America.

VILLAGES IN WHICH OUR FOREFATHERS LIVED

By Dr. Adam Giesinger

Under this heading Dr. Adam Giesinger will provide a series of chronicles, from various sources, of German villages in Russia. Such chronicles are available for most of the old colonies in the Black Sea region, but they exist in only limited numbers for the Volga colonies.

On this occasion we present the chronicles of three villages on the Volga Bergseite; Kamenka, Pfeifer, and Rothammel, and ancestral villages of many people of Volga German descent in Kansas and elsewhere in the United States. These chronicles were included in an article published by the Black Sea historian Konrad Keller in 1910 in *Deutsche Erde*, Heft 6/7, pages 184-192.¹ The translation and the notes are by Dr. Giesinger.

The colony KAMENKA

Kamenka was founded in the year 1764² by Catholic emigrants from various parts of Germany. It lies on the left bank of the Ilawla River, a tributary of the Don, and is 110 versts³ from the provincial capital, Saratov, and 70 versts from the district capital, Kamyshin.

At the general Russian census of 1788, Kamenka had 97 families, with 268 males and 267 females.⁴ Since the founding, the following have left the colony: in 1858, 40 families, with 104 males - the number of females is not given in the records — migrated to the province of Samara⁵; in 1886 and 1887, 35 families went to America, some to the United States, others to Argentina.⁶ At the present time the colony has 399 farmyards, with 5,351 people of both sexes, all of the Catholic faith. In addition to these, there are 146 families, still belonging to this community, who have their homes elsewhere.⁷

The village has four rows of houses, which form a rectangle 1 verst long and 160 fathoms wide. There are 58 stone houses, 253 wooden houses and 71 houses built of clay.

Kamenka is the seat of the dean, the superior of the Catholic clergy of the Bergseite.⁸ In 1906 a new brick church was built to replace the old wooden one, which had been destroyed by fire. The village has a parochial school and two private schools, but statistics on the number of teachers and pupils were not available. 725 adult males and 729 adult females are able to read and write.

Kamenka is also the seat of the Russian land-captain⁹ and is the local government centre.¹⁰ It has a medical doctor, a female and two male medical assistants, a midwife, a pharmacy, and a hospital with ten beds. It also has a post office and a telegraph station. There are two annual fairs and there is a market day every Sunday. The main highway from Saratov to Astrakhan runs through here.

The colony has the following artisans: 33 shoemakers, 7 cabinet-makers, 7 carpenters, 2 tailors, 19 millers, 6 blacksmiths, 5 wheelwrights, 9 transport drivers, 1 tinker, 2 musicians and 1 weaver. There are 45 establishments dealing in manufactured goods, 9 small shops and 3 liquor stores.

The colonists own the following livestock: 1,272 horses, 119 oxen, 990 cows, 1,871 sheep, 1,155 pigs and 375 goats.

The community pays personal and land taxes amounting to 12,495 rubles annually. The community income amounts to 2700 rubles.¹¹

The land owned by this colony has an area of 11,968 dessiatines,¹² of which 8,992 dessiatines are near the village and the rest is 14 versts away. About one-third of the land is good black earth, the other two-thirds has a clay soil with sandy subsoil. Of the total area, 8,064 dessiatines are used to grow a variety of grains, 767 dessiatines are wooded, and the rest is used for pasture.

Here, as in all the colonies of the Volga region, the land is divided among the male "souls", the division taking place every six years.¹³ This absurd re-division of the land every few years is responsible for the backwardness of agriculture here and the lack of prosperity of the German colonists in this region.

The inhabitants of Kamenka sell their produce partly in Nishnaja-Panovka on the Volga, 10 versts from the colony, and partly in the district capital, Kamyshin.

The colony PFEIFER

Pfeifer, called "Gniluschka" by the Russian authorities, was founded in 1765¹⁴ by German emigrants from Baden, Wuerttemberg and other parts of Germany. It lies on the right side of the Ilawla River, 117 versts from the provincial capital, Saratov, 65 versts from the district capital, Kamyshin, and 6 versts from the volost centre, Kamenka.

At the general Russian census of 1788, Pfeifer had 89 families, with 270 males and 237 females.¹⁵ Since the founding, the following have left the colony: in the years 1860-1864, 23 families migrated to the

province of Samara¹⁶; in the years 1877-1886, 64 families went to South America¹⁷; in the years 1868-1876 six persons were expelled from the community for immoral behavior and were banished to Siberia. There are also 90 families, still belonging to this community, who now have their homes elsewhere. At the present time Pfeifer has 349 farmyards, with 4,568 people of both sexes, all of the Catholic faith.

Pfeifer has been an independent Catholic parish since 1871.¹⁸ The parish church was built of wood in 1846. There is a parochial school and since 1888 a government-supported Russian school.¹⁹ 618 adult males and 524 adult females are able to read and write.

The colony has the following artisans: 27 shoemakers,²⁰ 4 cabinetmakers, 5 wheelwrights, 2 weavers, 7 carpenters, 4 tailors, 2 oven-builders, 8 blacksmiths and 1 musician. It also has an oil-mill, 2 wind-driven flour mills, and 21 establishments dealing in manufactured goods, 4 small shops and 3 liquor stores.

The colonists own 1,369 horses, 278 oxen, 1,112 cows, 2,446 sheep, 1,567 pigs and 255 goats.²¹ Annual personal and land taxes for the colony amount to 10,515 rubles.

The land owned by the community has an area of 11,979 dessiatines, of which 8,195 are under cultivation, 150 are hayland, 245 are wooded, 265 are pasture, 6 are seeded to hemp, 37 are potato field, 6 are cabbage field, 126 are occupied as village lots and vegetable gardens and 45 are used for threshing-floors. The land forms a rectangle 12 versts long and 7 versts wide. The surface is mostly hilly. Of the total area, 450 dessiatines have good black soil; the rest is mainly clay with sandy subsoil. On the land are seven dams for the watering of livestock. The land is divided among the families according to the number of males.

The colonists sell their produce mainly in Nishnaja-Panovka on the Volga, less frequently in the district capital, Kamyshin.

The colony ROTHAMMEL

Rothammel, called "Pamjatnaja" by the Russian authorities, was founded in 1764²² by emigrants from various parts of Germany and a few French families.²³ It lies on the right side of the Karamysh River, 104 versts from the provincial capital, Saratov, 90 versts from the district capital, Kamyshin, 7 versts from the volost centre Oleschna,²⁴ and 33 versts from the railway station Krasnijar.

At the general census of 1788, the colony had 29 families, with 87 males and 92 females.²⁵ In the years 1875-76, 28 persons from this colony emigrated to America.²⁶ There are 31 families, who still belong to this community but now live elsewhere. At the present time the colony has 181 farmyards, with 1,563 people of both sexes, all of the Catholic faith.

Along with the affiliate Seewald, Rothammel forms an independent Catholic parish.²⁷ The parish church, constructed of wood, was built in 1893 at community expense. There is a parochial school. 206 adult males and 210 adult females are able to read and write.

The village has 26 carpenters and 36 shoemakers. There are also 3 stores dealing in manufactured goods, 2 small shops, 2 flour mills and a liquor store.

The colonists own the following livestock: 629 horses, 252 oxen, 598 cows, 994 sheep, 490 pigs and 226 goats. A few householders raise bees. The colony pays personal and land taxes amounting to 5095 rubles annually.

The community land has an area of 5,171 dessiatines, of which 3,254 dessiatines are under cultivation. The soil is mostly black earth; only near the western boundary are there a few hundred dessiatines of clay. The subsoil is red clay. The surface of the land is hilly and becomes increasingly so towards the northwest. The colonists rent some land from their (Russian) neighbors at 4 to 7 rubles per dessiatine annually.

Farm produce is sold at Nishnaja-Panovka on the Volga.

NOTES

1. The Keller article included the Catholic colonies of the Volga Bergseite: Kamenka, Husaren, Vollmer, Pfeifer, Hildmann, Leichtling, Kohler, Semenowka, Gobel, Marienfeld, Josephstal, Schuck, Degott, Rothammel and Seewald. The similarity of the approach used in all the chronicles suggests that Father Keller obtained his information through questionnaires sent to the parish priests or to the village mayors. It is unfortunate for us that a similar article on the Catholic colonies of the Wiesenseite, planned by Father Keller, was never published.
2. The Volga German historian Beratz, who had access to the Russian archives at Saratov, gives the date of founding of Kamenka as July 6, 1765.
3. 1 verst = 2/3 mile.

4. At the founding, in 1765, according to Beratz, Kamenka had 42 families, with 73 males and 75 females.
5. The Volga River formed the boundary between the Tsarist provinces (gouvernements) of Saratov and Samara. The German colonies on the west side of the Volga (the Bergseite) were in the province of Saratov; those on the east side (the Wiesenseite) were in the province of Samara. In the 1850's and early 1860's many families from the Bergseite villages crossed the Volga to found daughter colonies on the Wiesenseite. The emigrants from Kamenka, mentioned here, were probably among the founders of Marienberg.
6. There were Kamenka emigrants to America much earlier than 1886. Riffel, *Die Russlanddeutschen insbesondere die Wolgadeutschen am La Plata*, p. 30, and Brepohl and Fugmann, *Die Wolgadeutschen im Brasilianischen Staate Parana*, pp. 17, 37-38, mention Kamenka families in Brazil and Argentina in the 1870's. There were also some who came to the United States in the 1870's. Laing, "German-Russian Settlements in Ellis County, Kansas," in Vol. XI of *Kansas Historical Collections*, pp. 493, 495, 500, lists the names of 23 Kamenka families among the Catholic Volga Germans who settled in Kansas in 1875-79.
7. These were families who lived on bought or rented land or in Russian towns and cities, but who had not given up their rights in their home village.
8. Kamenka was a Catholic parish centre from its founding, the earliest on the Bergseite. A complete list of the clergy who served there over the years is given in Schnurr, *Die Kirche und das religiöse Leben der Russlanddeutschen*, p. 110. The parish priest and dean in 1910 was Peter Glassmann. He was succeeded by Leonhard Eberle in 1912.
9. The land-captain (zemsky nachalnik) was a district governor appointed by the Tsar to keep an eye on local government in the villages. Usually a member of the minor Russian nobility, he was given authority in his domain as absolute as that of the Tsar himself and he often exercised it as arbitrarily. The system was introduced by Tsar Alexander III in 1889. It was generally unpopular in the German villages, because it infringed on their self-government.
10. Kamenka was the volost centre, the seat of local government for a group of villages. Most of the Catholic villages along the Ilawla River belonged to the Kamenka volost.
11. The village government had to collect the taxes from the people of the village and remit the whole sum to the Russian authorities. The community income was the amount which the village government had for its own purposes.
12. 1 dessiatine = 2.7 acres.
13. This periodic re-division of the land, used in the Volga colonies from their early days, was general practice in Russian villages. It was, however, never introduced into the German Black Sea colonies.
14. Beratz gives the founding date of Pfeifer as June 15, 1767.
15. At the founding, in 1767, according to Beratz, Pfeifer had 104 families, with 179 males and 149 females.
16. These families were probably among the founders of Streckerau on the Wiesenseite. See note 5.
17. Pfeifer emigrants to South America are mentioned in Riffel, p. 33, and in Brepohl and Fugmann, pp. 18, 36, 45-46. There was also a substantial emigration to North America. Laing, pp. 493, 495, 499, lists the names of 20 Pfeifer families among the Catholic Volga Germans who settled in Kansas in the 1870's. Sons of Pfeifer gave the name of their ancestral village to new villages in Kansas and in the province of Entre Rios in Argentina.
18. A list of the parish priests in Pfeifer, with some uncertainties, is given in Schnurr, pp. 113-114.
19. Such Russian schools were introduced into the German villages to speed up russification. They received generous financial support from the Russian authorities.
20. There are a strikingly large number of shoemakers in these German villages. All shoes were hand-made, of course, but one still wonders how so many shoemakers found work.
21. The considerable number of oxen used in these colonies indicates the still somewhat primitive character of the agriculture in that region in the early years of this century. The goats, whose keep cost less than that of cows, were raised for their milk.
22. Beratz gives the founding date of Rothammel as August 21, 1767.
23. Although the few French families in Rothammel and in a few other Volga colonies were rapidly assimilated into their German environment, their names survived, although sometimes with changed spellings. There is little doubt, for instance, that the Rothammel family Basgall, which has representatives in Kansas and in South America, once was the French Pascal.
24. Oleschna was the Russian name for the German colony Dietel.

25. At the founding, in 1767, according to Beratz, Rothammel had 28 families, with 51 males and 49 females.
26. The number of emigrants was larger than this. Laing, p. 498, gives the names of 7 families and 2 single men, with a total of 32 persons (23 of them Basgall's), who came to Kansas from Rothammel in 1876. Another family (also Basgall) is mentioned as having emigrated the year before and settled in Ohio. Some people from Rothammel also went to South America. In fact the first two Volga Germans recorded as having gone to South America were from this village. One of these, Andreas Basgall, played a prominent role in the founding of Volga German settlements in Brazil and Argentina in the 1870*s.
27. A list of the parish priests in Rothammel over the years, with some uncertainties, is given in Schnurr, p. 114. Shortly after the Keller article was written, Seewald also became an independent parish. See Schnurr, p. 113.

BY WHAT NAME SHOULD WE BE CALLED?

By Emma Schwabenland Haynes

Instead of writing a "Report from Germany," I should like to devote a little time to discussing the differences of opinion prevalent among members of AHSGR regarding the phrases German-Russian, Russian German and Russia German. Several members have written to ask why I myself say Russian German. They want to know if there is anything "wrong" with German-Russian. The answer which I always give is that neither term is wrong; both have a logical explanation; both have been used by reputable scholars; and each author has the right to choose for himself which phrase he prefers.

Some people may ask why any phrase except "Germans from Russia" is used. This is the official name of our organization and everyone is satisfied with it. The answer is that the phrase works fine when used as a noun, i.e., "Many Germans from Russia live in Kansas." It is far less satisfactory as an adjective, i.e., "My subject today is German from Russia Folksongs." In the latter case, the sentence becomes shorter and more concise by speaking of German-Russian or Russian-German Folksongs.

In view of the general confusion over this question, it might be worthwhile to present, as impartially as possible, the various points of view that have been advanced. This will not be done with the intention of persuading anyone to change his own ideas, but merely with the hope of developing a greater spirit of toleration and understanding.

1. *Russia German*. This is the phrase used by Dr. Harm H. Schlomer in his article "Inland Empire Russia Germans." (See Work Paper No. 6 for May 1971.) It was also used by Rev. Fred W. Gross in his autobiography, *The Pastor*, and has been chosen by Fred C. Koch of Olympia, Washington for his Volga German history *Farewell My People*, now being prepared for publication. Dr. Schlomer, whose Ph.D. comes from Heidelberg University, explains his choice with the following sentences, taken from the article mentioned above:

This designation (Russia German) appears to be the most correct. It is careless usage to refer to these people as "Russians" or to use any term that would imply identity with the native people of Russia. In the interests of accuracy we need to remember that the colonists are Germans, and that they struggled against odds to keep their culture and civilization unaffected by their domicile in Russia.

There are several other arguments that Dr. Schlomer could have added. The word "Russlanddeutsch" is always used in Germany in reference to our ethnic group. If the German word is translated literally, one would have to say Russia German (not even Russian German). One should also remember that in theory, if not in practice, the USSR is a free association of independent republics. Russia is only one of these republics and it is incorrect to use the word "Russia" when speaking of the country as a whole. The Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Kazakhs, Kirghiz and the other one hundred nationalities comprising the Soviet Union do not consider themselves Russians. Why should we call the German people German-Russians? Their official name in the USSR is Soviet Germans.

2. *Russian German*. The phrase Russian German, either with or without a hyphen, has been adopted by even more scholars than Russia German. Included in their number are: Hattie Plum Williams, whose Ph.D. thesis at the University of Nebraska, printed in 1916, was entitled *A Social Study of the Russian German*. It was also used by Dr. George J. Eisenach in his scholarly book on *Pietism and the Russian Germans* (1948); by Sister Mary Eloise Johannes in her doctoral thesis, *A Study of the Russian-German Settlements in Ellis County, Kansas* (Catholic University Press, Washington D.C., 1946); by Frank H. Epp in his book *Mennonite Exodus* (Canada, 1962); and in the two outstanding books published by members of AHSGR in

1974: *From Catherine to Khrushchev* by Dr. Adam Giesinger, and Richard Sallet's *Russian-German Settlements in the United States*, translated by Dr. LaVern J. Rippley and Dr. Armand Bauer.

Arguments in favor of the phrase Russian German closely resemble those for Russia German except that here the word Russian is used as an adjective describing the country in which our German people have lived. The following explanations have been given.

- a. Germans from Russia think of themselves as German. They resent being called Russians. In the phrase Russian German, the emphasis is put on the second word.
- b. There is no objection to such phrases as Volga German, Black Sea German or Volhynian German. Why not be consistent and say Russian German?
- c. American ideas of a "melting pot" should not be applied to European countries with their-shifting boundary lines. For centuries the Sudetan Germans were surrounded by Czechs but they remained German. The same thing was true of the Germans in Hungary and Romania; or, for that matter, of the Poles under the Russians and the Armenians under the Turks. Why should it be so difficult to understand that our ancestors also remained German?

3. *German-Russian* - usually written with a hyphen, although this is not necessary. Among the highly respected scholars who have used this term are: Rev. Francis S. Laing, O.M. Cap., whose 1909-1910 monograph on *German-Russian Settlements in Ellis County, Kansas*, is still the basic source of information on the Catholic Volga Germans in Kansas; Prof. Joseph S. Height, who in 1964 translated Dr. Karl Stumpp's book. *Die Russlanddeutschen — Zweihundert Jahre Unterwegs* with the title *The German-Russians. Two Centuries of Pioneering*, Dr. Albert J. Peterson, Jr. in his outstanding doctoral dissertation *German-Russian Colonization in Western Kansas. A Settlement Geography* (Louisiana, 1970), unfortunately, still unpublished. The same phrase is also used by Amy Brungardt Toepfer and Agnus Dreiling in *Conquering the Wind* (1967); by John Pfeiffer in his article on "The German-Russians and their Immigration to South Dakota" (Work Paper No. 8. May 1972); and by Richard Scheuerman in his new book, *Pilgrims on the Earth. A German-Russian Chronicle*. Arguments in favor of German-Russian include the following:

- a. Within the United States it is customary to speak of Italian-Americans, Polish-Americans etc., with the first word standing for the country of origin and the second word for the country in which the immigrant is now living. By implication, therefore, the correct term for our ethnic group would be German-Russian. They were of German origin but had been living in Russia. American authors writing in English should accordingly adopt the phrase German-Russian to be consistent with American usage. (Standard American dictionaries can be cited in support of this argument.)
- b. Even though our grandparents may have spoken only German when they arrived in the United States, they were, nevertheless, Russian citizens and carried Russian passports. For that reason they should be called German-Russians.
- c. The term German-Russian is so widely prevalent among both Volga Germans and Black Sea Germans in North America that any attempt, at this late date, to make a change would merely cause confusion. This is the attitude expressed by my good friend Lawrence Weigel of Hays, Kansas, who writes a weekly article for the local *Ellis County Star* on Volga German traditions and history. Mr. Weigel stated that his readers had always used the term German-Russian and would find it strange if he suddenly began talking about Russian-Germans,

In any debate, each side is granted time for rebuttal. There are undoubtedly additional arguments that could be presented, but enough has surely been said to show that no matter which term is chosen, one is in honorable company and has no reason to feel apologetic. On the other hand, neither should one assume that those people who use a different term are in error by doing so.

Perhaps I might add that in my own family the phrase German-Russian was universally used. In 1929 my Master's thesis at the University of Colorado was entitled *German-Russians on the Volga and in the United States*. Later, after weighing arguments for and against the various terms, I decided in favor of Russian German in order to put maximum stress on the German character of our background. That is still how I feel today. But perhaps everyone who writes articles for our Work Papers could make more of an effort to use the term "Germans from Russia" whenever it does not interfere with the smoothness of a sentence. In that way there would be more uniformity in usage, even though the final decision should always remain the prerogative of the author concerned.

Originally written-March 1974

Slightly revised-November 1974

LOOKING FOR PROOF OF AGE - CITIZENSHIP - RELATIONSHIP?

By Gerda S. Walker

The Census Bureau collects data on millions of Americans every 10 years - 205 million of us in 1970. It keeps this information in the strictest confidence. However, certain items of personal information may be obtained on a transcript of the census record.

Except for early records destroyed by the British in 1814 and those for the census of 1890 which were lost in a fire, the information from all censuses prior to 1900 is available at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. Information from censuses taken in 1900 and later years is available from the Personal Census Service Branch, Bureau of the Census, Pittsburg, Kansas, subject to the following restrictions:

For an Adult: must be requested by the individual concerned.

For a Minor Child: must be requested by a parent or guardian.

For a Deceased Person: must be requested by a blood relative of the immediate family (parent, brother, sister, or child), surviving husband or wife, etc.) Stating "for family genealogy" brings results.

Generally, the following information is available from census records — Name of individual, age, place of birth, citizenship, relationship to head of household at time of enumeration.

The transcript furnished by the Census Bureau will also indicate the year of the census from which the information is taken and the individual's county and state of residence. However, a person requesting this information should note that the transcripts are exact copies of the information as recorded in census records. For example, names may be misspelled and cannot be altered in any way.

Census transcripts cannot be furnished for use in tracing missing persons for two reasons. Since the records are confidential, they can be furnished only to the individual concerned or his authorized representative. In addition, the person's address must be known in order to locate information recorded in recent censuses.

Persons desiring a transcript of records from censuses taken in the present century (1900-1960) may obtain a special request form, *Application for Search of Census Records*, from the Personal Census Service Branch, Bureau of Census, Pittsburg, Kansas 66762.

Because census information is confidential and because this information is maintained in different ways for different years, the detailed information requested on the application form must be furnished as accurately as possible. No search can be made without an application that has been completed in accordance with the instructions furnished.

A remittance must accompany all requests for searches. A fee of \$5.00 is charged and searches are conducted in order of receipt of requests. This fee covers the search of not more than two censuses for one applicant and one copy of the information found. Requests accompanied by a fee of \$6.00 are filled ahead of the \$5.00 searches.

A SPECIAL NOTE TO OUR READERS

We regret reporting that Phil B. Legler who has been preparing most of the material for the Genealogy Report has been ill and unable to assist with this issue. We know our members will understand and that all wish him a speedy recovery.

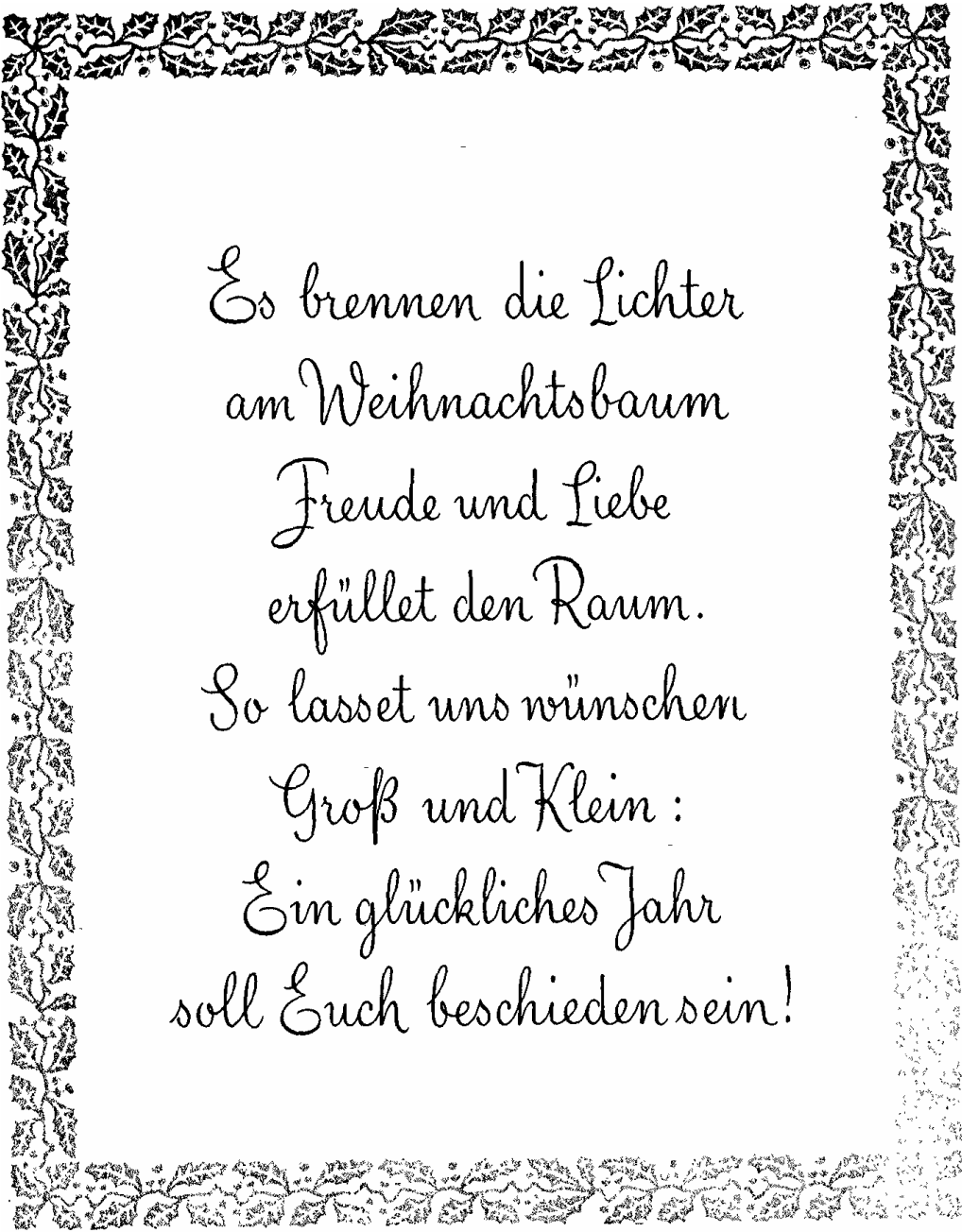
Mr. Legler does expect to edit the 1975 Edition of *Clues* which is scheduled for publication in February.

CAN YOU HELP?

By Phil B. Legler

Queries are accepted from members for publication at a charge of .05 per word. Do not count your name and complete address. Make checks payable to AHSGR and mail with your query to Mr. Phil B. Legler, c/o Windsor Gardens, 680 South Alton Way, Denver, Colorado 80231. The Genealogy Committee reserves the right to edit. Include at least one date and one location. Answers should be directed to the inquirer, but it is suggested that copies of unusual problems solved should be sent to the Committee also, to be published for the benefit of others. Remember, long and involved queries lose their effectiveness. Be specific! For abbreviation key, please see Page 62 of Work Paper No. 7. Don't forget to courteously acknowledge any replies.

FUHRMAN HARR TRAUTMAN MUELLER WACHTEL ERTEL	Desire info re FUHRMAN, HARR, & TRAUTMAN fam fr Rohrbach (Beresan Colony) area near Odessa, Rss; also, abt MUELLER, WACHTEL, & ERTEL fam fr Romanafka, Karlsruhe (another Beresan Colony) and Ehertsdorf. Good possibility ERTEL fam lived in Zurich, Rss, along East bank of Volga (Wiesenseite) above Saratov. - Mrs. Judith F. Rogers, P.O. Box 706, Snowflake, Arizona 85937.
SCHAFER STARKEL	Seeking additional info abt Phillip SCHAFER, merchant, fr Saratov & Grimm, Rss; Daniel, Wilhelm, Christoff & Heinrick STARKEL who supposedly were in Norka fr 1763 to 1805; Jacob STARKEL, b Sept 17, 1846, Saamoiza, Rss, m Katherina SCHAFER, b Aug 27, 1847, Grimm, whose first child was b Nov. 26, 1866; Fred STARKEL, b Sept 30, 1873, Anton. Jacob STARKEL & fam did 4 yrs missionary work in Arabia before coming to U.S., first settling in Kansas in 1885 and moved to Fresno, Calif, in early 1890's. - Mrs. Anne Starkel Johnston, 720 E. Michigan Avenue, Fresno, California 93704.
SCHMIDT KLUNDT HOLZWARTH STOLER BAUER ECKHARDT PFEIFF HARTUNG	Wish info abt pat GP from Rohrbach, District of Beresan, near Odessa - SCHMIDT, Georg, b Sept 27, 1875, s of Georg and Margaret nee KLUNDT, mar Karoline, b June 11, 1880, nee HOLZWARTH dau of Georg and Philipena nee STOLER. Also, mat GP from Frank - BAUER, Konrad, b Aug 18, 1875, s of Jakob and Katherina nee ECKHARDT, mar Anna Margaret nee PFEIFF, b Jan 17, 1882, dau of Konrad and Anna Margaret nee HARTUNG. - Clayton H. Schmitt, Box 293, Cascade Locks, Oregon 97014.
PFEIFER PFEIFFER KULM	Trying to locate or wish info re PFEIFER or PFEIFFER rel of two young boys by that name (one Alexander ?) sent by their parents to Glückstal, Rss, approx 1812, changing name to KULM. Possibly originated from Wurtemberg or Kulm (now Chelmna, Poland). - June Brown, 477 S. San Antonio Rd., Los Altos, California 94022.
NEU GLÜCKSTAL	Need facts, pictures, stories, clippings abt Neu Glückstal, Rss, near Odessa for forthcoming family book. - June Brown, 477 S. San Antonio Rd., Los Altos, California 94022.
MEHLHAFF (Mehlhaf)	Am tracing complete lineage of Colonist Peter MEHLHAF, who emigrated from Eppingen, Germany, in 1808 to Kassel, So Rss. Remit any available MEHLHAFF (Mehlhaf) info to Arlo C. Mehlhaff, Box 68, Eureka, South Dakota 57437.



Es brennen die Lichter
am Weihnachtsbaum
Freude und Liebe
erfüllet den Raum.
So lasset uns wünschen
Groß und Klein :
Ein glückliches Jahr
soll Euch beschieden sein!

KISSING THE SWITCH

Christmas Characters and their Roles in Social Control
among Catholic Volga Germans

By Timothy J. Klobberdanz

Obedience and respect are demanded early of Volga German children. Parents expect them to learn these virtues quickly and to act accordingly. Children who respond to the parental rules of the household are rewarded with signs of favor and affection. Those who display stubbornness or who attempt to influence their parents with an emotional outburst are reprimanded or simply ignored. Physical punishment is considered proper and necessary to curb the behavior of unruly children. Those who defy authority must suffer the consequences, however severe ("*Wer nicht hören will, muss fühlen*"). Discipline begins early in the home and is later enforced by the pastor and village schoolmaster.

When the Volga German child takes its first steps, it is encouraged by the mother and older siblings in its efforts. Praise marks success; ridicule follows failure. If the child falls and begs for sympathy the mother pretends that the accident is nothing. It is nothing, the mother whispers, in comparison to the hard falls that will come in later years. Sometimes, the Volga German mother soothes a child's bruised shin or scratched knee by reciting an ancient verse from the Fatherland:

Haale, haale, Sege-
's is nix dra gelege
Haale, haale, Gänsdreck
Bis marge früh is alles weg.¹
(Heal, heal, bless it!
It's nothing but a scratch.
Heal, Heal, goose-speck
Tomorrow morning it'll all be gone.)

Sounds that assume the meaning of spoken words open a whole new world for the child. Parents listen attentively to the first word uttered by a child. If the word is "Papa" the next baby is expected to be a boy.² The Volga German child is taught to pray as soon as he can repeat words and remember short sentences. The first prayers are simple and short:

Ich bin klein,
Mein Herz ist rein;
Soil niemand d'rin wohnen
Als Jesus allein. Amen.
(I am little,
My heart is pure;
No one may dwell in it
But Jesus alone.)

Jesus komm, mach mich fromm,
Dass ich zu dir in den Himmel komm.
(Come Jesus; keep me holy,
So that I can come to you in heaven.)

The child soon makes a strange discovery while learning the unwritten rules of his *Muttersprache* (mother tongue): he addresses his parents and other elders with the formal pronoun *Ihr* but speaks to God with the intimate *du*. The discovery is a simple but significant one. The terms of address are rigid ones; throughout his life he must address his father and mother formally as a sign of respect. With God and the saints, he is allowed more intimacy.

When the child is supposed to go to sleep one of the parents says: "*Die Hinkel kratzen auf dem Dach*" ("The chickens are scratching on the roof").³ Or the parents may scare the child to sleep by mentioning such fearsome figures as *der Pastor* (the village priest), *der Kirgise*, or *der Beiznickel*.

Though *der Beiznickel* is a masked character that traditionally visits Volga German children during the Christmas season, parents keep its enigmatic nature alive throughout the year. When children are troublesome they are reminded that soon "*Der Beiznickel kommt*" ("The Beiznickel is coming"). Little ones who have displayed poor behavior are told that *der Beiznickel* does not forget; when he visits the family home he will remember all that has been done and punish accordingly.

The arrival of *der Beiznickel* and *das Christkindchen* on Christmas Eve is the most elaborate form of ritualized social control in the Volga German colonies. The *Christkindchen* is a female counterpart who visits the household a short time prior to the coming of *der Behnickel*. Both figures are of pre-Christian influence and are related to ancient Germanic deities. The *Christkindchen* (literally translated "little Christ-Child") is actually a masked woman who bears a strong resemblance to *milde Perchta* - the kind fairy known as Mother Holle in old German folklore.⁴ Traditionally, the role of the *Christkindchen* is played by a young woman, usually a robust girl dressed in a white gown. The girl's face is covered with a muslin veil while a brightly colored sash and streamers adorn her gown. The *Christkindchen* wears an apron in which she has placed sweets and nuts; beneath it she conceals a switch. Though the *Christkindchen* is far more attractive than *der Beiznickel* she is still feared by Volga German children. The approach of the *Christkindchen* on Christmas Eve is signaled by the sound of a small bell. Often the masked woman knocks on the window or door of the family home and asks; "*Darf das Christkindchen auch hinemkommen?*" ("May the 'little Christ-Child' come inside?").⁵ The mother of the house soon opens the door and welcomes the *Christkindchen*. Assembled children in the household stare at the masked woman with a mixture of utter disbelief and fear. Sometimes, the *Christkindchen* carries a bundle of switches that is tied up with a bright ribbon. Carefully she removes a stick from the bundle or uses the one she has concealed beneath her apron. She brandishes the switch and loudly proclaims:

"Wo böse Kinder sein,
Da schlag ich mit der Rute drein!"⁶
("Where the bad children are,
There I strike them with the rod!")

The *Christkindchen* then commands the children to approach her individually. Each one is told to kiss the switch held by the *Christkindchen* and to pray.⁷ Good children who follow her instructions are given small gifts of candy while those who have been bad—as usually ascertained by their hesitancy in kissing the switch—are punished. Often the *Christkindchen* allows the bad children a chance to receive candy by dropping their sweets on the floor. As they attempt to recover the candy the *Christkindchen* switches their hands. After she departs, there is a general willingness expressed by the children to go to bed. But the father or mother of the house is reluctant to heed their cries: "*Wart nur, der Beiznickel kommt!*" ("Just wait, the Beiznickel is coming").

In contrast to the *Christkindchen*, the *Beiznickel* represents "*a fearsome, almost demonic figure in appearance and behavior*".⁸ The part is played by a large man of the village who is often callous toward children in real life. He is masked, bearded, and sometimes given horns like the Biblical Beelzebub. A shaggy sheepskin coat and fur cap further enhances the half-man, half-animal character that he represents. Instead of a bell, he carries a chain that is wrapped around his neck and waist. The *Beiznickel* also carries a large sack over his left shoulder and a heavy stick in his right hand. His approach is signaled by the sound of the chain as it is dragged outside the family home. When he enters, the children hover in the corners of the house. Older boys are especially frightened of *der Beiznickel* for he shows no mercy toward the disobedient and the prankish. Rarely does *der Beiznickel* ask the parents to identify unruly children; usually he has been previously informed and mentions embarrassing incidents that the children thought were long-forgotten. Children are then individually singled out and punished. Older brothers and sisters often have to drag a younger sibling forward who has been called by *der Beiznickel*. The punishment is more terrifying than painful. The large sack that is carried by *der Beiznickel* is intended for those children who have been especially difficult. The *Beiznickel* threatens to take such children from their home and carry them far away. Before the *Beiznickel* leaves, the children sing German Christmas carols and religious hymns. Small gifts are given to the better children by *der Beiznickel* and he warns the others that he will promptly return if their behavior has not noticeably improved. The *Beiznickel's* chain is then unwrapped and rattled to signal his departure. Sometimes, the *Beiznickel* does return within a few days to check on the children's behavior. Such an appearance usually takes place on New Year's Eve. At this time, one of the more rebellious children may actually be stuffed into the *Beiznickel's* sack and carried away. The crying child eventually returns home after "escaping" and relates the details of his experience to equally frightened brothers and sisters.

The traditional figures of the *Beiznickel* and *Christkindchen* are illustrative examples of ritualized social control. The practice of "kissing the switch" symbolizes a fearful acceptance of authority. Physical punishment is meted out to youngsters who do not conform to the expected norms of conduct. Thus, once each year, masked individuals in the Volga German Catholic colonies assume the guise of ancient Germanic deities and reinforce the parents' demand for obedience and proper behavior.

1. Peter Sinner, "Das Volksleben der Wolgadeutschen," *Das Neue Russland*, Doppelheft 1-2; (1926), p. 10,
2. Iris Barbara Graefe, *Zur Volkskunde der Russlanddeutschen in Argentinien*, Wien (1971), p. 125.
3. *Ibid.* p. 112.
4. Joseph S. Height, *Paradise on the Steppe*, Bismarck, North Dakota, (1972), p. 187.
5. Eduard Seib, "Der Wolgadeutsche im Spiegel seines Brauchtums," *Heimatsbuch der Deutschen aus Russland 1967/68*. p. 150,
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*
8. Height, *Op. Cit.*, p. 190.

BELZNICKEL

-Timothy J. Klobberdanz

Masked god of our ancient past,
friend of the frightened children,
when will you forgive us and return?

Sometimes the old folks speak
of how you magically appeared
on frozen Christmas Eves.

A crumpled hat, a mask of cloth,
a hefty coat and gloves
disguised your secret form.

The door would open wide
as you hurriedly stepped inside
to quiet the children's screaming.

"Pray" you told the little ones
giving peanuts to the pious
and spankings to the rest.

How many snows have melted
since you rapped upon a kitchen door
with your wooden paddle?

Perhaps you still come by,
pausing near each home
yet are afraid to enter.

—Afraid you will remind those
who have tried to forget
their earth-kissed heritage.

Surely you peek in the window
and see the aluminum tree,
electric wreath and plastic mistletoe.

Belznickel with the precious human eyes,
forgive my people who have forgotten
and left you standing in the cold.

CHRISTMAS IN VOLHYNIA

By Paul Peltz

Translated from the 1962
Heimatbuch der Deutschen
aus Russland, pp. 126-7
by Nancy Bernhardt Holland.

The Germans of Volhynia have a rich, deeply-rooted heritage of folklore. Of course there have been many foreign influences, primarily of Polish and Ukrainian customs, but a kernel of pure German folk culture has remained. Folklore was like a mortar which held people together, kept them in mind of their nationality and nurtured their ethnic consciousness.

When one speaks of years in general, whether of calendar or fiscal or church years, one can also speak of a folklore year, and the beginning of that year is Christmas.

A really thick golden yellow Christmas cake with a lot of raisins and saffron, a Christmas goose and a ham wrapped in dough and baked in the oven must not be lacking. But what really makes Christmas a holiday are the church services on Christmas Eve which are primarily the responsibility of the choir director.

Long before Christmas he practices Christmas songs, "speaks" and Christmas plays with the children which are then performed on Christmas Eve.

On this Eve the girls who have parts in the Christmas program wear white dresses while the boys usually appear in dark suits. The high point of the celebration is the procession of lights. The children march two by two from the choir director's house to the chapel holding candles and singing the song, "Vom Himmel hoch da komm ich her." That had become a tradition. The group of happy children then assembled around the tree which was decorated with lighted candles. Here the songs and verses they had practiced alternated with congregational singing and a speech by the choir director. A gift from Father Christmas in the form of a little book played a significant part at Christmas and throughout the entire winter. The children's practice of exchanging books with one another substituted for a school library,

After the Christmas vespers which everyone attended, those who were able to get away somehow, hurried home. Here in a glitter of candles stood the Christmas tree which had already been decorated by Mother. Of course the so-called pyramid was also in its customary place beside the Christmas tree. A wooden plate about 20 inches x 20 inches square and about one inch thick encircled with a pretty little railing is secured to the middle of a round wooden pole. At intervals little round or square boards are fitted to the pole—the larger ones below, smaller ones on the top so that the whole thing has the shape of a pyramid. The little boards have a large hole in the middle and are held together from inside by thin strips of wood. The last little board on the top has no opening, but instead, an iron rod in the middle which runs through the ends of the hollow pole. On the outer edge of the last little board eight to twelve fan-like blades are mounted. When the candles held in candlesticks on the edges of the boards are lighted, the rising heat sets the pyramid in motion.

Beside the Christmas tree, Father reads the story of Christmas from the large family Bible. After the singing of a Christmas carol, the gifts are distributed. Then follows the Christmas banquet.

Folklore customs are continued during the twelve days of Christmas. Weather forecasts are made during these days for the individual months of the following year. Love divinations are made and mysterious whispers in stables and barns entreat blessings on field and farm.

TWO SIBERIAN CHRISTMASES

The experiences of Leo Oks as a prisoner in a Soviet labor camp in 1945, "Christmas far from Home" appeared in the December, 1973 issue of *Volk auf dem Weg*. Eugen Bachmann's report on a more recent "German Christmas in Siberia" was printed in the December, 1972 issue of *Volk auf dem Weg*. Both translations are by Nancy Bernhardt Holland.

"Christmas far from Home" by Leo Oks The 24th of December, 1945 began, like all other days in exile, with the signal to awake.

The barracks of the Commandant stood in front near the entrance to the labor camp, behind a fourteen foot high wooden partition surmounted with barbed wire. The signal to get up was the gonging of forceful hammer blows at three to four second intervals on a piece of iron rail which hung in front of the Commandant's barracks. When the gong sounded at five o'clock in that persistent cold of the Christmas season, it was still pitch dark. The hoarse and hollow tones which reminded me of warnings and alarms, penetrated slowly through the raw, damp, ice-cold Polar air to the sixteen barracks which lay in rows of eight on both sides of the camp zone, under a forty inch deep blanket of snow. The inmates of the barracks, prisoners, exiles, deportees, and detained civilians of all European nationalities, were stacked along the side walls of the 55 yard long, three-story high barracks on bare wooden plank beds, thickly strewn with bedbugs. They were using their clothing as mattresses, pillows, sheets and blankets.

As soon as reveille penetrated the ear of the barrack's boss, a physically strong, healthy, eastern Russian worker, he tore those weak and dead-tired sleepers from their sweet morning rest with the disgustingly soul-piercing cry, "Podjom!" - "Get up!" Within fifteen minutes those still alive and able to go (there were deaths every night among the more than 200 inmates of the barracks) were up, sitting on the edges of their plank beds so that they could form a row immediately at the entry of the camp duty officer. If the count matched and no one was missing, all those able to go were led by the barrack's boss in an arranged order to breakfast in the camp mess hall. Here the daily bread rations and a soup spoon of cabbage leaf soup, "Balanda," was rapidly dispensed and consumed. Then in groups of six, we stepped out the exit door to be led to the place where we would work for 10 to 12 hours. From here on we were accompanied by a dozen guards equipped with machine guns and shepherd dogs. Having arrived at the work place, each man was assigned to his brigade, a work crew of 15 to 20 men. This morning, like the more than 3001 had already lived through, passed without incident.

But meanwhile, looking toward the East, one could see the first signs of the long-awaited, approaching day. The stars that had been shining so clearly grew paler and were soon swallowed up by the golden rays of the rising sun.

As everyone had hoped, the sun rose brilliantly and all clouds disappeared from the sky. The air became unusually clear. That was a good omen and we breathed a little easier.

The wind was calm and the blue sky beamed out a lovely, unique, other-worldly purity and filled our aching hearts. And we, in our great poverty, our hunger and cold, rejoiced and were happy to the depths of our souls to have lived to see that day on which Christ was born. Working in deep silence, gathering the last bit of our strength so that we wouldn't have to work extra hours, we finally exhausted the day. It was, however, a very long day and seemed as if it would never end.

Afternoon changed suddenly to evening. The sun sank toward the West. toward our homeland to which our thoughts hastened. The dusk from the East soon covered the whole sky. It became dark again and the stars shined so charmingly, but so coldly down toward earth.

Watched over by the guards, we then dragged our tired bodies to the gathering point. Probably more quickly than usual, strengthened by an invisible power, we went with winged steps toward home—toward camp. Several weaker ones could not keep up, so we had to cut our speed.

After roll call and supper—a dish of sauerkraut broth—five of us bunk-mates sat together in a circle in the corner and celebrated Christmas Eve. We celebrated that long-awaited first Holy Night in exile only in heart, in memory of those lovely, long-past Christmases in freedom. The day we had eagerly looked forward to was now here. God sent us His Son through whom He took our sins, guilt, and damnation on Himself and secured eternal life for us.

It was a Christmas Eve without a Christmas tree, without cookies or exchanging of gifts; a Christmas far from home in a desolate, strange land. We sang "Silent Night, Holy Night" in whispers and told each other stories of childhood Christmases and felt a sort of warmth, a happiness, a sense of love and good fortune penetrating our souls which diminished all our sufferings, doubts, skepticism, and faintheartedness. Peace of

mind woke a childlike faith in us and we talked of how the animals spoke together in the stables and understood one another on Christmas Eve, of how the lambs bleated "Bethlehem"; where Father Christmas lived and how he always knew the wishes of all the children. Before curfew, "Otboj!" at 10 o'clock we left our dimming barracks and looked toward the West, toward home, where we believed the sun was still shining, where relatives and friends, were perhaps at the same hour, looking toward the East, thinking of the fallen, the missing, the exiled. Perhaps our glances even met somewhere, on a star, or planet. In our hearts we spoke with home, sang its songs, and thought of those who lived there. No one heard our prayers or our crying like that of a little child who has lost his mother and no one could tell from our conversation that we had aching hearts and distressed souls. For we were happy and at peace to have experienced the day of the Deliverer's birth. We were also hoping for the day of our deliverance. It came later, but it came.

The next day, the 25th of December, Christmas Day, was no different from any other day in exile. Only one peculiarity was evident: the camp guards and sentries were doubled and the work quota was increased.

When today we celebrate Christmas in peace and prosperity which in many cases knows no bounds, we should always remember the Christmases of those oppressive years. Nor should we forget those who even today keep Christmas in places far from home. And we must thank God that He allows us all to endure. Merry Christmas!

"German Christmas in Siberia" by Eugen Bachmann

Christmas—the celebration of God's love revealed to us by the gift of His Son, Jesus Christ!

Christmas! Wherever German Christians live in the wide world, there Christmas is celebrated in the ancestral style. Christmas has also become the celebration through which German-speaking Christians throughout the world show their religious and national unity.

Our German Christmas customs have also been accepted in Russia, but there, because of official atheism, the dates have been changed to New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. The Christmas tree there is called a "New Year's tree".

How does the German Evangelical congregation in Zelinograd, Kazakhstan, Siberia, celebrate Christmas, especially Christmas Eve? As early as November the church choir begins to practice Christmas songs and poems. Previously, before the congregation was registered, that is, recognized by the state, Christmas Eve was, above all, the children's Christmas celebration. Since such children's celebrations became impossible after the congregation was registered, the members of the adult church choir took over the Christmas vespers. In spite of the fact that it is not approved of (without saying more) many mothers bring their children or grandchildren along, so that they can at least see the beautiful Christmas tree, since every home does not have one. Of course there can be no gifts for the children. But the light in their eyes shows that they participate in the celebration from within.

What is the form of the worship service on Christmas Eve? It begins with a song by the choir. After a short processional liturgy, the congregation whole-heartedly joins in singing, "Dies ist die Nacht, da mir erschienen". The congregational singing is accompanied by a harmonium, a gift of the Gustav-Adolf Company in Leipzig. The prologue, a greeting of the celebrating congregation, was introduced by this song. With deep emotion the congregation sings the beloved old "Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht", the song which resounds through the whole world on Christmas Eve in many languages, including Russian. The Christmas tree, the timely decoration of which is the honor of the church elders, shines with festive decorations, without, however being gaudy. Strings of various colored little electric lights produce a fabulously lovely sight. Because of the fire hazard, the use of candles is forbidden. Alternating Christmas songs and Christmas poems, the Christmas Gospel and Epistle are linked by congregational singing. After a sermon by the Pastor, the service closes with prayer, The Lord's Prayer, and benediction. Now the closing verse is solemnly recited, after which the congregation is dismissed. Of course, the speaker of the closing verse, like the speaker of the prologue, stands in front of the steps to the altar. All other verses are recited from the various positions of the speakers in the congregation. Also, the Shepherd's Play can not be missing on Christmas Eve. The service closes with the verse, "Drum, Jesu, schöne Weihnachtssonne." Also during the course of the service the carols, "Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen," "Vom Himmel hoch, da komm ich her," "Ich steh' an deiner Krippe hier," and "Der Christbaum ist der schönste Baum," are sung. At dismissal, the congregation, standing, sings "O du fröhliche, o du selige." Then everyone walks home full of Christmas spirit to the family Christmas celebration. The service on Christmas Eve begins at 6:30 and lasts a little over two hours. It is so well attended that some members of the congregation must sit on the steps to the altar since the room can not hold everyone. Many who can not even find standing room, must just go back home.

After the service, about 25 children from the neighborhood of the church assemble in the parsonage. They are prepared in secret by a lady for this children's Christmas celebration and now with much eagerness and joy they speak out the memorized verses and the Christmas Gospel and sing children's Christmas songs. Presented with gifts of cookies ("Lebküchle") and candy ("Zuckerele") from the *Christkindl* they go home happily.

On the First Day of Christmas worship services are held at 10 o'clock in the morning, even though it is a work day, and they are very well attended. On the Second Day of Christmas the service is in the evening, to accommodate the members of the congregation who work during the day.

The celebration of Christmas among the Germans of the Soviet Union, of both Evangelical and Catholic confessions, remains the beloved and loveliest church holiday and still attracts many persons, even those estranged from the church. And certainly they come not only to see their childhood memories acted out: Christmas carols, Christmas tree, Christmas poems. These people feel that they have lost a precious legacy of their ancestors and they find themselves wandering on strange streets, joyless and without comfort. The homesickness for the lost Paradise of faith bursts out in their hearts. So Christmas Eve has already become a great turning point in the lives of many lost sons, many lost daughters, causing them to decide, "I will arise and go to my father!"

Christmas vespers are held in a similar, if not so extensive, fashion in the many almost half-hidden congregations in Russia.

May the Christmas message, "Unto you is born this day a Savior" become blessed news this year to many people in Russia and the whole world.

Rejoice, rejoice, oh Christendom!"

DER CHRISTBAUM IST DER SCHÖNSTE BAUM

Der Christbaum ist der schönste Baum,
Den wir auf Erden kennen;
Im Garten klein, im engsten Raum,
Wie lieblich blüht der Wunderbaum,
Wenn seine Blümchen brennen.

Denn sieh, in dieser Wundernacht
Ist einst her Herr geboren,
Der Heiland, der uns selig macht.
Hätt' er dem Himmel nicht gebracht,
Wär' alle Welt verloren.

Doch nun ist Freud' und Seligkeit,
Ist jede Nacht voll Kerzen.
Auch dir, mein Kind, ist das bereit,
Dein Jesus schenkt dir alles heut.
Gern wohnt er dir im Herzen.

O lass ihn ein, es ist kein Traum!
Er wählt dein Herz zum Garten,
Will pflanzen in dem engen Raum
Den allerschönsten Wunderbaum
Und seiner treulich warten.

S O WIE ES WAR.... CHRISTMAS ON THE PRAIRIE

By Mela Meisner Lindsay

How can I ever forget Christmas — in the early 1900s — on the western plains of Kansas! Snow lay four feet deep on the level, and our little country church was six miles away, I was afraid we wouldn't be able to get there to see our very first Christmas tree. I was nine years old and I had never seen one. Besides, there would be the sack of candy and nuts. I could never do without them.

"Papa, Are you sure, we will get there in all this snow?" I asked. It must have been the tenth time I asked him. I was that anxious.

"Ja, sure, *Kind*," Papa said, smiling, "we will get there. We have all week to get ready."

I knew what my father meant by getting ready. I was helping him with the bellows in our blacksmith shop, while he was making sled runners for our wagon.

"The wagon box, and these runners," he said, "will get us there." He hammered out the steel - red hot sparks flying every which way. It kept me busy dodging them.

Mama, in the meantime, was also busy. With the help of my older sister, Lydia, twelve, she made egg noodles and *Butterknopf*. She baked white and rye bread, *Pfeffernusse* and *Susse dinnakuchen*. She dressed two ducks and four chickens and tied them in clean cloth to hang in the cold granary.

"There might be unexpected company," she said. Mama was never caught short.

The week before, she had made us new dresses out of bleached flour sacks, dyed dark blue. She trimmed them with rick-rack and pearly white buttons. They were very pretty.

Then, finally, it was Christmas Eve. "At last! At last!" We children shouted, jumping up and down.

It was too good to be true.

Even though we rushed with the evening chores and milking, it seemed to take forever. I, for one, had an awful time. I let the milk pail slip while I was milking and spilled milk in my shoe. It was the only pair of shoes I had. Then I turned the cream separator so fast that we got only half the cream, and mama scolded. It seemed to me, supper would never end.

Afterwards, we washed ourselves clean. We older girls braided each other's hair, and helped dress the three younger ones. Then we put on our new dresses. I was limping, because my shoe was still wet inside and it pinched my toes.

Papa brought hay to put in the wagon box for us children to sit on, and mama covered it with a heavy home-made quilt. There was another quilt to cover up with. She also put a quilt on the wagon seat to fold around their legs and feet. The weather was dry, but very cold.

Papa wore the Belz-coat (Pelz) he had brought from *Russland*, the wide collar turned up to cover his ears and *carduse*. Mama wrapped her woolen shawl over her *halstuch* and coat, for extra warmth.

Then, we were off, the sleigh runners singing a musical tune on the hard, frozen snow. The world all around us sparkled in the moonlight. While overhead the sky was filled with a million glittering stars!

I loved Christmas. Christmas was the birthday of the Christ Child who came to bring love and happiness to the entire world -- papa said. Papa knew all about God and his only son, Jesus. He read the Holy Scripture to us every morning and evening.

Even though it was comfortable sitting on the hay, we squirmed around. It was so hard waiting, to get to church.

"Sit still," Mama admonished from the seat. "You will wrinkle your dresses."

"Better yet," Papa added, "think about the piece you have to say."

But who wanted to think about that, when all that mattered was seeing our very first Christmas tree?

When we reached the cemetery a short distance from the church, papa called to us.

"Look, children. Look! I see the sparkling lights already."

We jumped out of our covers and stood up. The raw wind nipped our warm faces and smarted our eyes, but we gloried in the shimmering lights coming from the gothic windows.

"O Papa, Mama," we cried, "How beautiful!"

Our jubilation, however, was as nothing compared to the real sight of the tree. I gasped at the wonder of it as I came through the door. My breath left me for a moment. The tall fir tree was even more beautiful than I had imagined. High on the very tip of it played the *Engelklang* -- a small metal dome with swinging

angels striking clear-sounding bells. The heat of the candles making them go round-n-round.

Two men with burning candles fastened to slender sticks were lighting the rest of the yellow, red and blue candles. *Vetter* Friederich, at the organ, was playing, *Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht*, and all the people were singing. The men and boys sat on one side of the church, the women and girls on the other, as was our German custom. We school age children sat on the front benches with some of our teachers.

Our stately minister read the Christmas story: (Luke 2: 1-20). "And it came to pass in those days, that... she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in the manger: because there was no room for them in the inn. . . "

The congregation beamed as we children said our pieces. And even though I could have stayed all night just to look at the tree, the thought of "goodies" yet to come whet my appetite. I looked for the men to hand out the sacks of candy, orange and nuts. One for each child in the family. Some families received as many as ten - a whole arm load. We received five.

When I got home, I hid the sack of goodies in my clothes box under the bed in the attic. As time went by, I allowed myself only a nibble or two each day. It was a childish joy that lasted only a week. But one that will remain in my memory forever! . .



LIEBLICHE WEIHNACHTSZEIT

Liebliche Weihnachtszeit,
Du aller Kinder Freud'
Wie bist du schön!
Längst schon erwarten wir
Sehnlich dich mit Begier,
O lass dich seh'n,
O lass dich seh'n.

Freude die Fülle gibt,
Wer uns von Herzen liebt,
Heute so gern:
Und um den Weihnachtstisch
Scharen die Kinder sich
Von nah und fern,
Von nah und fern.

Aber das Schönste bist
Du, mein Herr Jesu Christ
Im Krippelein;
Lieber als alle Pracht,
Die unterm Christbaum lacht,
Sollst du uns sein!
Sollst du uns sein!

Heiland und Kinderfreund,
Der es am besten meint
Mit uns allzeit,
Du wardst für uns ein Kind,
Tilgest auch unsre Sünd
Das freut uns heut'
Das freut uns heit'.

Liebliche Weihnachtszeit,
Du aller Kinder Freud',
Nun bist du da!
Jubelt aus voller Brust,
Singet mit Herzenslust:
Hallelujah,
Hallelujah!

A MENNONITE CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR

Christmas in a typical Mennonite home, according to the *Cook Book* compiled by the members of the Homemaker's Club of Henderson, Nebraska, begins with the forenoon church service and a visit to Grandma and Grandpa's house. Here noses are tickled by the good smells of the foods that have been prepared a day or two in advance so no one would have to miss the morning service at church. The traditional menu includes shinka flaash (boiled ham) and bologna, fried potatoes, pickles, rye bread and butter, zwieback and pluma mos (plum porridge). In traditional Mennonite fashion grandparents and dads eat first. Then the table is cleared and re-set for the children. Finally the women who cooked and served the meal have their Christmas dinner.

After the tables are cleared for the third time and the dishes are done, other family rituals take place. Youngsters are required to "vensh" (wish, or say a piece) or sing a song. Grandpa and the uncles reward their efforts with shiny new coins, usually pennies. Then Grandma distributes the presents! She walks slowly about the room pulling a gift for each child from the large basket she carries. In addition to the gifts, each child receives a "tootya" (a sack of candy, nuts and an orange, apple or cookie). Then faspas—the Mennonite afternoon light meal—is served. Although an ordinary faspas consists of zwieback, jelly, cheese, coffee and sometimes sweets, the Christmas faspas usually includes the leftovers from the Christmas dinner, candy and peanuts and the famous Christmas cookie, papaneeata (peppernuts). After the clean-up and chores, everyone attends evening church services. The Sunday school or church choir usually presents the program.

A traditional Mennonite New Year's Day finds the men of the community at the annual church business meeting. The women are at home making portzilka, the traditional New Year's cookies, "Portzilka" means "tumbling over" since these plump little raisin fritters sometimes roll over when dropped into hot fat. No New Year could begin properly without the time-honored customs of a New Year's Day luncheon of warm portzilka and milk. From all comers of a Mennonite community on New Year's Day you will hear contented children chanting:

Eck sach dem Shorshstein rooka,
Eck visst voll vout za moka,
Za backta Niejoash kooka!
(I saw the chimney smoking,
I knew what they were making,
They were baking New Year's cookies!)

PORTZILKA

As a special Christmas gift to *Work Paper* readers here is Lela Mierau's own 'specially yummy recipe for the traditional Mennonite New Year's fritters: AHSGR members who have had the pleasure of eating at the Essen Haus in Henderson, Nebraska, will need no further encouragement to try this treat from Mrs. Mierau's kitchen.

Dissolve 1 level tablespoon dry yeast
& 1 teaspoon sugar
in ¼ cup warm water

and set aside.

Add:

2¼ level cups flour (not sifted, just lightly spooned in)
1 teaspoon salt
2 cups raisins (washed and drained well).

Into a medium bowl add:

2 medium eggs lightly beaten
with 1/3 cup sugar
to 1 cup warm milk
and the above yeast mixture.

Let mixture raise until double in bulk (I usually set this pan into another pan of good warm water; this speeds up the rising process to about an hour or so).

Next heat cooking oil in fry pan or a somewhat deep saucepan to about 350 degrees F. Drop the batter by tablespoons into the hot oil. Some of the fritters will turn over by themselves, but most will have to be helped along with the spoon. Fry until fritters are a deep golden brown on both sides, then remove with tongs and allow to drain on absorbent paper. (Note: If spoon is first dipped into the hot oil and then into the batter, the mixture will slide out nicely into the hot oil).

This makes about 2 dozen portzilka. They are best served while still slightly warm, but good any time. They may also be dipped in sugar before eating, if you like.

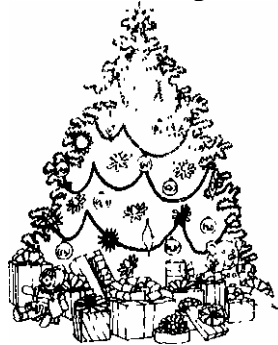
AM WEIHNACHTSBAUM

Am Weihnachtsbaum die Lichter brennen;
Wie glänzt er festlich, lieb und mild,
Als spräch' er: Wollt in mir erkennen
Getreuer Hoffnung süßes Bild!
Die Kinder steh'n mit hellen Blicken,
Das Auge lacht, es lacht das Herz.
O Fröhlich' seliges Entzücken!
Die Alten schauen himmelwärts.

Zwei Engel sind herein getreten,
Kein Auge hat sie kommen seh'n,
Sie geh'n zum Weihnachtstisch und beten,
Und wenden wieder sich und geh'n.
"Gesegnet seid, du kleine Schar!
Wir bringen Gottes Segen heute
Dem braunen, wie dem weissen Haar.



Zu guten Menschen, die sich lieben, Schickt uns
der Heer als Boten aus, Und seid ihr treu und
fromm geblieben, Wir treten wieder in dies
Haus." Kein Ohr hat ihren Spruch vernommen;
Unsichtbar jedes Menschen Blick Sind sie
gegangen, wie gekommen;
Doch Gottes Segen blieb zurück.



CHRISTMAS VERSES

Alle Jahre wieder kommt
das Christus Kind, Auf die
Erde nieder wo wir
Menschen sind.

Kehrt mit seinem Segen ein
in jedes Haus, Geht auf
allen Wegen mit uns ein
und aus.

Ist auch mir zur Seite still
und unerkant das es treu
mich leite an der lieben
Hand.

Du lieber, heiliger, frommer Christ,
Der für uns Kinder kommen ist,
Damit wir sollen fromm und rein
Und rechte Kinder Gottes sein.

Ich bin ein kleines Kindelein
und meine Kraft ist Schwach;
Ich wollte gerne Selig sein
und Weis night, wie ich's mach.

NEW YEAR'S WISHES

Man wünschet gute zeiten
Und Gott ist immer gut
Wir sehn auf allen seiten
Was er uns gutes thut.
Doch wir sind schuld daran
Wenn sich die zeit verschlimmert
Und sich das herz bekümmert
Wie es noch gehen kann.

Ich wünsch euch glück
Und ein seliges neu jahr.
Gesundheit, friede und freude
Geb Gott euch zu dieser neue zeit.
Euer glück und euer schick
Euer leib und sehl erquickt.
Euer müh und euer fleiss
Segne Gott zu lob und preiss.
Seit gesund zu dieser stund
Das wünsch ich euch aus herzen's grund.

Ich wünsche euch glücklich neues jahr
Gesundheit, friede, einigkeit
Ewig seligkeit.
Wast ihr net het
Kauft ihr euch.

Ich wünsch euch ein neues Jahr
In alden war des Geld so rar
Im Neua vons net besser geht
Bleiben die alta schulda stehend.

Ich bin ein kleiner König
Geb mit net zu wenig.
Lass mich net zu lange steh'
Kummet er net 'raus, Kummet sie 'raus,
Bringt mir ein Dollar-Fünfer 'raus.
Glücklich nei Jahr!

Was mein Herz denkt, das spricht mein mund;
Das wünsch ist Euch aus Herzensgrund.



Ich bin ein Kleiner Maler;
Ich mal' ein grosses Haus.
Gebt ihr mir Keinen Taler
Dann wünsche ich's Wider raus.

Gott segne Euch in Eurem Haus
Und kehre mit Euch ein und aus.
Gott segne Euch in Eurem thun
Und lass den Frieden auf Euch ruh'n.
Gott gieb Euch Glück zum allen Stück,
Und treib' das unglück weit zurück.

Ich wünsche euch ein grossen tisch
In der mittel ein gebackene fisch
Auf yeder ecken ein gläsysa wein
Das soll ihren gutes neu jahr sein.

Ich wünsche auch
Geb mir Gleich
Lst mich net zu lang stehen
Ich will a häisie weiter gegen.

Ich wünsche Euch das Himmelreich,
Die seligkeit, von nun an bis in Ewigkeit.

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

ARTHUR E. FLEGEL, well-known to AHSGR convention goers as the energetic president of the Golden Gate Chapter, has been involved in genealogical and historical research since 1956. Mr. Flegel, who is a vice-president on the International Board of Directors of AHSGR, has translated much material contained in the Hoover Institute Library of Stanford University which concerns the history of Germans from Russia.

ADAM GIESINGER, perhaps best known for his comprehensive history, *From Catherine to Khrushchev: The Story of Russia's Germans*, (reviewed in *Work Paper* #15) is senior member of the academic staff at the University of Manitoba. Professor Giesinger, whose deep interest in history, particularly that of his own ethnic group remained an avocation while he pursued studies leading to a doctorate and a teaching career in mathematics and chemistry, was born in a sod house in central Saskatchewan, the descendant of Black Sea Germans.

EMMA S. HAYNES, whose reports from Germany have been a highlight of the *Work Papers* from their inception, resides in Frankfurt, Germany, where she acts as liaison between AHSGR and the *Landmannschaft der Deutschen aus Russland*. Mrs. Haynes has been a scholar of German-Russian heritage since her undergraduate days. Her master's thesis, *German-Russians on the Volga and in the United States*, and her History of the Volga Relief Society are well-known and widely-respected volumes. She is presently at work on the Hattie Plum Williams manuscript, to be published by AHSGR as *The Czar's Germans*.

TIMOTHY J. KLOBERDANZ, visiting professor of anthropology at Colorado State University, attributes his interest in the culture of *unser Leute* to his long acquaintance with American Indian ways. "The Indians taught me many beautiful things," he writes, "... a deep-rooted pride in the spiritual traditions, folklore, language, and traditions of one's forefathers." In November of this year Professor Klobberdanz presented a paper, "Volga Germans in Western North America: Their Changing World View" to the American Anthropological Association meeting in Mexico City. His master's thesis, *The Catholic Volga German Life Cycle*, from which his article on *der Beiznickel* and *Christkind* is taken, will be reviewed in *Work Paper* #17. Professor Klobberdanz is presently writing a biography to accompany his forthcoming edition of the poems of Sister Michael Marie Kaiser.

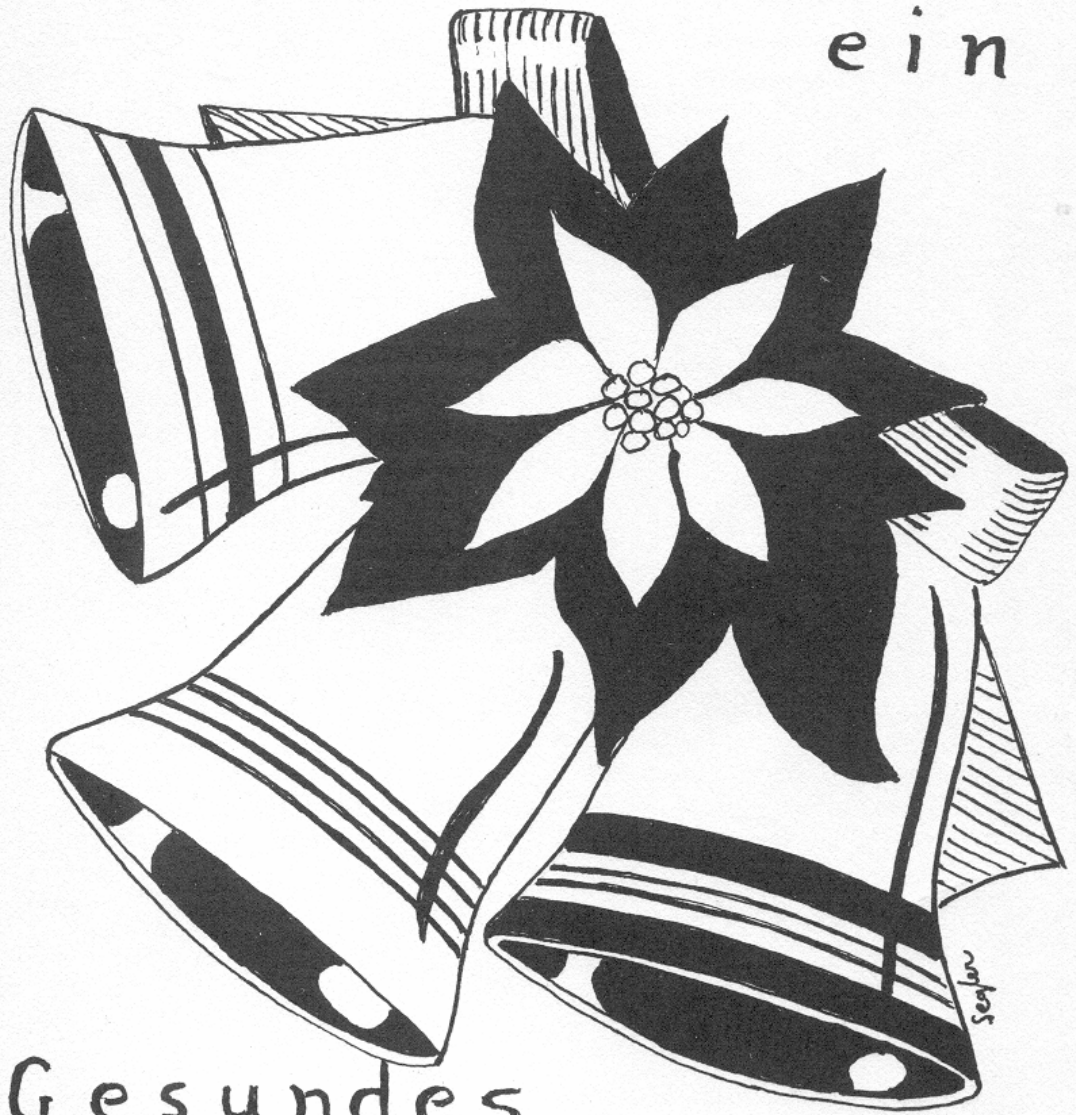
MELA MEISNER LINDSAY was born in Kindsvater Kutter near the Don Cossack Border in south Russia and grew up in WaKeeney, Kansas, to which her parents migrated after the Russo-Japanese War. Recollections of her childhood, ethnic heritage and eventful life have figured prominently in her stories which have appeared in *The Christian Science Monitor*, *Lutheran Digest*, the *Empire Magazine* of the *Denver Post*, *Old West Publications*, *Jack and Jill*, *The Lutheran Standard*, and *Saint Anthony's Messenger*, among others. Mrs. Lindsay is the author of *A Window into the Iron Curtain*, a series of interviews with displaced persons who fled Russia during the Stalinist era (available from AHSGR Headquarters), and has completed the manuscript of a historical novel, *Shukar Balan: The White Lamb*, the life story of a German Russian girl who typifies the experiences of "unser Leute."

MARIE M. OLSON, a member of the AHSGR Board of Directors since 1971, is a graduate of the Denver University School of librarianship and served for 14 years on the staff of the Denver Public Library. Mrs. Olson has done bibliographic research for AHSGR libraries in New York City and in Colorado. She assisted in cataloguing the AHSGR Collection at the Greeley Public Library and is presently engaged in indexing *The Czar's Germans*.

NORMAN E. SAUL, while not a descendant of Germans from Russia, is an active member of AHSGR where his expertise in Russian affairs is an invaluable resource. Professor Saul has returned to his position on the faculty of the department of history at the University of Kansas after having served as an exchange professor at University College, Dublin, Ireland during the 1973-74 academic years. Professor Saul is the author of a book on Russian interest in the Mediterranean and of several articles on Russian-American relations. During 1973 he researched in the Moscow Archives. Some results of his work there will appear in future *Work Papers*.

RAYMOND P. WIEBE, on Sabbatical leave from his position as assistant professor and counselor at Wichita State University is presently serving as visiting professor of American Heritage at Tabor College in Hillsboro, Kansas. Professor Wiebe, whose grandparents migrated to Kansas in the 1870's, is a member of the International Board of AHSGR, and this year acted as Research Associate and Information Director for the Kansas Wheat Centennial. During 1974 he researched and wrote numerous articles and co-authored and co-edited three books, including *They Seek a Country* and *The Groening-Wiebe Family*.

Allen Lesern
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Gesundes
Neues Jahr!

