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On the cover: Interior of the church in Balzer, decorated with evergreen boughs for a calendar feast day. From
the collection of Hattie Plum Williams and T. F. A. Williams, Nebraska State Historical Society.

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REDACTIONS: THE EDITOR'S PAGE

Amid the blatant commercialism, but also genuine good will, that reigns among us at this season of the year, it is appropriate that we recall how our ancestors celebrated their important feast days. This our folklorist, Timothy Kloberdanz, helps us to do in his article, "Lambs of Butter, Loaves of Gold". Some of the traditional practices he describes go back many centuries in our ancestral German homeland. They were undoubtedly embellished to some degree in Russia and were eventually brought to America by our immigrant grandparents or great-grandparents. The immigrant generation preserved many of the old practices through the pioneer era, but for most of their descendants these are now just a vague memory.

The past is also recalled for us by the article "Memories of Anton", written in 1938 by the daughter of the venerable Pastor Jordan of Balzer and translated for us by Gerda Walker, a pioneer board member of AHSGR, who is the promoter of our Village Research Project.

From these musings on the past we are brought sharply into the present by John McCormally in "A Recent Visit to the Volga Region". Mr. McCormally is an American newspaperman who toured the Soviet Union in July-August 1983 and on his return wrote a series of articles for his newspapers. His tour ship went down the Volga past Saratov, but he was not permitted to get off to see this city nor any of the former German towns and villages in the region. The whole area is forbidden territory for foreign visitors.

A Russian article of the year 1900, translated by Dr. Alexander Dupper, gives us a critical look at the backwardness of public education in Tsarist Russia at the turn of the century. Although only a small portion of it is devoted to the German colonies, the whole article presents an enlightening picture of the general situation then prevailing in Russian education.

We welcome in this issue three new contributors from the academic community.

Cora Miller Conner of the Department of Modern Languages, Creighton University, Omaha, Nebraska, has translated a manuscript left by her great-great-uncle, Rev. Christian Mueller, a pioneer minister among the Volhynian Swiss Mennonites who settled in South Dakota in 1774. Mrs. Conner's translation, with her notes and comments, appears in this issue under the title "Christian Mueller: A Mennonite Pioneer".

In addition to the German agricultural settlers on the Volga, in southern Russia and in Volhynia, there were Germans also in Russian cities, some of whom attained considerable prominence. Two of these receive attention in this issue. Manfred Schmidt, a graduate student in economics in Toronto, tells us some interesting facts about "Heinrich Storch: A German-Russian Classical Economist". Dr. Sophie A. Welisch, professor of history at Dominican College of Blauvelt, Orangeburg, New York, reviews a new book on Friedrich Joseph Haass, a German physician living in Moscow, who devoted a large portion of his life to efforts to abolish the cruel treatment meted out to the unfortunates who were exiled to Siberia by the Tsarist regime.

As usual, we present in this issue a lengthy list of books and articles recently added to the AHSGR Archives.

Your editor is grateful to our contributors, who gave so generously of their time to provide the material for this issue. This gratitude extends also to those who contributed the brief items that are not mentioned above. All contributions, lengthy or brief, dealing with any aspect of the history of our people, are always gratefully received. If you feel like showing gratitude to the editor for his work in producing the Journal, the most acceptable and welcome gift would be an article for our next issue!

The greetings of the season to all Journal readers!

[signed] Adam Giesinger
Whenever "das Christkindje" visits a family dwelling during the Christmas season, she is certain to draw the attentive but fearful gaze of every small child. This classic picture was taken in the German homeland where the Volga German "Christkindje" tradition originated. (From Hans Strobel’s Bauernbrauch im Jahreslauf, 1938).
"LAMBS OF BUTTER, LOAVES OF GOLD:"
AN ANALYSIS OF FOUR VOLGA GERMAN
CALENDAR FEAST DAYS

Timothy J. Kloberdanz

Rituale bestaetigen den Einzelnen in der Gruppe, geben ihm Sicherheit und Vertrauen und festigen den Zusammenhalt ueber eine gemeinsam gestaltete sinnbezogene Interaktion.

[Rituals integrate the individual into the group, they provide him with security and confidence and accentuate the solidarity of mutual, balanced, unified social interaction.]

—Ina-Maria Greverus

I. INTRODUCTION

Like other European agrarian peoples, the Volga Germans of pre-Revolution Russia celebrated a large number of important holidays. These celebrations were regarded as integral parts of social and religious life. As one European-born ethnographer has noted: The holidays are not an interruption of the agricultural cycle, but a part of it, bound in with each step of the farmer's work and felt as essential to its success.²

The festive events celebrated by Roman Catholic German colonists on the Volga almost always coincided with special days in the official church calendar. Even when certain celebrations were primarily of a secular or "profane" nature, these same festivals were often referred to by a saint's name or given a religious designation (e.g., Kirchweihfest). Despite the fact that most festive celebrations were officially recognized and condoned by the church, many displayed only a veneer of Catholicism. While priests and a small number of Volga German pietists sometimes spoke out against the "excesses" evident at village celebrations, such criticism usually was countered by the participants with the ancient expression: "Wer net kann Spass verstehne', soll net unner die Leit gehe." ("Whoever cannot appreciate good fun shouldn't be around people.")

As numerous scholars have noted, many European calendar customs can be traced back to pre-Christian times. Despite centuries of Christianization, ancient rites and beliefs persisted alongside established church practice and dogma. This seeming contradiction however, was of little concern to the Volga Germans. The Volga colonists, like other European peasants, were little interested in the primeval origins and latent functions of their festive celebrations. To the folk, the old and the new, the official and the unofficial, the reverent and the revelous, were not opposing dichotomies but simply integral parts of a festive event. Folklorist Robert J. Smith has aptly and succinctly described this phenomenon as "a complex interplay of devotional and joyful activities".³

Judging from interviews with Russian-born Volga Germans, informants invariably enjoyed talking about the Old Country celebrations that added so much richness, color, and meaning to the rigors of peasant life. Their verbal descriptions of these events characteristically portrayed them as memorable occasions, heightened by appropriate doses of either solemnity or merriment, depending on the nature of the celebration. Volga German Catholics celebrated more than thirty days in the church calendar, each of which was given special attention and considerable folk expression, as evidenced by the following list:

1
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calendar Feast</th>
<th>Volga German Designation</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Year’s Day</td>
<td>Neijohrsdag (Neujahrstag)</td>
<td>January 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three King’s Day</td>
<td>Dreikeenigsdag (Dreikoenigstag)</td>
<td>January 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candlemas Day</td>
<td>Mariae Lichtmess</td>
<td>February 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Blaise’s Day</td>
<td>Blasiusdag (Blasustag)</td>
<td>February 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shrovetide</td>
<td>Fasenacht (Fastnacht)</td>
<td>Monday &amp; Tuesday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ash Wednesday</td>
<td>Aschermittwoch</td>
<td>First day of Lent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palm Sunday</td>
<td>Palmsonntag (Palmsonnag)</td>
<td>First Sunday after Easter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holy Thursday</td>
<td>Grindonnersdag (Gruendonnerstag)</td>
<td>Third day before Easter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Friday</td>
<td>Karfreidag (Karfreitag)</td>
<td>Second day before Easter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holy Saturday</td>
<td>Karsamsdag (Karsamstag)</td>
<td>Day before Easter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easter</td>
<td>Oster’ (Ostern)</td>
<td>Between March 22-April 25</td>
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<tr>
<td>White Sunday</td>
<td>Weissersonntag (Weiessersonntag)</td>
<td>First Sunday after Easter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Joseph’s Day</td>
<td>Josefsson (Josefstag)</td>
<td>March 19</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 1</td>
<td>Der erschte Abril (Der erste Abril)</td>
<td>April 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ascension Thursday</td>
<td>Christi Himmelfahrt</td>
<td>40 days after Easter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pentecost</td>
<td>Fingsto’ (Pfingsten)</td>
<td>Seventh Sunday after Easter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holy Trinity Sunday</td>
<td>Dreifaltigkeitssonndag (...tag)</td>
<td>First Sunday after Pentecost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corpus Christi</td>
<td>Froleichnam (Fronleichnam)</td>
<td>Thursday after Holy Trinity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. John the Baptist Day</td>
<td>Johannisdag (Johannistag)</td>
<td>June 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assumption of the Blessed Virgin</td>
<td>Mariae Himmelfahrt</td>
<td>August 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvest Festival</td>
<td>Kerp (Kircheihefest)</td>
<td>mid-October</td>
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<tr>
<td>All Saint’s Day</td>
<td>Allerheilige’dag (Allerheiligentag)</td>
<td>November 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>All Soul’s Day</td>
<td>Allerseele’e dag (Allerseelentag)</td>
<td>November 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Barbara’s Day</td>
<td>Barbaradag (Barbaratag)</td>
<td>December 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Nicholas Day</td>
<td>Nicolausdag (Nickolaustag)</td>
<td>December 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christmas Eve</td>
<td>Heilige’ Oswend (Heiliger Abend)</td>
<td>December 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christmas</td>
<td>Weihnachte’ (Weihnachten)</td>
<td>December 25</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Stephen’s Day</td>
<td>Wunderdag (Stefanihtag)</td>
<td>December 26</td>
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<td>Johannes der Evangelist</td>
<td>December 27</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Unschuldige Kinner (... Kinder)</td>
<td>December 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Silvester’s Day</td>
<td>Silversterowend (Silvesterabend)</td>
<td>December 31</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

It would be impossible to adequately describe here all of the above Volga German festival days and their full cultural context. Thus, only four major calendar events will be briefly treated: Neijohrsdag (New Year's Day); Oster’ (Easter); Kerp (Harvest Festival); and Weihnachte’ (Christmas). All four festivals are described in the "ethnographic present," although the data actually relates to Roman Catholic Volga Germans living in Russia during the period 1890-1914.

**II. NEW YEAR’S DAY (NEIJOHRSDAG)**

Preparations for the Volga German New Year celebration begin on Silvesterowend (the evening of December 31). Special foods are prepared which include Grebbel (deep fried pastry), Schnitzsupp (sweet fruit soup), Gallera (jellied pork), and fresh rings of liver sausage. These foods are always made in great quantity, and are placed in a conspicuous area of the home, along with alcoholic beverages.

Late on New Year's Eve, the village streets become alive with the sound of singing and merry-making. Young, unmarried Volga Germans form small groups and sing Gotteslieder in various parts of the Dorf. In many Volga German colonies, the church bells toll from one-half hour before midnight until half an
hour after the New Year has arrived. Despite protestations from the clergy, Volga German boys and young men traditionally "shoot in" the New Year. The youths carry muskets and pistols decorated with colorful ribbons and fire the guns repeatedly throughout the village. Most Volga Germans are awakened by the sound of the church bells and the Neijohrsschisse' and even some of the older villagers leave their homes to visit others in the colony. The early morning hours are an acceptable time for perhaps the most common of all Volga German New Year's customs: the recitation of rhymed verses that invoke blessings upon both human and beast.

Many Volga Germans who are visited in the early hours of New Year's Day eagerly await well-wishers but fear the arrival of a female as the first visitor. Volga Germans believe that if a young man enters their home as the first well-wisher this signifies good luck and prosperity in the new year. Thus, it is not uncommon for the Volga German Hausfrau to call out if she sees a young woman or group of girls approaching: "Kinner, 's is noch zu frieh, kommt bissje spaeter!" ("Children, it's too early, come back a little later!")

Since New Year's Day is considered an important day in the calendar cycle, it is filled with homeopathic rites of magic. Certain events and occurrences are thought to foretell the course of the coming year and thus villagers are cautious in their every move and interaction with others. Arguments and quarrels are avoided and even the village drunk is politely tolerated and treated kindly. Consideration is ideally shown to everyone, ranging from toddlers to elderly widows. Such behavior reflects the concern of villagers for harmony and solidarity, as expressed in one of the better-known Volga German New Year's wishes:

Ich wuensch Eich a glickliches neies Jahr, I wish you a prosperous new year,
Gsundheit, langes Lewe, Glick, Fried un Aanigkei, Health, long life, happiness, peace and unity,
Nach eirem Tod es Himmelreich! And after your death the kingdom of heaven!

The various verses uttered by Volga Germans are numerous and range from short rhymes recited by small children to lengthy ones spoken by adults. The usual response to these verses is "Des winsche mr dr ach." ("I also wish you the same.")

Many of the traditional New Year's wishes contain colorful metaphors and hyperbolic imagery:

Ich wuensch Euch so viel Tag und Jahr I wish you as many days and years
wie der Fuchs am Schwanz hat Haar!" as the fox has hair on its tail!

Drum ist mein Wunsch im neuen Jahr: This is my wish for you in the new year:
So viel Glueck und so viel Segen As much happiness and as much blessing
als wie Tropflein in dem Regen, as there are drops in the rain,
als wie Flocken in dem Schnee! as there are flakes in the snow!

Ich wuensch eich ein Ochs mit dreizeh' Horner, I wish for you an ox with thirteen horns,
Draus' die Ambar voll mit Knupperkerne! And your granary filled with sunflower seeds!

After the New Year's visitors have recited their early morning wishes, they are invited in to warm themselves near the large clay oven. The foods previously prepared by the Hausfrau are then served, along with vodka, warm whiskey, or hot tea. After everyone has eaten, the visitors and the host family go to other homes in the village until it becomes necessary for them to divide into smaller groups. The approach of the visitors is made known by the sound of shooting or one of the younger members of the group may pound on the side of the house with a rock until the door opens to allow them entry. By dawn, many of the well-wishers return home to rest for a few hours before beginning another round of visiting.

New Year's Day is considered an appropriate time for children to make a special visit at the home of their godparents. This visit usually occurs well after sunup on New Year's Day and each godchild recites a special verse such as the following:
Ich winsch dem Petter a gesegnetes Fest  
I wish the godfather a blessed feast
Un'der Got a scheen warmes Nest, 
And the godmother a nice warm bed,
Ich winsch Eich an goldene Disch, 
I wish you both a golden table
An jeder Ecke an gebratene Fisch, 
With a fried fish at each corner,
In der Mitte a Flasche voll rotem Wein: 
And in the middle a bottle full of red wine:
'S' soil eier Neijohr sein. 
So shall your new year be.

Traditionally, the godparents reward the children with freshly minted kopecks or pastries. Some of the smaller children, unable to recite a long verse, express their sentiments succinctly but directly:

Ich winsch Eich! 
I wish you!
Gebt mr gleich! 
Give me [something] right away!

After the villagers have made their visits to godparents, relatives, and neighbors, the festivities are centered in the family dwelling. Members of the Grossfamilie (extended family) gather near the warm oven and listen to the Hausvater tell humorous stories about Eilespiegel or der dumme Hans. Often, the entire family joins in singing, especially Gotteslieder and New Year's folk songs such as "Es ist nun nicht mehr die alte Zeit" ("It is No Longer the Old Time") and "Nicht weiter sollst du dich erstrecken" ("Do Not Extend Yourself Any Further"). The sentiments in these songs are typically in keeping with the harmonious spirit stressed by Volga Germans on New Year's Day:

Der neue Bund soil ewig dauren 
The new covenant shall last forever
Den Jesus heut mit uns gemacht, 
That Jesus made with us today,
Ein Bund der ohne Furcht und Schauern, 
A covenant without fear and dread,
Nur Freundlichkeit und Liebe macht. . . . 
Which brings only friendship and love. . . .

III. EASTER (OSTER')

Few feasts in the church calendar evoke as much joyful devotion or possess so much cultural symbolism as the celebration of Easter. For Volga Germans and other Catholics, the observance signals an end to the forty-day Lenten period of fasting and penance. In contrast to the drabness and solemnity of Karwoche (Holy Week), Easter's arrival is celebrated with the ringing of church bells (not heard since the preceding Friday), joyful singing, dancing, and tables heaped high with rich pastries, elaborately decorated breads, and smoked meats.

Many of the Easter foods are prepared by women in the village on Good Friday and Holy Saturday. Such domestic work is not frowned upon since, according to religious legend, Christ was pleased with the smell of baking as he carried his cross to Calvary. Some Volga German women also believe that baking during Holy Week is an act of sympathetic magic, since it helps "heal the wounds of crucifixion suffered by the Savior". Thus, by the time Easter approaches, holiday foods are in abundance. On Holy Saturday, special Easter breads (circular and braided with four strands) are baked, along with small bird-shaped figures of bread dough for the children. Eggs are dyed in secret while the younger members of the family are asleep. Volga German women use mostly natural dyes such as dried herbs and grasses from the steppe, brown onion skins, and coffee grounds. A special feature of the Holy Saturday food preparation is the making of a paschal lamb out of butter. The shapes of these figures vary; in some families a small reclining lamb is made; in others a large ram with curled horns is preferred.

The Easter breads and butter are taken by the women and children of the village to Mass on Easter Sunday for the traditional blessing. Bottles are also taken to church to obtain Osterwasser in sufficient quan-
tity. Volga Germans believe that water blessed at this time by the priest is particularly potent. It is used at weddings, wakes, healing sessions, and on numerous other occasions. Volga German farmers often place *Osterwasser* in the drinking water of their farm animals to ward off disease and attacks by malevolent forces. Some peasants also carry *Osterwasser* into the fields where it is sprinkled to incur supernatural aid and to assure a bountiful harvest.

At dawn on Easter Sunday, Volga German children are awakened and encouraged to look at the *Osterlamm* "jumping in the sun." (Many informants have told me that the sun is very different in appearance on Easter and if one gazes at it intently the shape of an Easter lamb can be clearly ascertained.) Children are also encouraged to look for the colored eggs that the *Osterhaesche* has brought them. The eggs are usually found in an upturned old hat in the corner of the family dwelling. Fresh rabbit droppings and barnyard straw are often strewn near the eggs to give the "nest" a realistic touch.

None of the family members are allowed to begin eating the Easter foods until after all have returned home from Mass. The blessed breads and paschal lamb of butter are treated reverently by the family; no knife may be used in dividing them into individual portions for eating. The Easter meal following Mass is traditionally large and varied, in sharp contrast to the cooked potatoes and dumplings that were the normal fare during Lent. As with other festive occasions, the special nature of Easter is believed to influence future events and happenings. A popular Volga German superstition is that "if it rains on Easter Sunday, you can expect rain on seven consecutive Sundays."\(^{12}\)

Easter is considered a solemn occasion and even within the home, *Gotteslieder* are sung after the eating of the festive meal. Some of the traditional songs emphasize not only the triumph of the Savior over death but the re-birth of the world itself:

\begin{verbatim}
Die ganze Welt, Herr Jesu Christ, Alleluja,  The whole world. Lord Jesus Christ, Alleluja,
In deiner Urstaend froehlich ist, Alleluja,   Rejoices in your resurrection, Alleluja,
Die Sonn' heute froehlich tritt hinein, Alleluja,  The sun gladly rises today, Alleluja,
Und gibt der Welt ein neuen Schein, Allehija.  And gives the world a new shine, Alleluja.
\end{verbatim}

After several *Gotteslieder* are sung by the family members, the Easter celebration takes on an air of revelry. Playing cards, pipe tobacco, alcohol, and musical instruments that have been taboo since the beginning of Lent again make their appearance. Soon the singing shifts from sacred themes to profane ones; attention jumps from an emphasis on solemnity to marriage-arranging and courtship. Those who contemplate marriage are encouraged to act soon before agricultural tasks make it impossible to plan a wedding celebration. Young men who have not found a bride-to-be are teased at Easter by family members and peers, sometimes with the traditional lyrics of a favorite folk song:

\begin{verbatim}
Drei Wochen nach Ostern,  Three weeks after Easter,
Da geht der Schnee weg, The snow goes away.
Da heirat mein Schaetzchen, Then my sweetheart gets married
Dann habe ich Dreck. And I'm left with dirt.
Ein scheckiges Paar Ochsen, A speckled pair of oxen
Eine schwartzbraune Kuh,  And a black-brown cow
Die gibt mir mein Vater Are promised by my father
Wenn ich heiraten tu. . . If I get married. . .
\end{verbatim}
IV. HARVEST CELEBRATION (KERP)

One of the largest and most elaborate festivals between Easter and Christmas is the Volga German celebration of Kerp. The event usually occurs in mid-October, sometimes on the third Sunday of the month, when all of the crops have been harvested and the fall plowing is finished. In some villages, the date varies to encourage reciprocal visiting between colonies. The term Kerp is derived from Kirchweihfest (church consecration feast day) and originally was an occasion to commemorate the founding of the village church.\(^{15}\) In the Volga German colonies, however, the celebration has lost most of its ecclesiastical overtones and become a rather boisterous, three-day celebration. Paul Sartori has described the German Kerp (or Kirmes) as "das beliebteste und vielseitigste Fest des Bauern."\(^{16}\)

Since Kerp is usually preceded by the fall hog slaughter (Schlachtfest), there is always plenty of fresh meat on hand to accommodate hungry visitors from within and beyond the village. While everyone in the colony joins in making preparations for the celebration of Kerp, this is often done despite protestations from the clergy. A Volga German-American writer has observed:

\[...\] [Kerp] became an occasion when the colonist youth could let off steam after a rigorous six months and more of strenuous field work. The pastors disapproved of the way it came to be celebrated and some thundered against it from the pulpit, for it generated into an event whose more attractive aspects for the youths often had to be carried on clandestinely.\(^{17}\)

Perhaps as an attempt to give the harvest festival some official status, many Volga German priests encouraged the three-day affair to begin on Sunday immediately after morning Mass. In some colonies, young girls are encouraged to visit the homes of the villagers after Mass to collect monetary donations for the Church. The girls usually sing the traditional Kemesonndagslied as they make their rounds:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{. . . Wollt ihr uns etwas geben,} & \quad \text{. . . Won't you give us something?} \\
\text{lasst uns nicht langer stehen!} & \quad \text{don't let us linger any longer!} \\
\text{Ein Pfennig oder ein Heller} & \quad \text{A penny or a farthing} \\
\text{ist gar eine grunge Gab.} & \quad \text{is certainly a worthy offering.} \\
\text{Wir danken euch fuer die Gabe,} & \quad \text{We thank you for the donations} \\
\text{die ihr uns geben wollt.} & \quad \text{that you want to give us.} \\
\text{Gott wirds euch schon belohnen.} & \quad \text{God will certainly repay you.} \\
\text{Gott gibt euch euren Lohn:} & \quad \text{God gives you your reward:} \\
\text{die himmlische Krone.} & \quad \text{the heavenly crown,} \\
\end{align*}
\]

By Sunday afternoon, the feverish activities of the Kerp celebration are well underway. The church square fills with young people while the adults dance to the sound of the Hackbrett (hammered dulcimer) and other instruments in the larger homes of the village. In some Volga German colonies, young men stretch a rope high across one of the village streets from which a plump rooster is suspended by its feet. The youths then gallop their horses down the street and attempt to pull off the rooster's head with one hand. The winner is awarded the rooster as well as numerous alcoholic drinks from appreciative spectators. The origin of this folk custom is unknown but seems related to the Hahnentanz (Rooster Dance) and Gansreiten which were celebrated by peasants during the Kirchweihfest in the German homeland.\(^{18}\)

The Volga German Kerp is sometimes marked by fierce fighting between youths from the Iwwerdorf (upper half of the village) and Unnerdorf (lower part). Since the celebration brings together young men from both divisions there is often an outbreak of violence. Kerp is considered an ideal time for courtship and making new acquaintances and thus the village youths jealously watch that no single females from their half of the colony are seen in the company of other men. When such transgression occurs, epithets and even-
ually stones are hurled at the guilty party. Such violence between feuding factions of the village is a chief reason why the local clergy discourage the celebration of Kerp.

Few Volga Germans are dismayed by the excesses and violence that are integral features of the harvest celebration. Even adults have been known to engage in fighting and other normally taboo activities. Sometimes feuding among adults results from the singing of Spottlieder, in which individuals from visiting colonies are held up to ridicule:

Die Luijer werden gar nicht satt; The people from Louis will never have enough;
Sie backen Kuchen wie ein Wagenrad . . . They bake cake big as a wagon wheel . . .
Die Grafer zahlen mit Reichtum und Not. Those from Graf pay with wealth and want.
Sie singen sich alle in der Kirche tot. They all sing themselves to death in church . . .

Such Spottlieder reflect the intervillage rivalry that exists among Volga German Catholics, but is seldom given overt expression except at boisterous celebrations such as Kerp. Songs of ridicule are also directed at neighboring German Protestants, Russians, Tartars, Kirghiz tribesmen, and others not identified as "unser Leit" ("our people"). At the time of Kerp, numerous Gasse'lieder (street songs) are also sung, especially by the young men and sometimes by older adults. These songs usually deal with scatological topics and focus on such taboo behavior as premarital sex:

Johannes Peter heiss' ich, My name is Johannes Peter,
schone Maedchen weiss ich, I know some pretty girls,
Wenn ich sie nur haett. if only they were mine.
Koennt ich sie nur kriegen, If I could catch them,
Koennt bei ihnen liegen in I'd sleep with all of them
ihrem Federbett, . . . in their featherbed. ...

Songs sung to the accompaniment of dance music at the Kerp express similar sentiments:

Wenn alle Berge Butter waeren If all mountains were made of butter
und's Fluchen waer kein Suend, and cursing were no sin!
wenn alle Maedel Jungferj waern If all maidens were virgins
und krechten keine Kind! they wouldn't have any kids!

The Kerp celebration among the Volga Germans is largely devoid of such features as the erection of a beribboned pole, masquerading, and the mock burial of the harvest wreath known in the former homeland. Its primary characteristic in the German settlements on the Volga is a period of permissiveness and unparalleled frivolity enjoyed by young and old. The celebration formally ends after three days of dancing and feasting on Tuesday evening, at which time the church bells summon the people to vespers and a renewed atmosphere of sobriety.

V. CHRISTMAS (WEIHNACHTE')

Preparations for the celebration of Weihnachte' actually begin on Barbaradag (December 4). A small cherry tree or branch is brought into the Volga German dwelling where it is placed in warm water and carefully tended by the members of the family. Since there are few evergreen or fir trees on the lower Volga, small cherry trees are used by the colonists as Christmas trees. The villagers believe that if a cherry tree branch
or seedling is brought into the house on St. Barbara's Day, it will bloom by Christmas.\(^{24}\) (According to my informants, at least a few blossoms usually did appear around Christmas. When a tree failed to bloom, paper flowers were used to decorate the bare branches.) For the Volga Germans, removed from the forests and wooded valleys of their homeland for more than a century and a half, adjustments to their new environment on the steppe had to be made. Thus, certain Christmas customs were retained or altered while others were largely forgotten.

A few days before the celebration of Christmas, cookies (called *Brenick* by the colonists) and special loaves of bread are prepared. Apples and *sauere Arbuse* (pickled watermelons) are taken out of the summer kitchen or root cellar and used in the preparation of holiday foods. The giving of gifts at Christmas is largely unknown and thus pastries and candies are usually presented to small children during the Christmas celebration.

On *Heilige Owend* (Christmas Eve), the *Hausfrau* takes two loaves of bread into the family *hof* (yard). One of these, a small loaf, is given to the family pet.\(^{25}\) The other, a large loaf wrapped in a clean white cloth, is placed on the edge of the roof or in another high place where it cannot be disturbed. Volga Germans believe that such bread, left outside in the cold air of Christmas Eve, will be given a special blessing. This bread is considered "more precious than gold itself" due to its curative and magical properties when eaten on Christmas morning. Volga Germans also believe that ordinary drinking water left outside on Christmas Eve will be supernaturally altered and will become as "sweet as wine." Animals in the farmyard are believed to possess special powers on Christmas Eve and thus bountiful amounts of grain and fodder are given them.

Many Volga Germans also believe that divination and prophecy are possible on Christmas Eve. Thus, many peasants cut three boat-shaped slices from an onion, sprinkle them with an equal amount of salt while invoking the Holy Trinity, and place them near the window. The slices are usually named *Mai, Juni, or Juli* (after three of the more unpredictable growing months in spring and summer). On Christmas morning, whichever piece of onion has the most moisture in it is believed to foretell the wettest month in the coming year.

On Christmas Eve, the extended family gathers to discuss any problems that may have led to disagreements during the year. It is considered important that the family be united in a spirit of harmony before Christmas arrives. A few minutes before midnight, the entire family walks through the streets of the village together to attend Midnight Mass. The service is usually highlighted by a brightly-lit crib scene, a church choir accompanied by local musicians playing brass instruments, and in some cases, the singing of appropriate folk songs by small groups of adults at various times during the Mass. One of the better-known songs performed only at Christmas is the "*Kindlemwiegen*" that involves call and response singing:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Joseph!} & \quad \text{Joseph!} \\
\text{Wer da?} & \quad \text{Who's there?} \\
\text{Wo liegt das kleine Kindelein?} & \quad \text{Where lies the little baby?} \\
\text{Im Kripplein,} & \quad \text{In a tiny crib,} \\
\text{Im Kripplein.} & \quad \text{In a tiny crib.} \\
\text{Singt mit Schall, ihr Engelein all I} & \quad \text{Sing loud, all you angels!} \\
\text{Schemes Jesulein. \ldots} & \quad \text{Beautiful little Jesus. \ldots}
\end{align*}
\]

When the family returns home, the cherry tree is brought out and decorated with colored paper, Russian *Kunfeck* (candies), and paper flowers. *Brenick*, apples, and pastries are distributed to the children and alcohol, hot tea, and smoked meats are served to the adults.

In the early hours of Christmas morning, Volga German families are visited by masked individuals who interrogate frightened children and entertain adult spectators.\(^{27}\) The tradition of Christmas mumming on the Volga is an ancient one that can be traced back to the German homeland.\(^{28}\) The first masked visitor to approach the family home is the *Christkindje* (literally translated "Little Christ Child") who is actually a robust young female dressed in a white gown. The mummer disguises her identity by covering her face with a muslin veil. Her gown is adorned with a colored sash, streamers, and an apron under which she conceals a switch. The pockets of the mummer's apron bulge with Russian *Kunfeck* and home-made sweets.
A small bell signals the sudden arrival of the Christkindje, although in some colonies she simply stares into a window until one of the children inside the home discovers her presence. After the female mummer has entered the family home, she calls the children by name to stand before her. Some of the smaller children must be forcibly dragged by older siblings or adults to appear before the Christkindje.

The Christkindje then commands the children to approach her individually. Some are made to kiss the switch that she holds as a sign of their submission to authority. Well-disciplined children are rewarded with sweets; bad ones are punished with harsh words and sometimes a lashing with the switch. In many cases, recalcitrant children are allowed to retrieve sweets that the Christkindje throws on the floor before her exit.

After the departure of the Christkindje, the children express their desire to go to bed but their cries are countered with still another threat: "Wart nur, der Beiznickel kummt!" ("Just wait, the Beiznickel is coming!") The Beiznickel is the second mummer to visit the Volga German home on Christmas but his appearance is dreaded by all the children. The arrival of the Beiznickel is signaled by the sound of a chain that he drags through the family yard. In contrast to the Christkindje, the role of the Beiznickel is played by a large man of the village who is often callous toward children in real life. He wears a hideously colored mask, false beard, and sometimes horns. In many villages, he often turns his sheepskin coat (Pelz) inside-out to further disguise his terrifying appearance. The Beiznickel carries a large stick and also an empty sack. When the mummer enters the family home, he calls out by name the children who warrant questioning or physical punishment. Usually, the mummer simply requests children to stand before him and recite their prayers or sing Gotteslieder. Those children who have been especially unruly are sometimes stuffed into the Beiznickel's sack and later allowed to "escape" after being dumped on a snowbank outside the family home.

While the appearance of the Christkindje and Beiznickel evoke appreciative smiles from adult spectators in the household, the mummers enforce parental authority and thus serve as unforgettable agents of social control. Their annual appearance is recounted throughout the year as a constant reminder for children to observe the rules of home, church, and school. Such mumming on the Volga can be classified, according to folklorist Herbert Halpert's typology, as "informal visitation by inquisitors." 29

After sun up on Christmas Day, the Volga German family gathers to eat the blessed bread that was placed outside by the Hausfrau, as well as partake of other holiday delicacies. Pieces of the blessed bread are traditionally broken off by the Hausvater (oldest male) and distributed to all the members of the family. The remainder of the day is spent singing Gotteslieder at home or visiting godparents and relatives in the village. Even as the villagers stroll through the streets while on their way to spiele geh' (go visiting), there is much singing:

Maria rein. . . Mary most pure. . .
Sieh dort Stall See yonder stable,
Schuetst uns damal, Our shelter it shall provide
Vor kaltem Frost und Winde. —From cold frost and wind—
[There we can abide]. 30

On the evening of Christmas Day, preparations are made by hired men and non-family members to leave the household and find employment in another. The occasion is often a sad one, and as the laborers depart early the next morning on St. Stephen's Day {Wandernag), there is often the traditional singing of a mock lament by those leaving:

Es. . . ist ein barter Schluss It is a difficult thing to leave
So schlag ich Herzog aus dem Sinn But I'm going to forget all about it
Und wende mich Gott weiss wohn. And go — only God knows where.
Ich will mein Glueck probieren. . . I want to try my luck elsewhere. . .
Sie . . . Frau Meisterin, lebt sich wohl: Dear Master's wife, farewell:
Ich Says Ihr gerate ins Gesicht, I'll say it right to your face,
Ihr Speck und Kraut, Your pork and sauerkraut
Das schmeck mir nicht. . . Don't suit me. . .
VI. THE FESTIVALS IN ETHNOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

The four Volga German festivals discussed above have much in common with calendar feasts in other parts of Europe, as any cross-cultural survey of ethnographic materials shows. While some of the specific customs and descriptive details vary, many of the same ritualistic patterns occur repeatedly.

Arnold Van Gennep, building on the foundations laid by Edward B. Tylor, James G. Frazer, and other scholars, was one of the first to recognize and explain the seemingly universal features of celebrative behavior. He asserted: "What differ [in such rituals] are the forms, the details, the symbols, but not the internal armature." Van Gennep focused on those rites which accompany or mark changes in either an individual existence (life crises) or cosmic time (seasonal changes). He noted that such changes invariably brought about similar responses and behavior among culturally diverse peoples. These responses included resorting to rites of homeopathic magic, and ceremonies dramatizing the process of transition.

Even if Van Gennep's schema does not fully explain celebrative behavior, it at least enables one to view the problem in an organized fashion. Van Gennep's model also allows full use of the ethnological perspective due to its inclusive nature.

While Volga German festivals are similar to seasonal events in other parts of Europe, they are nevertheless distinct. They do not mirror 18th-century German peasant customs, nor are they a perfect reflection of Russian folk culture. Volga German calendar customs must be appreciated as integral parts of a dynamic (rather than a static) process. In the course of one-hundred-and-fifty years, Volga German calendar customs underwent alterations to accommodate various psychological, social, and physical needs. Also, it must be remembered that the original Volga German population consisted of peasants and craftsmen from various German provinces and thus diverse cultural elements were brought together and transplanted on the steppe, rather than a wholly homogeneous culture itself.

Volga German folk culture in Russia did not represent an uncontaminated, island-like phenomenon free of external influence during the period 1890-1914. Village priests on the Volga were often members of the Polish clergy or had been born in more prosperous German colonies on the Black Sea near Odessa. These priests, while sympathetic to the spiritual and cultural needs of the Volga colonists, nevertheless attempted to introduce various innovations (e.g., formation of women's groups; devotion to particular saints). The village schoolmaster was usually educated in an urban setting and tried to instill in Volga German pupils nationalistic feelings, as well as new concepts and new values. After military conscription became mandatory in all Volga German colonies in the 1870s, sons of the colonists who had served in the Russian army later introduced new songs, card games, musical styles, proverbial expressions, and dances following their return home. Such influences, both from within and beyond the Volga German cultural environment, gradually permeated innumerable aspects of daily and celebrative life.

In terms of both form and function, Volga German seasonal festivals are not unlike similar events observed in other cultural settings throughout Europe. The solemn Volga German observances of Oster' and Weihnachte', with their mixture of church participation and magico-religion, are largely devotional in nature, while the celebration of Neijohrsdag and Kerp illustrate a concentration on more festive concerns. All of the above festivals (with the exception of Kerp) involve a large number of magical rites. These supernatural practices — performed by individuals privately or together in a group — often serve to relieve anxiety by assuring some certainty in an otherwise unpredictable environment. The overriding concern with magic is found elsewhere in Europe during seasonal observances, as best illustrated by Elsa Enaejaervi-Haavio's excellent study of the Finnish Shrovetide.

In many Volga German festivals, there is a marked emphasis on rituals surrounding the preparation and sharing of food. Sometimes the food is given an official blessing by the priest (e.g., the lambs of butter brought before the church altar on Easter morning) and at other times food is simply blessed by the magical powers vested in the festive event itself (e.g., placing of bread loaves outside the home on Christmas Eve). This emphasis on the miraculous transformation of ordinary food undoubtedly reflects the peasants' fascination with the "mystery" of the Catholic Mass itself: the changing of ordinary bread and wine into divine sub-
stances. By partaking of supernaturally altered food, the people believe themselves to be similarly transformed (spiritually) and thus less vulnerable to malevolent forces. This belief curiously reflects both the acceptance of Catholic theology on the official level, and reliance on contagious magic on the folk level.

The Volga German harvest celebration (Kerp), while possessing little magico-religion, instead provides an atmosphere of frivolity and permissiveness that allows villagers to temporarily “let off steam” in a culturally sanctioned manner. Thus, all of the aforementioned Volga German calendar festivals function (in various ways) to provide individuals with security — or outlets for aggression — in the face of uncertainty and other pressures.

Volga German festivals not only promote the well-being of individuals but also strengthen group solidarity. This cohesiveness is accentuated, for example, by the practice of reciting traditional New Year's wishes (to fellow villagers) on Neijohrsdag, or it can take the form of singing derisive Spottlieder about those who live outside the village, as is done at the Volga German celebration of Kerp. Indeed, folklorist Robert J. Smith has described the central function of the festival as:

.. a prime device for promoting social cohesiveness, for integrating individuals into a society or group and maintaining them as members through shared, recurrent, positively, reinforcing performance. It is indeed, 'the most concrete expression of collective emotions and loyalties.'

VII. EPILOGUE

While Volga German calendar feast days are no longer celebrated as they once were in the pre-Revolution colonies of old, a surprising number of related folk beliefs and customs persist. Traditional New Year's wishes that echo hopes for a better future still are exchanged among Wolgadeutsche descendants living in dispersion throughout the USSR. The Volga German folk song "Drei Wochen nach Ostern" can be heard in contemporary communities on the plains of western Kansas, just as the joyful dance music of the Kerp celebration occasionally resounds among foot-stomping Volga Germans in urban centers like Chicago and Denver. Even the Beiznickel and Christkindje continue to make their annual rounds — particularly in the isolated Volga German settlements of central Argentina — where these masked figures can be seen moving stealthily from house to house, like fading but ever-familiar shadows in the night.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Numerous Volga German informants (too many to mention here by name) generously shared with me their recollections of traditional calendar feast days in Old Russia. To each of them I owe heartfelt thanks. In addition, the following individuals deserve special mention; Dr. Linda Degh (for whom I prepared the original draft of this paper while a student in her class on European Folklore and Ethnology at Indiana University); Lawrence A. Weigel of Hays, Kansas, and my wife, Rosalinda (Appelhans) Kloberdanz.

Notes

5. For a similar version of this well-known verse, see Klein, p. 60.
8. A variant of this verse was remembered by Mary Koch of McMinnville, Oregon. She traces her ancestry to the Volga German colony of Dreispitz.
10. Both of these songs were sung and recorded by the Volga German folksinger, Lawrence A. Weigel of Hays, Kansas.
11. From the Volga German song, "Nicht weiter sollst du dich erstrecken," as performed by Lawrence A. Weigel. See Nick J. Pfannenstiel and Lawrence A. Weigel, A Collection of German Folk Songs (Hays, Kansas: published by the authors, 1956), p. 98.
12. John B. Terbovich, "Religious Folklore among the German-Russians in Ellis County, Kansas," Western Folklore 22 (1963): 86. [the original page 11 ended here]
22. Kopp, p. 211.
23. For a description of these customs in German-speaking countries see Adolf Spamer, Die Deutsche Volkskunde, vol. II (Berlin: Herbert Stubenrauch, 1935), pp. 142-147.
24. This Christmas custom is also known in many parts of Germany. See Fehrle, p. 32; also see "Kirschbaum" in Hoffmann-Krayer and Staubli (vol. IV, 1932), pp. 1426-1434.
25. See, for example, Terbovich, p. 86.
28. For an account of similar mumming in Germany see Sartori, pp. 47-49.
31. Lyrics from the folk song "Es, es, und es," as sung by Lawrence A, Weigel of Hays, Kansas.
34. This thesis has been developed by several German scholars in their studies of seasonal festivals and other ritualistic behavior. See, for example, Ina-Maria Greverus, pp. 1-3; and Paul Geiger, Deutsches Volkstum im Sitte und Branch (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1936), pp. 29-30.
MEMORIES OF ANTON (SEBASTIANOVKA) ON THE VOLGA
Emilie von Liphart, nee Jordan
Translated by Gerda S. Walker

This article appeared in Die Welt Post, 17 November 1938. The author was the daughter of Rev. Gottlieb Friedrich Jordan, pastor in Balzer, Volga, from 1857 to his death in 1886. From Balzer he also served the people of the neighboring village of Anton.

* * *

I have written about their village for the people of Balzer. Now I thought it would be interesting to tell something also about Anton, for the young people who have not seen it. Pastor Jordan was also the minister for the Anton congregation and it was so arranged that he was in Anton every third Sunday.

Anton was a little village of about 2000 inhabitants. It was beautifully located among hills and surrounded by woods. The hills were covered with big oak trees. In front of the village, to the right, there was a long valley that extended for about two miles. Here was located the sugarbeet factory, which a Mr. Sigrist had built and operated for many years. When he died, his widow married his factory manager. In 1860 the daughter of this couple was sixteen years old. I knew her from then until her parents, the Laskobskis, died in 1878. When my father drove to Anton, my sister Lydia and I usually went along, and after church we were always invited to Laskobskis’ house for dinner. Our mother had died and that is why we were with father most of the time.

The people of Anton were from Thuringia, Germany. They were small, dark and very handsome people, who spoke an entirely different dialect from that of the Balzer people. In earlier days the Antoners had grown vineyards on a hill they called Fuchsberg (Foxhill), but when the sugar factory was built and land became scarce, they grew sugar beets and then worked in the factory during the winter. The factory owner hired only people from Anton and even the maids in his home were from Anton.

The factory and stables were located back in the woods, then came the owner's house and some small guest houses, which were often filled in the summer. Springs had been diverted from the woods and the water flowed into three huge tanks. In the first tank sterlets*, a famous fish from the Volga, were kept; in the second ordinary fish and in the third crayfish. When guests came, the mistress of the house went out with them and let them catch the fish of their choice with a net. The little boys of Anton liked to stand around the crayfish tank and put their little fingers into the water until a crab attached itself and then they would yell. The spring water was routed from one tank into the other and then into a large lake on which one could go boating and also swimming. In winter there was ice skating on it.

Behind the manor house there was a beautiful orchard, which was well cared for by a gardener. When the many gooseberries were ripe, the gardener was allowed to let the children pick them; they were very tasty. The Anton children were well brought up. When they misbehaved they were admonished with the words: "The Lord sees you, or else the pastor does", which made them well-behaved again. Even the little boys raised their caps [in greeting]. At Christmas time the factory owner gave a gift of a tree with lights and sacks full of nuts, candy or cookies, and a great many books. The Laskopskis were devout, good people and their workers were well off. Anton was a little paradise.

There were high, forested hills, deep ravines and a lake, Baerenloch (bearshole). In the winter there was much snow. When the pastor came from Balzer on a Sunday, the snow had to be shovelled, which the people did gladly, for there was much joy when they saw the carriage coming, drawn by the three grey horses. On the driver's seat sat "old Michel", who was an Antoner, and behind him sat the dear, old pastor.

On one occasion the pastor almost had a bad experience. Anton was small and could not afford to hire an expensive school teacher, and a cheap one was no good. A drinker often applied, even though he knew that the pastor wanted an upright person. There were also some unprincipled men who wanted to hire the wretched man and they thought of beating the pastor to death. My father left for Anton without us during a snowstorm. The Balzer people knew that these people in Anton were opposed to the pastor and wanted to send someone along, but Papa drove off with his Michel. At the hill everything went smoothly; some men had come with shovels and clubs. Papa had the driver stop, stepped out and said, "Gruess Gott," as he usually did. Then he thanked them for the good road, stepped back into the carriage and drove off. In Anton his dear, loyal people stood waiting for him and were overjoyed that he was still alive. Later they

*A variety of small sturgeon.
asked his enemies, "You did not harm the pastor?" and these answered, "We couldn't do anything to him, he said 'Gruess Gott'. So the old man, with his trust in the Lord, came through life well.

Ascension Day always belonged to the people of Anton. They had a high hill in the woods, which had a flat top; they called it Die Kanzel (the pulpit). There were trees all around and at the base of the hill there were springs and a brook rippled along from which we gathered the celebrated watercress, along with other good plants, such as wild thyme, which the people picked and used so much. A table and a chair were brought along and placed on the summit and the people, with their hymnals, found places to sit round about. Then their pastor gave the Sermon on the Mount and the hymns sounded so beautiful in the woods. The Laskopskis were always there too and brought their lunch along, just like the others. Everything tasted so good in the outdoors. Afterwards everyone searched for tea herbs. In the fall licorice root was dug. The people had their tea with bread and watermelon syrup. No one needed to hunger unless he wanted to.

The people of Anton also had beautiful fruit orchards, along a stream which ran through the village. The only shortage was for land on which to grow wheat, for there were too many hills around Anton. For this reason the people leased land thirty versts from the village. Because it was so far away, the Antoners remained on the leased land during harvest time even on Sunday, and the pastor went there once each summer. My oldest sister cooked cheese and took along some Kreppel from home.

There was something very interesting in the cemetery. When a child died, the godparents placed a doll on a little stick on the grave. If a boy died, the doll was a boy doll, and if a girl, a girl doll. They were dressed very beautifully too, even the handkerchief in the pocket was there. As a little girl, I often went with the other children to see the lovely dolls and clothes.

When I was visiting in Lincoln this summer, I met a Mrs. Wekesser, from whom my father always bought honey in the old homeland. My father was Swiss [born in Bern 1802, ed.] and he loved his "Antoner Swiss," as he called them. In Anton there were family names which did not occur in any other colony. Among them were: Wekesser, Regling, Tamblone, Rudi, and Albrecht [supposedly Swiss, ed.].

It was about the year 1875 when the 35-year contract between the beet farmers and Mr. Laskobski ended, and was to be renewed. He said that he no longer needed the factory, since his children were all grown up and earning their own living, and he wanted to move to the city. He was willing to sell it for an amount with which both sides could have fared well. Most of the people of Anton were ready to agree to this, but some stubbornly wanted a better deal and would not agree. They wanted the factory to be remodelled, which Mr. Laskobski was willing to do in order that the people could earn their living. Pastor Jordan spoke with the people, but the dissident group would not agree; they said the owner would change his mind. Finally he drove off and left his manager of many years, Haffner, to sell everything. Their gorgeous orange and lemon trees were taken to Moscow. After this the people of Anton had to do quite a bit of moving around. Some of them went as far away as Baku to find work; I myself met some in that city when I still lived there. Now in my old age I find Antoners in this country too.

Fifteenth International Convention
Hotel Saskatchewan Regina,
Saskatchewan June 26-July 1, 1984
A RECENT VISIT TO THE VOLGA REGION

John McCormally

Mr. McCormally is Roving Editor for the Harris Group of newspapers in Kansas, Iowa and California. He toured the Soviet Union for 3 1/2 weeks in July-August of this year and on his return wrote a 31-part series of articles for his newspapers, describing his visit. The article below appeared in Hays Daily News on September 14, 1983 under the heading “German heritage along Volga mostly destroyed by Soviets.”

We publish this with the permission of the author and the Hays Daily News.

SARATOV, U.S.S.R., on the Volga River — Laughing little boys, brown as berries, were doing cannon-balls off the 30-foot lock walls into the swirling pool as our ship went through the big dam at Balakovo.

The thick cluster of villages with old, familiar names showed clearly on my map, but were nowhere to be seen along the shore — Liebenthal, Katharinenstadt, Herzog, Obermonjour, Schoenchen, Pfeifer, Marienthal. The Soviets sharing this "Volga Peace Cruise" with me shook their heads in puzzlement when I showed them the map.

My map, a century out of date, had been given me by Lawrence Weigel of Hays, dedicated historian of that community's Volga-German association. These names no longer are those of Volga valley villages, but of western Kansas towns.

I’d promised Weigel I'd look for traces of them here, but they were gone — inundated by the vast Volga reservoirs, absorbed by the sprawling collective farms, erased from history by the forceable relocation of the German-Russians beyond the Urals. But with a kind of geographic immortality, the village names, like the villagers' descendants, flourish on other steppes half a world away.

As a young reporter in Kansas, I had to learn to spell all those Germanic names to get the obituaries right. It was satisfying finally to be here, where they came from.

In the 1760s, Russia's Catherine the Great was desperate to fill this rich Volga valley with settlers, not only to produce food for her empire, but as a Christian, Caucasian barrier against the Muslim, Mongol hordes from the east.

A German princess herself, Catherine appealed to her former countrymen, offering Germans who settled in Russia travel expenses, free land, freedom of religion, exemption from military service and taxation, 10-year interest-free loans. It was a offer hard to refuse. From 1763 to 1767, 28,000 Germans — Catholics and Lutherans and a few Mennonites — established 104 colonies on both sides of the Volga, above and below Saratov.

(In a separate movement, large numbers of Mennonites settled along the lower Dnepr, under similar arrangements, to colonize land Catherine had won from the Turks.)

Volga immigrants increased to more than 100,000 in the next century, spread over 3 million acres. Their prosperity and their privileges, however, antagonized their neighbors.

As noted by Norb Dreiling, another Hays historian, the Volga-Germans brought a lot of it on themselves by remaining German, clinging to their language and customs as Russia surged through the upheavals of the 19th century. Newly liberated serfs protested "foreigners' privileges, and in 1870, Czar Alexander II revoked most of the privileges Catherine had granted the Germans, especially exemption from military service and taxation.

By coincidence, American railroads had recruiters all over Europe at the time looking for settlers to fill their land grants across the Great Plains. The Volga Germans sent a scouting team to America, and they selected sites along the Kansas Pacific from Salina to Hays for settlement. Others settled in areas of Ohio and Nebraska.

Meanwhile, farther south along the Santa Fe Railroad, Mennonites from the Dnepr region were settling in Harvey, McPherson and Reno counties.

Throughout the 1870s, 18,000 of the Volga Germans migrated to America, and another 10,000 Mennonites came from the southern Ukraine.

Weigel estimates there are a million Germans from Russia now in the United States. He said the drive to reunite families was similar to that of Jews seeking more emigration from the Soviet Union.

Despite emigration, the German population along the Volga grew. With formation of the Soviet Union, a German Autonomous Republic within the Russian Federated Republic was formed, but it, too, disappeared.
As Hitler drove toward the Volga in 1941, the Soviets reacted to their citizens of German descent as we did to Americans of Japanese descent in California. They moved more than 400,000 Volga Germans beyond the Urals, to Kazakhstan. They never have been allowed to return.

There are nearly two million Soviets of German descent today — nearly all of them in the east. No sign remains, no mention is made by tour guides nor acknowledgement given by officials of their history along the Volga. It is another of those chapters the Soviets seem to have written out of their history.

I persisted with my little map, telling my Soviet acquaintances that I thought it was a connection between us worth cherishing. Legend has it that from these steppes, the German-Russians took their hard, red winter wheat to Kansas, making it the breadbasket of America, and America the world's second greatest wheat producer — after the Soviet Union. That should bind us together far more than fear of missiles and mindless rhetoric keeps us apart.

Such sentimentality struggles against the hard realities. Our ship can't stop at Saratov, capital of the old Volga-German region and now a great natural gas production center, because it is a "closed city" forbidden to foreigners. I'm sorry. I had hoped to see whether the old Catholic cathedral still is standing there. St. Fidelis Church in Victoria nearly is an exact copy of it.

But for similarities, I had to settle for the laughing little boys, leaping from the lock as recklessly unafraid as boys anywhere.
CHRISTIAN MUELLER: A Mennonite Pioneer
Cora Miller Conner

Christian Mueller was thirty-one years old when he arrived in the United States on May 18, 1874. He was among the group of Mennonites on the S.S. City of Richmond which had sailed from Liverpool, England, five weeks earlier. The group had first assembled in Hamburg, Germany, where they were aided by Henry Schuett, an agent of the Mennonite Board of Guardians. Upon their arrival in New York, Mueller wrote to Schuett, reporting on the safe journey and on the group's plan to depart for Yankton, Dakota Territory, the next day. The leader of Mueller's group was his brother-in-law Andreas Schrag who had been in the delegation of twelve sent on a scouting expedition to America the year before by German-Russian Mennonites eager to emigrate because of the loss of privileges which had been granted by Catherine the Great a century earlier. Andreas Schrag, the only so-called Swiss-Mennonite among the scouting delegation, had represented Mennonites in Volhynia (now part of the Ukraine) who traced their ancestry to Switzerland. The fifty-three people accompanying Schrag and Mueller were among the first of several groups of German-Russian Mennonites to travel to Yankton and then some thirty miles northward into Dakota Territory where they homesteaded in what is now the Freeman-Marion area.

Christian Mueller helped to establish one of the first Mennonite churches in the Dakota Territory and served as a minister until his retirement in 1911. In 1919, he was called out of retirement to serve an additional year as interim minister. He died in 1923 at the age of eighty. He wrote the following account of the South Dakota Swiss- Volhynian Mennonites some time after his retirement in 1911, and it was later hand-copied by his great-nephew Alfred P. Waltner. As far as can be determined, the document has neither been published nor translated from the original German before now, but it has been cited. Although much of the historical information recounted by Mueller has been published elsewhere, the manuscript is unique in that it was written by one who made the arduous journey from Volhynia to Dakota Territory and who was instrumental in establishing the pioneer settlement in the New World. It also documents the much-needed and appreciated assistance given to the Volhynian Mennonites by descendants of the very earliest German settlers in America, the Pennsylvania Mennonites. Where clarification or illumination of Christian Mueller's account seems desirable, I have added footnotes.

A Short Account of the Swiss-Mennonites in the Marion and Freeman, South Dakota Area, How They Came to Russia and from Russia to America. Recorded by Christian Mueller.

Probably most of these brethren emigrated from various countries because of persecution, for example, from Switzerland, the Central Palatinate and France where they were persecuted because of their faith. Some went to Austria, others to Poland. The exact years of their migration cannot be determined, but it was in the early part of the eighteenth century when they came from Poland and Austria, perhaps also from other countries, and traveled to Russia where they settled in the province of Volhynia. One party settled in the Dubno district and leased land, mostly forest, from a prince by the name of Lubanirsky. Here they laid out the village of Edwardofka (Edwardsdorf), I believe, named after Prince Edward Lubanirsky. Of course, the beginning was difficult and they had to struggle a great deal to reach the point of self-sufficiency, all the more so because they were poor. This took much sweat and hard work.

One party traveled farther northeast, approximately 100 verst (about seventy miles), where they, too, leased mostly wooded land from a prince. Here they laid out a colony by the name of Horodisch (Horodyszcze) in the district of Rovno. Their early years were also very difficult. Most of them were cattle breeders and tried to earn a little extra money on the side. Several families moved eastward about 120 verst and bought a plot of forest in the district of Novograd-Volynsk. Here they established the colony of Waldheim where, as elsewhere, the beginning was strenuous and difficult. It should be noted, by the way, that these communities always had clergymen who were chosen from their midst. They held regular worship services, but Sunday school was out of the question. That was completely foreign and unknown in Russia, as was mission work. They lived in isolation, apparently completely separated from the rest of the world, surrounded only by the lowest class of Russians and by a small group of Poles. The Swiss brethren enjoyed great privileges granted by the Russian government. While the natives had to bear all tax burdens, our people were exempt from everything: from military service, from billeting of the military and from land taxes except for a small poll tax (Kopfsteuer) which had to be paid to the government annually. Next to God, our people owed the Russian government a great deal for the many special privileges which they enjoyed. I think all these blessings were passed on from our early forefathers, for it is written, "I will keep mercy to the thousandth
Christian Mueller's Volhynian Homeland

This map appeared originally in Martin H. Schrag, "A Geographic Study Determines Location of Swiss-Volhynian Mennonite Villages, 1800-1874," Mennonite Life (July 1958), 142-43. Reprinted with permission.
generation with those who keep my commandments." As we know, our ancestors left all their goods and property and had to flee for the sake of their faith, and their children and children's children were permitted to enjoy the blessings. Thus passed one decade after another in joy and sorrow, sunshine and gloom, and the young people multiplied greatly.

About 1855, people from the Edwardofka colony migrated northeast approximately 125 miles. There they purchased heavily forested land and founded a colony in the district of Zhitomir and named it Kotosufka (Kutusovka). From the other two settlements, Horodisch and Waldheim, several families also moved to Kotosufka, and so a large village came into being there. As can be imagined, they too, had to contend with great difficulties. But through diligence and perseverance and God's rich blessing, things went rather well for them in subsequent years, and they made a good living. Several families from the Edwardofka colony stayed behind, namely Johann Schrag (who was an elder in this congregation) with his children, his brother Jakob Schrag with children and the Joseph Waltner family. They settled near the county seat of Dubno. There were also several families who had been among them from the outset, even since before the village of Edwardofka had been founded, namely the Johann Mueller and Johann Goering families who owned land there. The name of this place was Futtor, and there was a small congregation there served by Elder Johann Schrag up to the time of the migration to America.

As stated earlier, the Mennonites had enjoyed great freedom and privilege in the province of Volhynia and also in South Russia in the Molotschna. These rights and freedoms were to be abolished, and universal conscription was to be initiated with no one exempt from active service. This created great agitation. The privilege granted by Empress Catherine II and subsequently upheld by Emperor Paul I that the Mennonites should forever be exempt from conscription was to be violated and revoked. Of course, there was opposition and the decision was appealed; but they were told, "Nothing is permanent", and the government allowed ten years for people to emigrate who could not or did not wish to comply with the law.

It was hard to know what to do in a case like that. The Mennonites in Volhynia began correspondence with those living in South Russia to confer with them. Two brethren were even sent to the Molotschna, a Brother Jakob Stucky from Kotosufka and Tobias Unruh from Karolswalde (both elders). Near the city of Ostrog there were also several colonies of Mennonites originally from Holland. The two brethren conferred there in the Molotschna and agreed to send a deputation to America, and so steps were taken to do just that.

Brother Andreas Schrag was elected by all four Swiss congregations and Elder Tobias Unruh by the Karolswalde congregation as deputies who set out on their journey to America in the spring of 1873. Nine other brethren were selected in South Russia, from the Molotschna, and in Prussia Elder Wilhelm Ewert was chosen. They all met in Prussia, twelve in number, like the twelve emissaries that Moses sent out to explore the land of Canaan. They all arrived safely in America, where Brother John F. Funk of Elkhart, Indiana, and Brother Jacob J. Schantz of Berlin, Ontario, joined them. So these fourteen brethren crisscrossed Manitoba, then northern Dakota Territory, followed by Minnesota, Nebraska and Kansas. Two or three brethren continued as far as Texas. And in autumn they all returned home safely. During the time that the deputies were traveling about here in America, the American Mennonites bore witness to much love for them and also recommended that they immigrate to America. There was still a lot of space here and America would receive them with joy. This news was conveyed to the congregations by Brother Schrag, and so arrangements were made immediately for emigration, and they began to sell farms and everything that they had. But because the decision came so quickly, everything had to be sold cheaply. Then, too, it had taken a lot of time and money to obtain passports from the Russian government. Yet with God's help and with a lot of trouble and effort, they succeeded in having the first migrant group of eleven families set out on the long, hard journey in April, 1874. The families were Schrags, Muellers, Waltners and Schwartz. Our dear heavenly father brought all of us over safe and sound after a four-week journey. We arrived in Yankton on May 23, the Saturday before Pentecost, where we celebrated the holiday.

A horse-drawn vehicle was hired, and a man took several of us for a ride around the prairie. There was already one brother here named Daniel Unruh who had come somewhat earlier from the Crimea of Russia. He had just started to build a house. He was very friendly and hitched up his horses, too, and so we drove about for several days, to the north and to the west. As far as the eye could see, everything was free and open. Toward the east there were recent settlers here and there. All the territory far and wide was open government property and could be taken up as homestead and preemption land. So we settled here in present-day Turner County in southeastern South Dakota. In the fall, in September, a large party of Swiss brethren came as far as Yankton. Most of them also came out to the prairie right away, but some stayed in town over winter and rented farms there. Because most of the people had been rather poor, many were unable to finance their own trip, and so the American Mennonites brought them here from Hamburg at their ex-
made very good progress, some even attaining considerable prosperity. There is still a large congregation there. In difficult and arduous times at first. But through diligence as well as perseverance and God's rich blessing, they were too severe for them. They settled near Pretty Prairie in Reno County where they also had to go through hard times. There was a severe lack of food and money, and so the Swiss congregations decided to send two brethren to Pennsylvania to negotiate a loan wherever possible. For this task were chosen Brother Andreas Schrag and Minister Joseph Graber who traveled to Pennsylvania in February or March, 1878, and the Lord so moved the hearts of the [Pennsylvania] Mennonite brethren that they were willing to advance, beyond expectation, a loan of $7,400 at 6% for a considerably long time. This sum could finally be repaid, and the most urgent need was able to be relieved somewhat.

There is a saying, every beginning is difficult (aller Anfang ist schwer), and so it was here, too. Most of the Mennonite farmers had bought oxen at first because horses were too expensive. Then two or three families bought oxen jointly. It is easy to understand that not much prairie could be broken up and consequently only little could be sown. To this hardship was added the damage done by the many grasshoppers in the early years.

For the ministerial election and elder installation, Elder Jakob Stucky from Kansas was summoned. Because the group stayed with Elder Peter Kaufman and a small group went with Johann Schrag. But because Elder Peter Kaufman was rather old and also somewhat crippled by a stroke, he could not administer his office properly. Then the congregation agreed to elect two ministers. The vote fell to Christian Kaufman and Christian Mueller (the writer) as ministers and to Jakob Mueller as deacon. In 1879, Christian Kaufman was installed as elder.

In 1883-84, several families, fifteen to twenty, moved away from here to Kansas. The long, harsh winter here was too severe for them. They settled near Pretty Prairie in Reno County where they also had to go through difficult and arduous times at first. But through diligence as well as perseverance and God's rich blessing, they made very good progress, some even attaining considerable prosperity. There is still a large congregation there.

Now I have to go back somewhat. As noted at the beginning, there were four congregations in Russia. The congregation in Horodisch, the one at Waldheim and the one near Dubno came to Dakota Territory. The congregation in Kotosufka went to Kansas. Horodisch had as its elders Peter Kaufman and a Minister Joseph Graber; the elder of the Waldheim congregation was Johann Schrag and its schoolmaster was Christian Graber. The third congregation also had an elder, Johann Schrag. He, however, remained in Russia because his sons stayed behind. The fourth congregation, which went to Kansas, had Jakob Stucky as elder and as schoolmaster Jakob Goering. Now here in America these three congregations united and joined for worship services and Sunday school for about four years. But it did not work out very well. Opinions and practices were not quite in accord. Friction and disagreement occurred, and so the congregation divided in 1878 into two parts. The larger group stayed with Elder Peter Kaufman and a small group went with Johann Schrag. But because Elder Peter Kaufman was rather old and also somewhat crippled by a stroke, he could not administer his office properly. Then the congregation agreed to elect two ministers. The vote fell to Christian Kaufman and Christian Mueller (the writer) as ministers and to Jakob Mueller as deacon. In 1879, Christian Kaufman was installed as elder. For the ministerial election and elder installation, Elder Jakob Stucky from Kansas was summoned. Because the congregation was rather large and the homes too small to hold the meetings, it was resolved to build a church in 1880. For this purpose Brother Bernhard Kaufman in Pennsylvania advanced $1,350. The remainder was collected by the congregation, and so a church was erected, 34 by 54 feet. When it was completed, Brother I. P. Sprunger of Berne, Indiana, was invited to the dedication; and the name became Salem Church.

In 1883-84, several families, fifteen to twenty, moved away from here to Kansas. The long, harsh winter here was too severe for them. They settled near Pretty Prairie in Reno County where they also had to go through difficult and arduous times at first. But through diligence as well as perseverance and God's rich blessing, they made very good progress, some even attaining considerable prosperity. There is still a large congregation there.

But let's return to South Dakota. The congregation that Johann Schrag had served had also elected ministers, namely Jakob Schrag, a son of Elder Johann Schrag, and Joseph Kaufman. (Joseph Kaufman was a son of Elder Peter Kaufman.) Because Elder Johann Schrag was also already old and infirm, one of these elected ministers was to be installed as elder. The choice (lot?) fell to Joseph Kaufman. This, however, did not provide any real satisfaction, particularly for Elder Johann Schrag and his children. Consequently Jakob Schrag was also installed as elder. But this did not work very well either, and the congregation divided into two parts, and both congregations were very small. Meetings were held in homes. Then the congregation of which Jakob Schrag was the elder built a church four miles southwest of the Salem Church. This church was called the Zion Church. After a few years, however, this congregation was dissolved, for Jakob Schrag and several families moved to Oregon, and the other members who stayed behind joined the Salem congregation. Elder Joseph Kaufman with his congregation purchased the church building from the Zion congregation and also adopted the name Zion. So for several years there were the two congregations as well as the two church buildings. Nevertheless, some were of the opinion that it would be better if the two congregations would unite. The attempt was made, and the result was the merger of the two congregations in 1894. From then on this (united) congregation was called Salem-Zion Church, and worship services were held in both church buildings. In 1902, a cyclone demolished the Zion church, but the
congregation then thrived. The young people multiplied and the congregation spread out and soon the church building became too small. Because several families had so far to go to church, eight to ten miles, something had to be done. Several congregational meetings were held, but the congregation could reach no real understanding. Then in 1907, the southern group agreed to build a church themselves. A 36 by 54-foot church was erected two and a half miles south of the Salem-Zion Church. This congregation adopted the name Salem Church. The congregation consequently divided into two groups, and so both groups were helped, with space and also because of distance.

(Here Uncle Mueller wrote a sentence which I did not copy A. P. W.)

Brother Joseph Kaufman stayed in the old church and this writer went with the southern group because there was no minister there, and also it was two and a half miles closer to home. And so this congregation was served from this time on until October 1, 1911, by my own little self as well as I in frailty could. And because I no longer felt very well, was already almost seventy and with impaired hearing, the congregation was urged to look around for better laborers. The congregation thought it proper to call an outsider, a well-educated clergyman. And after a lengthy search. Brother Christian Hege consented to take over the congregation and to serve for an indefinite time.

Of course, he also had to be salaried, which until this time had not been customary among our congregations.

The Salem-Zion congregation also chose two young preachers from their midst, Alfred P. Waltner and Johann J. A. Schrag. Alfred Waltner was installed in the office of elder, and thus both congregations are provided for. May the Lord continue to let his blessing rest on these congregations.

The Rev. Christian Mueller Family

According to the Mennonite Ship List, Katherine and Anna (far left) were five and one respectively when the family arrived in the New World. Photo courtesy of Pine Hill Press.

Notes

2. Also a passenger on the ship was Christian Mueller's ten-year-old nephew Peter, whose father changed the spelling of the name to Miller. Peter was my grandfather. He died in 1950 on the South Dakota land he had homesteaded. My conversations with him revealed memories of his life in Russia and of the trip to America.
3. Although the group is called Swiss-Volhynian, their language is mostly Rhenish-Franconian because in the seventeenth century their Swiss ancestors had migrated to the German Palatinate where they remained for about a century before moving to Volhynia. See Cora Anne Miller, "A Phonological and Morphological Study of a German Dialect Spoken near Freeman, South Dakota," unpublished Master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1966.


6. There are many histories of the Mennonite migration to the Great Plains. Among them are the following: John J. Gering, *After Fifty Years* (Freeman, SD: Pine Hill Press, 1924).


   P. R. Kaufman, *Unser Volk und seine Geschichte* (Basil, KS: 1931),


7. Christian Mueller must have meant nineteenth century, not eighteenth. Wedel (pp. 12-13) states that it wasn't until after Catherine II ascended the throne in 1762 and invited Germans to settle her newly-acquired lands that Mennonites from Holland, Prussia and other countries came to Russia. The people described by Mueller began leaving Switzerland in small groups around 1525. Large migrations to the Palatinate and to Alsace occurred in 1671, and from those places to Russia by way of Lemberg, Austria, (present-day Lvov, USSR) about a century later. According to Schrag (p. 29), they settled in Lemberg at the invitation of Emperor Joseph II of Austria. Once in Russia it is likely that Mueller's ancestors (the Palatine group) lived a short time in Reditschoff in the province of Chernigov and in Michalin, Kiev province, before coming to the Dubno area between 1801-1802. The Alsatian group reached Volhynia via Montbeliard (then ruled by the Duke of Wuerttemberg), Austria and Poland. Thus, the two major Swiss migrations of 1671 were reunited in Edwardofka near Dubno around 1807. These rather complex routes are traced in detail by Martin H. Schrag. See also Kaufman, pp. 12-24; E. J. Waltner, pp. 135-87 and Wedel, pp. 9-17.

8. About 1837, the congregation at Michelsdorf near Lublin, Poland, was dissolved because the remaining families left for Horodisch. Shortly thereafter, possibly the same year, the small congregation at Waldheim was established (Wedel, p. 16). Waldheim was the first place where the Swiss-Volhynian Mennonites owned their own land (Kaufman, pp. 23-24; Schrag, p. 55; E. J. Waltner, p. 175).


11. The concessions granted by Catherine II were confirmed by her son Paul I in 1800 and again by Czar Nicholas I in 1838 (Schrag, p. 60). In 1870, word was received that Alexander II planned to withdraw the Mennonite exemption from military service.

12. A delegation from South Russia was elected to go to St. Petersburg in 1871 to plead the case of the Mennonites. Unfortunately, neither of its two chief spokesmen, Sudermann and Dyck, spoke Russian, which hampered their efforts. Several later delegations were sent in 1872 and in 1873, but by 1874, the new law was in place, providing noncombatant service for the Mennonites. This they found unacceptable (Smith, pp. 440-43; E. J. Waltner, p. 188).

13. Although neither Andreas Schrag nor any of his eleven fellow delegates set foot on Turner-Hutchinson County land during their initial trip to America, it is remarkable that that is the very area to which he led his group of settlers. There are several possible reasons for this: 1) Daniel Unruh, a Mennonite who had settled there earlier, may have corresponded with Schrag in Russia; 2) an Elkhart, Indiana, Mennonite, John F. Funk, who had escorted Unruh to Dakota also served as escort to the Schrag group and may have informed them of settlement possibilities; 3) Funk, who was a printer, may have included information about southern Dakota in one of the many tracts he sent to Russia about conditions in America. See *The Swiss-Germans in South Dakota*, pp. 13 and 15.

14. According to Unruh (p. 17), only two of the twelve delegates went as far as Texas because it was thought that the best land there had already been taken.

15. Some Mennonites met with President Ulysses S. Grant and with members of the United States Senate seeking privileges similar to those they had enjoyed in Russia, but they were able to receive no written promises. For a
discussion of the so-called Mennonite bill introduced in the first session of the 43rd Congress of the United States, see Unruh, pp. 18-21 and also E. J. Waltner, pp. 190-91. Despite the failure of the bill to be passed, the Russian Mennonites immigrated to America.

16 The task of securing passports was often a process lasting several months. Because the Swiss-Volhynians had never become Russian citizens, it was difficult for them to prove residency. With the aid of Leonhard Voss (Foss), a Lutheran from one of the Baltic provinces who knew the Russian language, and of Mr. Iliasiwicz, a Russian attorney hired by the group, and of payment to government officials, passports were secured for everyone (Kaufman, pp. 43-44; Smith, p. 450; Schrag, p. 81; E. J. Waltner, p. 192; Wedel, p. 51). P. R. Kaufman (p. 44) relates that between the time of registration and the date of departure, his youngest sister died. In another family there had been a birth; so at the border a girl from that family joined the Kaufmans. Although she was significantly older than the deceased daughter, this discrepancy was overlooked when additional money was proffered.

17 Two hundred sixty Mennonites arrived in New York on the S. S. City of Chester on August 24, 1874, and were joined there by approximately fourteen families on the S. S. City of Richmond which docked a week later. Together they traveled to Yankton. See Stucky, Mennonite Ship List, pp. 9 and 17.

18 Some sources claim that the donation was of 2,000 sacks of flour. See A. P. Waltner, "Important Events in the History of the Salem-Zion Church," p. 40 and E. J. Waltner, Banished for Faith, p. 201.

19 There were actually several small villages in the vicinity of Dubno (Wedel, pp. 21-23). According to Harley J. Stucky in the Mennonite Ship List, pp. 1 and 4, Christian Mueller and the first group of fifty-five Swiss-Volhynians to arrive in Yankton came from the villages of Sahorez (Zahoriz) and Futtor. The second group which arrived in June probably also came from Sahorez and Futtor as well as from the nearby small villages of Goritt and Hecker and perhaps from other villages in the Dubno area. See also Wedel, p. 52.

20. About fourteen families of the 441 Mennonites who arrived in New York on August 31, 1874, from Kotosufka on the S.S. City of Richmond went to Yankton instead of Kansas because they already had relatives in Dakota Territory (Stucky, Mennonite Ship List, pp. 9 and 17; E. J. Waltner, p. 194).

21. In the Mennonite Ship List, p. 9, Christian Graber is referred to as Rev. Graber. However, as Wedel (p. 33) and Schrag (p. 74) attest, the schoolmaster was often the minister. The only requirement was that the teacher be someone who could read, write and do arithmetic. Sometimes it was an elderly person who could no longer do full-time farm work. The teacher was not always Mennonite; some were Lutherans. Each family in the congregation was assessed the same amount to pay the teacher's salary.

22. Jakob is a brother of Christian who changed the spelling of his name to Miller.

23. Where there were several ministers in one congregation, one of them would generally be selected as elder by lot (Unruh, p. 65).

24. A. P. W. is Alfred P. Waltner.

25. Christian Hege was teaching in Henderson, Nebraska, at the time he was called. He served the Salem Church from 1911-1919 at which time he resigned because of Mrs. Hege's poor health. Upon his resignation, Christian Mueller served one year as interim minister until Elmer J. Neuenschwander of Aberdeen, Idaho, was called. See The Swiss-Germans in South Dakota, pp. 67-68.

26. By congregational vote, the salary was set at not more than $1,000 a year. The Salem-Zion congregation did not have a salaried minister until after Alfred P. Waltner and John J. A. Schrag resigned in 1934 and H. Albert Classen of Beatrice, Nebraska, was called (Unruh, pp. 65-66).

27. The two congregations have continued to prosper since Christian Mueller's time. The Salem-Zion congregation erected a new church building in 1957 and now has a membership of about 450. The somewhat larger Salem Church completed a new building in 1966 (The Swiss-Germans in South Dakota, pp. 46 and 66).
PROVINCE OF SARATOV
showing the division into UEZDS (Districts) as at 1900 and some of the German villages in Kamyshin Uezd
THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN THE GERMAN PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS OF THE
KAMYSHIN DISTRICT, PROVINCE OF SARATOV

A Russian article of 1900
translated by Alexander Dupper

Editor's Introduction

This article, entitled in the original "Nemetskiia tserkovno-prikhodskiiia uchilishcha v kamyshinskom uezde" (German Church-Parish Schools in Kamyshin District), by an author identified only by the initials G. U., appeared in Saratovskaia zemskaia nedelia, 1900, nos. 1-10. It was sent to us by Mr. Edward Gerk of Kelowna, B.C., who obtained a photocopy of it from the Lenin Library in Moscow.

The German villages covered by this survey are not named in the article, but we have determined from a map of the province of Saratov in Bol'shoi Vsemirnyi Nastol'nyi Atlas Markska (St. Petersburg, A.F. Marks, 1905) that the Kamyshin district (uezd) as organized at that time included all the Bergseite villages except Walter, Frank and Kolb and the three lying northwest of the city of Saratov. A list of these is given in the notes at the end of this article. In the 51 German villages in this area, there were then apparently 55 schools.

At the time this article was written there was a dispute regarding jurisdiction over these schools between the public schools directorate appointed by the Ministry of Public Education in St. Petersburg and the school committee of the Kamyshin District Assembly. This dispute was one of the factors that hampered progress in the improvement of the quality of education in the German parochial schools.

Only the first part of the article actually describes the condition of the schools in the German villages. The larger, second part deals with the problems of education in general, particularly the training of teachers, in the province of Saratov, and in Russia as a whole, at the beginning of the present century. To follow the discussion one needs some background information about the local government system then operating in Russia.

Tsar Alexander II, in 1864, had liberalized Russian local government by providing for the setting up of provincial and district assemblies, in which nobility, townsmen and peasants were represented through an indirect electoral system. These assemblies were given jurisdiction over education, public health, roads and bridges, administration of prisons, famine relief and other matters; and they were authorized to raise taxes for these purposes. Although the process was painfully slow, schools for the common people now received local attention for the first time. Unfortunately in the 1880's, the reactionary rule of Tsar Alexander III interfered with the progress being made by withdrawing jurisdiction over education from the assemblies and centralizing it in a Ministry of Public Education in St. Petersburg. This led to constant quarrels between liberal and reactionary representatives in the assemblies and discouraged local initiative in education. There are echoes of this in the article that Dr. Dupper has translated for us.

A provincial assembly was set up in the province of Saratov in 1866. Subsequently the province was divided into ten districts, in each of which a district assembly was elected. Our map shows these districts. Both the provincial assembly and several of the district assemblies are mentioned in the article. The Volga Germans were incorporated into this local government system through a law of 4 June 1871, which abolished their special colonist status. Those on the Bergseite had some representation in the Kamyshin District Assembly.

* * *

German Church-Parish Schools in Kamyshin District

The situation of the German parochial schools in the Kamyshin district presents a case of considerable practical interest from the time when these schools passed under the exclusive jurisdiction of the public schools directorate and were thus exempt from any control by the school committee of the district assembly. Two years ago the Kamyshin Assembly petitioned for the above-named schools to be put under the jurisdiction of its school committee. When no answer was received to that petition, the district assembly, at its last regular meeting, drafted a new petition, asking that all German schools be maintained at the expense of the Ministry for Public Education. The status of the German parochial schools has been a constant topic of discussion at the meetings of the Kamyshin district assembly held during the last three to four years. The Kamyshin assembly allots over 15,000 rubles each year to support the German schools, but it has no influence over them, knows nothing about their condition, since no reports are ever received from anyone. The assembly has repeatedly expressed its discontent at not receiving reports about these schools from the inspectors, and in 1898 adopted a resolution asking the public schools directorate to charge the inspectors with the duty
of presenting to the district assembly yearly reports on the condition of the German schools. Some of
the elected members [of the assembly] at that time were aware of the extremely poor quality of the
Russian language instruction in the German parochial schools and of the dissatisfaction of the local
population with the attitude of the officials inspecting their schools, who never take into account the
wishes and interests of the people in the appointment of teachers. [They knew also] that of the total
number of students [in these schools] an extremely low percentage has actually been graduating.

At the last regular meeting of the Kamyshin district assembly, a report from the inspector of public
schools was finally received, but this report was very brief and mainly descriptive in character, without
sufficient statistical data. In this article we shall attempt to give more complete information regarding
the condition of the German parochial schools, based on the statistics and data received by the
provincial administration directly from the teachers of these schools, who filled out a questionnaire sent
to all schools of the province last year. The following data, however, can not give the complete picture
of the situation in the German schools, because the questionnaire, through which the information was
collected, did not quite fit the particular structure of the German parochial schools.

Number of schools — their founding and development — school buildings and classrooms, and their
furnishings — textbooks — school libraries.

According to data gathered by the inspector of public schools, there were on January 1, 1899, some
55 German parochial schools in the Kamyshin district, 15 of which were Catholic, 38 were Lutheran,
and 2 were private community schools. Available to us are the more or less detailed data of 49 schools
(1 of which is a private community school), which represent a considerable majority. The data given
below are therefore sufficient to characterize adequately the German parochial schools.

The majority of the German parochial schools had their beginnings in the last century. The founding
dates of the 49 schools were given as follows: in the last century [before 1800], 22 schools; 1800-1825,
1 school; 1825-1860, 9 schools; 1896, 8 schools; 1897, 1 school; date unknown, 8 schools.*

During the long period of their existence, the German parochial schools went through several phases
in their development. Until the beginning of the 1870's, these schools had a primarily religious-national
character. The immediate and chief supervisor of the school was the pastor; instruction therefore
consisted mainly of teaching the catechism, reading the bible and the gospels, church hymns, etc. At
the beginning of the 1870's, partly because of the development of closer relations between the colonists
and the Russian population, partly as a result of the colonists becoming subject to the general laws
governing agricultural institutions and a unified court and law enforcement system,3 and especially
when general military conscription was extended to them,4 the need for secular education and a
knowledge of the Russian language became more and more necessary.* A result of that necessity was
the appearance of a type of special school, the so-called private community school, created by some
groups of families and funded by them. These schools co-existed with the parochial schools until 1897,
when their status as separate, independent schools was abolished, and they were merged with the
parochial schools. Since that time all German parochial schools have been put under the jurisdiction of
the Ministry of Public Education and the supervision of the Director of Public Schools, with compulsory
teaching of the Russian language.

After these brief notes on the history of the German parochial schools, we shall turn to a description
of the present situation, and in particular to describe the school buildings and classrooms.

Out of the 49 schools on which we have information, 48 have their own buildings (the Lutheran ones
are often in the prayer houses), and 1 occupies a rented house, the 10-ruble rent being paid from church
funds (in the village of Splavnukha — Huck ~ in Norka county). Of the school buildings, 47 were
constructed and are maintained by the village communities, but 1 by a private association. A very
important question concerning schools in general, and the German schools in particular, is the
classroom accommodation. It turns out that out of the 49 German parochial schools, 43 have one
classroom only, 5 have two, and 1 has four. The fact that the buildings of most of these schools are not
divided into several classrooms, is, as we shall see below, an extremely important shortcoming, which is
pointed out everywhere by the educators and the inspectors. According to their measurements, the
school buildings are quite spacious, in fact, the average floor space inside all the buildings comes to 44
square sazhens [2156 sq. feet]; in some cases twice as much. But these rather large rooms are terribly
overcrowded with students. When we calculate a floor space of one square arshin [0.6 sq. yard] and one
cubic arshin [0.6 cubic yard] of air for each student, the picture becomes very unattractive, showing a
shocking lack of space and overcrowding of the students. The average of all schools comes to 1.9 sq.
arshin [1.14 sq. yard], of floor space for each student, which is less

*Sbornik statist, sved, Kamysh. uezd, 1891, p. 89.
than 2 sq. arshin; in 7 schools, however, there is less than 1 sq. arshin of floor space per student. The volume of air per student is 8.5 cub. arshin [4 cub. yard] on the average, but in 9 classrooms there is less than 5 cub. arshin per student. It is necessary to add here that in the quoted calculations the space occupied by the classroom furniture was not deducted. It goes without saying that all the quoted figures are obviously far below the norms prescribed by good school hygiene. Naturally in such a crowded situation the classrooms will be very stuffy and the air quite foul. Other problems of concern in classrooms are low temperature, dampness and smoking heaters. In this matter, out of 49 schools 26 teachers gave more or less positive answers, but 23 were dissatisfied, calling particular attention, in 17 schools, to smoking heaters. The classroom furniture also leaves much to be desired. In 11 of the 49 schools there is very little classroom furniture, and in 34 schools it is extremely uncomfortable. In the majority of cases the classroom furniture is totally unsuitable for the students; instead of proper desks, we find long, high tables with narrow, steeply pitched tops, where both sitting and writing are very uncomfortable.

Although there are teachers’ lodgings available at the schools, they are intended mainly for the teachers of religion and the [German] schoolmasters. Teachers of the Russian language are either assigned lodgings which are rented and paid for by the community or they receive rent money. The rent for a teacher's apartment varies from 30 to 70 rubles [per year].

Teacher-training in the Province of Saratov — the Vol'sk Teachers' College and its Relationship with the Saratov Provincial Assembly.

Until 1881 the Provincial Assembly was not at all concerned with the activities of the teachers' college and the problems of training public school teachers. Only in that year was it realized that the schools do not have good teachers, and only then was it discovered that the Provincial Assembly "knows absolutely nothing about the function of the teachers' college," and does not know "how many and what sort of teachers it prepares, and whether that is of importance to the whole province."* The Provincial Assembly found itself in that strange situation thanks to the fact that in 1877 it had renounced its right of electing the trustee [curator] of the teachers* college in favor of the Vol'sk Assembly. The information collected by the Provincial Government, according to a resolution adopted in 1881, led the Assembly in 1882 to a generally more favorable conclusion. "In spite of its comparatively short existence and meagre material means, the teachers' college has made its presence known," reported the Provincial Government, "as an institution preparing the best and, in general, the most satisfying contingent of teachers for our elementary schools." Until 1885 the relationship between the provincial assembly and the teachers' college was, on the whole, quite good, and among the elected members no voice was raised against subsidizing it. But in that year this relationship suddenly changed. The mid-1880's, as is well known, constitute a dark page in the history of public education not only in the province of Saratov, but all over Russia. Those years are notorious for the rise of a strong trend against the assembly school; and some assemblies destroyed their creation with a stroke of the pen. . . . This retrogressive trend in public education also explains the negative attitude toward the only teachers' college in our province, the nursery of teachers for the assembly schools. From that time on it was declared "useless", "insufficient for the needs of the assembly", and the subsidy for it not only unnecessary, but even counterproductive. Questions about "who is studying there and what is going on there" were considered "pointless". . . . The strongest argument voiced by the opponents of the college — and we hear it year after year — is found in the speeches about the famous cowsheds built near the teachers' lodgings in 1884(!). Only the elected member Stolypin came up with a more serious reason against subsidizing the college. He proposed to free the assembly from the yearly contribution of 3000 rubles, as long as that educational institution was not reformed. . . . The assembly readily agreed with that suggestion, and resolved to collect data supporting the reasons for reorganizing the college, so that "it could satisfy the purposes for which it was founded", to be included in a petition to the government. That, however, was the end of the matter.

The speeches in the assembly in 1898, as before, mentioned only the famous cowsheds, the "wealth" of the teachers' college, etc. Statements concerning its activities amounted to groundless allegations, charging that the college is "useless for the provincial assembly", the expenditures for it are "unproductive", etc. In its desire to free itself from the accumulated debt of 21,000 rubles and the obligation of further subsidizing the college, the assembly ignored the desperate need for trained teachers in the public schools of the province; as it had in 1894, it forgot to consider the problem of the college, that is "if it does not satisfy the requirements of the provincial assembly", then if should be reorganized. As a result of this, our provincial assembly has fallen into a state of contradiction. On the one hand, it has recognized the shortage

*Ibid.
of good teachers; on the other hand, it has taken no constructive action to train them! This contradiction became
still more apparent, when, two days later, after it had stated that the Vol'sk Teachers' College was "useless", the
assembly, acting on the initiative of the Balashov district assembly, decided to petition "about establishing, at the
Crown's expense, men's and women's teachers' colleges in Saratov or Balashov." It turns out that all district
assemblies recognize the great need of teachers with good special training. * What does the provincial assembly
hope to achieve with its decision? 1) We doubt that this petition will be granted without any expense to the
assembly itself, because, in general, the government gives its consent to such requests only when the assembly
itself provides money. 2) If, contrary to expectations, the assembly should receive two teachers' colleges gratis,
then where is the guarantee that the teachers graduating from them will be more able to "satisfy the assemblies' 
needs," than those coming from the present one? Educational institutions, placed into the same circumstances
and conditions, will produce, of course, the same results. Would it not be better, instead, that the assembly
concern itself-with bringing about a better and broader foundation in the matter of training of public school
teachers? Would it not be better, if on its own it were to take an active role in satisfying the need of "all district
assemblies of the province for teaching personnel with good special training?" As long as the provincial
assembly stands aside from this matter, we can not expect any success in public education. It is time that our
(provincial) assembly, in its educational function, stops playing an inactive role in the training of teachers for the
people. This is, after all, the basic question in public education. In comparison with it all other questions
concerning classrooms, educational supplies, and even libraries are secondary. The main driving power in the
education of the masses is found in well-educated and dedicated public school teachers. "A poorly educated
teacher will ruin a school even under good conditions." ** "Only a well-trained and educated man," says
Disterweg, "can train and educate others." "The greatest challenge in elementary public education," says the
former inspector of public schools of the Petrovsk district, Mr. Felixov, "consists in attracting to the field of
teaching persons who are worthy of this great and sacred calling." ****

The question of the importance of the teacher's personality in the matter of public education is so clear, that
there is no need to dwell on it any more. At the present time we have the following information on the teaching
staffs in the province of Saratov:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>with secondary education</td>
<td>66.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with special education</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with primary education</td>
<td>06.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>privately educated</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These sketchy data can give only an approximate idea of the quality of the teaching personnel. Clearly, we
can hardly flatter ourselves with this record. Regarding the teachers coming from the girls' high schools
and convent schools, we rely on the findings of Mr. Felixov, who, as inspector of public schools, closely observed the
teaching world. According to him, these educational institutions "inadequately prepare their pupils for the
difficult and challenging role of public school teachers." And in general, he goes on to say, "the entire province
of Saratov produces an extremely insignificant percentage of satisfactory candidates for teaching posts.
Therefore, in the search for well-trained teachers it is necessary to turn to Moscow, Petersburg, Tver, Kazan,
Kostroma, and Simbirsk." Based on his official experience, the quoted author came to the conclusion, that "in
administering public schools, the most difficult task is the selection of candidates worthy of the difficult and
challenging vocation of teaching."***** We can better understand this difficulty, if we recall the small number of
graduates from the teachers' colleges throughout the whole of Russia (up to 1000 persons yearly), and the
resulting insignificant minority of teachers with pedagogical education (10 to 15%). Moreover, completion of
the course offered by the teachers' college, due to its limitations, can not serve as a criterion of preparedness for
today's public school teacher. But this matter requires a special discussion, which we will postpone to another
time.

All that has been revealed thus far should be enough for us to come to the conclusion, that if our provincial
assembly is really serious about wanting to improve public education, then it must take the training into its own
hands. It is necessary to abandon sporadic and temporary measures, such as the pedagogical courses now
offered, and start organizing a permanent teacher-training institution, that is, to establish an assembly-controlled
teachers' college with an extended course of study. In this connection one should recall the resolution adopted by
the provincial assembly in 1894, concerning the reorganization of the Vol'sk

****Ibid.
Teachers' College. There is no need to open a new teachers' college. The most reasonable course of action would be to request that the existing college be put under the jurisdiction of the provincial assembly, that it be moved from Vol'sk to Saratov, and the course of study be expanded up to 5 to 6 years. At the present time, such an approach to the problem seems, in our opinion, to be the only sensible and consistent course in the endeavor of the assembly to further the enlightenment of the masses. The 21,000 rubles' debt incurred by the Vol'sk college should be used for its reorganization (the assembly will never receive it anyway), in accordance with a provisional plan adapted to the present needs of the assembly. The advantages and the wisdom of establishing one co-educational teachers' college in Saratov are so obvious that they require no further explanation. This would make it possible to achieve much better results with the same expenditures. One institution, even if its dimensions equalled those of three, can always be furnished far more easily than three separate ones. Establishing it in Saratov will considerably simplify this task. Only in a metropolis can the education of our youth be raised to the proper level. Large population centers attract the most intelligent pedagogical body as teachers. Assisting this educational institution in its task of teaching and training would be the surrounding city life, including such establishments as theatres, museums, music and art schools, public lectures, etc. The public school teacher, more than anyone else, needs a broad and thorough education. After all, he in turn will have to develop in his pupils their best spiritual and intellectual qualities. What sort of esthetic values can a teacher instil, if he himself lacks any? How can he develop in children the love of music, if he himself was deprived of a musical education? Etc. The development of appreciation for these things is a powerful tool for ennobling the human soul. By depriving the public school teacher of such an education, we condemn the masses to the barbarism which now prevails. Furthermore, being educated in Saratov, the future teachers will also receive training in the various ways of educating people outside of school. Participating in the activities of the local educated populace will give them the necessary experience in organizing public readings, Sunday schools, remedial classes, public libraries, plays, etc. All the aspects of popular education taking place outside the school are now recognized as a necessity, and even the provincial assembly talks of "broad development" and "our main task", second only to the problems of universal education. Thanks to that, our former school teacher is now becoming a true people's teacher. He is now invited out of his secluded school to join in social intercourse with the masses of the population. His educational duties are becoming broader and more diversified. . . And even the public now makes more complicated demands on him. All this requires of the modern public school teacher a comprehensive education, considerable intelligence, and dedication to the cause of learning. The curriculum of our teachers' colleges, however, was developed back in the 1860's and the early 1870's, when the activities of the teacher were confined only to the teaching of reading and writing in the school in a three-year course. Furthermore, by raising the educational standard of the assembly school teachers, the provincial assembly will also considerably accelerate the practical solution to the problem of universal education. Well-prepared workers in the cause of enlightenment, who love their vocation, could become indispensable advisors to the grammar schools in neighboring villages.*

The limited size of this article does not permit us to examine in greater detail these questions, which deserve the full attention of the assembly. Regrettably, the provincial government in its report at the last meeting of the assembly failed almost totally to touch on them. Judging by its record of the past year, it still sees the chief means of raising the educational level of public school teachers only in the pedagogical courses. We will not, of course, deny the importance of these courses at the present time; but it is time to take the task of training teachers more seriously; it is time to replace the temporary courses v^\cap /h permanent educational institutions, planned according to the changing needs of life. Pedagogical courses can not be of great educational significance because of their structure and brevity, not to mention the low number of students attending (compared with the total number of teachers in the province).

Students attending: in 1875, 128; in 1897, 150; in 1898, 230; in 1899, 302 (out of 640 teachers in the province).

The percentage of teachers who have not attended provincial or district pedagogical courses is extremely high and it is distributed very unevenly among the districts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Atkarsk</td>
<td>47.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balashov</td>
<td>36.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vol'sk</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamyshin</td>
<td>50.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuznetsk</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petrovsk</td>
<td>54.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saratov</td>
<td>43.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serdobsk</td>
<td>35.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khvalynsk</td>
<td>44.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsaritsyn</td>
<td>89.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*There were 617 grammar schools in the province of Saratov in 1899, according to a report of the provincial assembly.
The average for the province of those not attending the courses is 47.6%.* Thus, almost half of the teachers have not attended any [pedagogical] courses.

In conclusion we bring data concerning the expenditures of the Saratov Provincial Assembly for the education of public school teachers:

Spent on pedagogical courses:
- in 1875 — 1242 rub. 12 kop.
- in 1897 — 1500 rub. 0 kop.
- in 1898 — 1997 rub. 79 kop.
- in 1899 — 2762 rub. 98 kop.

Total — 7462 rub. 89 kop.

In addition to this, 48,000 rubles were allotted from 1875 to 1899 to the Vol'sk Teachers' College (we do not count the 21,000 rubles debt, because the provincial assembly is requesting permission to write it off). Thus the total expenditures of the Saratov Provincial Assembly for teacher training during the entire period of its existence amount to 55,462 rubles, 89 kopeks, which is 1680 rubles, 66 kopeks annually (from 1866 to 1899).

Translator's Postscript

The complaints and petitions from the province of Saratov to the imperial government in St. Petersburg, regarding education, eventually had some success. In 1909 the government established the University of Saratov, which played a major role in improving educational facilities in the province. Some Volga Germans became students at this university; for the first time they had such an opportunity close to home. Although we have no definite information about it, the chances are that Peter Stolypin, the prime minister of Russia from 1906 to 1911, who had been governor of the province of Saratov from 1904 to 1906, was involved in the decision to establish this university.

One name associated with the early years of the University of Saratov is of particular interest to the Germans from Russia: Viktor M. Zhirmunskii (1891-1971). He spent some of his early academic life at Saratov and in 1919 became professor of the German language at the University of Leningrad, where he remained active for the rest of his life. He was the pioneer researcher in the dialectology of the Germans in Russia and became the leading authority in this field. His early articles on his dialect studies, in the 1920's and 1930's, were in the German language, most of them published in Germany, but some also in the Soviet Union. More than twenty of them are listed in Stumpp's *Schrifttum ueber das Deutschland in Russland, 1980* edition. He spent the summers of 1926 and 1927 touring the German colonies in the Ukraine to study their dialects. A book resulting from these studies appeared in 1928 in the Soviet Union under the title: *Die deutschen Kolonien in der Ukraine: Geschichte, Mundarten, Volkslied, Volkskunde.* (There is a copy of this in the AHSGR Archives). In his German language writings he spelled his name Schirrmunski.

The *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* (New York: Macmillan, Inc., 1975-1979), vol. 9, p. 640, gives a list of Zhirmunskii works on other subjects, presumably in the Russian language, dating from 1914 to 1937 and again from 1956 to 1971. The gap in his academic activity is not explained, but the dates suggest that he was in disgrace during the period when Germans were treated harshly in the Soviet Union. We don't know whether he was of German origin, but his silence from 1937 to 1956 suggests that he might have been.

*Doklad Saratovskoi Zemskoi Upravy, 1899, str. 68.

Notes

1. German Colonies in the Kamyshin District, Province of Saratov, as in 1900:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lutheran (and Reformed)</th>
<th>Roman Catholic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schilling</td>
<td>Seewald</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anton</td>
<td>Rothammel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beideck</td>
<td>Degott</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norka</td>
<td>Schuck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*30*
2. The founding dates given here are not accurate. It is known that nearly all the mother colonies, and there are 43 of them in the list given above, had schools, at least of a primitive kind, before 1800.

3. This new status of the colonists was the result of the law of 4 June 1871, which abrogated their earlier local government privileges.

4. The military service exemption was abolished in January 1874.

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**A DISCOVERY OF RELATIVES IN ARGENTINA**

Victor Sokolowsky

*Extracts from a letter of November 1, 1982.*

I have a genealogy history on my mother's side. Her maiden name was Mueller. A clerk from our church had written to the school teacher (in Dreispitz, Volga) in 1927 for information about her ancestors. This teacher copied the parish records of Dreispitz going back to 1796 pertaining to the families Mueller, Schuiz, Klein and Rupp. A copy of these records is now available in a book which is in a library of the Genealogical Society in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Sad to say, I had no records on the Sokolowsky family. My father had told me that he had some brothers who had gone to Argentina, South America, but I never learned their names or where in Argentina they had settled. My father died in 1942 and at that time I had no interest in genealogy.

In 1979 my son Ralph wrote to me and asked me whether I had seen (in *Clues*) the name of Arturo Mueller, a business man in Argentina, who wanted to contact people in the United States from Dreispitz. (This man's name and address were given in an article by Gerda S. Walker in *Clues*, 1979, Part 1, p. 57).

My son wrote to Arturo Mueller thinking that he might be related to us on my mother's side. Instead, he wrote back that he had an uncle who was married to Luisa Sokolowsky, whose father was Reinhold Sokolowsky, whose father was Jacob married to Katharina Bertram. What great news! At last I had found out something about one of my father's brothers.

We then wrote to Luisa Sokolowsky, who is married to David Gross. She gave me all the information I wanted. I found out that my father had three brothers who settled in Argentina and also that he had two sisters who died in Russia.

In October 1981 we visited my cousin Luisa and David Gross and my four other cousins, all children of Reinhold Sokolowsky in Argentina. As we got off the bus in Ramirez, we were met by Luisa and her husband David. They recognized me immediately, as I looked just like her father, Reinhold. I was also able to meet the rest of the children of Reinhold Sokolowsky. He had five daughters and one son. Reinhold himself died in 1948 and one daughter passed away about three years ago.
Heinrich Friedrich von Storch was an economist of importance in his day, even though he is virtually unknown to most North American economists.

Storch was born in Riga on 15 February 1766. As was the case with many Russian-born individuals of Germanic background, he went to Germany to attend university and studied at Heidelberg and Jena. In 1788, when he had completed his studies at Jena, he became an instructor at the Military Academy (Kadet-tenhaus) in St. Petersburg. In 1790 he was appointed as an attache at the Foreign Ministry and in 1796 was made an associate member of the Russian Academy of Sciences. In 1803 he became a full member of the Academy and when he died on 1 November 1835 in St. Petersburg he had been vice-president of the Academy for five years.

Compared with many persons of aristocratic background, where birth rather than ability is all-important, Storch showed considerable ability. This is apparent from his writings. He was a fairly prolific writer. He wrote mainly in German, sometimes in French, but never in Russian, although he knew the language. Up to now only two of his works have been translated into English and these early in the nineteenth century.

His earliest work was: *Skizzen, Szenen und Bemerkungen auf einer Reise durch Frankreich, 1787*, which is an impressive, well written description of France in 1786, just prior to the French Revolution.

In 1793 he wrote *Gemaelde von St. Petersburg*, a historical, sociological and economic survey of the Russian capital. This book was translated into English by Reverend William Tooke in 1801 as *The Picture of St. Petersburg*. It contains much useful background information about eighteenth century St. Petersburg.

In the years 1797-1803 he wrote the eight-volume work, *Historisch-statistisches Gemalde des russischen Retches*, which was translated into English at the time and published under the title, *Historical-Statistical Depiction of the Russian Empire*. This series earned him full membership in the Russian Academy of Sciences. In this work he presented some of his main economic views.

He can be considered a disciple of Adam Smith, whose famous book, *The Wealth of Nations*, appeared in 1776. By 1778 the first German translation was available. It is highly probable that Storch became familiar with the book while he was studying at German universities. The first Russian translation did not become available till the early years of the new century.

Storch thought that the state ought to minimize its intervention in economic activity. Only when private initiative was lacking should the state intervene. This is essentially the *laissez faire* theory of Adam Smith. With one aspect of Smith's doctrines, however, that the service sector is not productive, Storch disagreed. His view on this matter is the one now generally accepted.

One of Storch's teachings that had considerable influence in Russia in his day and later was his stress on the importance of developing agriculture. He thought that Russian agriculture was singularly unproductive, partly because it was based on serf labor. He objected not only to serf labor but also to the *obrok* variation, in which the serfs could work independently by paying their master an annual sum of money. There is no doubt that Storch's views influenced the policies of both Alexander I (1801-1825) and Nicholas I (1825-1855).

During the years 1804-1808, Storch devoted his talents to editing a historical periodical, *Russland unter Alexander dem Ersten. Eine historische Zeitschrift*, of which nine volumes appeared over those years, in St. Petersburg and in Leipzig, Germany. Although there were other contributors, he himself wrote many of the articles, promoting his economic views. There is frequent mention of the progress of the new German settlements in Russia, in which he was very interested.

In 1809, Storch became one of the tutors of the future Czar Nicholas I, then 13 years old. His assignment was to teach the young man political economy (economics). The Czar himself tells us later that he found the instruction boring, which is not surprising, since economic theories are generally not entertaining and the student was not noted for high intellectual capacity. Some of Storch's ideas seem, however, to have influenced Nicholas later in his government of Russia.

In 1815 Storch completed his major work, *Cours d'economique politique: Ou exposition des principes qui determinent la prosperite des nations*, in six volumes. This was translated into German in 1819-1820 and published as *Handbuch der Nationalwirtschaftslehre* in three volumes. The translation of this work into Russian was prohibited by the censor. It was too liberal in tone!

Storch was prepared to accept that there are universal economic laws, but he thought that circumstances could modify them. Their application therefore could not be automatic.
He developed a three-stage *Wirtschaftsstufentheorie*:

1) The first phase of human development, when there were only *Hirtenvoelker* (shepherd people). Differences in the amount of property owned and the beginnings of trades and crafts develop.

2) The beginning and development of agriculture. With the differences in property owned, a class of landless workers arises and the division of labor advances. Also, a merchant class develops in towns.

3) A trading and industrial stage. The agricultural sector becomes stronger. The division of labor becomes more pronounced and the first large factories arise. Foreign trade occurs when there are no more profitable outlets for capital in the domestic market.

All societies will progress through all three stages. By implication, Storch considered Russia to be only at stage 2, while countries like England were at stage 3.

Russia, he thought, should concentrate its capital in the agricultural sector. Agricultural products could be sold to buy the required industrial goods. He was critical of serfdom, because he believed that free agricultural labor was more efficient. He was not opposed to all industrialization, but thought that at this point in time the emphasis should be on agriculture.

Storch's last significant work, published in 1827, was *Zur Kritik des Begriffes vom Nationalreichum* (A critical view of the concept of national wealth). He was opposed to Adam Smith's contention (also that of J. B. Say, a French economist of the period) that services were not productive. Storch had expressed his views on this earlier, but renewed criticism prompted this book. The physiocrats (French economists of the 18th century) believed that only the agricultural sector was productive. Smith extended the concept to include trade and industry. Storch maintained that the service sector also contributed to the national income. His view has become the conventional view.

Storch's emphasis on the importance of agricultural development and the benefits of free agricultural labor had implications for German agricultural settlement in Russia and probably affected government policy in this respect during the early years of Alexander I. New government interest in the German Volga settlements, which had languished since the founding in the 1760's, now rapidly raised their agricultural production; and the change in the immigration policy in favor of experienced agriculturists, announced in 1804, made the new German settlements in the south much more rapidly a profitable enterprise. Alexander's liberation of the serfs in the Baltic provinces in the years 1816-1819 was also in conformity with Storch's views. Unfortunately the opposition of the Russian aristocracy prevented general emancipation till 1861.

The economist Storch is relatively unknown in North America. Standard surveys of the history of economic theory generally do not mention him. The reason seems to be that most North American economists are unilingual and do not read the works of foreign economists except in translation. Only two of Storch's books have been translated into English and these are out of print. The one writer who does mention Storch is Joseph Schumpeter in *History of Economic Analysis* (1954). He is an Austrian, who reads both German and French, and was therefore able to evaluate Storch's writings.

Needless to say, there is no mention of Storch in the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, published in English by Macmillan. This is typical of the deliberate Soviet minimization of the German-Russian contribution to Russia. It will be interesting to see whether *The Modern Encyclopedia of Russian and Soviet History* will have an article on Storch. There are large omissions of material on the German-Russians in this series.

There is occasional mention of Storch in English-language history books. There is also a good but short description of Storch's views in *A History of Political Economy* by John Ingram.

This economist is one of a large group of people of German-Russian background whose contributions to Russia were significant and should receive more recognition.

**Notes**

1. There are a number of quotations from and comments on this translation in *St. Petersburg: Industrialization and Change* by James H. Bater, 1976.
3. One standard text is *From Adam Smith to Maynard Keynes* by Vincent Bladen, 1974.
4. 33 volumes have been published to date, up to the letter S.
5. One example is *Lord and Peasant in Russia* by Jerome Blum, 1968.
6. This is, however, a 1967 reprint of the 1915 edition.
BOOK REVIEW


Reviewed by Sophie A. Welisch.

The assessment of a man's "greatness," judged by his contributions to his fellow man, cannot fairly be gauged during his lifetime and by his own generation, since the seeds he plants need time for fruition. With the perspective of hindsight and the accumulation of data, historians are continually reevaluating the impact of outstanding individuals in an attempt to reinterpret their relevance for their own era. One such "great man" in the Carlylean sense of the term who has currently become the subject of intensive study, is the German physician Friedrich Joseph Haass. Materials bearing on his life and works are now under scrutiny by the Archdiocese of Cologne in anticipation of formal application to the Vatican for his canonization.

Born over 200 years ago in the town of Muenstereifel, Haass devoted his medical skills and humanitarian services to the poor, the condemned, the sick, the enserfed, and the homeless of Moscow. Although contemporary critics viewed him as an eccentric philanthropist, a meddling foreigner or a potential revolutionary, Haass persisted in fulfilling his concept of Christian duty: *beeilt euch, das Gute zu tun* (hasten to do the good). Influenced by the examples of Francis of Assisi and Francis de Sales, both of whom he often quoted, Haass' "weapon was simple love of fellow man and his program the Gospels" (p. 121).

Dr. Anton Hamm and Gerd Teschke have given us a monograph of Haass which, after the Russian Senator Anatoli F. Koni's 1896 work, stands to date as the best biography of the "saintly" doctor. Expanding on Hamm's 1979 book, *Dr. med. Friedrich Josef Haass aus Muenstereifel*, this study introduces significant new material. Extensive excerpts of Haass' writings from private collections and published works, letters from contemporaries, and literary references from the great Russian novelists Maxim Gorki, Alexander Turgenev, Fedor Dostoevski and Alexander Solzhenitsyn contribute to making *Ein deutscher Arzt als "Heiliger" in Moskau* a semi-documentary source in its field.

Through the experiences of Dr. Haass, the reader catches a glimpse of the Russian penal and health care delivery systems during the reign of Nicholas I, both of which the German physician labored tirelessly to modify. His main energies were directed to those condemned to Siberian exile -- *die Unglücklichen* (the unfortunates) as he called them -- for whom he rendered spiritual, medical and legal assistance. Of his many achievements he was instrumental in abolishing *the prut*, or iron bar, to which six to eight prisoners were chained by the arm as they began their *via dolorosa* along a route known as the *Vladimirka* to their Siberian exile. Through Haass' intervention ankle chains of the deportees were lightened in weight and encased in leather to protect the limbs from the freezing cold and from chafing during the six-month journey to Nerchinsk. The German doctor personally attended some 200,000 prisoners, bought the freedom of 74 serfs, and pleaded relentlessly for toleration of the *Raskolniki* (Old Believers) and liberation of the serfs.

Through Haass' efforts a hospital, the *Haassovka* (Alexander Hospital) was opened to serve the indigent where some 30,000 patients received medical care during his lifetime. As director of the Prison Committee and chief doctor of all prison hospitals, he withheld ill prisoners from the Siberian-bound transports until they had been restored to health — much to the annoyance of some of his colleagues. Wishing to give spiritual comfort to *die Unglücklichen*, he provided them with pamphlets, books, church services and personal solace. Elisabeth Drachousoff, writing to inform the German doctor's family in Muenstereifel of his demise in 1853 remarked, "he taught those to sing and pray who previously had known only how to grumble and swear" (p. 108).

Nor were Haass' efforts unappreciated or forgotten by the Russian people. News of his death reverberated throughout the length and breadth of the Empire, in particular among the poor and the exiled, and his funeral was attended by over 20,000 people. Even today flowers decorate his grave in the Vvedenski Cemetery in Moscow while on the gate encircling his tombstone hang chains recalling his work on behalf of prisoners. In 1909, amidst festive celebrations, a bust of the great doctor was unveiled in front of the *Haassovka*. A tribute the following year by S.V. Puckov, Haass' successor as chief physician of the *Haassovka*, is one of the more recent documents about Haass to come to light, portions of which are included in the Hamm-Teschke biography.

*Embellished by color plates, tables, maps, cartoons and bibliography, Ein deutscher Arzt als "Heiliger" in Moskau* is a scholarly work which should have broad general appeal. Through the life of a relatively obscure German physician the reader learns of nineteenth century Russian prison conditions, experiences
the application of Christian thought to social action, and witnesses the triumph of human dignity in the face of overwhelming odds. Time may prove that along with such selfless, dedicated individuals as Albert Schweitzer and Mohandas Gandhi, Friedrich Joseph Haass may yet emerge as one of the great humanitarians of all time.

A copy of this book is being presented to the AHSGR Archives by the reviewer. Dr. Sophie A. Welisch, Professor of History at Dominican College of Blauvelt, Orangeburg, N. Y. Her gift is gratefully acknowledged.

The book is obtainable at a price of 29.80 DM from the publisher:
Westkreuz Druckerei und Verlag Berlin/Bonn
5358 Bad Muenstereifel-Hummerzheim
Federal Republic of Germany

There is an article on "Augenarzt Dr. Friedrich Haas" in Heimatbuch der Deutschen aus Russland 1960, pp. 131-133. It is an excerpt from a book by Pastor Jakob Stach, Das Deutschtum in Sibirien, Mittelasien und dem Fernen Osten (Stuttgart: Verlag von W. Kohlhammer, 1938).

The picture above, a drawing by Hans Harder, is taken from page 132 of Heimatbuch 1960.
At the time of this story, the Russian revolution was in its third year, and getting more bloody daily. The Red and White armies fought desperately for supremacy.

I, having become stranded between nowhere and starvation, joined a regiment of Cossacks under the leadership of Ataman Orloff, a hardy warrior of the old school, who served in the White army under General Wrangel. Soon I was given command of a scouting patrol of fifty men to be used for outposting and patrolling the lines.

One dark, foggy night, that caused us to be especially on the lookout, after placing half of my men at different posts, I took the remaining twenty-five to ride the extreme boundary or dead line, which was about two miles out in the field of battle. While patrolling we came upon the remains of a village, and decided to give it the once-over. Due to its situation this village had been the scene of many a bloody clash between the patrols of the two fighting factions. Cautiously we entered the street, looking warily about and leaning low upon the necks of our horses, ready to stifle any neighing by placing hands over their nostrils.

Nothing stirred. Only utter destruction and desolation surrounded us. We rode slowly down this street about two blocks, then turned to the right and down the street which led to the depot, just at the outskirts of the village. Beyond the depot and the tracks lay the open country. Soon we entered a large court, opposite which the depot could be seen looming in the darkness. This court had served for loading purposes and taxi service. The buildings surrounding this court, which had been warehouses and were built mostly from solid brick, remained in fairly good condition.

We had arrived in about the middle of this court and I was just about to get off my horse, when suddenly a loud voice came through the night from the direction of the station.

"Put up your hands — and don't move, or you are dead men," the voice commanded.

"We'll see you in hell," I cried, and fired in the direction of the voice. The next instant panic broke loose, for we were receiving fire from all around us. My horse rose on his hind legs and, shaking convulsively, fell heavily to the ground. I released my feet from the stirrups just in time to prevent being caught under him. Then, dropping behind his body, I began to fire. My men were dashing around the court to find some avenue of escape, but everywhere they were met by the fire of our hidden enemy. I beheld one after the other fall from their horses. Realizing that we were completely trapped and there was no use to resist, I called to my men and bade them to surrender, which they did.

The firing ceased, and immediately we were seized by the Reds. There were about a hundred of them. They took from us everything of value, and after completely disarming us, they marched us to the other side of the depot, where the remains of a box-car stood upon the shell-battered tracks. Here they halted, and by the dim light of a lantern they lined us up by this box-car. There were only nine of us left, out of twenty-five. While they were placing us side by side, one of my men, seeing an opening among them, tried to break through. He was shot in his tracks. Then we were tied together wrist to wrist with telephone wire, such as we used for field service.

"Now, comrades," cried the leader, "let's have a little target-practice. Strip them and paint marks upon their foreheads and hearts, and let's see if we can hit them."

This plan was cheered by the Red brigands, and immediately we were stripped to the waist. Then, having no paint or other material to mark us with, they dragged our dead comrade into the middle of the crowd, and dipping their fingers into his blood, which spurted from several wounds, they painted marks on our foreheads and hearts. Having thus marked us, the leader picked two men, whom he stationed at a distance of ten feet directly in front of the man to be shot. The man to aim at the heart knelt down, while the other man, who was to shoot at the head, remained standing behind the first one. This being done, the leader told the man with the lantern to hold it close to the target.
"When I count three, fire," instructed the leader, and raising his hand, began to count. "One . . . ." Silence reigned, during which I could hear my heart beat. "Two . . . ."

"I'll see you in Hades, you dirty rats," said our friend calmly. "I am a Cossack, and not afraid to die. Shoot."

"Three . . . ."

Two shots echoed through the night, and man Number One sank to the ground without uttering a sound. Two other men took position — and the second man went down. I was the fourth from the end; soon I would be next. I resigned myself to my fate and all fear left me. Instead I felt an intense hatred for these butchers.

Again two men were lining up, and while the others were examining the body, I thought I heard the stifled neighing of a horse behind us in the darkness. One of the Reds must have heard it also, for he called to the others to be quiet. They were all quiet and listened, and we could hear very plainly the stamping of hoofs close behind us. Suddenly there came from the darkness the war-whoop of charging Cossacks, and the next instant they were upon us like a hurricane, chopping the fleeing Reds right and left as they ran for cover. Those of us still able to move, quickly dropped on the ground and crawled under the box-car to escape the danger of being mistaken for Reds by our rescuers, and killed also. Only to the perfect training of the Cossack horses, which were used to obstacle-riding in the dark, did we owe our safe escape from being trampled to death, and except for a few bruised ribs and minor scratches, we were uninjured.

Soon we were recognized by our men by calling the watchword, and were untied. The battle had almost quieted down, except for a few Reds, who had found shelter in the depot and were firing desperately from windows and doors. But they were soon finished by the hand grenades which our men hurled into the building, blowing the building and its occupants into atoms.

We sought the chief to thank him and his men, and found him on the other side of the burning building, where he was nursing his horse, which had lost half of its ear. We were a sorry-looking sight, the six of us. Naked to the waist, with the still moist blood marks on our bodies, we resembled a bunch of wild Indians on the warpath more than anything else.

"Don't thank me," said the chief, "thank one of your men, who came and called us. He had escaped somehow, and if it hadn't been for him, I would have been no good to you fellows."

"One of my men?" I asked in surprise. "What do you mean, Chief?" Then, looking around, I saw in the light, a man sitting on his horse and smiling. His face was smeared with blood from a wound which had nearly torn off half his broad chin.

"Granzow!" I cried, and almost pulling him off his horse, I embraced him as I would have a brother. "Tell us how you did it."

"Well," he growled embarrassedly, "there isn't much to tell. When we were attacked I got this scratch and it gave me an idea, I don't get very many bright ideas, as you know. I slumped upon the neck of my horse, which is the sign for him to lie down. Both of us lay there deader than the Reds in that fire, and didn't stir. After you were marched to the other side, my horse and I came to life again — mighty quick too — and here we are."

"The devils!" growled the chief. "But let us go back to camp. We have more business to attend to tomorrow."

We placed our dead and wounded upon enemy horses, which the men found tied to a fence just behind the buildings, and slowly returned to camp, where we waited for what the next day would bring.

Granzow and I remained close friends, till later, in Constantinople, he was stabbed by a Greek and died in my arms, smiling.
BOOKS AND ARTICLES RECENTLY ADDED TO THE AHSGR ARCHIVES

The first ten items in this list were donated by Emma Schwabenland Haynes, who also wrote the mini-reviews for them.

GR — 1485
Bongs, Rolf.

When Hitler and Stalin signed a non-aggression pact in August 1939, Stalin promised that the Bessarabian Germans would be allowed to re-settle in Germany rather than becoming subject to Russia. Rolf Bongs was one of the German officials who helped carry out this plan. He arrived in Borodino, Bessarabia, in September 1940 and kept a diary of what happened in this village. At first the names and addresses of the German residents, with the names of their parents, were registered. Then a week was spent in exchanging Russian and Rumanian money and in figuring out the value of the property which the Germans had to leave behind. The Russian government was allowed ten years to pay for this. Then on the morning of 8 October 1940 approximately 1200 women and children were taken in 400 wagons to the Beresina railroad station, where they left that night in a train for Reni, Rumania, on the Danube. As soon as the carts were unloaded, the men returned to Borodino to pack their wagons for the trek to the boat. Each man accompanied his wagon on foot, bringing a total of 860 horses from the town. Rolf Bongs returned to Borodino with a Russian official to finish the paperwork involved. He uses every opportunity to praise the Bessarabian Germans and to comment on their beautiful country. Since he was writing at the time of the Hitler-Stalin pact, he kept criticisms of Russian officials to a minimum.

GR — 1486
Braeutigam, Otto.
So hat es sich Zugetragen. (This is the Way it Happened). Wurzburg: Hoizner Verlag, 1968. 723 pp. Hard cover.

The author was a member of the German Foreign Office, who had been German consul in many different Russian cities before World War II. Because of his knowledge of the country, he was made a member of Alfred Rosenberg's staff for the government of the occupied territories in Russia, along with Dr. Georg Leibbrandt, who had been born in Hoffnungstal in the Ukraine. Both Leibbrandt and Braeutigam were shocked to discover in 1941 that Hitler planned to turn over to Rumania the Bug-Dniester region of the Ukraine. They protested this policy, but their protests had no effect. An even greater source of difficulty was the fact that Hitler had put the S.S., in charge of the occupied territories and these began shooting all Jews, Communist officials and, for a time, even all Asiatics. Braeutigam protested that the Asiatic peoples, who were Moslems, were anti-Communist and therefore potential allies, and succeeded in stopping their persecution. The Rosenberg ministry had wanted to issue a pamphlet saying that the German army had come as liberators, but instead an SS official named Koch was put in charge, who treated the Ukrainian people as subhuman. There were also differences of opinion over the abolition of collectives, the treatment of religion and other matters. Braeutigam concludes that Germany lost the war in Russia primarily because of the cruelty with which it treated the conquered people.

GR — 1487
Harder, Hans.

Hans Harder's father had not become a Russian citizen and consequently, when war broke out in 1914, he and 25,000 other German nationals were interned as enemy aliens. Harder tells his story in the form of a novel, but he is obviously talking about his own family's experiences.

Most of the Germans were interned in the Orenburg area. Many of them were quite helpless, no money and no jobs. They were helped throughout by Rev. Johannes Stenzel, the Lutheran minister in Orenburg. He gathered clothing and food for them from the wealthier members of his church and found jobs for them. Although many of them had never done physical work before, they now had to do farm labor and housework, cleaning and cooking. On 10 March 1917 the czar abdicated and early in 1918 the communists signed a peace treaty with Germany. They promised to release all prisoners of war, but before it was accomplished civil war broke out between the Reds and the Whites. After many troubles, the Harder family was finally permitted to leave for Moscow, where they got
on a train to Germany and reached Berlin without any trouble. The Rev. Stenzel also managed to get to Germany and had a joyful reunion with the Harders there. (For Pastor Stenzel's life see GR — 731 in the AHSGR Archives.)

GR — 1488
Harder Hans (Pseud. Alexander Schwarz).

We already have the English translation of this book by Al. Reimer, under the title No Strangers in Exile (GR — 964 in the Archives). This is a very moving story of the Mennonite kulaks who were deported to Vologda south of the Arctic Circle in the early 30's. There they were forced to chop trees for export.

GR — 1489

These three volumes were received from Dr. M. Buchweiler of Tel Aviv, Israel. They contain Soviet German poetry and prose and are to appear twice a year henceforth.

One of the above contains a novel by Wilhelm Brungardt, born in Herzog on the Volga, which deals with the coming of the Volga Germans to Russia in the 18th century. There is little that is objectionable in this story. In another story, however, by Johannes Kronewald, there is a blatant attempt to re-write history. He praises the attitude of Joseph Stalin toward the Germans and claims that the Germans went to Asiatic Russia voluntarily in 1941 to work for Soviet victory against the invaders. He describes forced labor camps as follows: "We had a kitchen, a club and even a control guard before the entrance of our houses".

It is always easier for the Soviet Germans to write about events before 1917. The civil war, the famines of 1921 and 1933, the deportations, etc. are hardly ever mentioned. But it is still interesting to read what the communists say about the history of the Soviet Germans.

GR — 1490
Juhnke, James C.

The two kingdoms to which the author refers are the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of the world. It was relatively easy to keep these two kingdoms separated when the Mennonites lived in Russia in closed settlements, but after they came to America the two kingdoms started to fuse. Counties and townships were already laid out when the Mennonites arrived. To acquire homesteads, it was necessary for people to take out their first papers for citizenship. By the end of 1906 about 2,500 Mennonites had overcome their reluctance and had affirmed their willingness to become citizens of the new country. They gradually adopted the practices of their American neighbors, sent their children to American schools and began to use the American language. During the first world war the Mennonites realized that they were unpopular because of their doctrine of non-resistance and because they used the German language in their homes and churches. Some Mennonites continued to support the German side, but others changed completely after the United States declared war on Germany. Most young Mennonites who were drafted were sent to Camp Funston, where their officers tried to persuade them to join the regular army. The majority agreed to serve in a non-combatant capacity, but some very conservative groups did not cooperate at all.

World War II was different from World War I in that practically no Mennonites agreed with Hitler's Nazi principles. They wanted just to be accepted as Americans. Alternative service of various types was permitted for those who had religious scruples about military service. The two kingdoms are thus more in harmony with each other today.

GR — 1491
Miller, Elmer.

To get the material for this thesis, the author used a questionnaire which he gave to 125 people of Volga German origin in Ritzville, Washington. He asked in what Volga village they were born, their date of arrival in the U.S. and their first place of settlement. The largest group came from Kolb. The earliest of them had first settled in Nebraska and later moved to Washington; the later ones came to Washington directly and usually received help to come from relatives already here. They had mostly been farmers in Russia and entered the same occupation here. The earlier arrivals had a better
naturalization record than the later ones, probably because one had to be naturalized to get a homestead; later there were no more homesteads available. Assimilation was slow at first because the people had their own German churches and they did not usually join clubs. Court records showed that the Russian Germans were generally law-abiding.

GR — 1492

Schlundt, Johannes.


Rev. Johannes Schlundt was born in 1900 in the German village of Bauer on the Bergseite of the Volga. He attended a Gymnasium in Saratov and later completed his studies in a theological school in Leningrad. After graduation he became pastor in the parish of Rosenberg-Kamyshin (Volga), which consisted of nine communities with a population of 10,000 to 11,000. When all the churches were closed around the year 1931, he fled to Siberia to avoid arrest, but he was seized in 1934 and sent to Vorkuta in the far north to a forced labor camp. Here he stayed until 1958, at first as a prisoner, then as a German deportee. In 1960's he resumed his ministerial duties in Kazakhstan and Kirghizia. In 1970 he moved to the Caucasus, where he served four churches. His wife was a Black Sea German, whose relatives sent a visum to the Schlundts, which enabled them to come to Germany in 1973. Here Rev. Schlundt has worked since that time with newly arrived refugees.

In his book the pastor describes the origin of the Brotherhood Movement in the Volga region around the year 1872, with special mention of the work of Pastor Starkel and Brother Ehlers. Some of those who grew up in that movement are very important in religious work in Russia today. There is now not a single seminary-trained German Lutheran pastor in the Soviet Union. There are only lay ministers, mostly men from the brotherhood, who remember how German church services were conducted in the old days. There are about twenty registered churches, but Schlundt believes that many non-registered churches exist under the leadership of lay brethren.

This book may be purchased by sending 5 DM to Pastor Johannes Schlundt, Postfach 183, 8772 Markheldenfeld (bei Wuerzburg), Federal Republic of Germany.

GR-1493

Vins, Georgi.


The first part of this book, called "Family Chronicle," tells about the three generations of the Vins family that have suffered for their faith. Georgi's father, Peter Vins was of German descent (name originally spelled Wiens). He joined the Russian Baptist church while he was still a young man, and went to the United States for his theological training. On his return to Russia he moved to Siberia as a missionary. He was arrested during the 1930's and his family had no news of him for many years but eventually learned that he had died in a labor camp in the Far East in 1943. Georgi Vins became a minister of the Reform Baptist Church, a non-registered group, which is at odds with the registered All Union Council of Evangelical Christian Baptists favored by the government. He was arrested in the 1960's and sent to prison for three years. After release he was soon in trouble again, and in 1974 was re-arrested. Around the same time, his daughter Natasha was dismissed from her job at a Kiev hospital, being told that religion and medicine were incompatible.

The second half of the book is called "Faithful Servants of God" and deals with outstanding members of the Reform Baptist church, many of whom died in prison. Vins included letters that they wrote to their wives and children and also letters from his own mother. Finally there is a letter addressed to the World Council of Churches and Amnesty International, signed by A. Sakharov and three members of the Russian Human Rights Committee, appealing for Georgi Vins. Many other people throughout the world also interceded for him and he was eventually released from prison and allowed to come to the United States.

GR — 1494

Williams, Hattie Plum


Mrs. Williams wrote her thesis in 1909 when not a single book had been written in the English language on the Volga Germans. It consists for the most part of background material on 17th and 18th century German migration to the U.S. and to Russia and the subsequent Volga German migration to the U.S. Her later doctoral thesis, A Social Study of the Russian German, deals more specifically with the Volga Germans in Lincoln.
The following twenty-nine items were photocopied from the Library of Reuben Goertz, Freeman, South Dakota. The descriptions of them were supplied by Reuben Goertz.

GR — 1495
Poems published as a gift to each of his 23 students at the close of the school year in May 1920. There are 46 poems on a total of 28 pages.

The poems deal with community events: Der Tod meines Bruders am 12 Januar 1888 (froze to death in a blizzard). Bin Waisen Kind, Winter in South Dakota, etc.

GR — 1496
Boese, J. A.

The book deals with many of the Low German Mennonites that settled in South Dakota, but not those that came from the Crimea nor those from the Molotschna area.

GR — 1497
Boese, J. A.
Loretta's Settlement, Tyndall, S.D. Published by the author, 1950. 149 pp.

The first half of the book tells about the people mentioned in the book listed above and what became of them. The last half tells of their customs, traditions, occupations, school and church.

GR — 1498
Twentieth Century Canada and Atlas of Western Canada 1906. For the Guidance of Intending Settlers — Its Resources and Development, with Maps. Issued by direction of Hon. Frank Oliver, Minister of the Interior, Ottawa, Canada. 16 maps and a total of 42 pages.

Extolls the virtues of agriculture in Canada. Some propaganda overt, some subtle.

GR — 1499
Christlicher Familienkalender fuer das Jahr 1902. Published by A. Kroeker, Spat, Crimea, printed by A. Schultze, Odessa, 1901. 176 pp.

The first issue of this publication appeared for the year 1897 and it continued to appear annually till 1915 and then again 1918-1920. It had a wide circulation among Mennonites and others. The publisher, Abr. Kroeker, fled from Russia in the early 1920’s and eventually came to the United States. He subsequently published a number of books about his experiences under the Communist regime.

GR — 1500 Ewart, Milton H., compiler.

GR — 1501
Fast, M. B.

GR — 1502 Goering, John J.

The introductory European history is sketchy, but the local history of the first fifty years is good. Much of the material was obtained from personal interviews with original settlers.

GR — 1503
Graber, Edwin P., editor.

Edwin P. Graber became editor when the original editor, Dr. Edward J. Kaufman, died. A committee of five assisted him, two others contributed most of the genealogical material.

Rev. John Schrag, born in 1813, was elected to the ministry at age 27 in Waldheim, Volhynia, and served his congregation in Volhynia and America for 34 years. He left Russia in July 1874 with 53 families, the third group of Volhynian Swiss to come to America. He died February 21, 1898.

GR — 1504 Hafner, Joan M., editor.

There are many Bessarabian Germans in this part of South Dakota, from Kulm, Posttal, Rosenfeld, Eigenfeld, Hoffnungstal, Friedenstal and Wittenberg.
GR — 1505  
The Jacob Schrag Family Record 1836-1974.  

GR — 1506  

GR — 1507  

On September 18, 1965, the Ukrainian Council of Ministers passed a resolution proclaiming the Island of Khortitsya a state historical-cultural reservation. This album acquaints the reader with the glorious pages of Cossack history, which is closely linked with the island. The story is told of the capture of this Cossack stronghold by an army of Catherine II and of her distribution of the Cossack lands among Ukrainian and Russian landowners. Then there is a one-sentence mention: "In 1789 Khortitsya was settled by German colonizers."

GR — 1508  

At least 11 of the pioneer families written about in this book were Germans from Russia.

GR — 1509  
Martens, C.  

A description, by an emigrant of the 1920's, of the vicious character of the Communist regime in Russia.

GR — 1510  
Martens, Frau M.  

Personal experiences during and after the Russian revolution.

GR — 1511  


A brief history of the Mennonite settlements in Russia, with special attention to the period 1914-1920. Congregations in the Crimea, the Caucasus, Ufa and Samara regions, and Siberia are described.

GR — 1512  

Includes a brief history of the Mennonites, European, Russian and American, histories of church organizations, ministers, etc. and many pictures.

GR — 1513  
Records of the First Hutterites who came to America and settled in Bon Homme Colony, Bon Homme County, South Dakota.

About 60 sheets of church records of the colony, dating back to the early 1800's: births, deaths, marriages, etc. The first page gives a roster of the 123 individuals that came to America and their occupations in the colony.

GR — 1514 Schrag, Ben E., compiler.  

The Johann Schrags are the maternal great-grandparents of Reuben Goertz.

GR — 1515  
Schartner Family Reunion Records, August 2-3, 1970. A 75-page booklet in which the remarks of all the speakers are published.

Description of life in Karlswalde, Volhynia, and biographical sketches of all the Schartners that came from Russia.

GR — 1516  
Tschetter, Martha.  

GR — 1517  
Tschetter, Mrs. Joseph W.  

Some material on pioneer life in South Dakota, but most of book deals with mission work in Chicago,
GR — 1518
Unruh, Abe J. and Verney

Tobias A. Unruh was one of the deputation of 12 Mennonites who visited America in 1873. His biography and his two diaries are the best part of this book. The diaries recorded his 1873 trip to America.

GR — 1519
Walter, Kenneth J., compiler.
The Mathias M. Hofer Family Record, Published by the compiler, 1971. 32 pp.

GR — 1520
Waltner, Gary, translator.
Andreas Schrag Diary. Unpublished manuscript.

Andreas Schrag was a member of the 1873 deputation to scout America. His diary got soaked in a bad storm at sea. He put his wet papers on the deck to dry and a sudden gust of wind blew some of them away. He later reconstructed much of the diary from memory when he got back to Volhynia. This makes his diary less reliable than the others written at that time.

The rest of this list was prepared by Adam Giesinger, with the assistance of AHSGR headquarters staff.

GR — 1521
Walz, Ferdinand, compiler.

When the Walz family arrived in Yankton, S.D., the whole town was decorated with flags. They assumed at first that it was to welcome them. It happened to be the 4th of July 1974.

GR — 1522
Wedel, Rev. P. P.
Kurze Geschichte der aus Wolhynien, Russia füd, nach Kansas ausgewanderten Schwelzer-Mennoniten. Published by the author, 1929. 131 pp.

Historic origins of his group of Mennonites in Switzerland and the Palatinate, their life in Russia, pioneer life in America, struggles, spiritual and social life.

GR — 1523
Zeeb, Martha Knodel, compiler.

This is the history of a church organized by a group of Volga Germans. Included are pictures of pastors who have served the church, as well as pictures of confirmation groups and current membership.

GR — 1524
Andersen, Alan B.

GR — 1525
Anderson, Alan B.

GR — 1526

This is the history of the community of Moessingen, from which a number of families migrated to Russia and their descendants later to America. Lists names of families. Contains many photographs.
GR — 1529
Hordern, Richard, editor.

Contains some notes on the early families of the district and lists the pastors 1891-1980. There is also a record of some early baptisms, confirmations, weddings and funerals.

GR — 1530
Klassen, Peter J. and Elsie Geringer Sturges
*Bibliographical Sources of Germans of Russia in Fresno, California,* Fresno: Central California Chapter of AHSGR, n.d., 62 pp.

GR — 1531
Kratin, Cornelius

This book "presents an area and a total view of Dutch Anabaptist origin and development not found elsewhere in one monograph."

GR — 1532
Krahn, Cornelius

The book has two sections: I. Menno's Life and Work; II. His Theology.

GR — 1533
The Mennonites: A Brief Guide to Information.

The first part consists of a brief account of the origin and spread of the Mennonites. The second part is a selected bibliography helpful in research dealing with the Mennonites.

GR — 1534

Informative regarding the world-wide work of the Mennonites. Biographies, Conference reports, historical articles, missionary work, etc. Generally religious.

GR — 1535
Miller, Max

This gives a list of the Württemberg families who migrated to Prussia's Polish provinces in the years 1776-1786. Some of these later migrated onward to Russia.

GR — 1536
Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, German Branch.

There are Germans from Russia among the members of this church, but there is no special information about them in this book.

GR — 1537
Plett, Delbert F., translator and editor.

GR — 1538
Preszler, Lenora and Lydia Zimmerman
*German Songs.* Compiled for the Golden Empire Chapter of AHSGR, Bakersfield, California, for use at their meetings. Typewritten, photocopy, paperback, 33 pp. Contains 18 songs. Donated by the Chapter.

GR — 1539

An article by Tracy Scharf, pp. 24-26, "A Warm and Loving People", deals with Fred and Lydia Propp, whose parents were Germans from Russia.

GR — 1540
Schach, Paul

GR — 1541
Schach, Paul, ed.
*Languages in Conflict: Linguistic Acculturation on the Great Plains.* Lincoln: University of

GR — 1542  
Schach, Paul  

GR — 1543  
Smith, C. Henry  

GR — 1544  
Unruh, John D. and Gary J. Waltner  

Family Histories

GR — 1546  
Bahls, Helene Martha.  

The Hoefts were born in Volhynia and were married in Manitoba, Canada, where they established their home and family.

GR — 1547  
Berry, Clara, compiler.  

The Widmers came from South Russia. The book has brief accounts of their descendants.

GR — 1548  
Bier, Philip N., compiler.  

The Bier family (Mennonites) made the trek from the Volga region to Asia Minor, then back to Russia. Eventually they came to the U.S. and settled in Jansen, Nebr.

GR — 1549  
Fast, Mrs. Abraham (Irma Ross), compiler.  

Contains many genealogical tables, photos and brief biographies,

GR — 1550  
Gottwals, Villete Finck, compiler.  

John and Amelia Fink and their seven sons came from the southern Crimea to the U.S. in 1908 and settled in California.

GR — 1551  
Kludt, August, compiler.  

Contains genealogical listings of the five families. No photos.

GR — 1552  
Koerner, Jacob A., compiler.  

Contains the records of the ten children of Andreas Koerner and their families. AHSGR has a later version of the genealogy of this family, GR — 1078, compiled by Herbert Koerner in 1980.
GR — 1553
Koerner, Herbert, compiler.

Contains records of each of the twelve children of Friedrich A. Mettler.

GR — 1554
Kruy, Mollie, compiler.
Genealogical Record of the Krug Family. Hard cover, not paged. No date.

The Krug family came from Dietel (Oleshna) in the Volga region. This book contains a brief family history, many family group sheets and a few photographs.

GR — 1555
Leno, Gottlieb, compiler.

The history and genealogy of the Leno family from the time they left Prussia for Russia, the experiences of four generations in Russia (1816-1902), and the migration of the last two generations to the United States.

GR — 1556
Stueckle, Mrs. Edwin, compiler.
History and Record of the Broeckel Family. Typewritten, 9 pp. and History and Record of the Vogler Family. Typewritten, 3 pp.

GR — 1557
Stueckle, J. A. and Mrs. G. R. (Rachel) Stueckle.

Tells the story of the emigration from Germany to South Russia and then from Russia to the U.S. and gives records of individual families.

GR — 1558
Thompson, Vel.

The life of Konstantin Schamber and Julianna Kloberdanz from the village of Schuck in the Volga region, who migrated to Canada in 1912.

GR — 1559
Voyce, Irene (Ehrman) and Harold Ehrman, compilers.

Family origin: Odessa region, South Russia, Brief history of the families who migrated from Germany to Russia and then to America. Contains family records and photographs.

GR — 1560
Wall, 0. J., compiler.

A history of a Mennonite family that migrated from South Russia to the United States: some members to Minnesota, some to Jansen, Nebraska, and possibly some to Kansas.

GR — 1561
Weber, Darrell J.
The Life and Experiences of Alexander Weber. Paperback, spiral binding, 78 pp. plus family group sheets. Two copies donated, one by the author, the other by Dorothy F. Mauter.

Alexander Weber, Darrell’s grandfather, was born in Balzer, Volga region. The book includes an interesting account of life in Balzer and the family’s eventual migration to the U.S. Included are genealogical records and some maps.