

KRIM-GR

German & Swiss Crimean Colony Genealogy Newsletter

Volume 1 Number 1 Winter, 1999

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From the Editors:

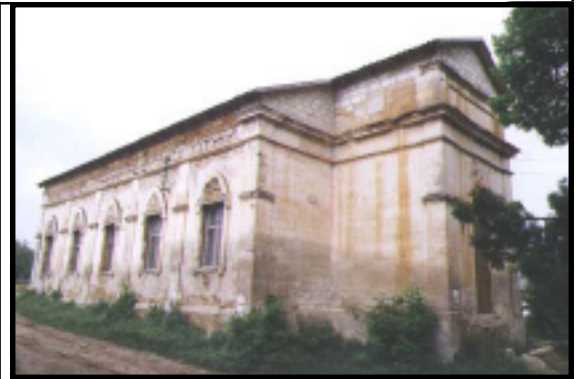
Greetings to you, the readers of this first edition of the *KRIM-GR* newsletter. Gene Baer, editor-in-chief, and Deb Beick, production and circulation editor look forward to using this newsletter as a means of serving you our readers and as a means of getting to know you.

Along with welcoming you we want to tell you a bit about the goals and purposes of this publication. We want this newsletter to serve you the readers. We want the newsletter to contain material that will be helpful to you as you pursue your genealogy interests, to include information that will help you better understand the Crimean colonies from which your ancestors probably came, to help you learn more about the areas to which they came in the US, and, perhaps most of all, to offer you interesting and even entertaining articles and illustrations.

We also want this newsletter to be one that helps us get to know one another better. We think that a good way to accomplish this purpose is to publish your stories and pictures, both your very own and those of your ancestors. So, if you have an interesting story or photos to share, send them to Gene Baer, editor-in-chief.

Another way we think we can help one another is with a Q & A column in each issue. If you are looking for some of your relatives or ancestors or have a question about anything dealing with your ancestors, Crimea, and such, send those to Gene, too. If Deb or Gene has an answer, we'll publish both the question and answer in the next newsletter. If we can't answer it, hopefully, one of your fellow readers can.

So, let's make this a newsletter created by and for all of us. Let's make it useful and fun!

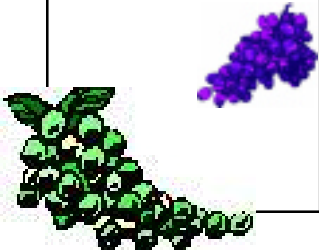


Former Lutheran Church, Zuerichtal, Crimea. Photo courtesy of Michael Miller, Germans from Russia Heritage Collection, North Dakota State University

Welcome to the first issue of the *KRIM-GR* Newsletter! My name is Debbie Beick and my research efforts in the Crimea started with the search for my mother's grandparents. Frustrated with the lack of any cohesive research materials for the region of the Crimea, I began accumulating anything I could find that related to this region and our German ancestors who lived there. Although my search eventually led me to the St. Petersburg records, I found that my families did not enter this region until the 1860's and after. And, unfortunately, the microfilms for these records end in 1885. Much of the information I required was for the time period after that.

So it seemed my quest had just begun. Where could I find more information on the Crimea? Were there any other microfilmed records for the Crimea other than the St. Pete's? Where do I even begin to look for records? Why couldn't I find my villages on any maps? These and many more questions inspired me to begin a full scale hunt for anything and everything that could be found out about the Germans who lived in the Crimea, the history of the Crimea and the peoples who lived there, old maps of the Crimea, in short, anything that might be helpful to me in my quest.

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Welcome

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My search connected me with many other genealogists who were asking the same questions and who were also finding few answers to these questions. It became apparent to me that an organized research effort was needed and with the help of many others, this effort has now begun. This newsletter, the KRIM-GR list serv, and the KRIM-GR web site are the result of the effort to organize and share the information that is available and to connect Crimean researchers with those people who might be able to help them in their search. It is my hope that through the concerted efforts of those involved, that the GR 's who have ties to the Crimea might be able to answer some of the perplexing questions that plague them.

At the current time, many efforts are underway that I hope will help in this effort. Extractions of the St. Petersburg Lutheran Parish records for the parishes of Neusatz, Zurichthal, Simperopol, and Sevestaspol, Crimea are in progress. An effort to locate further church books that may have been microfilmed by the LDS is underway. Contacts have been made with the Salt Lake City LDS in an effort to locate further records. Translations from German to English of several articles pertaining to the Crimea is almost complete. New listings of Crimean villages have been compiled and will be printed in subsequent newsletters and posted to the KRIM-GR web site. These and many more projects are currently in the works.

There are many people who have helped to get these efforts off the ground: Gene Baer, who graciously volunteered to edit and compile this newsletter and generally "do whatever is needed," Dale Wahl, who has provided much needed information, advise, and moral support for this project and who had already begun the grass roots effort to expand from, Michael M.

Miller, who has generously provided the web space and technical support for the

KRIM-GR list serv,

and especially the many people who have cheerfully volunteered to extract records, translate articles, hunt down information, and share their research. Without the efforts of these fine people, these projects would not have become a reality.

It is my sincere hope that by combining our efforts, both present and future Crimean GR researchers may be able to find answers to the questions they now are asking. It is also my hope that through the efforts of the people involved in these and future projects we may all be able to locate at least some of our missing ancestors. It gives me great pleasure to hear the success stories of those people who after years of searching have been able to locate their ancestors villages, birth, death, and marriage records, or simply answer a perplexing question that they have not been able to find answers for before.

Please feel free to contact me at any time with questions, concerns, suggestions as to how we can make this newsletter more informative, suggestions on things you would like to see in the newsletter in the future, resources that are available for research, or just to share your stories. My e-mail address is debbie@icehouse.net. My address is 703 W. Kiernan, Spokane, Wa 99205. I can be reached at (509) 327-9115. I'd love to hear from you!



Kronental, Crimea: Photograph by Michael M. Miller, Germans from Russia Bibliographer NDSU Libraries, Fargo, ND, Crimea, May 1998.

KRIM-GR Listserv

KRIM-GR: Crimean Germans from Russia Electronic Discussion Group A listserv for subscribers who are interested in Germans from Russia genealogy, research and family research oriented specifically to Crimea (Krim) today located in Ukraine.

KRIM-GR provides another means of discussion and communication for persons interested specifically in Crimean Germans from Russia Research.

Guidelines for sending messages: The KRIM-GR, self-moderated, open-subscription discussion groups provide a means of communication for persons interested in the history, culture, and folklore of the Germans from Russia.

Subscribers are expected to use restraint when replying, avoiding unsupported critical statements, unacceptable language, non-related information, and attacks on individuals.

— Michael M. Miller, Listserv Owner

Features: open subscription, self-moderated, archived

Possible topics of discussion: Crimean family history, Crimean village & parish histories, Crimean oriented news from the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia (AHSGR, Lincoln, Nebraska), Crimean oriented news from the Germans from Russia Heritage Society (GRHS, Bismarck, North Dakota), Crimean oriented news from the Germans from Russia Heritage Collection (North Dakota State University Libraries, Fargo, North Dakota), new book (Crimean oriented) announcements and reviews, Crimean oriented news from Canada, United States, Germany and the former Soviet Union, Crimean oriented workshops, newsletters, seminars, conferences, and tours, anything that concerns Crimean Germans from Russia research

What you need: computer, modem, communications

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software, e-mail access

How to subscribe:

1. Send an e-mail message to
LISTSERV@LISTSERV.NODAK.EDU

2. Send one line of text in the message section which reads: SUBSCRIBE
KRIM-GR [YOUR FIRST NAME]
[YOUR LAST NAME] (For example:
SUBSCRIBE

KRIM-GR KATRINA SCHWARTZ)

3. A welcome message and instructions will be sent to your e-mail address.

Other information: The list server address to use for list commands is
LISTSERV@LISTSERV.NODAK.EDU
The posting address for messages to the entire list is

KRIM-GR@LISTSERV.NODAK.EDU

To leave the list (unsubscribe) send e-mail to

LISTSERV@LISTSERV.NODAK.EDU
with the following command in the body of the e-mail: SIGNOFF KRIM-GR

To suspend mail temporarily without unsubscribing send e-mail to
LISTSERV@LISTSERV.NODAK.EDU
with the following command in the body of the e-mail: SET KRIM-GR
NOMAIL

To resume receiving messages send e-mail to
LISTSERV@LISTSERV.NODAK.EDU
with the following command in the body of the e-mail: SET KRIM-GR MAIL

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This page designed by Michael Ernst
Last modified July 16, 1998

Published by North Dakota State

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URL: [http://](http://www.lib.ndsu.nodak.edu/gerrus/listkrimgr.html)

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Cemetery, Neusatz, Crimea. Photo courtesy of Michael Miller, Germans from Russia Heritage Collection, North Dakota

The Crimea

Translated by Armand Bauer

The Crimea lies in the south part of European Russia. This is a beautiful, fertile peninsula jutting into the Black Sea. Based on nature of the soil, climate, and precipitation, the Crimea is divided into two different land areas.

In the north are steppe lands and in the south a mountain range.

The northern part is a continuation of the steppe land of South Russia, known as the Nogai Steppe. After the Tatars left the steppe area and went to Turkey, these desolate, nearly level lands were transformed into productive cultivated lands. In the vicinity of the town of Simferopol the steppe lands terminate, and the mountainous region begins.

The main railroad track through the mountains, generally known as the Jaila, runs from Sevastopol in an easterly direction to Feodosia. The

tracks can be seen in lovely valleys. Especially charming are the valleys in the mountains that are located on the south side of the Taurischen berge (Taurien hills), as well as those along the entire southern coastline. This area (the south part) has a particularly nice climate. In this area there is hardly any notice of the cold north and northeast winds that often rage across the steppes of South Russia causing dust clouds in the summer and fierce blizzards in the winter. For that reason, there is an abundance of vegetation. The oak trees maintain a green leaf canopy the year around. Also here grow naturally the evergreen laurel, olive trees, and fig trees. Nut and fruit trees are among the common trees growing in woodlands.

The southern slopes of the mountains are covered with vineyards that extend to the Black Sea, and the wine grapes and the wine produced here from them have a good acceptance in the entire Russia realm, extending even beyond its borders. Natural springs and roaring waterfalls beautify the entire area. Added to these are mountains which at times are obscured by the clouds, and the sea extending further than the eye can see, that greet and add beauty to the eyes of the wanderer.

The mountain valleys are the home of the Tatars. These peoples are pleasant (agreeable) and live a very simple life-style. Their shelters are huts that are covered with earth. Sometimes the dwellings are carved out of rocks (or are in a clearing among the rocks). Many also are hidden in arbors. Everywhere there are herds of goats and flocks of sheep.

The Crimea in a period of a thousand years has had various peoples as its residents. In prehistoric times this was home to Asiatic nomads, especially the Scythians and Taurians to name some. The peninsula derived its name Tauris from the last-named group. After

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German built house--Zuerichtal. Photo courtesy of Michael Miller, Germans from Russia Heritage Collection, North Dakota State University

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them came the Greeks who founded rich colonies, among others was Chersones that lay south of the present day town of Sevastopol, whose ruins were excavated in more recent times. A short time before the birth of Christ, the King of Pontus had his residence in Patekoptia, now known as Kertsch. Historical monuments (memorials) that tell of those times can be found on the Mithridatesberge at Kertsch.

In the thirteenth century Tatars settled in the Crimea; they formed the Crimean Chanat (khanate) with its principal town Baktischisarai that to this day, more than any of the towns in the Crimea, has maintained Tatar characteristics. At the same time the Tatars came the Genoese also came. These lived primarily in Jalta (Yalta) and Feodosia.

South of Bakschisarai lies the old Karaimen town of Tschufut-KalB on a precipitous, rocky slope. During the second half of the fifteenth century the Crimea came under the control of Turkish Sultans. Since 1783, this beautiful piece of real estate has belonged to Russia. The Czarina Katharine won this pearl for the Russian Empire.



Iron cross, North Dakota Cemetery. Photo courtesy of Michael Miller, Germans from Russia Heritage Collection, North Dakota State University

**SCHWABISCHE
“MAJOWKA” IN DER
KRIM — A SWABIAN
MAY FESTIVAL IN THE
CRIMEAN REGION**

The following translation is by Kim Kaul of Bismarck, taken from the 1957 Heimutbuch of Bessarabians, pages 224 - 225, and printed in the Heritage Review.

In the days when the czar ruled, the school year usually began on the first day of September and ended on April 30 of the following year. The vacation lasted from May first until the thirty-first of August with May first being the first day of vacation. This vacation was officially kicked off on the first day with a celebration by students and teachers alike. May first was I known as “Majowka.” Where a want for school celebration did not exist, the students were happy with an outing. Many schools did not celebrate much at all. Only a few of the elementary, intermediate and high schools had a celebration. At our teachers’ institute in the Central German School System in Neusatz (in Crimean region), we celebrated the closing of the schools every year with speeches, music and songs, and presentations of several German and Russian plays.

The May Festival was the test for all those who claimed they were Swabians. Since 99 percent of the students and teachers were “dyed in the wool” Swabians, most of them spoke with genuine Swabian dialect. The teachers and students used the Swabian dialect as their every-day language and during the May celebration poetry was always recited in the Swabian dialect and skits were presented in Swabian. No other language was spoken, for 99 percent of the guests were Swabian and showed the greatest interest for the Swabian skits and food. Because the

May festival was mostly generated from the Swabian spirit and language, it was usually known as the “Schwabische Majowka.”

Not only did the teachers and students take part in the festival, but also many relatives and other officially invited guests came from far and wide. They came in beautiful carriages with mighty horses pulling them to see their sons who were in great need of relaxation and they came to take part in the festival. Even the old retired teachers flocked to the festival with their wives. Old and young alike enjoyed the festival. It was the only festival in the Crimean region where one could see German plays. Besides that, one could again see relatives and old friends and celebrate the reunion. The number of participants fluctuated from 150 to 300 people. How such a large festival proceeded will be explained in the following paragraphs.

Seeing the theater from the front, one could see that all the prerequisites were there for it to be called a playhouse. The school had a large empty theater — seating was large enough for close to 300 people if a few stood in the halls — that was built in very little time. To make the stage look larger, a couple of wings were added. In two closets on the stage hung costumes and wigs, with or without pigtailed, and other objects that could be associated with the theater. If there was something needed, it could usually be borrowed from the villagers—such as furniture, clothes, dishes, etc. In this way, everything that was needed could be had without great cost.

A festive mood prevailed at the May festival, a festive mood that took one’s mind of the monotony of the everyday life and put it on one’s role in the play. Rehearsal for the play usually began in the end of February or the beginning of March (It was of great worth to start earlier on roles that required more time, such as Galal’s The Marriage or

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Schiller's Wilhelm Tell) and the practice under the guidance and supervision of the teacher usually resulted in a smooth performance that brought great pleasure to the spectator.

The introduction to the great celebration was usually held by the village parson, who held devotions. The service was started and ended with a song by the choir. The choir, which was a quartet from the school, sang the following song with powerful, practiced voices: "May is forthcoming, the trees are budding" which was like so many other folksongs that usually enlivened the festive spirit. Then the principal of the school gave a short welcoming speech and a summary of what was going to happen that day, with all of the events following after another in order.

As was the custom, there were two different plays which were the main feature of the festival. In between, two or three small plays were acted out in the Swabian dialect. During the intermissions either the choir sang or Russian or German poetry was recited. As an example, let's take the festival of 1913. In the forenoon the comedy *The Marriage* by Gogol was put on; in the afternoon the condensed form of Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell* was acted out in the Fox Woods on Fox Mountain (so named because foxes lived in the rocks of the mountain). The best Swabian plays were:

1. *The Wife Seeker*, which was about a man who thought he needed a wife but really only wanted a maid.
2. *The In-Laws Quarrel*, which is about an argument between two neighboring farmers who were friends until their children became married and then their peace and friendship ended.
3. *The Inheritance Creep*, which describes the clever ways of a man who tries to steal the riches of his step-brother.

Different plays were presented at other May festivals, such as *Minna of Barnhelm* by Lessing, *Kathy* from Heilbronn by

Kleist, *The Reviser* by Gogol, different peasant plays by Tschechow and a large number of comedies in the Swabian dialect. During the celebration of the 300 year anniversary of the house of Romanov and its presence in government, we presented *Shisnj Sa Zarja* (*The Life of the Czars*) and were bestowed with great applause and a special praise and recognition from the school authority. The author of the play played the role of the first Czar of the Romanov's, Michail Feodorowitsch. The closing scene depicts the Czar on the throne with the sceptre and the imperial orb, with guards flanking both sides and courtiers all around. The illuminating light made the scene fantastic.

The spectators applauded and were always satisfied with the performances. The great crowds and spirit usually resulted in an expansion of the activities and greatly enhanced our achievements as amateur actors. The influence upon the different nationalities (Russian, Ukranian, Tartaric, Turkish, Bulgarian, Greek, Armenian, Georgian, Karaymen) in the Crimean region was so great that there is no doubt that a German culture was instilled in them, a culture that did not play an underrated role in the spirited life of the Swabians.



The Wine Industry Of The German Colonies In The Crimea

By A. M.

Translation by J. M. Richey

Wines from the Crimea surpass in quality all other wines produced in Russia, including those from the Trans-Caucasus. They are first rate quality wines and popular in Russia as well as abroad, in spite of their price.

During the rule of the Czars, Crimean wines held first place on the wine export list because of their great demand based on quality.

The most famous and most expensive of the Crimean wines were the Sudak wines (*Sudakskije wina*) named after the German wine colony of Sudak. Sudak was located nearby the Russian village of the same name on the gentle slopes of the southern Jaila Mountain range.

This German colony was founded by German farmer immigrants during the reign of Czar Alexander I. These were Schwabian wine growers who settled here. The nature of the soil in the southern half of the Crimea is ideal for wine production. The area is well protected from harsh climates by the mountain range to the north, and thus has a sub-tropical climate. The Schwabian immigrants settled down, worked hard, and soon produced the wine coveted world-wide for its quality.

Wine was not produced in the Crimea prior to 1804. All of the first efforts at wine production were experimental, done mainly by the Russian noblemen of the region. But there was no real progress until the German colonists arrived. The vineyards begun in Sudak stretched from Sudak throughout the southern part of the Crimea in the direction of the settlements of Gursuf, Jalta, Balaklava, and Sevastopol. Whoever has visited this beautiful area of the Crimea will surely talk about the beautiful vineyards gracing the landscape for kilometers on end.

Certainly, not all the vineyards belonged to German vintners, but the majority of them did. On the average, the individual vintner devoted several dozen hectares (1 hectare = 2.47 acres) of land. But there were some farmers who owned several hundred, even thousands of hectares of vineyards. The most well-to-do of these was a Mr. Stahl. He had title to 15,000 hectares of

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vineyards. He owned the majority of the vineyards in Sudak, Gursuf, Balaklawa, and Sevastopol areas. He even had vineyards inside the city limits of Sevastopol and in its immediate vicinity. He also owned the so-called “Malchow Kurganes” slopes, an area historically well known. He was the largest wine grower in Russia, produced only top quality wines, and owned gigantic wine cellars. Those who have seen these cellars and tasted the wine will always long to return for more.

Over a period of years the Schwabian vintners amassed great personal wealth and could buy large houses in Jalta, Gursuf, Balaklawa, and Sevastopol. Also they bought hotels and wine parlors (or had these built) where they served their own products. These Schwabian vintners were indeed rich.

The German settlements established on the north slopes of the Crimean Mountains — Friedental, Rosental, Zurichtal, and Heilbronn as well as the southeastern sought out by visitors because of the quality of the wine colonies of Otus and Herzenberg (these are the mother colonies of the Crimea) — worked also as vintners, but only as a part-time effort. Each farmer there established one to four hectares of vineyards. Nevertheless, the profit from the vineyards often surpassed the profit from the larger agricultural endeavors. These vintners raised select grapes which brought a high price.

With the establishment of daughter colonies on the large steppe lands of the Crimea, the vineyard also expanded into the area. There was not one farmer on the Crimea steppes who did not have at least one vineyard, even if he only farmed a quarter of a hectare or less. These grapes were for his own use, meaning for his family, guests, and hired labor. Certainly the wine from the steppes of the Crimea did not have the same quality as the wine from the south part. But the colonists on the steppe tried everything to improve their quality. For example, they dug

trenches of about one and a half meter depth and filled it with gravel and loam (loam and gravel were considered to provide the best rooting medium for grapes). These artificially created soils produced grapes and wines of almost the same quality as some of those in the south of the Crimea.

Over a period of years, my grandfather had much of his twelve hectares set aside for wine growing to be excavated and filled with loam and gravel. These he planted to high quality grapes, and these produced superior wines. These men on the steppes learned that they had to make these laborious and expensive procedures of changing the texture of the soil. (The term “umregolen” was applied to this procedure of changing soil texture). The end result was a good income for the German farmers, even in cases where only two to three hectares were devoted to grapes. It is especially evident when the income from one hectare of vineyards is compared to an equal area devoted to grain. The yield of the average seeding of wheat in the Crimea was 80 to 100 pud per hectare (1 pud = 36 pounds). One pud of wheat brought 1.12 rubles. The gross income in years of good wheat yield per hectare was, at best, 100 to 120 rubles. One hectare of vineyards provided an entirely different income. The average grape harvest produced 800 to 1200 Russian wedro (1 wedro = 3.3 gallons) wine. In an exceptional year a farmer would produce more than 2000 wedro.

Depending on the quality of the wine produced, one wedro would bring one to two rubles. For quality wine the return was three to six rubles per wedro. Based on the average price of one or one and a half rubles, the gross and showed income from one hectare was at least 800—and up to 1800—rubles per hectare. In order to get the equivalent return from wheat one would have to plant 10 to 20

hectares of wheat. However, it must be realized that the establishment of vineyards and the work involved with vineyards compared to wheat took much labor and investment of money. The investment in the vineyards did give good returns and the income was many times greater than from other agricultural sources. All the farmers who made wine their major income source, could in a short time, attain great wealth.

The grape harvest was called by the good old Schwabian term “Herbschte,” and the celebration of the harvest as “Herbschtfest” (fall festival). It was always a happy time. The villager residents traded labor with each other to harvest the grapes. The grapes next were turned through a mill and then pressed in a wine press. It took eight days for the grape juice to ferment in open containers. Then it was decanted into barrels. After several weeks—up to two months—it was ready to sell.

The large wine cellars of Simferopol, Eupatoria, Jalta, Feodosia, Sevastopol, and others picked up the wine from the German vintners to export it abroad. How many Crimean vintners were involved in wine export can no longer be determined unfortunately, because no statistics were kept. Knowledgeable people place this at about 60 to 70 percent. From the grape residues — the so-called Troester (consolation) — the farmers distilled a Troester-Schnapps (consolation liqueur) which was in demand by the Russians. It provided additional income. It should be indicated too that the grape harvest celebration included happy feasting and was concluded with a dance.

The Soviet government banished these diligent, hardworking, exemplary vintners and farmers to the Siberian north to perform slave labor. But they will never vanquish the fame they achieved by establishing in many districts of the Crimea

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the wine and the agricultural industry and culture of the Crimes. And above all, their production of famous wines.



Books for Research of the Crimea

Contributed by Deb Beick

More books will be added as I become aware of those that have information that pertains to the Crimea. Please let me know if you are aware of any that I have not listed.

“Black Sea Germans in the Dakotas,” by George Rath, 1977.

This book gives a short overview of the Crimea which is less than one page long. However, he speaks at length about the settlements in each of the counties in the Dakotas, and includes a listing of some of the settlers in each of these counties at the end of the book and throughout the book. Definitely worth reading if your families settled in the Dakotas.

“Emigration From Germany to Russia in the Years 1763-1826,” by Dr. Karl Stumpp. “Alphabetical lists of names of German immigrants to Russia, many with place of origin in Germany, and locality of settlement in South Russia. It is the result of over 40 years of research by Dr. Stumpp” Wonderful book, great resource, the Crimea is not well represented in the section on individual villages. However, is still a great resource, especially if you ancestors migrated from elsewhere in Russia. Don’t pass this one by!

“From Catherine to Kruschev-The Story of Russia’s Germans,” by Adam Geisinger. This book gives a good overview of the mother colonies in every area of Russia, and indicates many of the daughter colonies that were formed, their location, when they were founded, and includes a

small map of each area in the paper form. The maps are not included in the digital form, which is available from AHSGR.

“German Russian-Two Centuries of Pioneering,” by Dr. Karl Stumpp. Contains over 200 photos of Russian German people, towns, churches, and scenes of life. Contains some photos of the Crimea, but not many. Great book to take a peek at what life was like in Russia.

“Memories of the Black Sea Germans,” by Joseph S. Height, pages 244-246. There is a one page article about the village of Rosental, Crimea, the second page is a map of the village, and a third page gives the founding families of Rosental and Kronental, Crimea.

“Mennonite Settlements in Crimea,” by H. Goerz. This book gives a list of the villages in which the Mennonites lived in the Crimea. Information regarding purchase from Mennonite Books can be obtained by calling 1-800-465-6564.

“My Home on the Crimean Steppe: Memoirs of David Weigum” These memoirs “are a product of his homesickness, nostalgia for the Crimea, for Russia, and his joyful happy youth.” This book is an excellent overview of the life of the Germans from Russia who lived in the Crimean steppes.

All these books can be purchased through GRHS, and most through AHSGR, with the exception of the book, “Mennonite Settlements in Crimea.”

Please visit the GRHS and AHSGR web sites for purchase cost and order information.

More book resources will be added as they are located.



Crimean Village Coordinators

from Crimea Web Site
Contributed by Deb Beick

Village Coordinators are volunteers who gather, organize, and distribute information about their chosen villages. Information the coordinator may have includes village histories, pictures of the village and/or it’s people, maps of the village and it’s peoples, census records, resources for information on the particular village, LDS film numbers for that village, as well as other information regarding the location of the village, when it was formed, it’s religious affiliation, etc. However, be aware, each village coordinator is at a different level in collecting information, some may have quite a bit of information, some may have very little. The information they may have also depends on the information available for that particular village.

It is customary when contacting a VC by mail, to include a SASE (Self Addressed Stamped Envelope) to aid the VC in responding. Reimbursement of photocopy charges and postage is also greatly appreciated as these

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FORMATION OF GERMAN VILLAGES IN THE CRIMEA

Contributed by Deb Beick

During the reign of Catherine, in 1768, war began with Turkey, which did not end until 1774. Russia's victories included in the Treaty of Kuchuk-Kainardji, included Kerch and Azov, as well as other regions surrounding the Black Sea. This effectively gave control of the Black Sea to Russia; however, it was not until 1783, that Russia annexed the Crimea.

Potemkin, who had helped to place Catherine on the throne, was made governor-general of the Crimea after the annexation. In 1787 war again broke out with Turkey, and continued until 1791, when the Turks sued for peace and in 1792 they abandoned all claims to the Crimea. It was during the period from 1768 through 1792 and after that many of the Crimean Tatars migrated in droves from the Crimea. (A full treatment of the political and social issues that culminated in the migration of the Crimean Tatars can be found in the book, "The Crimea Tatars," by Alan Fisher.) After the migration of the Crimean Tatars, many of their villages and estates lay empty, leaving vast tracts of land open for migration.

After the death of Catherine, her son Paul took the throne. His reign was to be short lived, and by 1801, his son Alexander had taken the throne. Tsar Alexander I reigned from 1801 to 1825, and further carried on the colonization of the vast empty tracts of newly gained Turkish lands. In the Crimea, small groups of Crimean Tatars remained, but for the most part, their former villages lay empty. Alexander, following in the steps of his grandmother, Catherine, decided to bring German peasants in to colonize the Crimea and the newly gained lands

of Bessarabia.

The governor of Taurida was instructed to find land in the Crimea for any experienced wine growers who were among the immigrants. The influx of immigrants to the Black Sea region was particularly heavy during the years from 1803-1805 and continued on through the early 1800's. At first, land was readily available near the mother colonies in other regions of the Black Sea for daughter colonies to be formed near their mother colonies. But by 1848 there was little crown land to be given away in the regions of the Black Sea, however, vast lands were still available in the Crimea.

Purchases of land by mother colonies for their landless sons seems to have occurred first in the Crimea, as these land grants had been smaller than in other Black Sea colonies. In 1839, Kojanly was formed, in 1844, Neudorf (Islam Terek) was formed, in 1849, Fruedental (Okretsch) and Neu Hoffnung in 1852. During the period of 1853-1856, while the Crimean War raged, severe economic depression effectively halted land purchases in the Crimea. However, good crops after the war helped the colonists to recover quickly and new daughter colonies were formed in earnest. Between 1856 and 1860, twenty-five new colonies were founded from Bessarabia to Crimea.

Of the new colonies in the Crimea, some were formed by mother colonies there, but many were formed by colonists from mother colonies in the Molotschna, Odessa colonies, the Berdjansk colonies, the Belowesch Colonies near Mariupol, the Chotiza Colonies, the Prishib Colonies, and from as far away as the original Belowesch colonies in the Chernigov region near Kiev. Twenty new colonies were formed in the 1860's, thirty colonies in the 1870's, and fifty colonies in the 1890's. By 1914 there were 250 or more small German villages in the Crimea

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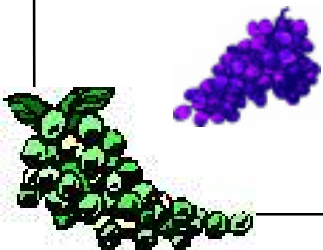
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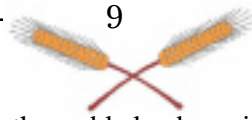
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with a total population of 31,000. These villagers owned approximately 360,000 dessiantines of land in the Crimea alone. In addition to the colonists living in the German villages, many lived on their own land. In 1912, an estimated 41% of the arable land on the Crimean peninsula was in the hands of German colonists. (see below for alternate figures)

Among the first colonists who arrived in Odessa in 1803, many of those had wine growing experience, so in the spring of 1804, these colonists boarded ships headed for Eupatoria and traveled overland from there to a region between Simferopol and Karasubasar where the majority of them settled and formed the villages of Neusatz, which was formed on the Tatar estate of Tschurkurtscha (e) and Rosental, which was formed on the Tatar estate of Schobanoba(c). A small group broke off and formed the village of Sudak (e), which was founded near the Russian village of Sudak, and Herzenberg (e), near Feodosia and Otus, and one other village, Otus (e).

Also in 1804, a group of Swiss colonists arrived in the Crimea, and after some delays, formed the village of Zuerichtal (1/2 Cath and 1/2 Evang) 35 versts northwest of Feodosia. Then in 1805, two groups of Wuertembergers arrived and formed the villages of Friedental, which was formed on the Tatar estate of Chan-Tokus (e) near Neusatz, formed by 25 families, and Heilbrunn (e) near Zuerichtal, formed by 40 families.

In 1810, another 105 families arrived in the Crimea. They were mainly Catholic families from Alsace, Baden, and the Palatinate. The majority of them formed the village of Kronental (Bulganak) (1/2 Cath and 1/2 Evang), which lay 25 versts west of Simferopol and the rest filled vacant spots in the former villages.

These mother colonies were formed in the mountainous regions of the Crimea, which were quite suitable for wine growing.

However, the arable land was in short supply in these regions, and therefore their landless sons were forced to find land on the northern steppes. The first daughter colony was formed in 1839 and by 1859 there were five daughter colonies. By 1859, colonists began to arrive from other regions and Schoenbrunn (Adargin) was formed by Separatists from the Berdjansk, in 1861, Byten (Herrehilf) was formed by colonists from the Belowesch Colonies near Chernigov, and in 1862, Karassan was formed by Mennonites from the Molotschna.

Most of the new villages in the Crimea were small, averaging about 100 people, but there were many of these villages. By 1914 there were more than 250 villages and the total population of German villagers was estimated at 60,000. (Catherine to Kruschev) Another source claims the German population owned 2/3 of the arable land in the Crimea by 1914 and over 314 villages and estates comprised of over 600,000 hectares. (Black Sea Germans in the Dakotas) The statistics for the Mennonite colonies indicate that there were 70 Mennonite settlements on the Crimean penninsula in 1926 which encompassed about 55,000 dessiantins of land with a population of 4,900. (Mennonite Settlements in the Crimea, by H. Goetz)

Primary Sources include:

“From Catherine to Kruschev,”
by A. Geisinger

“The Black Sea Germans in the Dakotas,” by George Rath



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Photograph courtesy of Roger Ehrlich and Pixel. Marker on the grave of Christina Miller, daughter of Bernhard and Katherine (Herman) Baer, great-great grandparents of Eugene Baer, Krim-GR editor.



TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

As we said at the outset, we want this newsletter to serve the interests of you--our readers. So, we want to include in it what you want to read about. Send your letters, suggestions, criticisms, ideas, family photos, ancestor stories, and such to

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