

## CHAPTER ONE

### BACKGROUND

Overtime I was able to acquire many real sources of information by way of background. Rather than having the reader go to an appendix I will mention these as I go along—making the details more understandable. My reading came at different times but all added to the total information. My mentioning them does not mean that is the order or chronology in which I acquired the knowledge source. Unfortunately I repeat some of the information throughout

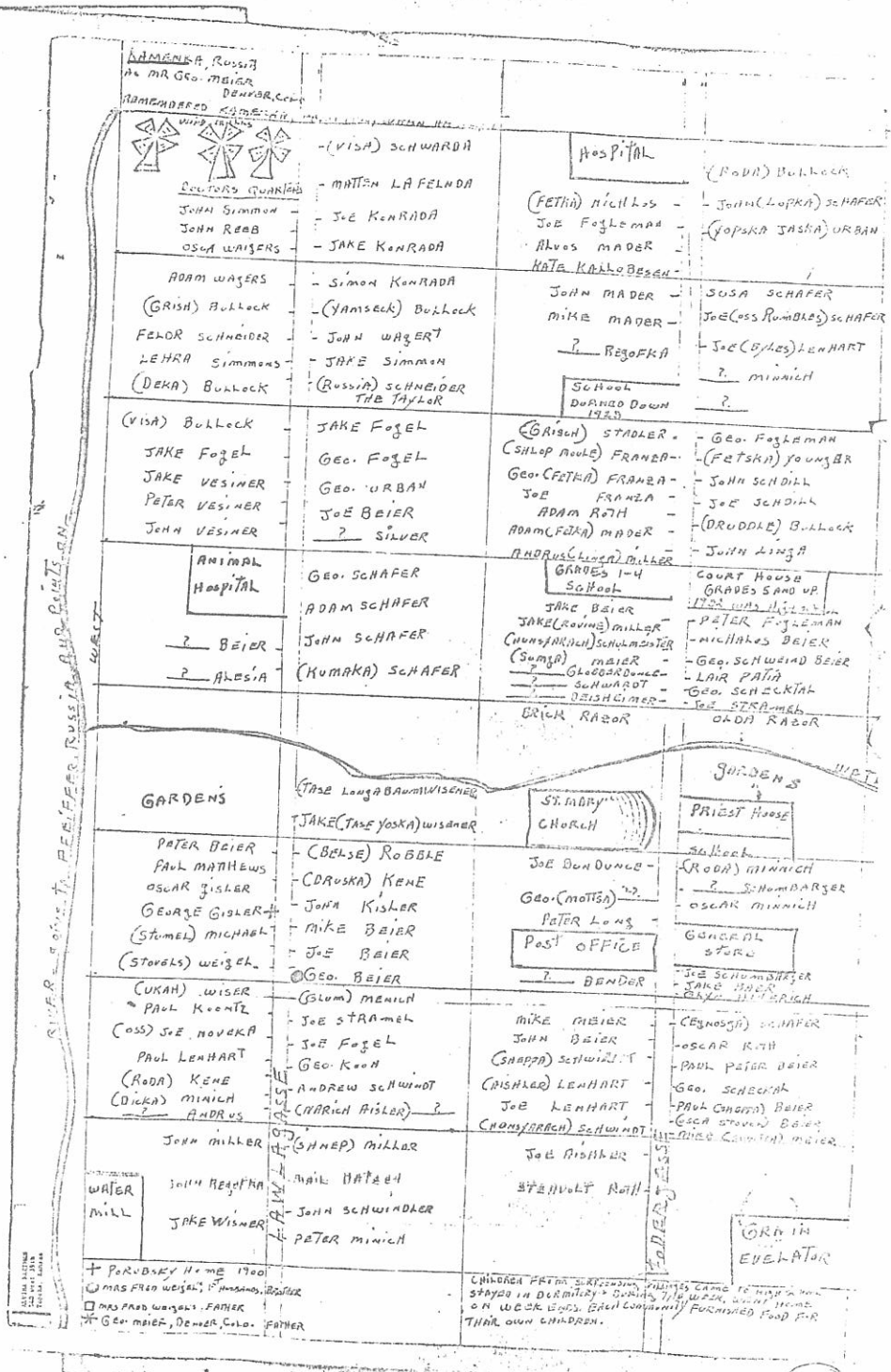
A lawyer in Marinette, Wisc Michael Anuta (50 mi north of Green Bay) wrote a book about the Ships of our Ancestors, showing pictures of the various ships and detailing information regarding the various ships. It included the S.S, Donau on which J.M. Schaefer and his mother and siblings sailed from Europe to the U.S. (Unfortunately I never met the author although I was in the city on business. A mistake as he died a number of years ago) Vic had the information about the ship and arrival information, showing arrival on June 8, 1878 having sailed from Bremen, Germany. I believe he acquired this from a Society source which listed ship arrivals and passenger lists in its publications.

The book entitled the “Golden Jubilee of the German-Russian Settlements of Ellis and Rush Counties, Kansas” published in 1926 provides a vast amount of information of the history of the movement of the Germans to Russia as well as details on the location of the people in the villages of western Kansas, including our J.M. Schaefer and his mother and siblings. As noted in the forgoing section the republished book is available thru the Ellis County Historical Society in Hays, Ks. Google the Society. .

At some other time I learned that there were sources available from the Fed Gov't for Maps and aerial photographs. I acquired an aerial of Kamernka, Russia taken by the German airforce during WWII . It verifies a drawing of the village made in 1930 by George Meier.(copy of as large map is on the CD) Using Google Earth on the internet also verifies the village layout. Of course no details are shown confirming a Schaefer having lived in that village. The Meiers map does show the location of lot(s) with the Schaefer name but that does not confirm they are our relatives. “The New International Atlas” by Rand McNally shows the location of Kamenka along the Volga river. (there are actually several Kamenka's in Russia)

Mentioning the Internet. I must say that in the beginning there was little information about genealogy. I recall entering the word "genealogy" in the early search engines (before Google) and only turned up about 35 hits as opposed to 35,000+ now!!! The Historical Society has a web page (look at Google). The Society has a variety of books and publications and other documents, maps and charts available. I have made our family charts available for which the Society charges (a disk is included with this book showing both Schaefer charts). There is also a map of the Volga region populated by the Germans in 104 villages. Some on the west side of the Volga and others on the east side. Kamenka is on the west side. There the land was not as fertile. Each village was either Catholic or Lutheran. Kamenka was Catholic. (there is a Schaefer village but it was not Catholic and is northeast of Kamenka on the east side of the Volga). The Catholic colonies are marked with a "k".

Listed in the bibliography are a list of books and background sources for information on the history of the Germans from Russia. Also a Google search for German-Russian sources will list a vast source of readings.



PART 1(A) OF TWO MEIERS MAP OF KAMENKA—1930  
#53 LARGE MAP AHSGR

Kamenka ca. 1930 by George Meier

B

NORTH			
FRIE BULLOCK JOE BIVEOR FRIE GULZA ADAM GULZA (SHEP) UNDRASS JOHN (UKAN) URBAN	OSCA BULLOCK SAYLASH ALVOIS SCHWENDBEIER PATER ROTH	JOHN HOFFMAN JACOB NOUB CSHEPPA KOKMAN	GEO. GOLGA JOHN KNOB JOE GALLING ? JOHN
PATER (HILLY) RAEH) SCHUMMELE JOE GREENVOLT (STUMMA) LEHART L. MISSHA JOHN BOTTLE (JOHAN) URBAN MIKE RAZOR	(RUSSIA) KEINER ADAM (KUTAN) KEINER ANDR. STADLER JOHN VOLDER Geo. Bullock PHILIP (CUPKA) URBAN NICHALAS URBAN JOHN SCHAFER (COCHNEP) HONAS MILLER MALDIBITZ (OSKA) SCHAFER FRANZ URBAN JOHN VOLDER JOE SCHNIEDER (STICKA) SCHUMMELE	JOE GALLING JACOB BALKIS GEO. KEINER JOHN (HEHNSA) MADER NICHALAS (KODA) ROTH DASTIAN URBAN (SCHON) ADAM ? (VISER) SCHLITZER SCHWIND) LEINHART MIKE FELD'S ADAM BALL	NICHALAS GALLING KONSTAIN GALLING JOHN REEB GEO. RAZER UNKNOWN JOE SOPPES ADAM KEINER ANDRUS KEINER BOBBLE YASKA ? JOHN DYLOF JOE DYLOF CONSALINE RAZOR PETER BEIER
(GRABE) FOGEL <b>FIRE HOUSE</b> FRANZ LEIBOLT NICHALAS LIEBOLT ? JACOBS FRANZ STRAMEL ADAM (FINN) SCHAFER	? (HARRIAR) HONAS ? (SHEP) JOSEPH JOHN ANDES ADAM ANDES JOHN SCHAFER GEO. FELDER (THE) HONZEL (GODA) SCHRIEBER	JOHN LEIBOLT JOE SCHWINDT FRANZ REBIN STANITZ) SCHMIDT ? JACOB AND'S MIKE (MISCHA) LINGUS GEO. PAUL MILLER JOE HOFELS GEO. FRANZ SCHNIEDER JOE SCHNIEDER	TTTTTTTTTT TTTTTTTTTT TTTETT TTTTTTTTTT TTTTTTTTTT TTTTTTTTTT TTTTTTTTTT
DITCH			
JOHN HANFEROCH FRANZ (SHEP) MEIER BRUSSA VIMAN MISCHA STRAMEL	OSKA BRASSA'S (KORAT) DRESER ADAM FOGEL JOE NOREVICK ANDRUS MIKE PELLE (GEOGHL) (MISKA)	DANA ROFRANZ MEIER	JOHN KEEN MIKE (BORNER) EGART SCHAFER (SCHOOL MASTER) JOHN SAVOLT PETER SAVOLT JOHN BALL ? (SPUSTER) YOSKA JOHN SCHUMMELE
JOHN ROTH JOHN SAVOLT FRANZ ROTH HANS PATER VIMAN JOHN LITZER JOHN KUSH PATER GREENVOLT	GEO. ROTH JAKE SAVOLT JOE ROTH PHILIP HARTMAN JOHN LITZER JAKE SPATZER JOE VUYER OTTO ANDUS ? GREENVOLT	(GRUSSEL) ADAM KUMME (BASCHE) MATEN) BAUER ANDREW GOKONDER GEO. ROCHER JOHN RICHBERG KRONA) NICHALAS JOE NIMMAN ADAM KEINER (SALDOE) MADER	ANDRUS VIMAN GEO. NICHALAS ? (SCHWARTZ) MIKE MEIER WIND MILLS
SOUTH			
CHURCH AND IS STEPS IN FRONT (ROUNDED STEPS) HIGH STEPLE 3 CHURCH BELLS INSIDE CHURCH STEPLE CHURCH MADE OF STONE		I KNOW MANY NAMES AND NOT RECALLED C. F. RICHARDS	

PART 2(B) OF 2- KAMENKA STREET MAP OF 1930 BY GEORGE MEIERS  
#53 FROM AHSGR





AERIAL OF KAMENKA, RUSSIA BY GERMAN AIRFORCE  
IN WW.II

## CHAPTER TWO

### WHY GERMANY TO RUSSIA

Our earliest known ancestor was **FRANZ XAVIER SCHAFFER** (an umlaut over the “a” making that an “ae”). He came to Kamenka, Russia on July 6, 1765 at the age of 25 meaning he was born in or about 1740. He was single and a Catholic. The original settlers record show he was given 30 rubles when passing through Saratov, Russia. He was a worker in the colony of Schuch (Schuck—north of Kamenka see Volga area map on CD). It is noted that he came from Nagelstadt, Germany. (later we will question this).

Why would these people leave Germany?? **WARS, FAMINE, SERFDOM, PEASANT LIVING, COMPULSARY MILITARY DUTY AND MISTREATMENT AND PROPERTY DAMAGE** are the best answers aside from the invite to Russia noted below. At that period in history Germany was divided into over 200 separate States. Fighting between these states and with neighboring countries had been going on for years and continued as each states leader “Prince” caused more wars. Many were religious based. The War of the Austrian Succession was from 1740 to 1748. The Seven year war was from 1756 to 1763—also known as the King of Prussia war. In that setting Franz was born and grew until he obviously left Germany.

In 1763 Catherine the Great of Russia repeated her second invite to Russia.(see attached and other articles.)The following article is repeated from Vol 9 on pages 2 & 3 of the Heritage of Kansas publication from Emporia Kansas State College. (this publication ended with Vol 12). I use it because it is one of the best and most succinct background article of **WHY TO RUSSIA**. I should also note that several of the Bibliography articles are also especially informative, especially the 128 page book entitled “Golden Jubilee of the German-Russian Settlement of Ellis and Rush Counties published by the Ellis county news of Hays, Ks. This book specifically refers to J.M. Schaefer and his mother and siblings.

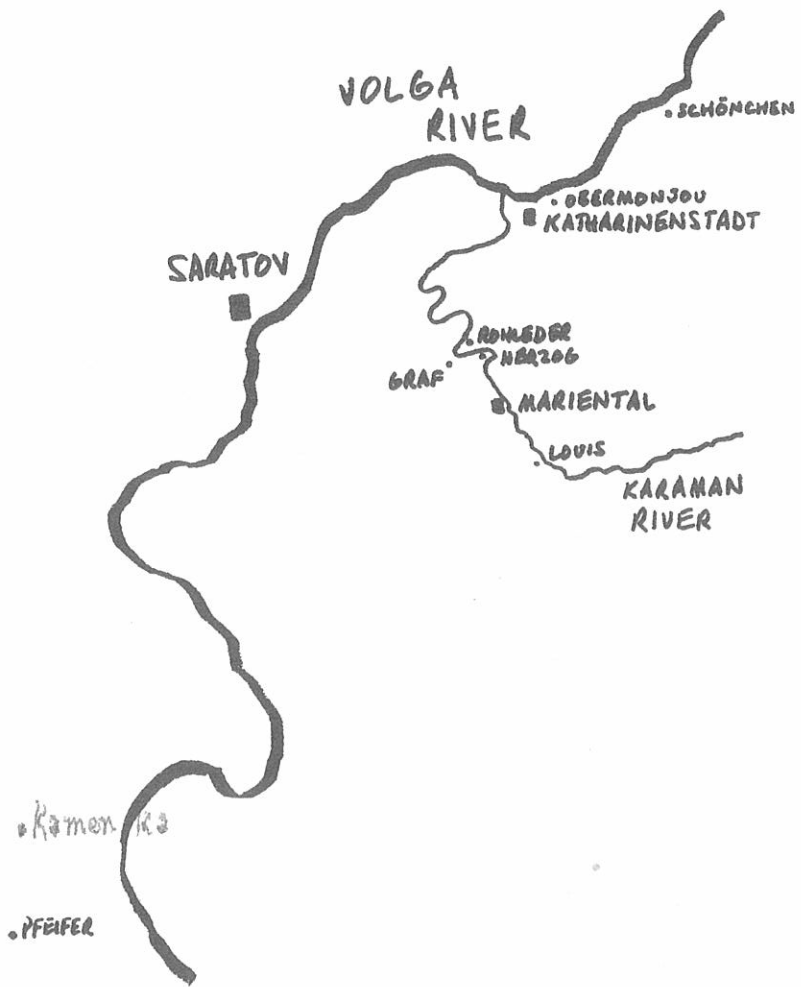
J.M., his mother and siblings originally settled in Pfeifer, farmed there for awhile and then moved to Hays. (see Heritage writing by Sister Rosaria attached-second half of article)

# The History of the Volga Germans in Ellis and Rush Counties, Kansas

by S.J. Sackett

In 1763 Catherine the Great of Russia issued the second of two manifestos designed to stimulate German colonization in the Volga region. Her purpose was to import industrious German farmers as models for her own people, whom she regarded as agriculturally inefficient and backward. The first manifesto, promulgated the previous year, had had no effect; to ensure the success of the second, the empress sent into Germany a team of agents under Captain J.G. von Kotzer to recruit colonists and also liberalized the conditions offered German immigrants. These conditions included freedom from taxes for thirty years, a loan to pay transportation to Russia, and freedom from military service. It was the third of these three stipulations that later caused trouble, for the amount of time was specified as *na vyak*, which is an ambiguous term meaning a long period of time—a hundred years, five hundred years, or forever. Captain von Kotzer and his staff were successful in inducing about eight thousand families, about twenty-five thousand Germans, to migrate to Russia under these terms between 1763 and 1767. By 1768 these people had founded 104 colonies along the banks of the Volga and Karaman rivers; they lived in Russia for over a century. At first they found the life very hard, especially as they were mostly artisans rather than farmers and had little experience with agriculture life, and they were also terrorized by the fierce, nomadic Kirghiz tribesmen; but during their second decade in Russia they became reconciled to their life. They had little contact with the native inhabitants, for whom they felt contempt, and retained their German culture and traditions—songs, recipes, proverbs, etc.—throughout their stay in Russia.

In 1871 Czar Alexander II issued an edict limiting the exemption from military service of the Germans in Russia to ten more years. This does not seem to have caused much stir among the people, and they apparently were not even aware of it until later. Then in 1874 the Russian government passed a military law, making all men between



the ages of sixteen and forty-five liable for six years of military service. Although the sources of Volga German history do not make this point, evidently what happened was that the people had considered themselves perpetually immune from military service, while the Czar's government felt that the original promise made by Catherine the Great had been fulfilled by a century of immunity. Be this as it may, the actual induction of some of their young men into the Russian army greatly alarmed the Germans in the Volga region. Their objection stemmed from several reasons; most important to those who were Catholics, which includes those who later emigrated to Ellis County, was that while serving in the Russian army, which was, of course, predominantly Orthodox, it would be impossible for them to attend Catholic religious services.

Representatives of the various communities met to discuss the problem, and it was felt that the only solution was for the Germans to leave Russia. According to the terms of the Czar's original edict of 1871, they could leave before 1881 without forfeiting their property. One of the Germans, Balthasar Brungardt, had attended a college or seminary in Saratov in 1860-64 and had, while there, heard lectures on geography by a Professor Stelling, who had been born in California. Brungardt urged the group to migrate to America. A group of delegates was sent to tour the United States; it reported that the climate and soil in Nebraska and Kansas were much like those in southern Russia. The first group of emigrants left in 1875 and went to Topeka, where they were met by an agent of the Kansas Pacific Railroad, Adam Roedelheimer, who persuaded them to settle on land belonging to the Kansas Pacific in Ellis and northern Rush counties. This first group, which numbered about 150 families, filed claims at Liebenthal, three miles south of the Ellis County border in Rush County.

Liebenthal, by the way, was the name of one of the villages in Russia from which the people had come; it was on the Karaman river and had been founded in 1859 by people from the other villages who felt the need for more land. The personnel of this first group was not wholly from Liebenthal, Russia, but included people from six other villages as well. The Volga Germans in Ellis County come from nineteen Russian villages and gave their new communities the names of the localities from which they came. Liebenthal was in the *Wiesenseite*, as it was known; that is, on the meadow side, or east bank, of the Volga. The second group of colonists was also from the *Wiesenseite*, in fact from a village on the banks of the Volga itself; they came predominantly from Katharinenstadt, Russia, which had been one of the first German villages in Russia, dating from 1765, and founded the town of Catherine in Ellis County in the month after the organization of Liebenthal. The third community, also in Ellis County, was founded

within a month after Catherine; this was Herzog, named for another community on the banks of the Karaman near its juncture with the Volga. The original Herzog antedated even Katharinenstadt, having been founded in 1764. Herzog was established half a mile north of the English settlement at Victoria. As time passed the English failed and left, while the German-Russians prospered and grew; finally the two towns grew together, and the name Victoria, established by the railroad, is given to the entire community, which is now wholly Volga German. Because it is the only one of these communities which is on the railroad, it is also the largest, with a population of about a thousand people.

These three communities were all begun in the spring on 1876. Later that summer Pfeifer was organized by immigrants who came chiefly from Pfeifer, Russia, but also from three other villages which, like Pfeifer, were in the *Bergseite*—that is, on the mountain side, or west bank, of the Volga. Pfeifer is the only community whose inhabitants came from the *Bergseite*. The largest group of Volga Germans to immigrate, consisting of 108 families, arrived in Ellis County in 1877. These settled in Munjor and Schoenchen. Munjor was named for Obermonjou, Russia, and Schoenchen for an identically named village. Both were in the *Wiesenseite* along the east bank of the Volga; Obermonjour had been founded in 1766 and Schoenchen in the following year. The immigration to the United States came to an end in 1878. Exactly ten years later a group of men, dissatisfied with life in Kansas, left to investigate conditions in Brazil, but decided to return after two years in that country.

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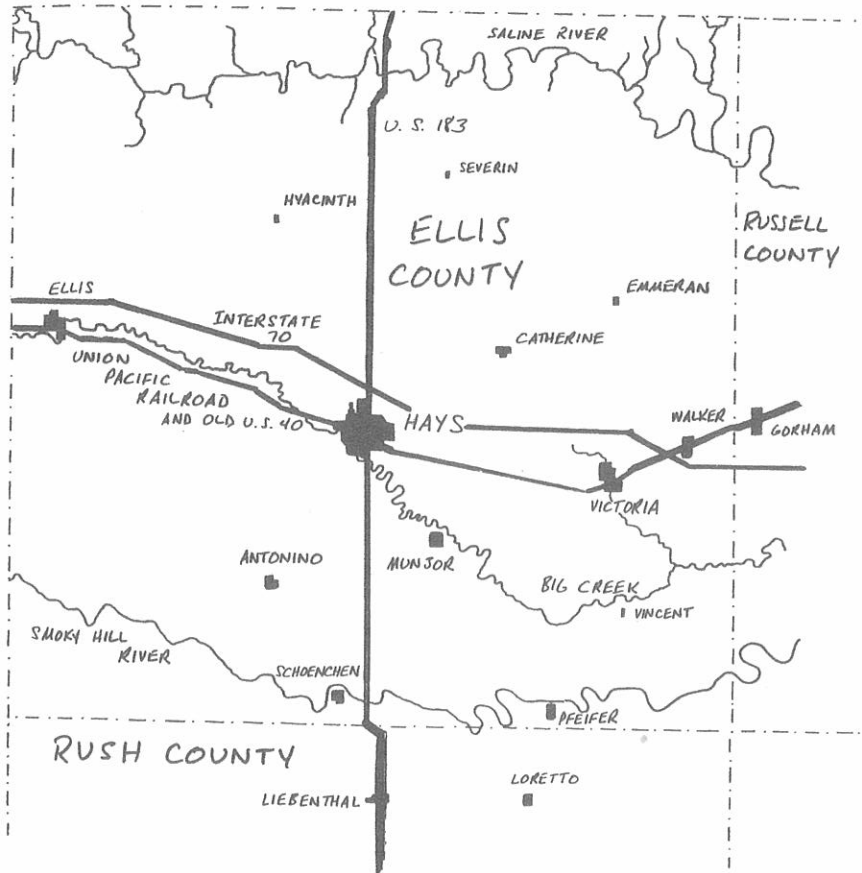
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# Manifesto of the Empress Catherine II

issued

July 22, 1763

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By the Grace of God!

We, Catherine the second, Empress and Autocrat of all the Russians at Moscow, Kiev, Vladimir, Novgorod, Czarina of Kasan, Czarina of Astrachan, Czarina of Siberia, Lady of Pleskow and Grand Duchess of Smolensko, Duchess of Esthonia and Livland, Carelian, Twer, Yugoria, Permia, Viatka and Bulgaria and others; Lady and Grand Duchess of Novgorod in the Netherland of Chernigov, Resan, Rostov, Yaroslav, Beloosrial, Udoria, Obdoria, Condinia, and Ruler of the entire North region and Lady of the Yurish, of the Cartalinian and Grusinian czars and the Cabardinian land, of the Cherkessian and Gorsian princes and the lady of the manor and sovereign of many others. As We are sufficiently aware of the vast extent of the lands within Our Empire, We perceive, among other things, that a considerable number of regions are still uncultivated which could easily and advantageously be made available for productive use of population and settlement. Most of the lands hold hidden in their depth an inexhaustible wealth of all kinds of precious ores and metals, and because they are well provided with forests, rivers and lakes, and located close to the sea for purpose of trade, they are also most convenient for the development and growth of many kinds of manufacturing, plants, and various installations. This induced Us to issue the manifesto which was published last Dec. 4, 1762, for the benefit of all Our loyal subjects. However, inasmuch as We made only a summary announcement of Our pleasure to the foreigners who would like to settle in Our Empire, we now issue for a better understanding of Our intention the following decree which We hereby solemnly establish and order to be carried out to the full.

1.

We permit all foreigners to come into Our Empire, in order to settle in all the gouvernements, just as each one may desire.

2.

After arrival, such foreigners can report for this purpose not only to the Guardianship Chancellery established for foreigners in Our residence, but also, if more convenient, to the governor or commanding officer in one of the border-towns of the Empire.

3.

Since those foreigners who would like to settle in Russia will also include some who

do not have sufficient means to pay the required travel costs, they can report to our ministers in foreign courts, who will not only transport them to Russia at Our expense, but also provide them with travel money.

4.

As soon as these foreigners arrive in Our residence and report at the Guardianship Chancellery or in a border-town, they shall be required to state their true decision whether their real desire is to be enrolled in the guild of merchants or artisans, and become citizens, and in what city; or if they wish to settle on free, productive land in colonies and rural areas, to take up agriculture or some other useful occupation. Without delay, these people will be assigned to their destination, according to their own wishes and desires. From the following register\* it can be seen in which regions of Our Empire free and suitable lands are still available. However, besides those listed, there are many more regions and all kinds of land where We will likewise permit people to settle, just as each one chooses for his best advantage.

\*The register lists the areas where the immigrants can be settled.

5.

Upon arrival in Our Empire, each foreigner who intends to become a settler and has reported to the Guardianship Chancellery or in other border-towns of Our Empire and, as already prescribed in # 4, has declared his decision, must take the oath of allegiance in accordance with his religious rite.

6.

In order that the foreigners who desire to settle in Our Empire may realize the extent of Our benevolence to their benefit and advantage, this is Our will -- :

1. We grant to all foreigners coming into Our Empire the free and unrestricted practice of their religion according to the precepts and usage of their Church. To those, however, who intend to settle not in cities but in colonies and villages on uninhabited lands we grant the freedom to build churches and belltowers, and to maintain the necessary number of priests and church servants, but not the construction of monasteries. On the other hand, everyone is hereby warned not to persuade or induce any of the Christian co-religionists living in Russia to accept or even assent to his faith or join his religious community, under pain of incurring the severest punishment of Our law. This prohibition does not apply to the various nationalities on the borders of Our Empire who are attached to the Mahometan faith. We permit and allow everyone to win them over and make them subject to the Christian religion in a decent way.

2. None of the foreigners who have come to settle in Russia shall be required to pay the slightest taxes to Our treasury, nor be forced to render regular or extraordinary services, nor to billet troops. Indeed, everybody shall be exempt from all taxes and tribute in the following manner: those who have been settled as colonists with their families in hitherto uninhabited regions will enjoy 30 years of exemption; those who

have established themselves, at their own expense, in cities as merchants and tradesmen in Our Residence St. Petersburg or in the neighboring cities of Livland, Esthonia, Ingermanland, Carelia and Finland, as well as in the Residential city of Moscow, shall enjoy 5 years of tax-exemption. Moreover, each one who comes to Russia, not just for a short while but to establish permanent domicile, shall be granted free living quarters for half a year.

3. All foreigners who settle in Russia either to engage in agriculture and some trade, or to undertake to build factories and plants will be offered a helping hand and the necessary loans required for the construction of factories useful for the future, especially of such as have not yet been built in Russia.

4. For the building of dwellings, the purchase of livestock needed for the farmstead, the necessary equipment, materials, and tools for agriculture and industry, each settler will receive the necessary money from Our treasury in the form of an advance loan without any interest. The capital sum has to be repaid only after ten years, in equal annual instalments in the following three years.

5. We leave to the discretion of the established colonies and village the internal constitution and jurisdiction, in such a way that the persons placed in authority by Us will not interfere with the internal affairs and institutions. In other respects the colonists will be liable to Our civil laws. However, in the event that the people would wish to have a special guardian or even an officer with a detachment of disciplined soldiers for the sake of security and defense, this wish would also be granted.

6. To every foreigner who wants to settle in Russia We grant complete duty-free import of his property, no matter what it is, provided, however, that such property is for personal use and need, and not intended for sale. However, any family that also brings in unneeded goods for sale will be granted free import on goods valued up to 300 rubles, provided that the family remains in Russia for at least 10 years. Failing which, it be required, upon its departure, to pay the duty both on the incoming and outgoing goods.

7. The foreigners who have settled in Russia shall not be drafted against their will into the military or the civil service during their entire stay here. Only after the lapse of the years of tax-exemption can they be required to provide labor service for the country. Whoever wishes to enter military service will receive, besides his regular pay, a gratuity of 30 rubles at the time he enrolls in the regiment.

8. As soon as the foreigners have reported to the Guardianship Chancellery or to our border towns and declared their decision to travel to the interior of the Empire and establish domicile there, they will forthwith receive food rations and free transportation to their destination.

9. Those among the foreigners in Russia who establish factories, plants, or firms, and

produce goods never before manufactured in Russia, will be permitted to sell and export freely for ten years, without paying export duty or excise tax.

10. Foreign capitalists who build factories, plants, and concerns in Russia at their own expense are permitted to purchase serfs and peasants needed for the operation of the factories.

11. We also permit all foreigners who have settled in colonies or villages to establish market days and annual market fairs as they see fit, without having to pay any dues or taxes to Our treasury.

7.

All the afore-mentioned privileges shall be enjoyed not only by those who have come into our country to settle there, but also their children and descendants, even though these are born in Russia, with the provision that their years of exemption will be reckoned from the day their forebears arrived in Russia.

8.

After the lapse of the stipulated years of exemption, all the foreigners who have settled in Russia are required to pay the ordinary moderate contributions and, like our other subjects, provide labor- service for their country. Finally, in the event that any foreigner who has settled in Our Empire and has become subject to Our authority should desire to leave the country, We shall grant him the liberty to do so, provided, however, that he is obligated to remit to Our treasury a portion of the assets he has gained in this country; that is, those who have been here from one to five years will pay one-fifth, whole those who have been here for five or more years will pay one-tenth. Thereafter each one will be permitted to depart unhindered anywhere he pleases to go.

10.

If any foreigner desiring to settle in Russia wishes for certain reasons to secure other privileges or conditions besides those already stated, he can apply in writing or in person to our Guardianship Chancellery, which will report the petition to Us. After examining the circumstances, We shall not hesitate to resolve the matter in such a way that the petitioner's confidence in Our love of justice will not be disappointed.

Given at the Court of Peter, July 22, 1763  
in the Second Year of Our Reign.

The original was signed by Her Imperial Supreme Majesty's own hand.  
Printed by the Senate, July 25, 1763

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This manifesto was very soon followed by many supplementary stipulations, for instance the enactment of March 19, 1764, concerning the right to own land. In 1871 all privileges were

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## VOLGA GERMAN HISTORY: NEW APPROACHES TO RESEARCH

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*Dr. Igor Rudolfovich Plehve*

*Translated for publication by Richard Rye*

*Introductory remarks by Dr. Timothy J Kloberdanz,  
Chair of Department of Sociology and Anthropology,  
North Dakota State University, Fargo, North Dakota:*

*The day when a German Russian scholar from Russia would stand before us has come, and that day is today. Dr. Igor Plehve is a historical researcher and is the deputy dean of history at Saratov State University in Russia. He is also a descendant of Volga German colonists, with ties to the Wiesenseite colony of Mariental. For the past few years, Dr. Plehve has been delving into the records of the Volga Germans and has been making many fascinating discoveries. Since he is only 34 years of age, he has many years of active, productive scholarship ahead of him.*

*I first met Dr. Plehve when my wife Rosalinda and I were in the Volga area of Russia last summer. He came to the village of Frank with his interpreter, Professor Alexei Kuryaev, who is also here today. Talk about a stroke of incredibly good fortune—the day we first met was August 22 of last year, the rain was pouring down in Frank, and it was from Dr. Plehve and Prof. Kuryaev that Rosalinda and I heard that the Soviet coup was over. So whenever I see Dr. Plehve, I cannot but think of that first meeting and the good news that he bore.*

Dr. Plehve is a bearer of good news in more ways than one, as you will soon discover. Please give a warm AHSGR welcome to Dr. Igor Plehve and his interpreter, Prof. Alexei Kuryaev, who have come to us from Saratov, Russia.

Thank you, Tim, for the warm words of welcome. Such warm words obligate me to make an equally excellent report.

Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends: Allow me to convey to you the warmest regards and very best wishes from the shores of the Mother Volga and from Saratov, and from that small group of Volga Germans who have succeeded in returning to their homeland. I also want to express my thanks to the leadership of AHSGR for the opportunity and honor of appearing at this twenty-third convention of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia.



*Dr. Igor Rudolfovich Pleve.*

In addition, I want to thank the many representatives of the organization who have so warmly and heartily greeted me in Washington, DC, in Lincoln, the Denver airport, and here in Washington. I will not try to name each one, so that I won't offend anyone by forgetting them.

It was not until 1987 that the possibility of working with the archives of the Germans of the Volga appeared. From that moment, my dream of studying the history of my people became a reality. Germans, not only here in the United States, but also in Russia, have always been interested in two questions: Who are we? Where are we from? These two questions became the guides of my research work. I well understood that materials of the Germans on the Volga were practically untouched. Before they could be researched, they had to be found in the archives themselves.

In today's report I will not examine closely the total spectrum of the problems of the history of the *Wolgadeutsch*. I will touch only on those questions which are less likely to be known to you, or of which you may have only a brief understanding.



On the evidence of documents and books published earlier, it was clear that material on the genealogy of the Volga Germans existed and must be located somewhere. At the end of 1988 I was able to find a copy of the list of original settlers. This copy concerned the lists of several colonies which were written by village teacher Schaab of the colony of Semenovka.\* Now, if there were copies, then somewhere there must be an original. The search for the originals took several years. They were scattered in various archives of various cities. At present, I have found material from 96 of the 101 colonies of the *Volgadeutsch*. These materials will be included in future genealogical research.

But first I would like to talk about and show some earlier documents from 1766. Many of you have read the book written by Pastor Beratz [*The German Colonies on the Lower Volga*, translated and published by AHSGR, 1991]. Described in it are lists written by Ivan Kuhlberg. These lists are real and do still exist. They have become a valuable resource for genealogical research.

How were they compiled, and who was Ivan Kuhlberg?

As soon as the colonists disembarked from the ships in the Russian city of Oranienbaum, near St. Petersburg, their arrival was noted immediately by officials of the Russian government. One of these administrative officials was Ivan Kuhlberg. He knew very well not only the Russian language, but also German. He compiled these lists in Russian, translating from German exactly what the colonists said about themselves. I now draw your attention to the first exhibit, one of the Kuhlberg lists. On the screen is one of the reports which Kuhlberg himself compiled. After the report is the text itself. In it he notes from where the ship departed, what its name was, who its captain was, and how many colonists arrived on this ship. This information concludes with Kuhlberg's own signature. Lower down is the date: May 4, 1766.

Of course, this information is very, very important. This list states that colonists under the command of Captain Anderson arrived from Danzig aboard the Danzig ship *Kleine Andreas*. The detailed list of those colonists who arrived on this ship follows. First is the surname [*familiya*] and christian name [*itnya*]. Also his duty: *Vorsteher* Jacob Hussenbach. This is the same *Vorsteher* [German: colony leader] Jacob Hussenbach who organized the colony of Hussenbach. The information following records that he came from Frankfurt am Main, that he is of the Lutheran faith, his profession is tailor,

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\*Schaab's list for Semenovka was published in the *Frankfurter Bliitter fir Familiengeschichte*, 2(August 1909)8: 113-16.

and where he wants to settle in Russia. This information is complete for practically everyone who was on this ship. You can see there are other names, but it is very difficult to read them because they are written in the Old Slavonic language. But of course at this meeting there are those who have already mastered the Old Slavonic language, and read it very well. I have in mind David Schmidt from California.

Two hundred and nineteen people arrived on this ship. Those aboard included the ancestors of some fairly successful people living in the U.S. today, including the vice-president of Delta Airlines, Harold Alziger, and the current president of the Rocky Mountain Farmer's Union, John Stencil.

These documents fairly accurately tell us who of our people arrived in Russia from Germany, and when. We have at our disposal the names of 10,000 colonists arriving in Russia from Germany in 1766.

I want to pay special attention to the last column on these lists, where the Russian government asked these colonists where they would like to live. Farmers generally indicated that they wanted to live near Saratov, while craftsmen indicated they wanted to live in the city of Saratov itself.

Why do I pay such attention to this column? We all know about the famous Manifesto of 1763 of Catherine II. I consider that several points of this manifesto are examples of political deception. The manifesto states that the colonists could settle wherever they wanted in the Russian territories, and do whatever they wanted. But when they came on board the ships departing for Russia, the territory where they could settle was already precisely defined: the area of Saratov.

In Oranienbaum they were still asked if they wanted to settle either in the area of or directly in the city of Saratov. But when they arrived [on the Volga], there were no questions. They absolutely had to settle near Saratov, and they had to become farmers.

The Kuhlberg lists are not only valuable for genealogy, but also for historical research. For example, the colonists were directed from St. Petersburg toward the area near Saratov. Now, this journey was quite long, as is well known to you. But the czarist government determined that this journey would take 47 days. If the colonists took more time than the 47 days, then it must be at their own expense. But keep in mind the terrible Russian roads. Very often the money that had been allotted in Oranienbaum ran out on the way. [The money allotted in Oranienbaum ran out before the roads did.]

By the end of 1767 the main mass of immigrants arriving in the Volga area numbered 21,000 persons. It was necessary to register every colonist who had arrived. For that [the government] began to compile new lists by

colony. This is the more important material on the population of colonists.

I must draw your attention to the fact that for the first years of their existence, the colonies on the Volga did not have their own names. Each colony had only a numerical designation. The colonists themselves named the colony with the name of the *Vorsteher*. For example, the colony was at first named "The colony of *Vorsteher* Schulz," but finally became known simply as "Schulz." Also, it was "the colony of *Vorsteher* Hussenbach," then just "Hussenbach." By the end of 1767, each colony was given a Russian name. So that is how the colony of Schulz received the name of Lugovaya Gryaznukha [which translates loosely as "Muddy Pond"].

On the next list you can see the more or less detailed information about the colonists who arrived on the Volga. Number 1 indicates the surname of the *Vorsteher*. In the given example, it is Johann Jacob Schulz. In addition to the surname and name are shown the ages of each member of the family. In the next column you can see the religious faith and the place from which the colonist came. (See page 52.)

In contrast to the Kuhlberg list, in the next column are shown not only the name of the country [from which the colonist came], but also the name of the nearest population center. Also shown is the profession of the given colonist. Next you will find the exact date the colonist arrived in the colony. In the given instance, *Vorsteher* Schulz arrived on 8 August 1766.

The next column shows from which agency of the Russian government the given colonist family received money, how much was received in Oranienbaum and how much in Saratov. It shows not only the money received, but also the amount of goods they were given. In such a manner we can research not only genealogy, but also the activities of the Russian government. In the very last column we can see how much livestock each colonist had at the end of 1768. These lists are an invaluable source of material for the study of the *Wolgadeutsch*.

Now these materials are currently being researched by the Institute of Eastern Europe in Gottingen, Germany, which will publish them. It is difficult to determine exactly when the material will be published, but it likely will be at least three to five years before they appear. You must understand that it is an enormous amount of work. Of course, these materials will then be available to all.

In addition, I do not foresee any difficulties for research on the Germans from the Black Sea area or Volhynia, but I have confined my remarks to only the *Wolgadeutsch*. We must admit the fact that the Volga Germans are somewhat detached from their history, compared with the Germans on the Black Sea. They have the book by Karl Stumpp. For the Volga Germans such material is just now being coming available.

Of course, my remarks right now are only about those lists of the first settlers. Unfortunately, they do not give definitive information about genealogy. For that it is necessary to use other materials which are located in the archives of Russia. Some of these source materials are family lists compiled in 1798. I do not have with me an example of these lists, but I think that you will believe me that they do exist. In them are found the names and ages of all members of the family. The most important information they contain is the maiden names of the wives.

There are also indications noting when a person moved from one colony to another, and from which colony they came. This is very important, because in the first 30 years of the colonies' existence, movement of the population from colony to colony was quite active. In addition, in these lists are indications of what was included in the farms of these German colonists, what kind of grain was planted, and what the harvests were. These materials also await in-depth research.

One of the most important sources of genealogical information for the Volga Germans is the revision list [*revizskaya skazka*], or *perepis* of the population. The fact is that the church books for the first 70 years of the colonies' history are irretrievably lost. Therefore the census records have become very important. Here with me I have examples of the census reports from 1834, 1850, and 1858. Together, these materials give a fairly complete genealogical picture of the first 100 years of the colonies of the Germans on the Volga.

Please refer your attention to the first list from such a census. This is also for the colony of Schulz, or Lugovaya Gryaznukha. Here is the census of 1834, and further an indication of the composition of the family. The first list notes the names and ages of the male members of the family, then the age according to the previous census (1816); next to that is the age at the 1834 census. Between these notations are indications when a person died between censuses, and the year of death. Here, for example, we see a notation that one member of the Miller family died in the year 1831. Next we see on the list the names of females. In the revision lists, very often maiden names are not given. There is only the name and the age at the time of the census. By all this we can see that the census lists are also very valuable genealogical sources of information for Germans on the Volga.

I would like to bring to your attention the fact that these materials are currently under research. That is why my report is not especially a very scholarly one, but is a general overview of my work. I hope that this is not the last time we will meet, and that the next time we will be



able to go into the history in greater depth and give details of specific colonies. For that I must now say that I must avoid questions about the availability of these materials. Of course everyone wants to receive these materials and see them in their entirety. But in our lives we must remain realists. In spite of those changes in Russia which Tim and Rosalinda described yesterday in their talk, there is no rosy picture in Russia. We still have many complexities because those people who were in power early continue to direct us. Therefore we have many problems. In addition, in order to get these materials in photocopies or on microfilm, it is necessary to employ a large number of people and great resources. You must understand that the importance of these documents is understood not only in the USA, but also in Russia. Therefore, AHSGR has concluded a contract for the materials for several colonies. First of all, this material will be prepared on the basis of the census revisions. The first material, on the colony of Kolb, has already been delivered to AHSGR. I hope that it will be published within the next year. In this regard we have had the very active participation of Tim Kloberdanz, Dick Scheuerman, and Allyn Brosz. I think that by the end of this year we will also have material available on the colony of Frank.

Right away I want to address one question which will arise, and which I must answer now. This is about the preparation of individual genealogical projects. Here I must note that I work at the University not only as a teacher, but also as deputy dean. I have a lot of work with the AHSGR here, and with the University of Gottingen. Therefore I must realistically assess my own capabilities. Already this year a stream of tourists has begun arriving on the Volga to visit the sites of their ancestors' homes. I must give first attention to those who come to visit this region. I well understand that those who are now coming to the Volga are desperate, but I must consider that I simply cannot prepare material for all those who come.\* I will try to answer individual questions in this regard after this meeting.

Also, another rather uncomfortable moment: In Russia very few people know anything at all about AHSGR. There is much more information about the activities of the Landsmannschaft from Germany, but there is very little information about AHSGR. Of course, it would be

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\*Here the interpreter said, "...we are preparing a special program for those tourists who come to the Volga." This is *not* what Dr. Plehve said.

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very useful for Germans here in America and those who live on the Volga or in Siberia to have closer contacts with each other at all levels. This is not only for searching for one's relatives, but also in the realm of economic cooperation. I want to emphasize especially that I am not speaking of humanitarian aid, but of economic cooperation. But such questions are not related to this report, so I will not speak of them further.

After this report there will be another, and I have run out of time, but I will do my best to answer any questions that you may have. Thank you.

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**Question:** Dr. Plehve told us that there were lists for 96 of the 101 colonies. Could we get a list of the 96 in order to find out if our village is there, so we might consider making the trip?

**Answer:** It is easier to list those colonies for which original lists are not available. They are Schilling (Sosnovka), DONhoff, Hussenbach, Warenburg, and Beideck. I am speaking only of lists of the *original* settlers. It is possible that something of them will yet be found, but right now there is nothing. We have only a third of the list for Frank. That colony was very unlucky, because the lists start with Frank, and the first page of that list is missing. We have lists of the first settlers for all other original villages.

**Q:** I'd like to find out if Dr. Plehve has any knowledge of documents written in German and what types they might be?

**A:** [The interpreter asks Dr. Plehve if he knows what materials have been or will be published in Germany.] I am already acquainted with all the materials that were published in Germany. The first materials were lists of the original colonists in Russia. You probably already know that this was the work of Dr. Stumpp. He has given information about only four colonies on the Volga. The rest of the lists of original settlers were not published in Germany. I do not know of anyone in Germany who now has this information, but very many want it.

**Q:** I'm sorry, I was referring to colony records that may be in the archives that are written in German. I would like to know if he has any knowledge of records written by the German colonists that are held in the archives.

**A:** There are documents in the archives, and I have shown you some photocopies. These are mostly from the teacher Schaab from Semenovka in 1909. He wrote in Russian, but was a German. Pastor Beratz translated records from original lists of about 50 colonies. That is all that has been done by the Germans themselves.

# POLITICAL SITUATIONS ON THE LOWER VOLGA

Respected Ladies and Gentlemen: Please allow me to congratulate you on this holiday in honor of the United States of America, and to wish each and every family in the U.S.A. happiness and long life.

I also want to recognize the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia, and its President, Lee Kraft, for the honor of appearing at such an exalted meeting. And please allow me to present to the organization a few items from the city of Saratov. [Here Dr. Plehve presented a map of Saratov, several packets of postcards, and lapel pins of the new Russian flag.]

Today I will touch on a problem which I do not really like to address. This is the problem of politics. But it is absolutely necessary to discuss this in order to clarify personal opinions and explain the true situation on the Volga. Many of you know that in the region of the former Republic of Germans on the Volga, there have been many activities related to the re-establishment of the Republic. In spite of the changes in our government, this process is very delicate and unclear. There was animosity between the local population which now lives in the area of the former German republic and those Germans who have returned to the Volga. Today I will try to explain some of the reasons for this situation, and how things might develop over the long term.

First a few words about a history with which you are probably well acquainted. After the government edict of 28 August 1941, there was a period of two and one-half weeks in which [German] people from the territory of the former German Republic and from other areas of the former Soviet Union were deported to areas of Siberia and Kazakhstan. I will not spend time talking of the conditions in which those people were left. You already know this well.

In 1946 the government issued another edict, by which Germans were "eternally banished" from the European part of Russia to Siberia and Kazakhstan. After the death of Stalin in 1953, the restrictions upon Germans living in Siberia and Kazakhstan were gradually loosened. It wasn't until 1964 that the government acknowledged that the measures taken against the Russian-Germans were illegal, and the seizure of their land groundless. But only a very small circle of people know about this edict of 1964.

Dr. Igor Rudolfovich Plehve

Translated for publication by Richard Rye

Since then, however, a group of Germans in Russia began to try to re-establish their rights in full. But all those who appealed to the Kremlin returned with nothing. The government did not want to lose any good workers in Siberia or Central Asia.

Since the beginning of so-called "perestroika" in 1985, the Germans in Russia have found hope that their problems would be solved. But this matter was very, very complex. It wasn't until 1989 that an organization was formed which presented their demands to the former Soviet government in the name of the German population of the former Soviet Union. The organization was called *Medergeburt—Vozrozhdeniye*, or Renewal. It held its first congress session in March 1989 in Moscow. After that session, and in answer to the Germans' requests for autonomy, movements opposed to that autonomy began in the Volga area, particularly near Saratov. For many of you it may seem a strange thought, that someone would want autonomy. You have nothing like this in the United States. You must understand that the situation in Russia is such that the development of an ethnic group's nationality is guaranteed to every ethnic group only if it has its own state. Therefore, autonomy became the aim of the movement of Germans on the Volga. *Wiedergeburt—Vozrozhdeniye* stated quite clearly to the population now living in the area on the Volga: The Germans of Russia have no claim now to the area that population now occupies, nor can they have any. The Germans refused any form of compensation for the damages which they received at the hands of the government. They refused any compensation for the homes which had been abandoned on the Volga. They demanded only one thing: to be allowed to return to the Volga and re-establish their statehood.

But those circles which directed the Saratov and Volgograd regions, particularly the Communist parties, and especially the local [*raionnye*] authorities, did everything possible so that the local population would oppose the Germans. Practically no information about the problems of the Germans in Russia appeared in the pages of the local press, while at the same time the national press carried discussions about the fate of the Germans in Russia. Of course the attitude of the local population

can be understood. This silence in the local press created the impression that this was a "new experiment" in a long succession of similar problems throughout the history of Russia.

How was this anti-German sentiment expressed? Why did the Russian and Ukrainian population of the area oppose the re-establishment of German autonomy? The answer is Communist propaganda. One of the main claims of the propaganda was that "We do not need a third Germany on the Volga." The local population came to believe that if the Germans returned, they themselves would be put out of their homes. All would be forced to learn the German language. And all this was done by falsehood. The truth of the German problem hardly appeared in the local press at all.

Why did the local population fall victim to the lies of the local authorities? There is a completely understandable cause. For almost 50 years there has been virtually no information about the existence of a population of almost 2 million ethnic Germans in Russia. Many Russians believed that the Germans living in Siberia were only former prisoners of the war with the fascists. Of course, in the absence of true information, there arose this false impression about the problem of the Russian-Germans.

In addition, we must also examine another aspect of this question. When the Germans were deported from the area of the Volga, many other people from Ukraine, Byelarus, and other western areas of Russia were resettled in their places. For many of them, the Germans in Russia were associated with fascist Germany. This erroneous impression has been perpetuated.

We must also add another footnote. After the war, a large part of the war refugees who were able to work returned to their former territory. The largest part of these refugees came to the area of the Volga.

In addition, at the beginning of the 1960s and 1970s, oilfield and gas workers were settled in the Volga area to develop the gas fields. For them the matter of returning to a homeland and the land of one's forefathers was of no concern. They were raised in the Soviet traditions that were then very popular, as expressed in a popular Soviet song, "My address is neither house nor street, my address is the Soviet Union." For them the striving of the Germans to return to their homeland was of course incomprehensible. From these groups were formed the columns of demonstrators who came to Saratov and met in the former colonies of Mariental and Balzer.

We must also recognize that a criminal element [former incarcerated individuals who were forbidden to live in larger population centers such as Moscow or Leningrad] was settled on the former territory of the Volga Germans.

And now we can understand that, on the whole, these causes are the main reasons why certain segments opposed the resettlement of Germans in areas of today's Saratov and Volgograd *oblasts* [regional governments]. I must emphasize that the people who expressed opposition to German autonomy—and there are now only a few expressing these sentiments—are only another casualty of that structure which has directed Russia for such a long time.

I think that several of you who have been in the Saratov area can testify to the fact that, on the whole, the people in these areas are very hospitable, and they understand why visitors come to these areas from abroad.

In the course of 1989 and 1990, the anti-German movement was on the rise, because it had the full support of the authorities of Saratov and Volgograd. At that time, *Kiedergeburt—Vozrozhdeniye* conducted frequent meetings, and at these meetings very pointedly demanded the restoration of autonomy on the Volga.

But unfortunately the voices of Germans of Russia, Kazakhstan, Tadzhikistan, of Turkmenia and Kirghizia were not heard. As a result, the emigration of Germans from Russia drastically and rapidly increased. In 1990 and 1991 alone, the former Soviet Union was abandoned by more than 240,000 Russian Germans. Many of them well understood that it would be extremely difficult to adapt to the new society in Germany. But they saw no future within the framework of the former Soviet Union. Only after the events of August 1991 did any new hope for change arise.

It must be said that the current government of Russia has made a few unsteady, faltering steps toward some sort of autonomy. In the territory of the Volgograd and Saratov *oblasts*, regions were designated where Germans could settle in compact areas. This territory was near Engels in the Saratov oblast and the northern part of the Volgograd oblast. Another proposal was a quite stupid idea to resettle Germans on the former military reservation of Kapustin Yar. But the German movement *Wiedergeburt—Vozrozhdeniye* quickly squelched this idea as completely unacceptable. [note: here the interpreter, Prof. Kuryaev, explained that Kapustin Yar is a former missile testing range and is ecologically unsound.]

And we must note that the process itself of the movement of 1990-1992 toward German autonomy was passing through the deepening economic crisis of the country. Therefore the tendency toward emigration was not only a protest by the German population for autonomy, but was also an attempt to secure a future for their children.

Now there has been a split in *Wiedergeburt—Vozrozhdeniye*. One part demands complete emigration of Germans from Russia, no matter what the future may



hold. The other part, which now has formed the Union of Germans of Russia, is striving to solve this problem, by any means, within the framework of the Russian state.

It is impossible to separate the problem of autonomy of Germans in Russia from the external politics of Germany. The government of Germany is interested in stemming the tide of immigrants and improving conditions in Russia so Germans there might live normal lives. Therefore they are employing all means possible and are making attempts to assist both the movement for autonomy and the Russian government in their attempts to re-establish German statehood on the Volga.

Organizations have taken steps to give aid to establish economic ventures on the territory of the former German republic. In the territory of the Saratov oblast, they have already set up several small factories to produce bread, cheese, and sausage. This economic aid helps not only the German population, but the entire population which now occupies the area. Judging by the latest reports from the German government, this economic cooperation—and I emphasize economic [development], not just humanitarian aid—will continue to grow in the future. In this regard, the Russian government is attempting to support this economic initiative, even though its means are very limited.

Since the end of 1991, the anti-German activity, which I did not describe to you in detail in order not to frighten you, has been laid to rest. People understand extremely well that they need not fear the Germans, who want only to return to their homeland, but rather the economic conditions that await them in the future. Here I must note that during Yeltsin's last visit to the United States, it was directly stated that the Russian government is intent on resolving the problem of Germans on the Volga.

Here you must understand that Russia is not the USA. The fact of the matter is that it is one thing for the Russian President to say something, and a completely different matter what the government will do with his statements. Unfortunately there are many, many old party functionaries who, though they have discarded their party identity cards, still continue to think in the old manner. They are the main obstacle in the fair resolution of the question of the Russian Germans.

Now, while economic cooperation of various governments with Russia is fairly active, the Germans on the Volga are hopeful that cooperation with the USA and Germany will not be directed simply at Russia, but concretely to those on the Volga. The Germans of Russia understand quite well that only by overcoming the current economic crisis will it be possible to solve the problems of not only all of Russia, but also of the German-Russians. Unfortunately, conditions for a purely German economic structure are very weak, but they are on the mend. Purely German national villages are already being planned in the area of Volgograd and Saratov, with the aim of increasing German business. And as has already been stated, we continue to live with the hope that for the Germans, our problems will be solved.

I cannot sidestep one more problem which may only touch peripherally on the Germans from Russia. This is the impression that some people get when they come to Russia. I would so like for people to look much more objectively upon the problems of Russia and the situation which exists in Russia today. We have many problems, many more than all other civilized countries in the world together. But you must understand that we do not have people perishing from hunger on the streets. You can take photographs of everything, even the offices of the KGB. And you must understand that the dire picture painted by those leaving Russia today does not correspond with reality.

I was delighted to hear how Timothy and Rosalinda Kloberdanz described their visit to Russia. I think their opinion can be supported by everyone who has visited the former German villages in the area around Saratov. In my opinion, and I think that Alexei [Prof. Kuryaev, the interpreter] would agree with me, they would carry away that same opinion of the people who now live on the Volga. In spite of all our problems, I am very hopeful that understanding and cooperation between Germans in America and Russia will not only continue but will develop further.

Again, let me thank you for the heartfelt warmth with which you have met me in this hospitable land of America. Thank you. I=1

# A Brief Description of a Typical Southern German Village in the Past Centuries

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## Abstract

This article gives some insight to the life of Southern German farmers in the past centuries. The life of an individual was only partly concerned with obligations to the landlord or the church. More than anything else the social class of the village into which he/she was born determined the whole life. The knowledge about the basic rules of the rural life in the past represents not a bad chance to reflect our own lifestyle from an distant perspective. In any case however it is a great help for the ancestry researcher.

## Social Classes

There were three village social classes in the area that is now called Baden-Wuerttemberg, during the period 1500 to 1800, and perhaps even to 1900.

The first class consisted of wealthy farmers (German=Bauer) (ca 2-5 %). They possessed the big farms. Generally, smaller parts of their farm were owned by them and larger parts were obtained by fief (German= Lehen, Schupflehen, Erblehen) from a landlord or the church or a monastery. Also, these farmers occupied the important village positions, like Vogt (=Governor), village judge, etc.

The common farmers (ca 60-80 %) made up the second class. They possessed land, also obtained by fief. These farmers worked hard, and usually were able to have a modest standard of living for themselves and their families.

The third class consisted of the day laborers (German= Tagelohner, in Southern Germany also called Seldner) (ca 20-40 %). They worked for the other farmers for day wages. They were very, very poor and had many children, many of which died immediately after their birth.



The Farmer and the Death  
Hans Holbein d.J., 1525

## Occupations

Most of the farmers had a sideline profession that was usually handed down from father to son.

Upper class: an occupation that brought in the most money: innkeeper.

Middle class: smith, cartwright, cooper, tailor, shoemaker, etc.

Lower class: weaver, ropemaker, tanner etc.



The Smith [Ref. 5]

There was one profession, which has to be considered separately: the millers. Generally, they were wealthy, often very rich, but also they had a very bad moral image. It was said that they were not always honest (e.g., they would mix flour with sand or gypsum) and they were considered to be highly immoral. The last statement is based on the fact that the mills were naturally located outside the village (towns: outside of the fortification walls). It was at the miller's location that events took place which the village would not tolerate within its own walls (prostitution, gambling, excessive drinking/partying) - (And alas, a considerable number of my ancestors were millers, but of course, they were the exception to the rule!)

The word "Bauer" (farmer) not only denoted the profession of a farmer, but was also used as a title. A "Bauer" had to have at least two horses and/or bulls and one plow. A wealthy first class Bauer had six or more horses and a net worth of more than 1000 fl. (=guilders). On the other hand, a third class "Tagelöhner" possessed not much more than a cottage, a vegetable garden and possibly, a goat and some chickens. In order to get a feeling for wealth and poverty, here are some figures from ca. 1800: a good horse cost about 100 fl., a bull about 40 fl. and an old cow 15 fl. The daily (12-hour day) wage for a "Tagelöhner" was six Kreuzer that is one tenth (!) fl.

### Marriages

Before roughly 1820 marriage was allowed only with the permission of the landlord. First of all, the engaged couple had to pay the lord for his permission (2-10 fl). Secondly, the couple had to prove to him and to the community that they would be able to support themselves and their children without any outside help. A minimum net worth of 100 - 200 fl. was required for marriage. Since many engaged couples could not come up with this sum of money, a large number of the people remained unmarried. Illegitimate births were a frequent occurrence. The parents of illegitimate children were punished heavily. Both were subjected to a painful interrogation by the village judges and fined (the maximum allowable fine was ca 12 fl). A worse fate was to be exposed publicly on Sunday in front of the church, the woman with a straw garland on her head, the man, with a straw sword at his side. Because of these difficult conditions, many emigrated to Hungary and Russia (mainly before 1800) and to America (after 1800), usually not always asking the lord for permission because he would require some remuneration (dozens of guilders).



Farmer Couple in Love  
Albrecht Dürer, 1500

### Emigration

For the most part, emigrants were recruited from the middle and lower classes. Often a family group put all their money together in order for one of their sons to emigrate. They hoped that he would earn enough money in the New World to later pay for their crossing. In many cases, this happened. Upper class people only emigrated when a farm had been willed to one son (not too rare,

the youngest one!) and this heir would give his brothers some money to find a new existence outside the village. Another social group for emigration consisted of those persons who were a permanent burden to the community: e.g., extremely poor families, unmarried or widowed women with children, violent persons and prisoners. In these cases, the community paid partly or fully for the crossing. In 1884, the fee for Bremen-New York crossing was 80 Mark (equiv. 60 fl).

### Names and Ancestor Research

An important consideration for family researchers is the fact, that marriage between the classes was nearly impossible. At best, a mixing of classes only took place after disasters like war or plague. The result of all this was that all families within each class of a village and its neighboring villages as long as they belonged to the same landlord were related. This is good for finding ancestor relatives, but bad for identifying specific individuals because many persons had the same name (both first and family names). Researchers must have in mind that before 1800 in the area of Baden-Wuerttemberg were more than 100 tiny countys with jealous landlords. It was not until 1806 that the Grandduchy of Baden and Kindom of Wuerttemberg were made by Napoleon.

In a typical Catholic village, two-third's of all sons were named Johann or Jakob and two-third's of all daughters were named Maria or Anna. The rest were named after saints, especially the local ones. Sometimes the children were named after the landlord or infrequently, after the present or deceased sovereign provided he was respected or beloved.

Here some very rough but nevertheless useful rules of thumb for first names related to the sovereigns:

Baden:	Burkhard, Bernhard, Friedrich, Hermann
Wuerttemberg:	Ulrich, Eberhard
Bavaria (Bayern):	Leopold, Ludwig, Max (Maximilian)

### Village Government/Officials

There were rights for self-administration and self-jurisdiction of the villages. The head of the village was the Vogt (=Governor). The lord selected him out of the members of the community. Under him, two or three Buergermeisters (Mayors) were selected by the Gemeinde (=community). Sometimes, communities owned considerable amounts of land and forest for common use. Not infrequently, the community and the lord would have a quarrel on property rights. What was troublesome for our ancestors proves to be a gold mine for today's ancestor researcher. I found very valuable information about my ancestors' families to ca. 1500, two hundred years before the parish records were introduced. In the case of my ancestors, the lord felled trees in the community's forest. The community prosecuted the lord at the Imperial Court of Justice. In the trial, not less than 27 witnesses testified for both parties. In the court, they had to identify themselves and their parents (that is, the gold mine of ancestor information!). The trial lasted for more than 10 years. Initially, the community had good chances to win the case, but in the end the parties entered into a shaky agreement, which kept the quarrel alive for another 100 years..



Landgraf von  
Nellenburg



### Final Note

What I described here is a very condensed picture of a German village in the past centuries. It is typical for the areas in southern Germany. Other places in Germany would be different in some aspects.

### References

For those readers who understand German, I'd like to give some references. Most of the information for this paper I extracted from books, edited by the "Verein für Geschichte des Hegaus" (Society for the History of the Hegau County). Their address:

Verein für Geschichte des Hegaus  
Schwarzwaldstr. 7  
78224 Singen / Hohentwiel  
Germany

Specific references:

1. Wolfgang Kramer, "Gottmadingen, vom Bauernhof zur Industriegemeinde", Hegaubibliothek Bd. 101, Gottmadingen/ Radolfzell, 1997, ISBN 3-921 413-67-2
2. Gertrud Streit, "Geschichte des Dorfes Rielasingen", Hegaubibliothek Bd. 82, Singen (Hohentwiel), 1993, ISBN 3-921 413-34-6
3. Herbert Berner (Hrsg.), "Singen, Dorf und Herrschaft", Hegaubibliothek Bd. 55, Konstanz 1990, ISBN 3-87799-090-8
4. Rainer Kiewat, "Ritter, Bauern, Burgen im Hegau. Eine Chronik", Hegaubibliothek Bd. 46, Konstanz 1986, ISBN 3- 7977-0144-6
5. Ferdinand Stemmer, "Orsingen, Geschichte eines Hegaudorfes", Hegaubibliothek Bd. 33 Singen (Hohentwiel), 1977

Concerning the professions, as I am a lover of fairy tales I would recommend highly a booklet, in the preface of which historical information on the "ehrbaren" (honest) and "nicht ehrbaren" (non honest) trades can be found. As a bonus, you will get some nice German fairy tales on about trades in past times.

6. Frieder Stöckle (Hrsg.), "Handwerkermärchen", Fischer Taschenbuchverlag, Frankfurt 1986, ISBN 3- 596-22866-2

### Acknowledgment

I would like to express my special thanks to Jack Lauber, West Chester, PA, USA (Jlauber889@aol.com) for his excellent suggestions and for his great help with the editing of the article.

**Robert Schaefer**

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**From:** Shirley J Hulett <marcompro@juno.com>  
**To:** <BADEN-WURTTENBERG-L@rootsweb.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 12, 1999 9:21 AM  
**Subject:** Re: German Villages in the Past

Dieter:

I really appreciate your input. Could you clarify the time period described?

Shirley in San Diego

On Thu, 12 Aug 1999 13:04:33 +0200 "Dieter Joos" <djoos@nikocity.de> writes:

>Listers,

>some questions addressed to me let me decide to give a rough

>description of a

>typical Southern German village in the past centuries so I have not to

>answer to

>each individual query.

>

>The society of an common village in the area what is now called

>Baden-Wuerttemberg has rather sharply been separated into three

>classes: The

>first class were the wealthy farmers (ca 2-5 %) which possessed the

>big farms

>partly by their own but mostly by fief (?) (German = Lehen;

>Schupflehen,

>Erblehen) from a landlord or the church or a monastery. They also

>occupied the

>important village positions like prefect (German = Vogt), village

>judges etc.

>The second class were the common farmers ( ca 60-80 %). They possessed

>land also

>got by lief. This farmers worked hard but were usually able to earn so

>much as

>to guarantee a modest life for their families. The third class

>consisted of the

>day laborers (?) (German= Tagelohner) (ca 20-40 %). They worked for

>the other

>farmers for day wages. They possessed almost nothing and were very,

>very poor

>and had many many kids which died nearly all immediately after their

>birth.

>

>To each of the three classes typical occupations were usually

>associated : The

>occupation of the upper class was that which brought most money:

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>innkeeper. The  
 >occupations of the middle class were: smith, cartwright, cooper,  
 >tailor,  
 >shoemaker etc. The occupation of the lower class were weaver,  
 >ropemaker etc.  
 >  
 >There was one profession which has to be considered separately: the  
 >millers.  
 >Generally they were rich often even very rich, but also they had a  
 >very bad  
 >moral image: first as it was said that they were all trickster (what  
 >surely  
 >comes near to truth) secondly as they were considered to be highly  
 >immoral. The  
 >last statement is based on the fact that the mills were generally  
 >located  
 >outside the village (towns: outside of the fortification walls). So  
 >this was  
 >the very place  
 >for events which no society loves to tolerate within its own walls. -  
 >(And  
 >alas, a considerable number of my ancestors were millers!)  
 >  
 >What is important for family researchers is the fact, that penetrating  
 >the  
 >barriers of the social classes e.g. by marriage was nearly impossible.  
 >At the  
 >best a mixing only took place after disasters like war or plague. A  
 >consequence:  
 >all families within each class of a village and its neighbor villages  
 >(as long  
 >as they belonged to the same sovereign authority) are somewhat  
 >related. Good for  
 >finding relations, bad for separating the individuals. In a catholic  
 >village two  
 >third of all sons were named Johann or Jakob and two third of all  
 >daughters were  
 >named Maria or Anna. The rest was named after Saints especially the  
 >local ones.  
 >Sometimes kids are called after the landlord when this was a beloved  
 >one. But  
 >this did not occur very often.  
 >  
 >Emigrants recruited mainly from the middle and lower class of the  
 >farmers. Upper  
 >class emigrants only show up when a farm has been handed over  
 >completely  
 >to one son (not too rare the youngest one!) and this heir gave to his  
 >brothers a  
 >stock for founding an new existence outside the village.

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- >
- >Remark: What I described is to some extent typical for the areas in
- >southern
- >Germany. Other places especially in Northern Germany have had in some
- >details divergent rules.

- >
- >Dieter
- >Ueberlingen, Germany

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>==== BADEN-WURTTENBERG Mailing List ====

>Visit the Baden-Wuerttemberg Mailing List Website:

>[http://members.xoom.com/BW\\_List/bw.htm](http://members.xoom.com/BW_List/bw.htm)

>

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