

KRIM-GR

German & Swiss Crimean Colony Genealogy Newsletter

Volume 1 Number 2 Summer, 1999

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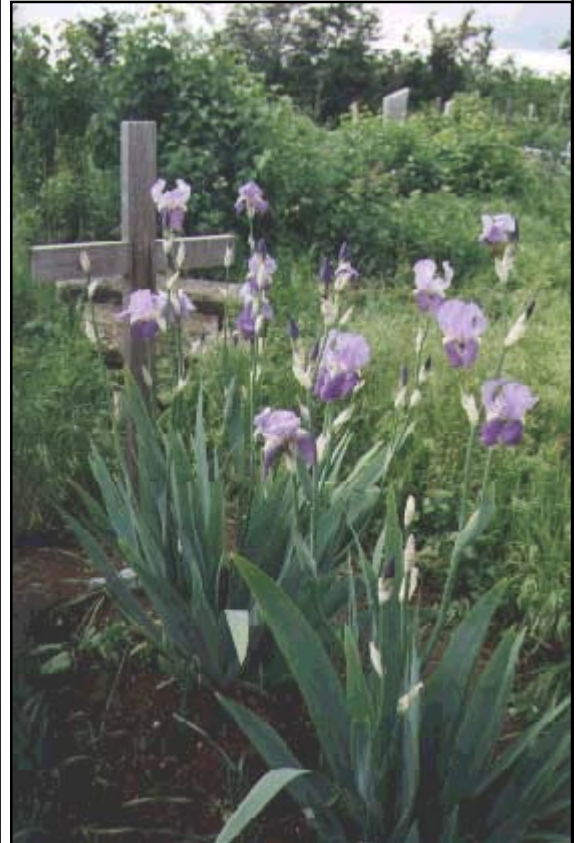
From the Editors:

Welcome to volume 1, Number 2 of our Krim-GR newsletter. Deb Beick and I (Gene Baer) are confident that you will find the content of this issue interesting and informative as together we seek to grow in our understanding of our forefathers and mothers who so bravely left their homes in Germany and Switzerland to establish colonies on the Crimean Peninsula and then, just as bravely, left those colonies and crossed the Atlantic to establish homesteads on the American frontier.

The focus of this edition of the newsletter is primarily historical. The articles, which were published previously in some of our fine periodicals on Germans from Russia, include one on the founding of Friedenthal colony, several descriptions of villages that are excerpts from the series "German Farmers in the Crimea during the Period 1806-1941," and one describing the upheaval and catastrophe that World War II brought to those German colonists who remained in Crimea.

Another account of a similar nature, not published here but one that has always affected me deeply because it involves some of my distant relatives, is the story of Frieda Baer, composed by E. D. ("Buster") Baer, and published in the April, 1981 issue of *Heritage Review*.

Enjoy this issue. Please let us know your thoughts on what we can include that will be interesting, informative, and useful. Most of all, if you have family stories we should publish, please send them to either Deb or me.



Gravestone at Kronental Cemetery of unidentified German grave site according to local Ukrainians.

Photos courtesy of Michael Miller, Germans from Russia Heritage Collection, The Libraries, North Dakota State University, Fargo, ND, Travel to Crimea, Ukraine and the former German villages, May 17 - 21, 1998

The Deutsche Evangelical-Lutherische St. Marienkirche in Yalta, Crimea, Ukraine



FRIEDENTHAL CRIMEA

The Germans from Russia Heritage Society published a history of the founding of Friedenthal, Crimea (Heritage Review, Vol. 21, 1978). The history was written in 1848 and gives some insight into the colonist's early lives.

When the call for emigration to Russia went forth in 1804 in the kingdom of Wuerttemberg by Commissioner Ziegler, a large number of persons from numerous areas of endeavor resolved to make the journey. They met in Ulm in the month of June. There, they boarded the 11th, 14th and 16th transport, accompanied by their leaders Ottman, Bauer, and Schoek and sailed down the Danube to Wien (Vienna). From Wien, they traveled by land to Radziwill at their own expense, then farther at the expense of the high crown to Ovidiopol where they were sheltered in two barracks through the winter.

This Ovidiopol (in dialect, "Widerpol") will through the tales told by fathers to grandsons and great grandsons, remain a traumatic memory because in that place nearly all the immigrants fell ill and during the winter more than 600 souls died and nearly all families were affected. Parents were torn from their children and children from their parents so that some children arrived at the place of settlement without either parent.

Though Wuerttemberger emigrants had settled in the Crimea in 1804, the steppes surrounding Odessa bore little resemblance to their Wuerttemberg native fields. So they sent some scouts to the Crimean peninsula and from them learned that parts of the Crimea, and especially the area near Neusatz with its mountains, valleys, streams and forests was similar to their homeland. So with the permission of Duke Richelieu they traveled from Odessa by water; landed in Kasslov (Eupatoria) and after a year of many hardships and the miseries of traveling, they fortunately came to

their new destination of Kandagoes near Neusatz on June 24, 1805. This land was bought by the high crown from General Kandagoes and assigned to the immigrants for settlement. It consisted of only a single farm unit until 1806 when individual houses were built to provide lodging.

Originally 25 families settled in Kandagoes from the districts of Balingen, Backnung, Kannstadt, Waiblingen and Goepingen. All were Evangelical-Lutheran in faith in 1819. Through the addition of three sons as landlords, the colony was enlarged so that it now consisted of 28 landlords.

Since the village lay in a charming, peaceful valley it was called Friedenthal by Sir General Kontenius.

Friedenthal is favored by nature in manifold ways. To the south the colony is bordered by beautiful forests and mountains. Eastward, the River Barentsha forms the boundary line where two watermills, six crossovers and the community gardens provide income for the colony. To the north, and visible from the gardens, stretches the great steppe where a larger population has found a second home. Yet two to three families still live in one household. When coming into the village from the west, after the two-mile-long mountain has been climbed, one sees in the charming valley the pretty village with its fruit orchards and stone walls – lovely sight which has delighted many a tourist.

Here the Schwaben found a home again. Pure water and good building stones were available without too much effort. In the middle of the village at the street intersections was the prayer hall, the school, and the community building. The houses and barns of the landlords were built of stone and covered with brick. In nearly every yard was a 40 to 50-foot deep masonry-lined well of good spring water. The inhabitants of

nearby Neusatz experienced the same good fortune.

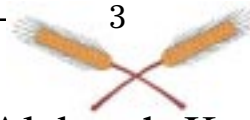
In 1822 the Friedenthalers built their own prayerhouse and bought a bell with their own resources. Until this time a local community-elected teacher taught school and conducted religious services in a private home. With the building of the prayerhouse, the friendliness of God seemed to illuminate then in that Pastor Boerlin came to them from Switzerland and richly revived their immortal souls with the bread of life.

Since God for five years in succession withheld bread from them through grasshopper swarms, the "bread of life" tasted even sweeter because of their misery and affliction. But, in 1826 God tore from them their dear soul shepherd by sudden death at the age of 27 years. The fruit of his labors is still held in sacred memory. When another grasshopper plague ensued, the parish assembled nearly every day for earnest prayer in the prayerhouse, whereupon God removed the plague and sent years of blessings.

The next Pastor was from the Mission House in Basel, the person of Wilhelm Fletnitzer whose genuine love, effective action and ardent zeal, especially in school improvements, did not go unrewarded. In the younger generation, this influence was visible and resulted in God-pleasing living and spiritual growth. Fletnitzer served only until 1831, when he transferred to Odessa but gratitude is still widely expressed by men who knew the values of his guidance while they were in school. Presently Pastor Kylius, born in Baden and trained at the Baseler Mission House is serving the parish.

Like many other districts, Friedenthal was plagued with crop failures and cattle disease epidemics in 1833 and 1834. Since the village is heavily populated and one farming unit comprises only 25 dessjatin which must support 2 to 3 families, the community recovered slowly





Alabasch-Konrat (Alabasch)

By Theodore Eisenbraunn

Excerpt from the article, "German Farmers in the Crimea during the Period 1806-1941."

Translated by Armand and Elaine Bauer.

Printed in HR, vol. 19, Dec. 1977

Up to the 1905 revolution, the land belonged to the estate owner Popow and Alabasch-Konrat was a rental village of mixed people. German colonists and Russian farmers lived in a crowded neighborhood. There was a continuous large turnover of renters. In 1905, the land was turned over to the landbank and the renters had an opportunity to purchase land for themselves. The division of land was about 30 to 60 dessjantine per family.

Here lived the German families: Schlegel, Burger, Schroeder, Bueche, Molotschnaer: Mueller, Weigum, Haar, Schneider, Krimer and others. The Germans, primarily Evangelical Lutheran confession, were in majority and they had a reputable schoolhouse in the middle of the village and a German teacher.

The village was without most of the characteristic peculiarities of a German colony. It lay hardly more than 0.5 kilometers away from the railroad station Bijuk-Onlar and during the Soviet time it grew and merged into the railroad settlement. Yet the collective Alabasch-Konrat existed until 1941 with the Germans in majority.

Bakschai

By Theodore Eisenbraun

Excerpted from the third installment of the article, "German Farmers in the Crimea During the Period 1806-1941." Translated by Armand and Elaine Bauer. Printed in the Heritage Review, vol. 19, Dec. 1977

This small village was populated by Roman Catholics and established on rented land. There was one broad street. On both sides of this street

from these wounds. Nevertheless, not only were the buildings completed and yards well kept, but five households bought their own land and others rented landed property.

The main agricultural industry is potato cultivation. The present potato, known for its soundness and taste, is exported not only to Simferopol and Karazabassar but also to all other towns in the Crimea: Theodosia, Kertsch, Armjansk, Eupatoria, Sewastopol and Yalta.

Since 1843 much progress has been made in fruit cultivation. But in 1844 progress was slowed through unfavorable weather. Also, the cattle diseases appeared again in the winters of 1845 and 1846 and many farmers lost nearly all their animals.

For some years the potato didn't want to thrive anymore, but harvest was never so bad as in the year 1847. In the best growth period the plants would suddenly die and many a piece of land planted with five tschetwert (1 tschetwert is about 6 US bushels) of potatoes yielded hardly one tschetwert. The grain crop too was meager and the hay crop nearly a total failure so that in winter an extraordinary feed shortage arose.

This year in April already the wheat fields stand in full ear and all is in beautiful bloom. Even the water springs that for several years ran dry, have broken forth with new abundances. Thus God, the Lord, has revived again the sunken hope.

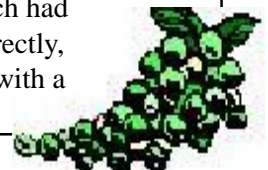
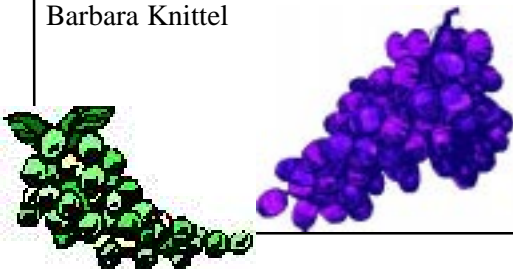
Mayor- Wilhelm Sailer¹ Assessors – Christian Weisz, Konrad Traxel

School teacher and village clerk – Johann Georg Birnbaum

¹ Wilhelm Sailer was the son of Wilhelm Michael Sailer and Christina Barbara Knittel

was constructed a low wall of hard rocks covered with mud, running in a north-south direction. Behind this wall were small identically built houses covered with tile. The wings of the street walls were constructed of the same material and there was seldom a tree. This was the outward picture of this small village. The populace stemmed from the Mother colony Rosental. An agreeable remembrance of my early youth period about the people of Bakschai has not been completely obliterated from my memory yet today.

On the date of the Three Holy Kings (Epiphany, January 6) two Crimean wagons (kasten wagon) with eight to ten men from Bakschai came to our village. After the horses were properly taken care of, the men put on different clothes. Each wore a tall conical hat of various colors. A white shirt, decorated with gay-colored ribbons, black trousers and tall top-boots constituted the remainder of the costume. The youngest of them, clothed entirely in white and holding a golden star, played the role of the angel. One of the oldest, with a large natural Hussar-type moustache and a curved sword on his left side, played the part of Herod. They went from house to house and in the front parlor they acted out the event of Herod receiving the message about the newborn King of the Jews. After a short song that sent a thrill through me, Herod turned to his counsel, touched the floor with the sword point, rolled his eye and spoke the words, "What kind of thunderbolt has stirred up my heart, that I travelled in such great haste these many thousand miles?" What his counsel answered I have unfortunately forgotten, but Herod called out: "Thus, my counsel, you advice is good! I will shed childrens blood. The Mother should guard the child, the blood shall sweat through the ribs!"* After each had recited his verse correctly, they spoke together with a full voice:





“A star arose in the East, in the East**

and made salvation known to the world:

known to the world!
Halle-Halle-Halleluja!”

Each was given a full glass of wine and Herod also a coin and then they went to the neighboring house. We children naturally followed after, for we constituted the chief audience. This was one of the most agreeable changes for us in the cold and desolate winter days. And for a long time we sustained ourselves with the three Wiseman from the East and the little angel and Herod of Bakschai.

· So, so mein Rat, dein Rat ist gut! Ich will vergiesen Kinderblut. Die Mutter soll das kindbeschutzen, das Blut soll durch die Rippen schwitzen!”

** “Ein Stern ging auf im Morgenland, im Morgenland und macht! Das Heil der Welt bekannt, der Wet bekannt! Halle-Halle-Halleluja!”

Adschambet and Boranger

By Theodore Eisenbraun

Excerpted from the article, “German Farmers in the Crimea during the period 1806-1941.” Translated by Armand and Elaine Bauer. Printed in the *Heritage Review*, vol. 19, Dec. 1977

Like Bakschai these two Mennonite villages were established on rented land. They belonged to a group of six Mennonite villages, of which Danilowka, Baschlytscha, More and Lustigstal belonged to the Totanai District. (Gebiet).

In our colloquial language these settlements were designated as “Mamischtedorfer.” Why the Mennonites were referred to as “Manisten” is unknown to me. It, however, was not meant to be derogatory. These two villages on rented land differed from the other Mennonite villages principally because of smaller houses and fewer farm buildings in the yard.

The streets were framed with closely planted acacia trees.

In place of street wall there was a string-

straight trench the entire length of the street on both sides, broken only by the entry way to the yard. With the high gable end to the street side, the houses stood by rank and file.

As in all Mennonite villages, the borders of the long fields were as straight as if drawn by a ruler. The methods of operation by the Mennonites differed in some respects from ours. They primarily used well cared for horses as draft animals, while we carried on the hardest field work, sod breaking and crop hauling, with oxen. With these patient animals the Kazap (large Russian) and the Cochol (small Russian) could manage much better, than with horses. If we plugged up the plow in the sod-breaking because of the deep penetration, they suggested that shallow plowing would be better. If we set the harvested grain into large stacks, they made small ones. While in our village the men cleaned the intestines of the slaughtered animals, by them the women did this work. So time and again points of controversy developed not only those by word of mouth, but also those carried in the “Kolonialen” of the “odessaer Zeitung” (Odessa Newspaper). The end of the song was always this, that each could have his own opinion.

Now, I have slipped somewhat off my theme and I don’t believe that anyone from Adschambet or Boranger would have participated in this scholarly dispute. I didn’t make a close acquaintance with the people in these villages.

Beschewli-Ilak

By Theodore Eisenbraun

From the article, “German Farmers in the Crimea during the period 1806-1941,” Fifth Installment printed in the *Heritage Review*, vol. 21, Sept. 1978. Translated by Armand and Elaine Bauer. Reprinted here with permission of GRHS

This settlement too was not a

true village by our standards, but it couldn’t be classified as an estate either. Three brothers, Jacob, Friederich, and Philip Dreher came from the Molotschna, bought the estate of about 1000 dessjatin and settle on three large farmyards. They were considered to be Evangelical Lutheran and therefore belonged to our parish and District. Friederich Dreher was the chairman of our district Court for three years. He died soon after and left a widow with minor children. His brothers leased his portion of the land. It was only shortly before the advent of the Soviet Government in the Crimea in 1920 that his oldest son could take possession of his inheritance.

They were loyal supporters of our cooperative store and Jacob Dreher assisted at times with the management, and also privately with financial assistance.

Philip Dreher fled and escaped the Kulak liquidation and Jacob Dreher left his yard of his own free will and moved to Eupatoria. There I met him in 1934. He was arrested during the mass arrests in 1937. Inquiry about his fate brought neither oral or written information that could be considered secure. So apparently his life was ended in a Soviet concentration camp, as was that of so many, many of his comrades that proceeded him.

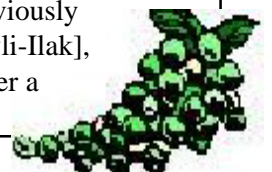


Burtschi

By Theodore Eisenbraun

Excerpt from the article, “German Farmers in the Crimea during the Period 1806-1941,” which was translated by Armand and Elaine Bauer and appeared as part of the fifth installment in the series in the *Heritage Review*, vol. 21, Sept. 1978

To drive to Burtschi from the German villages previously mentioned [Beschewli-Ilak], one had to travel over a high hill oriented in





a east-west direction. The road, in a straight line toward the north, served as the boundary between the Gloeckler and Haar (Dsambuldy-Konrat) estates. The elevation increased over a distance of about five to six kilometers, but not very steeply. At the top was one of the highest points in the Crimean Steppes. Here at the highest point was a stopping place at the site of a triangular wooden frame made with poles six to eight meters long. When travelers arrived at the summit they had to rest the horses. This vantage point provided a wide view of Heavens creation. Toward the south lay the village, as on a flat hand, and the horizon broadened toward the Crimean Hills with its "Tschatayr-Dag." Our German villages with their reddish tiles roofs between green acacia trees, lay like oases in this panorama. On a sunny may morning the green acreage was richly bedecked with steppe flowers. The wild poppy drew a red streak through the green carpet and the wild mustard covered everything with its yellow flowers. In miniature form in the distance one could distinguish that plowing was being done with three pairs of oxen and one pair of horses. Weed-infested cropland was encircled with back, plowed stripes. I regret that I cannot better describe in words the unusual landscape of the Crimean Steppes, but probably only a gifted painter could capture it on a canvas as it naturally occurs. Toward the north one could see only the more distant inhabited places. The near-lying Burtschi and Samau were hidden in their valleys.

When this high point was examined in detail, one could discern little mounds occurring in scattered groups. The triangle of poles was erected on such a mound. These mounds were graves of past inhabitants. This likely was a place where the Scythians laid their dead to rest. These mounds were about 10 to 20 meters in diameter, had a height of one to 2.5 meters and were found virtually on all the higher hills in the

Crimean Steppes. When one dug into these mounds, one found five, square stone plates in the middle. These were about 25 centimeters thick and 90 centimeters wide; two of them were one meter long and the other three 1.80 meters long. Two of the long plates were used as side walls, the two short ones were the head and foot ends and the last served as the cover. In this chamber lay decayed human bones. Based on these findings, we estimated that the Crimean Steppes were populated by nomadic peoples during the times of Abraham and Moses. Thus all people that were in the Crimea for any period of time at all left their tracks behind them: They Scythians their indestructable graves, the Greeks the names of the larger cities*, and the Tatars the names of inhabited places. And we Germans? I think the villages that were established according to specific plans, even though they have Tatar names, will show evidence for a long time to come that Germans had made their homes here.

One drove hardly one kilometer north before one saw various houses on the right built after the German pattern, and also immediately the schoolhouse with its wooden steeple. The acacia stand was thin. The streets and garden walls were built with hard rocks just as the Almighty had made them, and they presented a gray, tragic picture. The little village was settled by renters and the inhabitants altered continuously, except for the three Haar brothers, George, Friedrich, and Alexander who remained until 1914. During WWI George Haar left Burtschi and moved to Bulatschi. Shortly thereafter Friedrich Haar moved to Friedental. After the war, George Haar moved back to Burtschi again. Alexander Haar died in the meantime. When the Red Army over-ran the Crimea in 1920, the gentle George could not find peace and he brought his life to

an early end. In February, 1930 the GPU (Soviet Police) appeared before Friedrich Haar in Friedental and arrested him along with the other "Kulaks." Out of fright the rock man suffered a heart attack and he fell a corpse before his tormenters.

The Burtschi land was very stony and for this reason it did not find favor among the German farmers. It was better suited as pasture for the sheep. In the past the Moldauers from Romania with their large flocks of sheep had been here. They benefitted not only from this rented land but also from neighboring fields, especially at night. One could get good sheep cheese, "Brinsa" in Burtschi at all times.

Byten

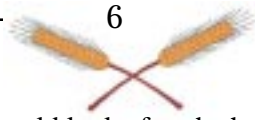
By Theodore Eisenbraun

Translated by Armand and Elaine Bauer and printed as part of the the third installment of the article, "German Farmers in the Crimea during the period 1806-1941." Reprinted here with the permission of GRHS. *Heritage Review*, vol. 19, Dec. 1977.

Byten was our seat of government and our Parish village. It was founded in 1861 by Hessians of Evengelical Lutheran confession. They, however, did not come directly from Germany, but from Kaltshinowka and vicinities of the Tschernigow government. The following families were included: Reimchen, Bechtold, Luft, Schwarz, Faerber, Seibel, Laukert, Haag, Reusswig, Hof, Ollenburger, and Gottfried. The chief magistrate position was held by the following persons: Philip Seibel, Wilhelm Hof Sr., Heinrich Schwarz, and Johann Laukert.

The land of the community ran from the main rail line in the Crimea northwesterly to the Menler estate that belonged to the District of Eupatoria. It had a length of over 12 Kilometers. The outermost northwest corner was called Liefeland, the estate owner Alifanow (Russian) the "Liefllaenner." The land owned by individual families was





variable ranging from 50 to over 400 dessjatin. The community land was not mortgaged in any landbank, as was the downfall with most of the German villages in the Crimea.

On both sides of a rather narrow street lay the farmer yards bordered by whitened stone bricks. The houses with gables and steep roofs peeped through trees and shrubs at equal intervals from one another on the streets. The main street was divided in the middle of the village by a diagonal street, on the side lay the schoolhouse. In front of the schoolyard was the community well with good drinking water. Some of the farmers with larger land holdings had a well in their yard, but these did not have good drinking water. The wells were 30 to 50 meters deep. A large shed was located diagonally across the backyard of the larger farmers. On the schoolyard was located the school with two instruction rooms for over 100 students, and behind it was a teacherage. This yard was as long as the farmers yards and on it was located the cemetery with the verse on the gateway: "Come again children of men." ("Kommet wieder Menschen Kinder")

In 1890 Byten was selected as the Jurisdictional district village (Wolost). The Magistrate's office was located at the north end of the village. Here resided also the District Secretary and the Courier. Later the Magistrates office was made over into a hospital and dispensary. The building sites were provided by the Byten community free of charge, and the expenses were primarily raised by the populace.

The dedication of the Magistrates offices in the month of May was conducted by Russian Priests from Grigorjewka. I can remember this incident with lifelong firmness and I cannot abstain from a short revelation. My Father was one of the three peace officers and as such it was his duty to attend the dedication of the Magistrates offices. As a 13 or 15 year old youth, I had to drive along

so that I could look after the horses during the dedication ceremonies. Here I was exposed for the first time to the pleasing odor of incense. It fogged so sweetly in all the rooms of the building. After the church-like ceremony there naturally was a robust, cold meal with sausage, head cheese, white bread, wine and brandy. We youngsters were given lemonade to drink. The estate owner Friedrich Gloeckler of strong build, in the flower of manhood, could tolerate and had a great capacity for wine and brandy. He said now and again: "How would it be Batjuschka*, if we had another small glass?" So another drink was swallowed for good health, until the time came that the Batjuschka had to be on his way.

Heavily laden the Batjuschka staggered in Gloeckler's and the Secretary's accompaniment to the springed wagon. After an affectionate farewell with many words of thanks he was finally hoisted, through holding and pushing, upon the springed wagon. But the angry Priest pulled him so hard to the other side, that if Gloeckler had not grabbed him promptly on the Riesa** and held fast, he would definitely have landed on the earth on the other side of the springed wagon. But he fell instead somewhat sideways to the seat and with a loud "Hospodi pomilui" (Lord have mercy!) he drove off. This picture was deeply impressed on me.

What made Byten especially popular was the Missionfest. Each year in the middle of September the Missionfest was celebrated in a large shed. Boards were gotten from the lumber yard of a Jew in Bijuk-Onlar (the railroad station). The whole floor of the shed was filled with temporary benches. In the middle of the broadside a raised portion was constructed for a pulpit and for the foot parlor-organ. Then the preparations were complete. In the week before Missionfest, Father and

Mother were completely taken up in work with the preparations for the reception of the guests. Actually many of the guests could not participate in the morning church service. The more springed wagons that were in the yard the day of the festival, the more Father and Mother felt honored. Some Pastors came from the outside as guest speakers. Pastor Baumann from Prischib and Pastor Christen from Adargin were speakers that were gladly seen. Also young missionaries from the Leipzig Mission also made appearances. The deaf-mute school at Worms (Cherson government) often sent a teacher with several deaf-mute students to this festival at Byten. Our countryman, the Missionary Kaiser, told us various things about the India Pagan Mission. The collection was directed to this establishment.

A most amusing occurrence associated with one such festival at Byten likewise I must reveal. It could only have taken place in Byten. Pastor Ferdinand Hoerschelmann from Neusatz was the spiritual leader of the festival for a long time. When he was still young and his beard was black and when he wore clothes with a light summer cap on his head he could easily be mistaken for a Jew or Armenian. He usually came on Saturday afternoon by way of the railroad to Bijuk-Onlar and had to be gotten from there by someone from Byten. This time the farmer that had to provide the transportation sent his unmarried son to the station. A young companion swung himself on the springed wagon and he rode along. Prior to the start of the trip the two youths got half a liter (about a pint) from the tavern and became courageous from drinking. At the station, they looked all around, but could not spy a man that, to them, looked like a preacher. They thought, therefore, that the Pastor would disembark in Talar. Because of the crowd on the station platform, the two comrades had become separated but had





again come together. By this time most of the people that had arrived on the train had left on foot. Then one fellow said to the other: "There is a Jew here, he wants to ride along to Byten" "Tell him, we can take him along," replied the comrade. So Pastor Hoerschelmann walked with the slightly intoxicated comrades. "Do you want to drive to Byten, Jew?" was the brusque question that he was given to hear. Pastor Hoerschelmann perceived then which role he was to play, and replied in earnest: "Yes, I will drive with you to Byten." Thereupon the second hero advanced: "If you buy us a half liter you can drive along." The Pastor then let himself be told how much a half liter cost and gave them the money. After the brandy was obtained the two heroes sat themselves on the back seat of the springed wagon and the Jew had to sit backwards on the coach box. Once on the way, the bottom of the bottle was struck on the flat had so that the cork and a stream of brandy flew out. Then they drank to their good health. Also they offered the Jew the bottle, but he declined. So they came in the happiest frame of mind to Byten. Before entering the village one of the comrades asked: "Who do you want to go to in Byten?" In all earnestness the Jew answered: "I must drive to Father Philip Laukert." (this man was a church trustee for a long time.) The trustee was completely astounded when he saw the strange company drive into his yard. But our good Pastor Hoerschelmann took hold of his suitcase, sprang laughingly from the springed wagon, greeted the trustee, and thereafter he had to shake himself because of laughter. "You, this is the Pastor," whispered one youth to the other. Immediately the intoxication left both heroes and before either the trustee or the Pastor had a chance to look around, they drove at a gallop out of the gate.

The teacher at Byten was highly esteemed. This was merited especially by teacher Gottfried

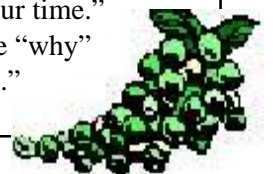
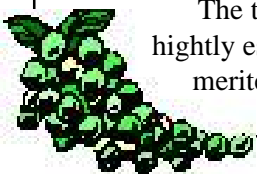
Ahners. He came from Grossliebental near Odessa and was the teacher in Byten from his early years until he died. As the village secretary he took part in all community deliberations. He directed the division of the cultivated land and laid out the plans for its use, that was never altered. He brought orderliness to the village secretarial duties and his books were a classic. To us he was the model of a good teacher. The community demonstrated its thankfulness for it by providing the opportunity for his sons to attend the Neusatz Central School. After his death his son Richard took the position and at the latter times his youngest son Oscar was the teacher in Byten.

When the hogs were slaughtered in late fall and winter the teacher was invited for the evening for "metzlsuppe" and he was driven here and there with a sled. I, together with Richard Ahner, had the good fortune to be representative of these esteemed persons. This honor provided us with a special opportunity to devour food in the true sense of the word. The kreppele (chicken in a greasy sauerkraut) and with it the Crimean wine, was a kingly meal. One had to restrain himself not to overdo a good thing.

As an aftermath to the Missionfest in 1910, we committed ourselves to build a large church in Byten. Through self taxation on the land, we gathered the money we needed to build. The Evangelical Lutheran communities from the bordering Districts Kamar, Alexandrowka, and a small part of Kokei and Saki as well as the Byten District were involved in the building project. There were some outsiders who found various excuses to keep from paying. The community Byten directed the building site to the middle of the village beside the school. The corner stone was laid on Ascension Day. A charter written on

parchment and placed in a glass holder was bricked in on the spot where the altar was eventually placed. The bricks and tile were provided by Jacob Gloeckler from his tile-works at Schiban at cost to himself. The church was dedicated at the Missionfest in the same year. A spacious confirmands drawing room was built on to the church. At the close of Missionfest a church meeting was held. "To a great church belongs also a parsonage with a Pastor," said Pastor Hoerschelmann. After frequent, aroused deliberation, it was moved to build a parsonage. The building site for it, next to the church, was a whole farm yard of about one and half dessjatin and was vacated by Wilhelm Schwarz. In its place he received an inferior yard from the community. Later this same Wilhelm Schwarz made a gift of five dessjatin of good cultivated land to the congregation.

The parsonage was also built of bricks and tile from the tile works of Jacob Gloeckler. He too was the leader of the building commission. Pastor Arthur Hanson was called from Arzis, Bessarbia. He was known to us from having been at Djelal. He accepted the call and became our Pastor. Then after that there were congregation meetings to deliberate over the establishment of a self supporting Byten Parish. The Baltic Evangelical Lutheran congregations in the Crimea became part of our parish. After this action was completed, Pastor Hoerschelmann came again to the congregation now separated from the Neusatz parish and said something like this: "The daughter now has a prettier dress than her old mother in Neusatz. Depressed and with envy the old mother looks down here upon her separated, grown up daughter. Arouse yourselves and help those of us in the Neusatz Parish to build a church in Neusatz suitable to our time." To be sure there were "why" and "by what means." However, the end of





the song was, that we again spit into our hands and assisted in building a new church in Neusatz. In the 1940's these two churches still stood as witnesses of German farmer culture, and the crosses on the steeples provided to the churchgoers, who enjoined their voices with courage in hymns of praise to God on festival days, that they did not live by bread alone. We were not a model of Christian people, no that we were not. There were many hypocrites and wicked people among us, to which I also belonged. But a Sunday without services was like food without salt. Later on a sunny Sunday morning in a Siberian concentration camp I was overcome with homesickness for our Sunday celebration and I sang, as well as I could, with Uhlands Schaefer.

This is the day of the Lord!
Dies ist der Tage des Herrn!

I am alone in a strange land,
Ich bin allein im fremden land,
Where everything about me is
obscure

Wo alles um mich unbekannt
And silent near and far.
Und still ist's nah und fern.
No bell ring calls me
Mich rust kein Glockenklang
To God's house, desolate and
empty,

In's Gotteshaus, das Od und leer,
No more a sermon comforts me,
Mich troestet keine Predigt mehr
Unrefreshed by a choir song.
Erquickt kein Chorgesang.

The Heaven near and far
Der Himmel nah und fern
Is solemnly reserved
Sich feierlich verschlossen hat
My path leads me to labor
Zur Arbeit fuehret mich mein Pfad
Also on the day of the Lord.
Auch an dem Tag des Herrn.

Byten therefore was a center: 1.
For our District (Gebeit, Wolost), 2.
For the fifth Church Parish in the
Crimea, and 3. For its
Missionfest for all Evangelical
Lutheran Congregations in the
Crimea. And if it be God's
will that I again

come home, (to the Crimea), I will
drive to the Missionfest at Byten.

* Apparently a Russian
official (translators)

** Seat of the pants (transla-
tors)

Grunfeld

Excerpt from the article, "German Farmers in the Crimea during the Period 1806-1941," translated by Armand and Elaine Bauer and printed in the *Heritage Review*, vol. 19, Sept. 1978, as part of installment five.

The village Grunfeld (Tatar: Adsch Achmat) was located four kilometers from the railroad station Kolai, and was established by my Great Grandfather Mathias Lohrer. He was 12 years old when he came with his father from a town in Wuerttemberg, unknown to us, to Weinau on the Molotschna. He married Elisabeth Schill. This marriage produced five sons-Jacob, Gottlieb, Mathias, Michael, and Johann-and two daughters-Johanna and Christine. After all the children were grown and some already married, my Great Grandfather bought land in the Crimea in about 1860-1865. Here he settled with four sons; Mathias had died. Later the sons-in-law Wilhelm Siffring and Jacob Krauter also came.

The first years must have been very difficult, according to the following event that was told to us: The winter wheat was just beginning to head out as my Great Uncle Michael and a Tatar were driving around the fields. He said to the Tatar: "We have lived through many poor harvests in the Crimea and if the one this year is poor again, we will likely have to abandon the land." Thereupon the Tatar told him to halt and after getting down off his wagon he spread his coat over the wheat. Then he counted the heads that were under the coat and said cheerfully: "Korkma Schorbaschi," which means "do not fear, you will harvest a very

good crop." This was truly the case and from then on conditions improved. Their lack of knowledge of how to work the heavy soils of the Crimea was the reason for the poor crops during the early years. They had more success with sheep husbandry. When the amount of pasture land was not longer sufficient for their many sheep, they were forced into buying more and more land.

The water question gave them many problems. Only the well on my Great Grandfather's yard provided suitable drinking water. In all other wells the water was slightly salty and could only be used for the cattle. Later on, however, each farmer had an artesian well.

As the wool prices declined, they gave up sheep husbandry and depended entirely upon the cultivated land. Winter wheat was primarily the crop grown. How much land the community or the individual farmer owned, I don't know. My Grandfather Gottlieb Lohrer had about 975 dessjantin (equal to 1060 hectare). The youngest Great Uncle, Johann Lohrer, established the village Altschin with his four sons, three kilometers distant from Grunfeld, that later became famous for its large orchard.

The following industrial establishments were found in Grunfeld: 1) a brick-works with two kilns, 2) a steam-driven mill built in 1900, 3) a locksmith's workshop, 4) a blacksmith shop, and 5) a cabinet-maker shop. Most of the families were fellow members in the cooperative store in Kolai.

The people of Grunfeld early put great emphasis and worth on education. Two of my Uncles, Friederich Lohrer and David Richter were engineers, Jacob Siffring was an agronomist, and Edward Lohrer a teacher. The daughters were sent to school at Halbstadt or Baltikum at Lindheim and Dorpat. The youngsters completed the





Central School or Gymnasium and the commerce School in Simferopol.

Except for Johann Richter all had to leave the village in 1930, and as descendants of the rich Lohrer had to undergo fearful imprisonment and deportation. Many found employment in the Caucasus (region) and were active as teachers, bookkeepers, and similar occupations. Unfortunately, they with all other Russian-Germans were deported to Siberia in 1941. I am not aware that any of our many relatives ever found their way into Germany.

After 1930, I once again visited our home village Grunfeld. How disconsolate and ravaged it appeared!! Most of the houses were abandoned, door and windows stood open, and the cattle roamed about freely. The fences and many buildings were partly torn apart. The tile supposedly were taken to use in construction of a Jewish village. Furniture and other goods had long been removed by the Jews. Later on Russians supposedly were to have settled here. So the German village Grunfeld and its first occupants vanished from the Crimea through the Bolshevik Regime. *

* The section on Grunfeld was apparently written by Ilse Bauman nee Lohrer (Ed.)

“Hilda R., The Deportation from Hebron, Parish Hochheim”

Printed in the Heimutbuch der Deutschen aus Russland, tran. Mathias Steinke, 1973

Hilda R.

At the beginning of the German-Soviet war, I lived with my foster parents, Johannes and Lydia

Storz in Hebron in the Crimea. On the 10th of July, 1941, my uncle was arrested together with eight other former (middle) farmers. When the German Armed Forces bombed Sevastopol for the first time, it was announced to all the Germans on the Crimea, that they would have to be evacuated. Because the railway couldn't provide wagons at once, it took eight to ten days until the evacuation. During the night of the 17th to the 18th of August 1941, all Germans in the county (Rayon) Kolai were brought to the railway station at Kolai and were loaded on to the wagons. We had been told to take clothes to change and provisions for ten days with us. So, both of our families—three women and three children—were, together with their personal things, loaded on to a rack-wagon and brought to Kolai.

Johannes Storz and Adam Heinrich, both of them fathers of a family, had been arrested during the night of the 10th of July. The Germans that came from the Kolchos “Gigant (Giant),” which included the villages of Hebron (Tatar: Bekkasi), Hochheim (Naiman), Meschen and Mesit, came into our train. The wagons were over-crowded (crammed). All the other property – furniture, house, livestock, the hard-earned wheat (the bread for the forthcoming year)—all this was left behind.

In the morning, the chairman of the Kolchos “Giant,” a Jewish man who had been honored in the Lenin order, a good man, held a meeting in front of the wagons. With a voice nearly smothered by his tears, he said he had done all which stood in his power to not give away his people, but it did not work. The only thing he had reached was the promise to put up the people in a similar climate as at the Crimea. He told us the name of the place at the Caucasus to which we would be sent, and we were really

brought there. Unfortunately, I can not remember the name of the place.

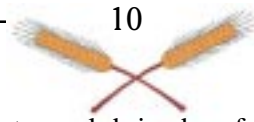
My foster sister, Hildegard Fessler and here family were transported together with me. The name of her husband was Fedja Prochorow—a Russian, who had been raised by Germans and who was confirmed the Protestant way. He decided at he last moment to go with his family. It took ten days to travel to the Caucasus. Twice a day we got soup, water only once a day. When the train was stopped, we got out of it and cooked ourselves something to eat on the stones. At the Caucasus, we came into a Russian village in the region of Ordshonikidse. The Russians were glad because they needed workers. Most of our men had stayed with their families, the participated at once in the work in the fields. I myself hoed corn.

. Exactly one month after this, on the 28th of September, 1941, when the German Armed Forces had bombed the nearest railway station, we were told that we would have to continue traveling again. A couple of days after we were transported again; this time, the journey took more than twenty days. Like on the first “voyage,” again we got a stale soup twice a day. On the 23rd of October we rived in Akmolinsk, which is called “Zelengrad” today. It was already very cold.

The German Kolchos “Thaelmann” (a Germn communist leader) would have like to house us, but it wasn't allowed. There, we would have better livingconditions. Instead, though, in the cold and on a bumpy path, we were brought with coaches to the village of Blagodaschonoje, Clouny Erkenschelik, and were quartered in the house of a Russian family.

In January 1942, the men were drafted into the “Trudarmija” (kind of hard labor), later on, the women who were able to work, were too. Incidentally, the families with the Russian fathers were left at the





Caucasus, where they remained. They were told it was a mistake that they had been brought there and they were free people again.

Thomas Neufeld

I was born on the 15th of October, 1914 in the village of Altenau in the Molotschna, county of Melitopol, region of Saporoshje, Ukraine, as the son of Jakob Neufeld (born in 1876) and Katharina Neufeld, nee Neufeld (born in 1884). I also have one sister. Fate hit hard on us and our relatives in Russia. In February 1919, my father, my uncle, and their friend were shot by the bandits of Machno. My stepfather didn't get on the train with which the abduction to Siberia was carried out. Any questions regarding him remained unanswered.

On the 17th of August, 1941, (Sunday), I was deported from the Crimea to the Caucasus together with my mother and my stepfather; we were given only two hours to prepare for our journey. (You will note here that the story varies, in the above paragraph, Thomas states that his step-father didn't get on the train.) On August the 25th, we arrived at the region of Stavropol at the Caucasus. On the 5th of October, when the German Armed Forces were standing near Rostow, our deportation continued. We arrived in Petropawlowsk in Northern Kasakstan on November 28th-wearing summer clothes in the Siberian winter.

The long journey was terrible and gruesome: only small rations, hunger, lice, and up to 80 people per wagon. At the new destination of our trip, we were brought into a Kolchose, where I worked until the end of January 1942. At the beginning of February that year, I was forced to work (Trudarmija=forced labour) in a camp in Tawda, region of Swerdlowsk/Ural. Our camp was surrounded by a wooden fence 2.5 metres high with barbed wire on top. Inside the fence was a death strip and a small house for an attendant. We were

divided into work-brigades of 40 men each and on the third day, work started. I cam into the second working gang, which had it easier than the first one, because we worked in the lumber mill. Because we were conscientious workers and were performing our duties, we got our daily ration of 850 gr. of bread.

The first gang of workers had to build a factory. Because there was not building technology in those days, the whole work had to be done by hand. In addition to this, the ground was often frozen up to depths from 1.5 metres to 1.8 metres. When the standard had not been fulfilled, there were only 450 gr. of bread for us, which was the main food. Furthermore, there was a mash ("Saterucha") of stagnated rye flour, without fat and very little salt. In contrast to this, the fish were salted so much that they were nearly inedible. But hunger hurts, which we had experienced before (1921, 1933, and later, 1947). Because of the lousy food during the first six months, about one third of us 1992 men were permanently in the hospital. From September 1942 on, the food became a little better and the conditions improved on more time, when food came to us from the USA.

The only days without work were on the 10th, the 20th, and the last day of the month, but on these occasions we were oftentimes searched for knives, scissors and other possible weapons. One average working day lasted twelve hours, while the way to go to work and to go back to the camp took one hour each. We had to give away the money we earned for the construction of planes for the army. Our feet were dressed in shoes made out of bast or sock-like, cotton wool lined cloth shoes, combined with a cotton wool jacket and cotton wool trousers. For bathing there were 10 gr. of soap.

Anyone who would have

secretly gone away from his work (from the camp this would have been impossible), had to face five days in the lock-up with 300 gr. of bread and water and a soup ("Balanda") on every fifth day. This was the revenge towards us, the ones without protections or rights.

Our families, who had been left behind had it even worse-no food, no apartments, no burning material, no warm clothes, and the freedom to move only within a radius of 3 kilometers. The women and children were trying to save themselves of dying of hunger by gleaning beneath the snow. Often, [the few ears they found were taken away] by Kasaks (Cossacks) and [the people] were hit by them.

When you needed to go to a doctor or a pharmacy, you needed written permission of the commanding officer, otherwise there would have been a punishment. In the camp, there were doctors coming from our lines; they did whatever they could, but there wasn't enough medicine. The hardest forced labor was cutting wood, which had to be done my our German innocent women and very young girls (16 years and older). Because of the inhumane treatment, about 80 percent of them never came back from the woods, buried far away from home. So did my father-in-law die in a communist concentration camp in 1942 and with him, thousands of other men died too.

After the end of the war, we were discharged from the concentration camp, but we remained banned. Even at holiday times, we were not allowed to leave the place. With the permission of the MGB (ministry for state security), to which we were subordinated after the end of the war, the families were brought together again. So me too, came, accompanied by the militia back to my family in Kasakstan in 1951. I passed the house of my mother, but was not allowed to visit her after ten years of





being departed.

In our camp in Tawda, about 15 percent of the prisoners died during the first two or three years. In autumn 1944, after the retreat of the Germans from the Crimea, the Tatars, Greeks, and Gypsies were also deported from there to the Ural and had a compulsory registration every month at the headquarters. For 44 years I have worked in Russia (from 1930 to 1974); for this I got a pension of 46 rubles, my wife didn't get any pension.

Molla Elli (Adschi-A-ul) *

Excerpted from the article, "German Farmers in the Crimea during the period 1806-1941." By Theodore Eisenbraun. Translated by Armand and Elaine Bauer. Printed in the *Heritage Review*, vol. 19, Dec. 1977

This was a true German village of only Evangelical Lutherans. The people came from the Mother colonies of Friedental and Kronental (Bulganak). The land ownership consisted of two possessions: Adschi-A-ul the larger and Molla-Elli the smaller. That is why in the first years the name Adschi-A-ul (Adschaul) was used more often than Molli-Elli. The village lay, however, on the smaller possession. That is why the official name was Molla-Elli. On the southern end of the village in the deep valley that ran over Jusler, Taschly-Da-ir to Teschly-Konrat, lay the community well that had a lot of good drinking water. From here the water had to be hauled in small casks up the small hill to the water-barrel that stood in front of each house.

Most of the founders of the village were dead by 1915. Their sons divided their fathers land equally and each had his own yard. At this time the following farmers occupied the land:

Theobald Weiss, Friederich Zeissler, Robert Weiss, Theobald Weiss, Andreas Gross, Johannes Guentner, Sebastian Zeissler, Karl Guentner, Johannes Weiss, and another

Theobald Weiss. The three indentially names Theobald Weiss' were indented with their fathers name after the Russian custom. The first was Petrowitsch, the second Robertowitsch, and the third Ivanowitsch. Robert Weiss held the District Office of Justice of the Peace for three years.

*Founded 1882 (Translators)

The Crimea Jakob

From Rudolf Zeiler, *Heimutbuch Landsmannschaft der Deutschen aus Russland*, 1965, tran. Mathias Steinke

It was a rainy summer day. I sat in a shabby, dark tavern in our little county town at the Romainian-Russian border and looked melancholy into the gray shade of rain, which was sometimes blown against the dirty windows by the rain. Then, I heard the roaring laughter from the neighboring table where some happy farmers sat. I turned and saw the Crimea-Jakob, a poor tenant farmer from our neighbor parish.

With an old felt hat that rakish in the nape, he was vehemently waving his arms and it seemed that he tried to explain something to the other companions but they didn't listen. His nose was glowing from the wine and his voice cracked. Besides, he got the hiccups so that his words weren't to be understood in the tumult. His exterior was as unusual as his biography, that I later got to hear. He had big water-blue eyes that stared sad and at the same time obstinate into vacancy, a seal-moustache, a small, daring bent nose and a world-weariness in his voice.

"Such a stupid, mean rabble," he abused while he arranged his untidy clothes, "One ought to fetch everyone of them one."

"Why?" I asked him, because I saw that he waited for it, to pour his

heart out to me. Drunks have this habit.

"Because they always say Crimea-Jakob to me, this stupid rabble," he replied with a grudge in his voice.

"But isn't that your name?" I asked insincerely. I had never heard another name.

"Rall is my name, Jakob Rall!" Or do you want to make me angry?" and he looked at me quite menacingly.

"Please excuse, dear Rall, I didn't want to offend you!" I tried to calm him down and poured into his glass at the same time.

Impressed by my politeness or by the full glass, the face of the Crimea-Jakob smiled conciliatorily. As I saw it, I had won his confidence, and I asked him encouragingly: "How did you get this strange nickname?"

"Well schoolteacher," he began, wiping off his wet seal-moustache with both hands, "the following happened. My late, the beast..."

"You were married? I didn't know that."

"Sure, sure."

"And your wife is dead?"

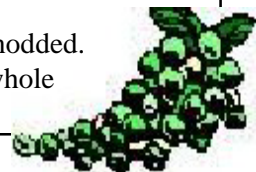
"So half and half. That means-for me, she is dead. She serves now in Kishinew. Well, she was always such a beast."

"How did it happen?" I asked curious and at the same time a little bit amused.

"Well, it's my sad biography. Everyone makes a blunder in his life. And so I married Dina Radler. She looked very beautiful and excitingly feminine. I loved her. But she always made fun of my moustache. Well, I pub one over her and everything was OK again. She made the best pastry roll and we could have lived happy and content, but modest, if there didn't come a swindler to our parishes. Schulz was his name."

"Ah?" I said and was totally surprised.

"Yes, yes," he nodded. "With this guy, the whole misery came to us."





'People,' he talked big, 'how could you live on the little bit of land? No wonder that you don't come out of the calamity. *Look around-the world doesn't stop behind your parishes. Russia over there is big, endlessly big. In the Crimea, the Caucasus, behind the Urals is land to get. As much as you want, and cheap. Dirt cheap. Come to us, and I'm sure that everyone of you will become a farmer with a [large amount] of landed property.' The guy could speak like a book.

"Yes, yes," I said so that he felt understood. "Russia is big, but it became a fate for some."

"But especially the guy, the Schulz, understood and turned Dinas head. No morning, no evening without her sentences, 'A sleepyhead is who doesn't seize the opportunity! So much beautiful land and so cheap!'"

"You believe in all," I replied to her, "what he is talking about. One knows this kind of people. They always want to make a profit."

"But the Schulz said it," she continued, "or haven't you heard it?"

Of course I heard it. It sounded authentic. But I had no good feeling about it.

"Do you really mean," I asked Dina, "that it's not enough what we have here?"

It seemed that the guy, the Schultz smelled the rat and that he was losing his deal. So, he visited Dina and what was he asking? "Don't you want to come personally and look, lady?"

And what do you think she replied? "Yes, that's a good idea," she said to him, "I will go over there with you tomorrow."

"You understand," sighed the Crimea-Jakob and I nodded silently. "from now on, I couldn't convince her. From this damned hour-God excuse my sin! I couldn't speak with Dina anymore. She wanted the Crimea, where it's warm all the time and sunny and where people needn't work so hard. If she was diligent and fast so far, she became lazy and careless

through the Schulz. All went down to ruin in the house and garden, everywhere weeds, everywhere dirt. It was so hard to see. But no, god-forsaken, all she said was, "To the Crimea, to the Crimea!" And where-ever she talked about it, they laughed in our village, they laughed mocking, and you know, I became ridiculed by the gossip of the people. It came like a poison that wanted to burn me very slow.

Dina wasn't alone. Others wanted to move there, into Russia, into Crimea. The guy twisted more than half of our village around his little finger. "Yes, that comes," I nodded, "and you can't make nothing against it." "Yes," he agreed with me and put down the glass after a further gulp, "and who didn't want to go over there said: 'The Dina and the Jakob, they were one and they will be one.' And with that gossip, they had me in a trap. If Dina wants it, Jakob also wants it, and they asked, 'When will be move, into Russia, into Crimea?' Everytime, in the morning in the field, in the evening when I cam from the field, they asked and asked. Even if I told them that not I, but Dina was bewitched by the guy, the Schulz, they nodded and thought that he won't tell us because of his bad conscience, nothing else but conscience."

"That they are thinking," I nodded and called after the fat hostess to pour again in our glasses.

"It is my treat," I whispered to her and nodded encouragingly to the Crimea-Jakob. "Yes it is so."

"I had no good feeling," he continued, "you can believe me! But as I came home from a tavern five years ago, I heard the cow low in the cowshed. I heard it, although I was very drunk. Goodness, she hadn't done anything all the hours, she hasn't milked the cow, whose tight udder had began to hurt. And even the buckets for milking weren't clean.

I rushed into the chamber, thinking she was sleeping, but she lay on the bed with her best dress and read, and do you know what she was reading?"

"Well?" I asked tensed.

"They call it propectus. Before, she read quite nothing instead of the Bible sometimes. 'Dina,' I said to her, 'have you let someone turn your head?' But, she didn't hear me."

"No, no." I said, to encourage him that someone is listening.

"I took the papers with the many pictures, the big letters and the many numbers on it, which they call pro-spectus or whatever, threw them into the fireplace, into the glowing fire, that they burned and charred, like they had the pestilence."

He shook his body, and it seemed that he was disgusted with it still today. He took another gulp before he continued, "And after I took the first comer bucket and milked the cow, and finally-well you already know..."

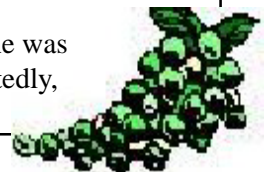
"Yes, yes," I said, "I know it," to let him go on, to continue to pour out his heart to me.

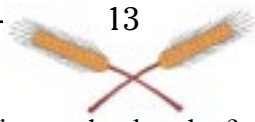
"And really," he continued, "the creature stopped to bellow and I breathed again. But then, after I brought the bucket with the fresh milk into the kitchen to thte cool-hole, I stood and listened to hear if Dina stood up, the beast. But the house was quiet, deserted like. As I came into the bedroom, she wasn't there. She was away, disappeared without leaving a trace. But, she won't have gone to the Schulz, I thought to myself. The man ensnared quite every woman. But she didn't see that. Where else could she be but in the tavern?"

"A heavy summer rain came down, like today, 'Yes, where else could she be?' I set out for it"

"And was she really there?" I asked to give him time to breath and to take a fresh gulp of from his glass.

"In fact, yes, she was there." He said excitedly, "and suddenly I





knew why she was wearing her best dress. And really, after I IIIIlooked through the haze in the tavern, saw her dancing with the Schulz. The scoundrel!”

“I went into the milling crowd of dancers to reach them. But Dina and Schulz laughed and danced away. My head swam like a merry-go-round and I went down exhausted on a chair. But then, the dance stopped and Dina and Schulz came to my table. I don’t know whether they already sat there before, and Dina said to me, ‘Jakob,’ she said, ‘don’t you want? Like here now, we can have it over there all the time and without the drudgery like here.’ I didn’t look at her you know, I felt shame for her and for me. But she talked to me like a child and said, ‘Her, that is the Franz Schulz! He is the best man for [helping us] move to Russia. Let’s try.’

“I felt that the Schulz with his oily face came nearer to me. My fists clenched. How he smelled of rotgut! Then this scoundrel said, ‘You can’t have it so cheap every day. Not for so little money. But,’ and he raised his hands like an ape, ‘as you want. Who risks nothing, won’t win. And?’ I wanted to reply but he went away to other victims for his swindling, without even paying attention to Dina anymore who looked after him very flabbergasted. But he had got from us what he wanted, he made a bargain. And he met a lot like Dina.”

“Come on,” I said to Dina, “we’ll go home.” And I went with her outside while the others were dancing again and the ground under the tavern pounded. When we were home, what did the beast say to me? She will seek a divorce if I don’t move away with her to the Crimea. She can’t endure it here with the cold and ugly weather as a small [land]holder anymore.

“Nothing helped, no urging and no thrashing. My Dina was bewitched. What should I do? I loved my wife, God knows it. I wanted to have peace. So, the next day I went to Franz Schulz. You don’t know this

land profiteer, schoolteacher? Some praise him as a locator and founder of our daughter colonies, some condemn him into the lowest hell. This was a person, I tell you! I got to know him unfortunately! In his youth, he was a poor wretch. Then, he began to work as a cattle dealer. He bought cattle cheap from the German settlers, brought them to Odessa and sold them there at a profit. In a short time, he became a rich man. But when has a person got enough, this scum of God? Never! So Franz Schulz wanted more and more. After the cattle deals, he threw into the land-deals. There one can become even richer with clever manipulations. He met realtors and learnt the damned business very thoroughly.”

“Some do that,” I said and took a gulp trying to calm down his fast speech.

“At that time, the Russian landowners, you have t know,” he continued, ignoring my objection, “needed lots of money for their own expensive lives in the foreign countries. And they had enough land, more than enough. They got thousands of desjantines (Russian square measures) as gifts from the Tsar after the Turkish wars because they participated as bigwits in these wars. You know it better, schoolteacher.”

“Yes, yes,” I agreed with him, “I know it all.”

“What else should they do with all the deserted, wild steppe?” he continued and raised his hands to show me the uncertainty. “Franz Schulz seized the opportunity. First he bought small lots and sold them to landless German settlers with a considerable profit. After that, he bought thousands of desjatines, even with all-lease villages, complete with houses and equipment and founded German villages. So, many daughter colonies arose in the southern Russian steppe. In every one of the new settlements, there was one of his

many sons, sons-in-law or a relative with some hundreds of desjatines. The wealth of this land speculator became legendary. Because the prices went up by leaps and bounds, he expanded his field of activity. He bought huge landed properties in the Crimea and in the Caucasus and also found German settlers to whom he sold this land with enormous profit. What did he care that the Russian people begna to grouch and their priests and politicians spoke about a German occupation? What did he care if a lot of German settlers perished because of failed land speculation? The deal with land was his kingdom of heaven.”

“And you?” I asked because I was curious and impatient. “How did you manage it?”

“As I came to him, he had just bought a big noble estate with several thousand desjatines. Dina flew into a rage when she heard it, [mad] that I won’t go to the Crimea. So she wouldn’t go, and people would laugh at her. So, I purchased three hundred desjatines. The conditions weren’t bad. We had to pay ten rubles for each desjatine at once and we could use the land. The rest of the amount we got from a bank in Odessa as mortgage to pay back in yearly installments plus the payable interest in sixty years.”

“So why should the land hungry farmers not take the bait? There were more and more German settler, and there was land to sell. The hunger for land became a real greed for land in the German parishes. I sold my little farm of ten desjatines and moved to the Caucasus. The ground was good and was supplied with possibilities for watering. One could obtain good harvests. A new German farmer ‘island\ was in the process of development.”

“But then came the big setback, the big misfortune. I will never forget this night. Since some days some of saw something on





our way to the hills and talked a lot about it. Our farms in the Caucasian mountains were far away from each other. As we looked out the window late one evening, we saw an odd bright light spread out over the mountains. We thought that some farms above us were on fire and many of us ran out to help, then the people who went up came back with panic in their eyes, 'The Tsherkesses! Save your lives!' they shouted. "The Tsherkesses in rebellion!" Most of us could do nothing else but run on bare feet. Only some, like Dina and I, could harness two of the best horses to a light weight coach and drive away in the confusion. After this rebellion of the wild Caucasian mountain tribes, the rich harvest in the fields were burnt and those who didn't flee, were killed very cruelly. We were glad we saved our lives."

"So we came back to our old native place, even poorer than we were some years before. This the rich Franz Schulz didn't care about. We were the beggars. And no one cared about us betrayed German settlers." The Crimea-Jakob took a longer break, smoked his pipe, and spit contemptuously on the ground and stared in front of him with his sad, water blue eyes.

"It's all over," I tried to comfort the Crimea-Jakob.

"Yes, it's all over. But as we came back, we were poor like church mice, the beast left me and went to Kishinew. And what else is she there, the housekeeper of this villain, the Schulz. She couldn't endure the poverty, this large landed property owner. She wouldn't realize, why it came as it came. 'Not all of the dreams will be fulfilled' I said to Dina several times, 'In a pinch, we can make it even here.' 'In a pinch,' she screamed, 'In a pinch! Do you think we will ever live in misery: You are a sleepyhead!' she said as if it were my fault. 'What does that get us? Why didn't you move to the Crimea?'"

Why have you let him talk you into buying

land in the Caucasus? You should have bargained for [the Crimea]. But stay here where you are, I will go to Kishinew.'

"What else could I do? I built a house again and became a tenant. I make a poor living. One has to be content, even if one is poor, then it is ok. And at home, no one gets lost. At the home hearth [in our native place], there is always bread and a roof over the children, both for the lucky and the unlucky. Only that they are so unjust to me, as if I did something wrong. They laugh about me and if they see me, they won't believe anything I say. I can't endure it. I can't endure it..." he repeated

CRIMEAN RESEARCH

Researching our Germans from Russia ancestors in the Crimea requires some different tactics from those used for other areas in Russia. Unlike Bessarabia, few original church books have been filmed by the LDS church for the Crimean villages thus far. The few that are available represent only a few villages and a short time frame. The same is true of the villages represented in Dr. Karl Stumpp's epic book, "The Emigration of German to Russia in the Years 1763 to 1862." Census records have not yet come to light, and few village histories exist. Lists of founding families for most villages are non-existent. So, where do we turn for information? One answer is the records of the St. Petersburg Lutheran Constrictory.

To date, the Lutheran St. Petersburg records are one of the only resources available to the Crimean German-Russian researcher. However, these records cover only the period from 1833-1885 and represent only those who belonged to the

Lutheran faith, or married into the Lutheran faith. Rumors exist that additional St. Pete's records exist in the Russian archives for the years after 1885, however, they have not yet been filmed by the LDS, and the archives in Russia are currently closed due to lack of funds.

For the period prior to 1833, when the Lutheran churches were assembled into the Constrictory of St. Petersburg, we are left with an almost total loss of records save the few original church records that have been filmed for the villages of Neusatz and Zurichtal. For the period after 1885, the same problem exists. Few original records have been filmed, and those represent only a choice few years in the Neusatz and Zurichtal parishes.

Filmed Catholic records represent only the village of Rosental for the years 1847-1865. Mennonite and Separatist church records are not represented at all. Interfaith marriages were few, leaving us with few resources for those who did not belong to the Lutheran faith. So where do we turn from here?

We do have some options, and there is light at the end of the tunnel. Some of the village coordinators have done extensive work on their villages. A few individuals have compiled extensive village listings and surname listings, and have located some founding family listings. Efforts are now underway to compile a bibliography of articles, books, films, and other materials pertinent to the Crimean village. Articles about the Crimea in the German language are being translated. A new Crimean web site is now available online, and a Crimean listserv has been started to aid people in locating others who may have information that can be of help to you in your research.

Efforts are also underway to locate additional films through the LDS that may contain materials from the German villages. Compilation of a surname/village database is





the in the early stages. Extractions from the St. Petersburg records are underway, and the results will continue to be posted to the Crimean Web Site and Odessa Web Site as they are completed. Index cards containing information about Germans living in the Crimea have been microfilmed and are available through the LDS. A record retrieval effort has been discussed, and the list goes on.

Eugene and I, along with many others, have joined in an effort to provide information, research tips and helps, film locations, and other items of interest to the Crimean GR researchers. However, the success of this endeavor depends on the continued support and volunteer work of our fellow Crimean GR researchers. Extractors are in short supply, databases can only be compiled with available data, and only so much work can be completed through the efforts of a select few.

The St. Petersburg records supply the primary resource for the time periods they cover. A group effort to compile existing informational resources supplies yet another. The individual efforts of those involved in active research in the Crimea will add still another resource to our incomplete database of information. Through the work and dedication of those willing to contribute to the effort, progress will continue to be made. And hope lies eternal...

Kijabak

By Theodore Eisenbraun

Excerpt from the article, "German Farmers in the Crimea during the period 1806-1941." Translated by Armand and Elaine Bauer. Printed in the *Heritage Review*, vol. 19, Dec. 1977. Reprinted here with permission of GRHS

As a colony, Kijabak was daughter of Byten. This land area was acquired by purchase by the Byten community and settled by those that came later. Only two new families settled in the village and these were Gudi and Littau, both had

belonged to a Baptist community.

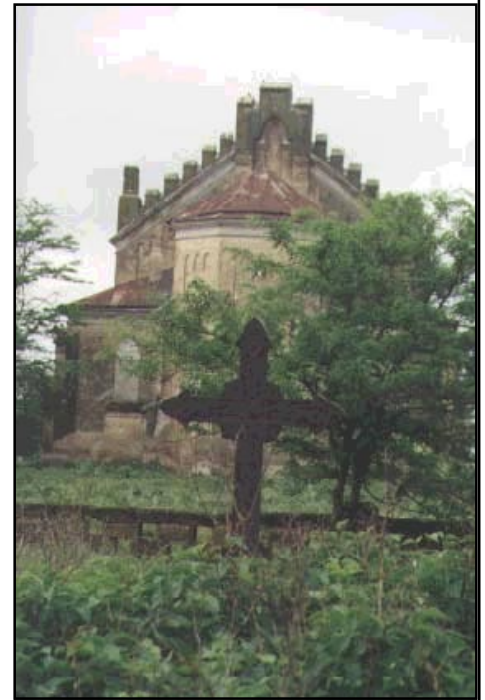
The yards were not built in an unbroken manner. There were empty yards between the built-up yards. These were separated from the street with red, sawed rocks set against and upon one another into stone walls. For the same reason, the row of trees on both sides of the street were not evenly spaced. The street, according to our notion, was much too wide. Later by community agreement the street walls were pushed forward 21 meters on both sides of the street and still the street was wide enough. To the last, the street did not have a closed unity. The main street was crossed by a diagonal street in the middle of the village. Here also was the school yard with a small cottage for a school but without a teacherage.

In the first year of the twentieth century, the people of Kijabak built a large schoolhouse with a spacious teacher residence. This forward step was borne in greatest part by Georg Reusswig. He exchanged his land in Byten with his neighbors living on land owned in Kijabak and left Byten. In a short time, he built four identical yards for himself and his three grown up sons. These four yards made an impression on travelers because of the large houses, on whose roofs were displayed the date of the year with colored tile, and by the spacious barns and sheds. However, they could not enjoy their luck very long. The youngest son, already married, fell in World War I as a Russian soldier.

The oldest son died in the prime of his life from a serious illness. He (Georg) and his wife wanted to visit their old home in Tscherizigowen once more, but they did not get there nor did they come back to Kijabak. The robber chief Machno* carried on a campaign of murder and burning in Jekaterinosslow and in northern Taurien during this time. This band raided German colonies, murdered the men and supplied itself with the

provisions and German vehicles. Railroad trains were raided, plundered and many passengers horribly murdered. The good old Reussig and his wife very likely fell into the hands of this devil in human form and, as Germans, their fate was sealed.

Before the village was completely built up, it came under communist authority. They not only built up the empty yards, but also brought about the deterioration of the previously established buildings.



As we were driving from Simperofol to Odessa, we saw on the prairies this large church in the Crimea. This village has not yet been identified but this was a former Catholic church. According to a local Ukrainian who is Czech, the village included Germans and Czechs.

Photos courtesy of Michael Miller, Germans from Russia Heritage Collection, The Libraries, North Dakota State University, Fargo, ND, Travel to Crimea, Ukraine and the former German villages, May 17 - 21, 1998.

Krim-GR is a publication dedicated to serving the interests of descendants of the Crimean colonists.

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