GERMAN-RUSSIANS ON THE VOLGA
AND IN THE UNITED STATES

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Chapter I.
INTRODUCTION

One of the subjects, concerning which there seems to be a noticeable lack of clearness on the part of historians, is that of the so-called Volga Germans both in Russia and in the United States. Recent maps of Soviet Russia designate their place of settlement as the German Volga Commune, but teachers of history often have trouble in explaining just why there are German settlements in that part of Russia; how long they have been there, and what kind of life the people are leading.

A similar lack of clearness is often evident when the discussion turns to that of the many Volga Germans that began immigrating to America in 1870 and are living here now. In many towns in which they have settled, the greatest misunderstanding imaginable is again seen over such questions as their characteristics, their attitude to the government, their ability to progress, and, what is even more noticeable, the language which they speak.

Consequently, the purpose of this thesis is to attempt to settle some of these difficulties by explaining just why Germans immigrated to Russia after 1763;
why they later came to America, and to tell about their mode of life and occupations in both places. In order to do this adequately, we must begin our story by describing the political and economic situation in Russia during the latter half of the 18th century.
Chapt. II.

**The Settlement of Germans on the Volga.**

1. **Early History of the Volga**

In the year 1762 when Catherine II came to the throne of Russia, the middle and lower portions of the Volga River were practically unknown in any accurate way, to the Russian government. The reason for this fact is soon seen when one studies the turbulent history of this region.

Between the years 1236-1552 hordes of Tartars were in possession of central and southern Russia, and maintained their capital at Sarai near Astrakan. We cannot take the time to discuss the nature of the Tartar rule, or its influence on the religious, political and cultural life of the Russians, but shall merely say that the first important victory of the Russians was won by John III in the year 1460. John IV (1533-1584) continued the work of his predecessor and in a hard-fought battle succeeded in capturing Kazan which is situated at the junction of the Kama and Volga Rivers.

The next year a request came from Astrakan that John nominate some prince as ruler, and after a few

years of disturbance, the city was finally annexed in 1566. In this way the Volga district, in which we are especially interested, came into the hands of Russia.

In order to retain a hold over this territory, the Russian government undertook the building of a chain of widely separated forts along the Volga. The present cities of Samara, Saratov, and Tsaritsyn all owe their origin to this plan. An attempt was also made to induce Russian settlers to inhabit this region, but on the whole, this plan was very unsuccessful. This was due to the fact that the lower Volga was still inhabited by nomad tribes of Bashkirs, Kirghiz, and Tartars, who often crossed the river and attacked the settlements on the west bank.

Aside from these nomad tribes, we also find that criminals, fugitive slaves, escaped serfs, and discontented people of all kinds would flee to this part of Russia and make it their home. The old Russian proverb, "Na Wolge shitj morami slyty" (A person living on the Volga is considered a robber) shows what the repute of this territory was.

Between the years 1667-1671 the entire region was

in the control of a Cossack marauder, Stephen Razin. In 1670 he and his band of followers sailed up the Volga and captured the towns of Tsaritsyn and Kamyschin. A government force sent out against him from Astrakan revolted against its officers and joined him. At the end of July he took the two posts of Samara and Saratov and then began an attack on Simbirsk, but was defeated and later executed in Moscow, June, 1671.

As a result of this constant warfare the few Russian settlers that had moved to the Volga found it to their advantage to either join the near-by rebels or to return to their first homes; and for some time it appeared that the region would never be occupied by permanent settlers.

2. Reasons why Germans settled there.

Catherine II in Dec. 1762 resolved to try a new plan. Instead of moving her own Russians to this district, she issued a manifesto inviting people of all nationalities except Jews to come to Russia and settle there. In this way she hoped that a higher civilization would spread among the Russians, and that a bulwark against the nomads be established. By calling immigrants into Russia, she

was not inaugurating a new policy, but was merely con-
tinuing the work of such rulers as John III, John IV,
Boris Godunov, and particularly Peter the Great, all of
whom were interested in the Europeanizing of Russia, and
favored the immigration of merchants, craftsmen, mechan-
ics, professional people, etc.

Catherine also realized that it was necessary to
have definite officers to take charge of this work and
instituted the so-called Vormundschafts-Kanzlei für
Ausländer, (Tutelary Chancery for Foreigners) with Count
G.G. Orlov, one of her favorites, as president. Later,
a subsidiary branch, the Kontor, was established at
Saratov.

This first Manifesto of 1762, however, gained no
response whatever. The two main reasons for this fact
were that the Seven Years' War was then raging in Europe,
and also that no specific promises and inducements were
offered to the colonists. To remedy the latter of these
evils a second Manifesto was issued July 22nd 1763, and
it was in response to this document that the Volga

Germans, in whom we are especially interested, left their homes. The following promises taken from this Manifesto were of special importance in enticing Germans to Russia:

1. Freedom of settlement in any part of Russia,
2. Payment of travelling expenses,
3. Freedom in the choice of one's occupation,
4. Freedom of religion,
5. Freedom from taxes for a period of 30 years for farmers; 5 years for inhabitants of large cities, and ten years for all others,
6. Interest-free loans with which to make a start in life,
7. Internal self-government,
8. Freedom from military service,
9. Permission to leave Russia at any time.

However, aside from this force attracting Germans to Russia, there was an equally strong force pushing them out of Germany. The Seven-Years' War ended in the year 1763, and as is always the case after a war, a period of hard times had set in. Whole villages lay devastated; soldiers were wandering around looking for work; food was lacking; and poverty was found on all sides. There was also a common feeling that only a truce

had been established and that the war would soon begin again. A constant stream of emigration had begun even before this time to America, Poland, and Hungary. The emigration to the latter country was particularly strong, and it had been necessary for German princes to pass stringent laws providing for the punishment of both immigration agents and people desiring to leave.

3. The Winning of Settlers.

This desire to leave was increased even more after the year 1763 when copies of Catherine's Manifesto were printed and spread throughout all Germany. In order to get as many people as possible, two special commissioners, Friedrich Meixner and Johann Facius, were sent to Germany to explain the Manifesto and induce families to come to Russia. Meixner's field of operation was around Ulm while Facius established his bureaus in Frankfort on Main. Both commissioners were to receive a yearly salary of 400-500 rubles, and had assistants who were usually paid three to four ducats for every family.

Besides these official commissioners, Catherine II also made agreements with the following six Frenchmen:

Ferdinand Baron de Beauregard, Otto de Monjou, Leunier de Precourt, Baron de Boffe, Le Roy, Pictet, and the two Germans, Iwan Reiss and Baron Bock.

Beauregard, for example, promised to win 3000 colonists for the venture and was given 15,000 rubles to pay for the transportation costs of the first 300 families from their homes to Hamburg or Lübeck. Special commissioners were to take care of them until they reached Petrograd, and from there on, the crown was in charge.

These men were not given definite salaries, but instead were to be repaid indirectly for their trouble and the time they spent in winning settlers. Catherine promised that after the colonists came to Russia, their directors were to receive three percent of the land of each individual farmer, and enough servants to care for it. Each colonist also made a private contract with his director in which the privileges and duties of each were clearly stated. Bonwetsch tells that Precourt's people promised to give him one-tenth of their farm products, to let him have priority rights whenever a sale occurred, and to repay all loans in ten years. They also agreed to conduct themselves in a seemly manner during the journey.

to Russia, to begin no quarrels, to remain as clean as possible, eat no green fruit, refrain from drinking, and not to leave the ship without permission.

We unfortunately do not possess a copy of the promises given by Precourt, but they were probably very similar to the ones Beauregard made to his people. The more important of these were that he promised to pay to them a fixed sum of money, which was to be used to buy food; to give loans that were to be re-paid without interest, and to furnish doctors and ministers.

As a result of the work of these commissioners, directors, and their agents, people from all parts of the Holy Roman Empire, but especially the Rhine countries of Hesse, Swabia, Saxony, and the Palatinate, prepared to leave their homes. There were also a few settlers from Italy, France, and the Netherlands, but emigration from these countries never reached any great numbers. The lies and tricks practised by the agents, who were naturally working for numbers only, cannot be over-estimated. The German people were told that the country along the Volga was very similar to that in which they were living; that the climate was extremely mild; the ground fertile, and the entire region a veritable Paradise. Letters supposedly coming from

Germans already settled in Russia substantiated all these claims, and even the most credulous were forced to believe the agents when they saw how promptly the transportation money was paid.

People from all classes and ranks of society listened to the agents and decided to leave: farmers, officers, doctors, students, members of the nobility, artists and craftsmen were all to be found. Besides these, there was also a rather large element of more or less undesirable emigrants: soldiers without a home and with loose morals, lazy and shiftless people of all kinds, drunkards, thieves, and even some criminals, who often had no right to leave Germany, turned their names in to the agents. All of them thought that they would find an easier mode of life in the far-away steppes.

Just as had been the case when Hungary was seeking colonists, the German princes again became alarmed, and a series of laws against further emigration were passed by the Kurfürsten of Mainz, Trier, Cologne, the Palatinate, and other princely lands. However,

as long as these laws were passed by individual princes instead of by united action, the work continued to progress. Then too, some of the smaller princes even seemed to appreciate getting rid of what they considered an undesirable element in their population. For example, when Pacius was driven out of Frankfurt by the prince of that territory, he was given an official home in the palace of the count of Isenburg-Büdingen, and continued his work there.

In the year 1766, things had come to such a pass that the princes of both the Palatinate and the Rhine united in forbidding all future emigration, and in the following year turned to the imperial government at Vienna for aid. As a result of their demands Joseph II passed an "Edict against Emigration" in the year 1768.

However, by this time, the Russian agents had succeeded so well in their endeavors, that they were perfectly willing to stop. We do not know the actual number of persons setting out for the Volga, but we are told that 9000 families consisting of 27,000 people settled in Russia. This naturally does not

include the many that turned back before embarking at Lübeck, or those that died on the long toilsome journey to the Volga.

4. The Journey to the Volga.

The story of this journey, which in many cases lasted nearly one and a half years, is one of the most interesting in the history of the German-Russian people.

After having given their names to a commissioner or director, and having signed a contract with him, the German emigrants were told to meet in certain cities as Regensberg, Freiburg, or Roslau -- the so-called Sammelplätze, and from here moved in loosely organized bands to the northern sea coast. Bonwetsch tells how these people like a horde of grasshoppers would enter a town after a long day's march and buy everything in sight that was eatable. In many cases stories of quarreling and fighting over food are recorded, and we are told that the more unscrupulous a person was, the better he got along.

Different routes were taken by these people in their march to the usual places of embarkation: Lübeck and Danzig. The parties of Mäxner and Beau-

27. Bonwetsch, op. cit., 27.
regard went through Roslau to Lübeck while that of
Le Roy travelled from Regensburg through Weimar and
28. Lüneberg. At the harbor cities rough shelters were
erected for the emigrants, and strict watch was main-
tained over them so that those who were already be-
coming faint-hearted over the venture, would be unable
to escape.

Before embarking, each person was given sixteen
shillings with which to buy food for the trip, and
the poorest and most ragged were clothed before being
30. put on board. Bread, zwieback, Vpickled meat, wine
and French brandy were stored away in the hold of the
ship, and after everything was in readiness, the order
to sail was given:

This trip from Lübeck to Kronstadt in Russia
could have been easily made in nine or eleven days, but
according to Beratz, some of the Hanseatic and English
captains are supposed to have steered backwards on
dark nights in order to lengthen the journey and
sell the provisions to the people at three times

30. Beratz, op. cit., 44.
their natural price. Ballensky states that often six weeks were spent on this trip. Bernhard-von Platen even tells that on many ships no food was to be had except salt, molded bread, and water, and that in some cases there was not even enough of this. Other colonists report that they had nothing to complain of during this trip, and they even praise the food that they received while on board.

After their arrival in Kronstadt, the German immigrants were met by Russian peasants with long beards who drove them to the near-by town of Oranienbaum where they often remained from two to six weeks. Here they took an oath of allegiance to the empress, and were given an opportunity to become acquainted with the native Russians for the first time.

It was here at Oranienbaum that the colonists suffered their first big disillusionment. One of the main privileges of Catherine's Manifesto which had attracted quite a few immigrants to Russia, was the one granting the right of the colonists to choose for themselves where they wished to settle and what

33. Ballensky, ibid., 5.
34. Baratz, op. cit., 45.
occupation they wished to follow. However, the Tutelary-Chancery had sent a certain commissioner named Ivan Kuhlberg to "persuade" the German immigrants to become farmers and to settle along the Volga in certain districts that had been laid out for them. The majority of the people in spite of their disappointment at not being allowed to do the work which they were trained for, consented to do this, but even those that insisted upon their rights soon found that all resistance was in vain. Consequently, with the exception of a few craftsmen, who were allowed to remain in Petrograd, all of the immigrants were forced to set out for the region along the Volga.

The next stage of the journey, from Oranienbaum to Petrograd, was covered either by land or by sea. Here the amount of money that the men were receiving daily was made equal to the much smaller sum that the children had been receiving, and as a result loud complaints broke out on all sides. After all necessary business had been completed and soldiers provided for the rest of the journey, the colonists again

37. Beratz, ibid., 50.
set out. The road chosen led them through Novgorod, Tula, and Tver, and then either by land over Moscow, Rjassan, and Pensk, or by river down the Volga to Saratov. (see map)

The old historians tell in their interesting style how winter set in, soon after the parties left Novgorod, and how the immigrants had to spend the coldest months of the year in such Russian villages as Torschok and Kostroma. "Here they had time and opportunity enough to become acquainted with the customs, manners and to a certain extent, even the language of their new home. With amazement they saw for the first time in their lives that people lived under the same roof with cattle, chickens, pigs, sheep, etc." 38.

The food that they were offered in these crowded Russian houses was also extremely unappetizing to the tidy German women. Instead of receiving butter, eggs, and meat, which they were accustomed to, they were instead offered cabbage soup, millet porridge, and the Russian drink, kvass.

During these winter months, priests and ministers appeared from time to time in the villages where the

38. Beratz, ibid., 53.
people were quartered, in order to comfort the sick, bury the dead, baptize new-born children, and even to perform marriage ceremonies.

In the spring, as soon as the ice began to melt, the journey continued, and finally after "many hardships, disappointments, and hunger, cold, and sickness" the first settlers after a journey of a year and several months, reached the city of Saratov, which at that time contained about 10,000 inhabitants. In this city Catherine had placed a subsidiary branch of the Tutelary-Chancery -- the Kontor -- in charge of governmental affairs. The president of this organization with the aid of the other officers was to give the colonists enough money with which to get started in life, and to help them in every way possible. Here again a few of the more skilled workers remained in the city to open factories, but all the rest were driven in wagons to the open steppes along the Volga and left there with the words, "This is to be your future home".

5. Disappointment of the Colonists.

In order to understand the feelings of the colon-

40. Schleunking, op. cit., 19.
ists it is necessary to remember some of the things that the agents had told them while they were still in Germany. They had been promised that everything would be in readiness for them when they reached their place of settlement: homes would have been built, machinery and live-stock on hand, and the land marked out. During the long weary journey from Germany to the Volga, they had comforted themselves with the thought of the "Paradise" that had been promised them, and now their dreams were suddenly shattered. It is true that in some places lean-tos had been built and the land marked out for them, but in other places absolutely nothing had been done.

One colonist remarks, "We looked at each other with frightened expressions. We were in a wilderness without even a tree. Nothing was to be seen except the endless dry grass of the steppes." Schleunfung also tells that another colonist exclaimed with bitter irony to a friend, "Is this our Paradise?", and the other answered, "If it is, it's the lost Paradise".

In some places there was not even wood with which to build some sort of a primitive shelter, and for some

41. Bertsch, op. cit., 73.
42. Bonwetsch, op. cit., 33.
43. Schleunfung, op. cit., 19.
time the colonists had to camp under the open sky or live in rude canvas huts. Even when rough wooden shacks covered with earth, were built, the settlers soon realized that it would be impossible to spend the cold winter in this manner, and they began to build underground huts in the manner of the Tartars and other nomad tribes. Such shelters were called semlinkin (huts) and were large enough for three or four families. In this way the first winter was passed, although the crowded conditions and lack of ventilation made it a far from desirable mode of existence.

An old colonist by the name of Anton Schneider says the following: "Throughout the winter we lived miserably and in greatest need. The dark winter days and the eternally long nights seemed to last forever. We were separate from all other human beings, and in many cases did not even have enough to eat."

The first ten years in Russia 1765-1775 are called Die Jahre der Not by historians, and in reading an account of them, it is easy to believe that they were well-named. This was due not only to mis-government.

44. Semlinkin -- huts.
46. Die Jahre der Not -- The Years of Want.
but also to the inexperience of the colonists, bad crops, financial difficulties, and the attacks of nomad tribes. However, before beginning a discussion of these first years, it will be necessary to say a few words regarding the founding of these colonies and some of the rules laid down for their government.

The oldest colony, Dobrinke, was founded June 20, 1764 with 353 inhabitants; Beideck, August 10, 1764 with 360 inhabitants and the third was Galka, August 12 of the same year. This colony had 240 inhabitants. Norka, which was founded August 15, 1767, had the largest number of settlers -- 957. According to Beratz, who gives some very valuable statistics on the size, date of settlement, and location of these colonies, only four were established in the year 1764: 11 in 1765; 20, in 1766, and 68 in 1767. This makes 104 colonies whose total population was about 27,000 people. Of these colonies, 46 were on the hilly or Bergseite of the Volga, and 59 were on the flat or Wiesenseite. All of the colonies on the Bergseite with the exception of eight

47. Beratz, op. cit., 304-311.
49. Wiesenseite - East side, in government of Saratov. Samara.
on the Karamysch and three on the Ilawla Rivers were
crown colonies; here Le Roy and Pictet had 25 together;
and Beaugerard and Monjou had 26. These originally
were known as Jutland colonies (maitre-colonies).
During the first few years, the greatest confusion
imaginable was to be found regarding the proper names
for these colonies. This was due to the fact that all
the directors with the exception of De Boffe on the
Bergseite, gave to their colonies arbitrary names which
they themselves picked out. For example, Le Roy and
Pictet whose colonies were on the Tarlyk River named
present Brabander, Quincourt; Preuss was Choisi le
Roy; and Kukkus, Neu-Braband. The difficulty, how-
ever, was that these names were given after the German
colonists had lived for some time in their new homes,
and in order to have some method of identification, they
used the name of their chief village officer, the Vor-
steher. Thus a man travelling to a neighboring town
would give his name as Johannes Kohn from the colony of
the Vorsteher Franz Brabander; or Philipp Mader from
the colony of the Vorsteher Abraham Kukkus. Then, as
time went on, people merely said that they came from
Kukkus, Brabander, Preuss, etc. As a result of this

custom, the names given to the colonies by their directors were never used and soon forgotten.

In the year 1763 the matter was made even more confused because the Kontor at Saratov gave Russian names to all of the colonies except Norka, which already had a Russian name, and a few of the colonies of Beau-regard. Straub was now called Skatowka; Beideck, Talowka; Preuss, Krasnopoleje; Grimm, Lesnoi Karamych; and Frank, Melwelizkoii Frestowoi Bujerak. Needless to say, these difficult-sounding Russian and Tarter words were never used by the German immigrants except in official documents and as addresses. Consequently even to the present time the Volga colonies have two names: the official Russian name and the common German one used by the inhabitants.

6. The Years of Distress.

In regard to government and the division of the land, we are told that a colonial law of 1764 not only designated the region for settlement but also laid down the following rules. The entire region was to be divided into Bezirke 60 to 70 verst in circumference.

52. Baratz, Ibid., 67-68.
53. J.C. Schwabenland, Berthoud, Colo.
54. Districts.
55. Two-thirds of a mile.
each of which was to serve for 1000 families. One-sixth of this land was to be reserved for future married couples and another sixth for artisans. The only qualification as to the place of settlement was that people of different religious faiths remain in separate Bezirk so that "all hostility and hatred be avoided".

Every family, no matter what the size, could claim thirty dessiatines of land: fifteen of which were to be of farming land, five, of hay land; five of forest land; and another five for the house, garden and as meadow land. This property with the exception of the last five dessiatines mentioned, was not held in permanent possession, but instead according to the Russian mir system. Consequently, when a parson left the colony, the land simply returned to the commune or Gemeinde. Another rather peculiar law, which was never carried out, was that the youngest son of a family was to receive his father's property in case of his death, while the older sons were to follow trades of various kinds. A certain part of the communal land was also to be reserved for churches, schools, factories, and other buildings of like nature.

57. 1 dessiatine — 2.172 acres.
58. Bonwetsch, op. cit., 32.
59. Ibid.
If the rules laid down in this bill and in Catherine's Manifesto, had been carried out, much of the distress of these first years would have been avoided, but a hopeless confusion seems to have reigned during these early years both at Petrograd and at Saratov. In many cases the officers placed in charge of the settlement work in the Crown Colonies, had no comprehension whatever as to how to begin the work in a scientific manner, and in other cases vast sums of money were appropriated by unscrupulous officials. Bonwetsch says in this connection: "Of the great sums which the Russian government spent for this undertaking, an important part remained in the hands of dishonest officials. As a result, the expenses became extremely high. The total expenditure for the colonists on the Volga finally exceeded 5,000,000 rubles, but in spite of this fact, money was always lacking."

Nevertheless, conditions in the Crown Colonies were on the whole much better than what they were in the colonies of the private directors, whose only interest was to retain as much of the good land and amass as large a fortune as they possibly could. Complaints against DeBoffe, Precourt, and LeRoy were especially 60. Bonwetsch, ibid., 33.
frequent. Money would be sent to these directors to be used in the purchase of cattle, but would be put in their own pockets instead. De Boffe once received 3,200 rubles with which to build stone houses, but only two buildings were constructed. He was also supposed to employ doctors, ministers, teachers, and mid-wives, but none appeared. Then too, after the first crops were harvested, he not only demanded one-tenth of the farm products but of the poultry as well.

As a result of the many requests of these colonies to be placed under the jurisdiction of the crown, formal action was finally taken, and the directors dismissed. It is not known whether they were paid off by the Russian government or simply told to leave, but we can imagine that their financial returns were by no means trifling, since Baron Beauregard, for example, was able to live in luxury for the rest of his life.

However, bad government was only one of the reasons why the colonists suffered so much during the first ten years on the Volga. We have already mentioned the scarcity of food and the poor living conditions of this period. Then too, the bad water, the few doctors to care for the sick, and the Russian climate with its

sudden change in temperature from the heat of the summer to the cold of the winter, all help to account for the fact that a typhus-like fever broke out in the colonies. Schleuniging tells that during the first years thousands of people died in this way.

We must also remember that the type of people settling in Russia were not predominately farmers. Baratz makes the rather general statement that one-half of them were trained craftsmen, and he quotes as an authority the scientist, Pallas, who travelled through the colonies in 1772 and expressed surprise at the large number of artisans and professional people whom he found there. Bonwetsch, on the other hand, claims that the majority of the colonists were of a very inferior type. However this may have actually been, all writers agree that the average colonist knew hardly anything about agriculture, and in most cases had been forced to take up farming against his will. We must also remember that the different climatic condition and the strange soil would have made life difficult for even an experienced German farmer.

Various accounts are given of how the people

64. Baratz, op. cit., 138.
actually felt the next spring when they were told to begin spring plowing. One man reports, "Then our life of joy really began! Here stood a tailor; there a wig-maker; neither of them had ever harnessed a horse, not to mention worked in the fields; but nevertheless, they were given an old Kalmuck horse, and a few pieces of lumber with which to make a plow and a wagon and were calmly told to get to work!" Ballensky also tells that in many cases these horses had never been used for field work before and were so wild that they often broke the wagons to which they were harnessed and escaped to the steppes.

Along with the inexperience of the colonists, the poor farm machinery, and the late seed, we also find that at this particular time a series of especially dry summers followed each other, and as a result, one crop failure after another occurred. In order to keep from starving, the people had to turn to the government for financial aid and thus got deeper and deeper in debt. Food became so scarce that one old chronicler reports, "The flour which we received consisted of hard clods and was already molded green. It had to be pounded into small pieces with a hatchet or axe, and even then, there

---

was not enough to go around."

Many deaths also occurred because of the storms of the steppes and the attacks of bands of wolves which were particularly bad in certain regions. In other places contagious diseases broke out among the cattle, and as a culmination of all these evils, we have the attacks of nomad tribes, and Pugatchev's Rebellion, in 1773-1775. In a previous connection mention was made of the fact that the lower Volga had always been the Eldorado of robbers, deserters, and criminals of all kinds, many of whom joined nomad bands of Bashkirs, and Kalmucks and became the terror of the entire region.

Of all these robber bands, the Kalmucks were by far the most harmless since they restricted themselves to horse-stealing and the robbery of occasional travelers. The Bashkirs, and particularly the Khirghiz, on the other hand, would not only commit crimes of this nature but would also attack and burn villages, steal everything in sight, and then sell the inhabitants into slavery. The colonies on the Wiesenseite had to suffer particularly in this way. Four colonies on the Wiesenseite: Chasselois, Casarfeld, Keller, and Leitssinger were completely destroyed by them in 1774:

68. Beratz, op. cit., 64.
in 1776 the Catholic village of Marienthal was attacked
and from here alone 300 inhabitants were carried away
and sold as slaves in Bucharest and Chiwa. A certain
priest named Johannes was long famed as being one of
the few people to escape from their hands and return
safely to the Volga. The stories told of the terrible
treatment of these captives and particularly of the
women and children were long repeated in German-Russian
homes.

Even in the middle of the 19th century, when Hax-
thausen visited the colonies, he was told by the older
men how a watchman was always kept on the church steeple
to warn the inhabitants of the town when the robber bands
were coming and how the men worked in armed groups on
the fields for mutual protection. Schleuninger thinks
that on the whole 1200 people were carried into slavery
by the Khirghiz during these early years, but does not
even try to give an estimate of the number killed. (op. cit., 21)

Most of these attacks took place on the east side
of the Volga, but even on the west side they were so
common that the three villages of Balzer, Moor, and
Anton had to unite for mutual protection. However,

69. Bonvetsch, op. cit., 39.
70. Baron von Haxthausen, The Russian Empire, its
in spite of the best efforts of the colonists, conditions did not get better until the Russian government established a series of forts along the Ural River, and even then horse-stealing remained quite common even to the time of German-Russians now living in America.  

Bonwetsch tells that robbery and stealing were never considered crimes by these nomad tribes, and that before attacking travelers, they would make the sign of the cross, and thank God for their good fortune in having found some one to rob. He goes on to tell that in many cases when horses had been stolen, the robbers would very considerately tell the owners that if they would bring a certain sum of money to such and such a place, they would receive their stolen property.  

Even worse suffering was in store for the colonies during Pugatchev's Rebellion which took place between the years 1773 and 1775. This bold Cossack, who claimed to be Catherine's murdered husband, Peter III, won enough followers to form quite a large band and swept as a tornado over the German colonies, robbing and stealing everything in sight. Sick people were thrown out of their beds, women and children driven

72. J. C. Schwabenland, Berthoud, Colo.
73. Bonwetsch, op. cit., 39, footnote.
from their homes, houses and barns burned, and the cattle driven away. Even the city of Saratov was stormed and taken by him and his men, and twenty-two government officials were murdered because they refused to recognize him as their czar. He then marched against Moscow, but was sold by some of his companions and executed in that city.

The following statistics show how enormous the death rate during these first ten years was as a result of the famine, fever, and attacks of Pugatchev and the other marauding bands of robbers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Families</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1765</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>27,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1767*</td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>29,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1775</td>
<td>5,502</td>
<td>23,184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1788</td>
<td>5,723</td>
<td>30,962</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(The year in which immigration stopped)*

These figures tell only part of the story however, because it was during the year 1767 that the most of the colonists came to Russia, and throughout the entire thirteen years the birth-rate per 1000 population was exceedingly high.

75. Encyclopaedia Brittanica, Pugatchev.
76. Schleuning, op. cit., 22.
Consequently, it is easy to believe that as a result of everything that happened in these colonies between 1765 and 1775, many of them longed to return to their old homes, and in the words of Schleunzig "Everything that they did and undertook was done for the present only, and not for the future, because all lived in daily hopes of returning to Germany soon". Even during the first years several groups set out with this purpose in view, but only a few managed to escape, while all the rest were forcibly brought back by Cossacks and their leaders severely punished. Others heard that land was open for settlement in the Caucasus and sent representatives to see if conditions there were better than what they were on the Volga, but here again robber bands were to be found and the colonists were gradually forced to give up any hopes that they had of leaving. (Schleunzig, op. cit., 23)

Conditions remained in this state until the year 1775 when the colonists harvested their first really good crop. This alone was enough to lend a more cheerful view to the situation, but by this time the worst attacks of the robbers were also over, Pugatchev had been captured, the unscrupulous directors dis-

77. Beratz, op. cit., 97.
missed, and everything began to look much brighter. The colonists had also learned how to get the best returns from the soil, and had even become adjusted to the climate. A younger generation was now growing up, and as it knew of no other home except the one on the Volga, the young people were naturally more satisfied with their life in Russia.

The professional and educated people also gave up all hopes of leading some other kind of life beside that of a farmer, and in many cases were even an example in diligence to the other members of the community. The primitive Russian plows and sickles were now exchanged for better ones. Houses, which were both roomy and in most cases similar to the ones that they had in Germany, were now built, water mills constructed and new industries introduced. For a few months the colonists were afraid that they would be forced to repay the loans that they had used to get started in their new homes and which were now due, but the Kontor at Saratov realized that they were in no position to do this yet, and persuaded the Empress to defer the time of payment for another ten years.

78. Bonwetsch, op. cit., 42.
Consequently, in 1793 when Pellas re-visited the colonies he could not help but remark on the big difference between their condition in that year and what it had been twenty years previous, and he makes the statement that "the people consider themselves fortunate and happy, and have no other wish except to be governed by officers who understand the German language". Their reason for making the latter half of this statement will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter III.

Life on the Volga.

1. Survey of the Colonies.

Before beginning a discussion of the government, schools, customs, and religious life of the German people living on the Volga, it would be wise at this time to give a brief survey of the colonies as they existed before the World War. We notice first of all that there is quite a difference of opinion as to the total population of Germans then living in this part of Russia. Schleunxing, and other writers that use him as an authority, give 750,000 as the total number but Gerhard Bonwetsch mentions only 600,000, and divides them in the following groups:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evangelical Protestants</td>
<td>435,667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholics</td>
<td>112,876</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarepta Moravians</td>
<td>2,485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mennonites</td>
<td>1,207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>552,207</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These statistics were gathered in the year 1910, but because of the rapid increase in population prevalent in the colonies, we are safe in saying that there were at least 600,000 Germans living along the Volga in the year 1914.

2. Gerhard Bonwetsch, Geschichte der deutschen Kolonien an der Wolga, 122.
The land of these colonists lies on both sides of the Volga in the former governments of Saratov (the Bergseite) and Samara (the Wiesenseite), and forms the most compact group of German settlements in all Russia. The colonies on the Bergseite are almost all south of Saratov, and extend from Schilling to Kamyshin, but those on the Wiesenseite begin farther north with Schaffhausen and extend to Alt Weimar. In both of these districts one sees only a few isolated German or Russian towns, since both the Germans and Russians settle near people of their own nationality.

The biggest exception to this rule is to be found in the case of the colony Sarapta, located near the old fort of Tzaritsyn. This colony was settled by German Moravians that came to Russia to carry on missionary activity among the Mohammedans. The inhabitants were given particularly advantageous privileges and soon became known as the most prosperous and progressive of all the German colonies. In 1773 when Pallas came through the town, he saw with surprise a stately stone church, a tobacco factory, an

4. Bonwetsch, op. cit., 44.
apothecary's shop, a whiskey distillery, and a system of water works. The fabric factory made cloth famed throughout the entire region, and even Catherine II herself, used the well-known snuff coming from here.

The average colony on the Volga has 5,000 to 10,000 inhabitants; Katharinenstadt (present Marxstadt) has about 20,000 inhabitants, and Norka, 17,000.

More than three-fourths of the colonies are Protestant (either Lutheran, Reformed, Mennonite, or Moravian) and the remaining are Catholic. However, in spite of the fact that the religious faith of these people is different, they have always felt a sense of unity because of their common nationality. This feeling was especially noticeable during and after the World War.

2. Description of the Volga District.

In journeying down the Volga from Kazan to Astrakhan, it must be an extremely strange feeling to find oneself suddenly transported from a Russian to a German world. At least, great astonishment is shown

5. A cotton cloth.
6. The early history of Sarepta is given in Bonwetsch, op. cit., 45-47.
7. Schleumking, op. cit., 5.
8. Ibid.
by various writers making such a trip, when they
entered typically German villages south of Samara.
Thus Arthur Ruhl in his book, White Nights and Other
Russian Impressions, tells how he got off the boat at
Saratov, and was asked by an old man, "Sind Sie deutsch?".
He goes on to say that the Germans living here had
maintained their own nationality and customs as thor-
oughly as our own Pennsylvania Dutch, and remarks that
their villages were much cleaner and the inhabitants
more thrifty than the surrounding Russian villages
and inhabitants.

A German soldier, captured during the World War,
also recounts his surprise at finding people of his
own nationality living here; and A. Ross in his
book, Russia in Upheaval, tells how he met a German
colonist, who had come day after day to the Saratov
Zemstvo building trying to get a permit to export
a few puds of butter, and who sadly exclaimed "Keine
Ordnung hier". Perhaps the best account of all
is given in Baron Haxthausen's The Russian Empire:
its People, Institutions and Resources, in which he
makes some exceedingly interesting remarks about the

9. Arthur Ruhl, White Nights and Other Russian Im-
pressions, 190-191.
11. E.A. Ross, Russia in Upheaval, 43.
differences between the Germans and the Russians living along the Volga. These are some of the things that we ourselves would probably notice, if we could take such a trip down the Volga. After leaving the very interesting town of Kazan, which Ross calls "the center of Mohammedan culture", we would pass the town of Simbirsk, and then slowly turn east towards Samara. The region, with its tree-covered hills and deep ravines is exceedingly beautiful, and is still famous as the hiding-place of Stenka Razin and other free-booters of the 17th century. The Volga now turns in such a way that it forms an isthmus from which water can be seen on both sides. The city of Samara, which is situated here, has a population of 100,000, and is one of the most important trading places on the Volga, since from here grain is exported to Tver and Novgorod, and flour sent to Astrakhan.

The Volga is two miles wide at this point, and now turns south again. On the right bank of the stream, a steep plateau of colored rocks towers above us, but on the left bank, flat meadows which give

their German name to the district, extend as far as the eye can see. The colonies on this side of the river are found along the river, and are situated close together for mutual protection, but those on the other side are more widely distributed and do not lie along the river. (4-5) If we were making this trip in the spring of the year, we would notice the many beautiful wild flowers which bloom here. Haxthausen tells how they grow in large red, yellow, and blue patches and fill the air with their fragrance, while German Russians living in the United States often express a desire to see the steppes in the spring-time just once more before they die. 15.

The first German colony that we would pass in our journey down the Volga is Shaffhausan. Haxthausen remarks, "Even before entering the village, we recognized the German atmosphere by the dress of some women returning from the fields knitting. I never say Russian women knit -- at least never while walking in the open air. The majority of the Russian peasantry wear no stockings, but swathe their feet in pieces of cloth. The trees planted before the houses in the villages and the well-kept gardens surrounded

15. Mrs. Margaret Ostarmiller, Berthoud, Colo.
that instead of being their teachers in agriculture, cattle-breeding, and handicraft, they rush into trade and speculations, and interfere with the branches of industry to which they are most inclined. I found therefore among the Russians everywhere great animosity and envy of the German colonists on the Volga."

Continuing in our journey, we would finally come to the city of Pokrowsk (the German name being Kosakenstadt). Here Catherine II forced Little Russians to settle in order that she might have some-one to bring salt from Yelton Lake to the Volga. These Little Russians also have retained their own language, manners, customs, and distinctive dress, and only rarely mix with the surrounding Great Russians and Germans. Across the river from Pokrowsk is the city of Saratov, the real center of the German-Russian district. This city has about 150,000 inhabitants, and is situated in a valley surrounded by hills. Here we find asphalt streets, trolley cars, many public buildings, and quite a large university. In fact, the entire town atmosphere reminded Arthur Ruhl of

his own business-like native American cities. 2

German colonies now extend from Saratov to Kamyshin on the right bank of the Volga, but not so far south on the left bank. From here on, the altitude becomes gradually lower until we at last reach the salt steppes of the Caspian Basin. The two most important towns in this region are naturally Tatarstan and Astrakhan. Both are inhabited by large numbers of Asiatic Mongols, and particularly Tatars, Kalmucks, Kirghiz, and Bashkirs. This entire district was once covered by the Caspian Sea, and the land is practically valueless for agricultural purposes.

With this introduction, let us now consider the agricultural, industrial, and social life of the Volga Germans.

3. Agricultural Life.

A. Instructions.

In April 1769, the Tutelary Chancery at Petersburg sent to the German colonists a series of instructions in which the following rules were laid down. They were told to plant their grain in the spring after the snow had melted, because "it had been found from

21. Instructions are discussed -- Beratz, op. cit., 143-170.
experience that this was the best time of the year to do such work". The Vorsteher was to see that the plows, wagons, harrows and horses were all ready with which to begin the plowing, and a definite time should be set in which the work had to be done. (Beratz sarcastically remarks that the Russian officials evidently considered the colonists feeble-minded because such very minute directions were laid down for them.)

The instructions go on to say that lazy, shiftless people were to be carefully supervised, and if they refused to better themselves, they were to be made the serfs of the more industrious colonists. Rules were also laid down as to just when and in what way the grain should be harvested, how much of it was to be kept as seed, and how much sold. Any colonist that refused to obey these rules in every respect was to be punished severely, and as a result, hardly any progress was made in methods of agriculture until the Russian Revolution. (Ibid., 145.)

Other commands were that the hemp, linen, silk, and bee industries be introduced, and that mulberry and other fruit trees be planted. No one was allowed to kill his own cattle or sell them without permit.

22. Beratz, op. cit., 143-144.
from the Vorsteher, and during the winter months, both the men and women were told to busy themselves with spinning and weaving. (Ibid., 160.)

Another law, which was unfortunately seldom carried out, stated that birch, linden, aspen, and elder trees were to be planted, and care taken that the forests be preserved. Trees were to be divided yearly according to lot, and a watchman hired to guard the forests. However, from stories that are told, it seems that it was quite easy to bribe this watchman with either money or volks and then steal the best trees. Each newly married couple was also commanded to plant twenty trees, and the father of a child told to plant six trees for each newly-born son and four trees for each daughter.

B. The "Dusch"System.

From the very beginning of the settlement period, all of the land of a colony except the five dessiatines of Hof land per family belonged to the community or Gemeinde, but it was not until the end of the 19th century that the real Russian mir system with its periodic re-distributions of land was introduced. We unfortunately do not know the exact reason

23. Mr. and Mrs. John Weizel, Berthoud, Colo.
why this change was made. According to Johann von Keussler it resulted from the fact that after 1813 a capitation tax was levied on all the men and boys in the German colonies, and that it was felt that if the taxes had to be paid equally by all, the community land should also be divided equally. 25.

Bonwetsch, on the other hand, shows that the mir system preceded instead of followed the law of 1813, and states that the probable reason is that land was becoming scarce, since the villages had been established so close together for mutual protection, and that the small landowners demised an equal division of property. According to this system, every manly soul (called a Dusch) has an equal amount of land for his own temporary use. The land is periodically measured and divided according to lot. This is done in six, ten, or twelve year periods, according to different authors. 26. At this time the new-born sons are added to the family and those that have died withdrawn. As the land is naturally of different values, it is often divided into three, four, or five large pieces, of which each

26. Ibid.
27. Schlemming, op. cit., 8
Bonwetsch, op. cit., 52.
farmer receives his share.

The biggest objection to this system, just as in Western Europe during the Middle Ages, is that the farmers have no incentive to improve their land because it is kept in temporary possession only, and secondly, so much time is wasted travelling from one strip of land to the other since they are often dozens of kilometers apart. On the other hand, this system did succeed in keeping the villages purely German, as it was practically impossible for an outsider to enter the Gemeinde and acquire land in it, and it also created an extremely strong Democratic spirit, since everyone in the village had equal rights. A third result was that since the amount of land held depended on the number of persons in the family, a large number of children, and particularly sons, were greatly desired.

C. Principal Crops and Methods of Agriculture

Catherine II had hoped that the German colonists would introduce new crops and methods of agriculture, but with a few exceptions, no great changes were made.

In the year 1772, however, people from Holland, who

J.C. Schwabenland, Berthoud, Colo.
had settled in Katharinenstadt, introduced the tobacco plant, and its cultivation soon spread to 41 colonies most of which were on the Wiesenseite. The first tobacco factory was built in Sarapta, and from here and other places, the finished product was sent to towns on both sides of the river, and even to Moscow, Astrakhan, and Kazan. Three other tobacco factories were later built at Saratov, Katharinenstadt, and Wiedemann, but of these only the one at Saratov was in operation at the time Schleuning wrote his book. Much of the tobacco was given to the Kirghiz, and Bashkirs, who "liked it for its vile smell", in exchange for furs, skins, saddles, felt blankets, and fat.

Another innovation is to be found in the cultivation of the potato plant, which was also introduced by German colonists, but was not adopted by the Russians on the Volga until the middle of the 19th century, since they considered it a sin to eat this vegetable.

The principal crops of the lower Volga, as is well known, are grains of all kinds but particularly

wheat and rye. Of these, the latter is more often kept for home use while the wheat is shipped away. The importance of this crop is shown by the fact that in 1885 the amount of wheat sent from the colonies consisted of over three million Pud. and before the war nearly twice as much flour alone was exported. Other crops are oats, millet, and barley, the latter of which is grown in the sandy soil around Marxstadt. In some places sunflowers are grown for the oil that is extracted from them. Attempts have also been made to introduce the cultivation of sugar beets, and a factory has stood at Anton for about sixty years, but on the whole, this movement has failed because of the lack of support from the government.  

The Sarepta mustard and balsam are sold throughout all Russia, and here too the wine industry has been very successful, although all attempts elsewhere have failed. The bee industry is carried on in other parts of this region, and in several places hemp, flax, hops, peas, head lettuce, cabbage, and lentils are grown. Melons, pumpkins, and cucumbers, the first mentioned of which are dried and used in

34. Bonwetsch, op. cit., 60.
making whiskey, grow in great profusion on the Wiesen­seite but with less success on the Bergseite. 
Mulberry, cherry, plum, and apple trees can also be 
found in the German colonies.

The cattle industry, however, has never been of 
great importance because the colonies are too close 
together to have large herds, and also because of 
the terrible storms of the steppes, one of which is 
said to have destroyed 1700 head of cattle in the 
year 1833. Two other reasons are fear of the 
thieving nomads, and also the danger of contagious 
diseases that break out so frequently among the 
herds.

To be sure, each household possesses four to 
eight cows and even more horses for its own use. 
Oxen are also kept and used for field work. At one 
time the sheep industry was quite important, but 
according to Bonwetsch, it has been gradually 
supplanted by that of pigs, which are fed on old po­
tatoes, pumpkins, and cornstalks. We should also 
mention that the camel is not an unknown animal 
along the Volga, and is frequently harnessed to a

35. Bonwetsch, ibid., 61.
36. Bonwetsch, ibid., 63.
plow along with an ox, or else used as a means of transportation.

In all of the German colonies, a special herdsman is kept for the swine, calves, cows, horses and sheep. Of these, the cowherd and swineherd drive their animals home from pasture every night, but the sheep, calves, heifers, and horses are often driven ten to fifteen verst from the village and kept there. This was done in the case of the horses, after the crops had been harvested in the fall, and stories are told how the boys watching the horses would make underground houses and stay there until November when the winter snows began.

As we mentioned in a previous connection, the farming land of the colonists often lies fifteen to twenty-five verst away from the village, and both during the spring plowing and harvest season, a general exodus takes place from the village to the fields until the work is done. Enough food is taken along to last during this period, and tents are erected out on the fields. A three field system of tillage prevails here, since one-third of the land is used for

37. Bonwetsch, op. cit., 64.
38. J.C. Schwabenland, Berthoud, Colo.
wheat, one-third for rye, and another third lies fallow. Dung is never used to increase the fertility of the soil, but is instead dried and used as fuel. During the harvesting season the men walk ahead cutting the grain, and the women, dressed in short dark skirts and white shirts, come behind binding the ears into sheaves. Mrs. Liphart tells that some years the stalks were so high that it was necessary for the women and girls to wear bells in order that they might not get lost.

Before the war the threshing was done out in the open fields by means of a large six-cornered stone that was pulled by two horses or oxen, walking around in a circle, just as was done in Biblical times. The separation of the grain and the chaff was left to the wind, and after this had been accomplished, the grain was sacked and taken to the village. In ordinary years the returns from the seed are six to twelve fold, and in good years twelve to twenty fold; but from the very start, crop failures have occurred very frequently. This is due to the fact that a hot dry summer will completely ruin a crop, and also be-

39. Emmy von Liphart, Dorfgeschichten, 47.
40. Putzmaschinen were later used -- Bonwetsch, op. cit., 62.
41. Bonwetsch, 1613, 64.
cause of the wild geese, grasshoppers, and marmots, which are so very prevalent in certain districts. Bonwetsch tells that even now the punishment for certain offences is to kill a definite number of marmots and produce their tails as evidence. Some of the more recent famines, at which time government kitchens were set up, are those of 1882, 1892 and 1921. In such years the poorer people of the village are forced to buy flour from the rich grain merchants at fabulous prices, or else to mortgage both their future crops and their own services in order to get food for their families.

D. The founding of New Colonies after 1842.

During the first few years, all the colonists had even more land than they needed, but in a very short time, the population had increased so rapidly that the amount of land per jüsch became steadily less. This fact is shown in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>No. of Dessiatines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1765</td>
<td>27,000</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1775</td>
<td>23,000</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1784</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1793</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1808</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

42. Bonwetsch, ibid., 63.
43. J.C. Schwabenland, Berthoud, Colo.
44. Bonwetsch, op. cit., 66.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>No. of Dassiatines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1816</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td>127,000</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1857</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The colonies on the Bergseite began to suffer from this lack of sufficient land, but in a very short time the same thing began to take place on the Wiesenseite. The government then decided to extend the land of the Wiesenseite colonies further east, and to give 250,000 dassiatines of land, part of the Khirghiz steppes, to the colonies on the other side of the Volga. In this way the territory of the German colonists nearly reached the Ural Mountains.

This plan naturally worked very easily for the colonies that had been planted east of the Volga, but it was extremely difficult to induce colonists from the Bergseite to leave their homes and friends to establish new colonies in a district that was not nearly as fertile as the one that they were told to leave. For this reason each family leaving was given 100 rubles, and was not required to pay any taxes for a period of ten years. Seed grain and machinery were taken along, and a thorough attempt made to avoid the mistakes of 1764-1767. Between the years 45. Schleunking, op. cit., 27.
1842-1867, 350,000 rubles were spent by the Bergseite colonies in this emigration work, and forty-four Protestant colonies and seventeen Catholic colonies were founded.

The first Wiesenseite Tochterkolonie was Weizenfeld, which was founded on the Nachoi River in the year 1846, and the latest one, Neuwarenburg, was established in 1902. In general, the colonies of the Wiesenseite are to be found on the Nachoi and Karaman Rivers, while those of the Bergseite are usually on the Jeruslan River. According to Bonwetsch, a great deal of unnecessary quarreling and greed were displayed by these colonists during their first years in their new homes. This was partly due to the fact that a rather young, radical element often predominated in these colonies, and in many places succeeded in electing a Vorsteher from their own ranks. We are told that in one of these colonies, the most violent quarrel raged for months over the question as to whether the men should sit and hang their caps on the right or the left side of the church, and that it was finally necessary for the superintendent of the

46. Schlaumpf, ibid., 28.
47. Daughter-colony.
churches to decide this weighty question.

However, in spite of all mistakes and absurdities, we find that in an astonishingly short time, a period of prosperity soon began to set in, and order was again restored, just as had been the case in 1775. According to Boratz's statistics, 91 new colonies were founded between 1842 and 1909, and of these, five were founded by Manonites from the Black Sea. Bonwetsch, however, names ten such colonies, and states that these people were much better educated, and had more advanced methods of agriculture than their Evangelical and Catholic neighbors.

E. The Stolypin Land Reform Bill of 1906.

Although the Stolypin Bill of 1906 was the biggest factor in awakening the colonists from the agricultural lethargy into which they had fallen, attempts had also been made by the Kontor Alexius von Frese to institute reforms of various kinds during the latter half of the 19th century. At this time a larger harrow drawn by horses, and a six-cornered threshing stone were introduced. Frese also attempted to institute yearly agricultural meetings.

49. Bonwetsch, ibid., 91.
50. Bonwetsch, ibid., 94.
51. Bonwetsch, ibid., 94-95.
at which crop rotation, methods of fertilization, and the introduction of new machinery were to be discussed. This plan unfortunately never materialized, and it was not until 1906 that any great changes were made.

Each colony was now given the opportunity of deciding for itself whether the land was to be held in permanent possession, or the mir system to be retained. In some places the latter was done because it was felt that greater equality could thus be maintained, but in the other colonies, the advantages of the new system were immediately seen, and the change made. Landowners now took a quickened interest in their farms: intensive agriculture and modern machinery were introduced; dams and canals built, and everything possible done to improve the old farming methods.

On the other hand, many of the more shiftless colonists sold their land for money, and then after having spent it, were penniless. Such people naturally complained that they had been ruined by the Reform Bill, and during the Russian Revolution gathered in large bands, and cried in their rather pe-

Aside from agriculture, the greatest industry on the Volga is naturally the manufacture of grain into flour. This industry lies almost entirely in the hands of German manufacturers and merchants, who handle millions of dollars worth of sales, hire thousands of people, and own their own methods of transportation. Before the war eight and one-half million 53. Zentner of grain were manufactured yearly in German steam mills and sent by ship to the Baltic provinces from where it was distributed over the world. 54.

On the Bergseite particularly, the spinning and weaving industries are also of very great importance. This work is usually carried on in the homes during the long winter months by the men, women, and children; and in this way not only enough cloth for private use is provided, but in many cases, the finished products are sold to middlemen, and enough money thus earned with which to pay the yearly taxes. Aside from the work done in the homes, there

52. Take out the posts! Divide the land!
53. 1 Zentner = fifty kilograms.
54. Schleunigner, op. cit., 11.
55. Not so often.
are also factories, in which the women do weaving. Thus in the volost of Schilling there existed 69 sarpinka factories containing 6000 looms in the year 1866.

The first important industrial town was Sarepta, which in 1773 possessed a flour mill, tobacco factory, whiskey distillery, apothecary's shop, soap and chandler factory, and a sawmill. Later a sarpinka factory, a bakery, and a mustard factory were also built, but after the year 1802, so many industrial failures occurred, that the town lost its early fame.

The only important commercial center on the Wieseneseite is the present city of Marxstadt. Here a yearly fair has been held from early times, and manufactured articles sent to both Russian and German villages east of the Volga. Some of the more important industries carried on in this city are the making of farm machinery, hats, baskets, felt articles, etc. We also find steam mills, saw mills, casting foundries, blacksmith's shops, and a printing press mentioned here.

The Bergseite cities, on the other hand, have

56. District.
57. Schlegling, op. cit., 11.
58. Bonwetsch, op. cit., 58.
59. Schlegling, op. cit., 11-12.
always been more interested in industry and trade, and as a result do not have to rely entirely on the fluctuating returns from their fields. Schleunfung gives the following list of industries and factories that are to be found in the city of Balzer alone: two oil mills, two steam mills, eight windmills, a foundry and a machine factory, two clothing factories, one weaving factory with seventy-nine looms, four stocking factories, a woolen factory, seventy-two sarpinta factories with fourteen thousand looms, fifteen dying houses, seventeen tanneries, twelve salt factories, four brick-kilns, three hundred shoemakers, eight wagon factories, four saddle factories, twelve cabinet-factories, and twelve smitheries.

3. Relations between the Germans and their Neighbors

In the 2nd Manifesto of 1763, Catherine II states that she wishes to "people with immigrant foreigners the desert waste lands of the southern provinces of the Empire and through them to disseminate industry and agricultural science among her subjects".

However, this wish was only partly fulfilled because it is almost universally agreed that hardly any influence whatever was exerted by the Volga Germans on

60. Schleunfung, ibid., 11.
their neighbors, and that although their methods of agriculture were better and the returns greater than those of the Russians, only the Mennonite colonies can be considered model in any sense of the word.

A greater difference of opinion prevails as to just what the relation between the two groups of people was. "Haxthausen and Alexinsky say that they noticed a great deal of envy and animosity on the part of the native Russians toward the German colonists, because of their speculative ways and superior attitude. Then too, the military and financial privileges granted to the foreigners, and the greater amount of land per capita that they possessed, naturally tended to create a spirit of jealousy toward them."

Baroness Sojina, on the other hand states: "No one saw any harm in the life of the German colonists who kept the privileges of former times, never abusing them or taking advantage of the Russians. The Germans were a curiosity to their Russian neighbors, who on Sundays used to drive over to the little German villages to look at the spotless streets, clean houses, and little flower gardens as children look at a picture.

62. Haxthausen, ibid., Vol. II., 42. John Spargo, Russia as an American Problem, 78.
63. Gregor Alexinsky, Russia and R. Europe, 43.
book." In another place she remarks, "The efficiency of the Germans never distressed the Russians. Germans were Germans, and did not know better." And she also says that the German salesmen were much more popular than the Jews because they were more honest and knew exactly what the people wanted.

D.M. Wallace in his Russia makes the following very similar statement. "The Russian muzhik looks upon Germans almost as beings of a different world— as a wonderfully cunning and ingenious people, who have been endowed by Providence with peculiar qualities not possessed by ordinary Orthodox humanity. To him it seems in the nature of things that Germans should live in large, clean, well-built houses, in the same way as it is in the nature of things that girls should build nests; and as it has probably never occurred to a human being to build a nest for himself and his family, so it never occurs to a Russian peasant to build a house on the German model. Germans are Germans, and Russians are Russians—and there is nothing more to be said on the subject."

On the whole, relations between the two races were

64. Baroness Soulny-Seydlitz, Russia of Yesterday and Tomorrow, 188.
65. Soulny-Seydlitz, ibid., 186.
always kept on a rather peaceful basis. A certain amount of communication had to take place because of their commercial intercourse, but as far as language, customs, and religion were concerned, the two races always remained absolutely separate. The only people that learned to speak the Russian language were the more educated classes, the merchants, and later, the soldiers. The Russian people often brought their grain to the German villages to be ground into flour, and on market days often came with farm products, bakery goods, fish, etc. Then too, blind Russian beggars that were led by children came to the villages quite frequently, and would sing religious and secular songs in return for food, but inter-marriages between the two races occurred so seldom, and were considered such a disgrace by the Germans, that they were talked about for years afterward.

This was naturally different in the large cities where greater intercourse between the Germans and Russians took place, and also after 1874 when the German boys were forced to enter the Russian army, and often spent the winter months in Russian villages where they met and in some cases married native girls.

67. J.C. Schwabenland, Berthoud, Colo.
   Mr. Carl Warner, Fort Morgan, Colo.
Government.

During the first few years the colonists were treated almost like prisoners, and all their acts carefully regulated. Any colonist travelling 50 versts or even less from his home was forced to receive a pass from the Vorsteher, and if his journey took him more than that distance away, the pass had to come from the Kontor. "The colonists dared not consider themselves independent, but instead were only to obey, and that immediately, because otherwise they were fined or beaten". The Vorsteher had to attend all baptisms, weddings and other feasts to see that not too much money was spent or more than ten guests invited, and careful directions were given as to what the punishment for all offenses was to be.

The actual government of the colonies was divided into four divisions: that of the commune, of the volost, the Kontor, and the Tutelary-Chancery. Every man over twenty-one years of age attended communal meeting, and here the officers of the village were elected, communal affairs decided, and the more burdensome village duties divided.

69. Bonwetsch, op. cit., 49.
The officers were a secretary, a Vorsteher, who was responsible for everything that took place in the village, and his assistants. These men were elected for a period of two years. Schleuninger remarks that the office of Vorsteher was really one of honor only, because the yearly salary was seldom more than fifty to one hundred rubles. A great deal of reverence was felt for the alten Männer of the village, and their advice was always asked when disputed questions came up.

Three to sixteen colonies formed a volost, at the head of which was an Obervorsteher, who held office for three years, two to four assistants, who were elected for two years, and a permanent secretary. These officers were elected by a group of men consisting of the Vorsteher and two or three representatives from each village.

Until 1856 the acts of these officials were supervised by the Kontor at Saratov, a bureau solely concerned with colonial affairs. In 1782, it was felt that the German colonists should be given the same

70. Old men.
72. Bonwetsch, op. cit., 49.
jurisdiction that the Russians were receiving, and
the office of Kontor was abolished, but because of
the inability of the Germans to get along with the
Russian officials placed over them, Paul I re-
opened this office in 1797, and gave it even greater
juridical powers than it had formerly possessed.
The main officers now were the chief-justice, who
was chosen by the czar, two assessors, a secretary,
two doctors, a bookkeeper, a translator, and a sur-
vveyor. The duties of this bureau were to overlook
the collection of taxes as well as the choosing of
teachers and school teachers, to settle all cases
of dispute except those between Russians and Germans,
to provide passes when a long journey was taken,
regulate rules of inheritance, etc. 73.

These duties were increased even farther in
1803, and in 1837 the Kontor was placed under the
supervision of the new Ministerium der Reichsdomän.
74. but from 1866 on, its duties have been gradually taken
away, as we shall see later. Schleuning states that
it was through the influence of this bureau that the
German colonies were able to progress as well as they

73. Bonwetsch, ibid., 48.
ill, since they were thus given a great many more powers of self-government than they otherwise would have had.

The only officials with greater authority than the Kontor were the members of the Tutelary-Chancery, which Catherine II had organized in 1763 to look after the colonization work, and induce foreigners to settle in unoccupied regions. But after the first few years, these officials were seldom mentioned in histories of the Volga Germans.

According to the reports of German-Russians living in the United States, the governor of the region would occasionally visit the colonies to the great excitement of the inhabitants, and twice a year, judges would come from Saratov to decide certain reserve cases. All petty offenders were tried by the Gemeinde, and an attempt made to punish them in a manner befitting the offense. Thus a woman living in the colony Kübler, who had stolen hay, was forced to walk through the village with part of it tied to her back, and a dishonest tailor, who had stolen a collar, was punished in the same way.

75 Schmiert, op. cit., 26.
76 Beretz, op. cit., 101-102.
77 Beretz, ibid., 262.
78 Léphart, op. cit., 21.
Whenever such offenses recurred, or when the stolen article was of great value, it was customary to exclude the culprit from the Gemeinde, and in many cases send him to Siberia. This was also done in the case of all criminal offenses.

Until the end of the 19th century, physical chastisement was the usual mode of punishment for minor offenses, but from then on, it became more common to imprison people or exact fines from them. According to a certain Fort Morgan blacksmith, this change in the method of punishment resulted in a great increase of crime along the Volga, but even so, it is amazing to hear of the extreme good order that prevailed in all the colonies.


We now come to one of the most interesting phases of German life on the Volga -- a discussion of the churches and schools there. This subject is also of extreme importance because it was through the agency of these two institutions that the colonists managed to retain their national characteristics so well.

During the first few years, in Russia, a hope-

79. Beratz, op. cit., 263.
80. Carl Wagner, Fort Morgan, Colo.
less confusion existed in the German colonies in regard to religious affairs. The colonists had been promised that the government would both support and provide for ministers, but between the years 1765 and 1771, only seven colonies (Norka, Anton, Beideck, Grimm, Frank, Katharinenstadt, and Stephan) had been given pastors, and at the end of two years, the government refused to support these pastors any longer. The Volga Germans, who have always been noted for their almost miserly thrift, immediately objected to paying their pastor's salaries, and it was finally necessary for the latter to threaten to leave their parishes, if they were not paid at once.

After the several years the troublesome question was settled in the following way: Every minister was to receive a definite salary, the payment of which was divided equally among all able-bodied men between the ages of sixteen and sixty. In 1867 this sum amounted to eighteen kopek in the Catholic villages and eleven kopek in the Lutheran and Reformed villages. Besides this, the ministers also received payment in wheat, rye, barley, hay, potatoes, and wood, and were

82. J.C. Schwabenland, Berthoud, Colo., states that the pastor in Straub was paid according to the dusch.
given a large house, usually containing six to ten rooms, in which to live. Beratz states that after the death of a pastor, his widow was allowed to draw his salary and live in the parsonage for one year. But after 1807, she and her children were provided for, through a fund raised by means of a free-will offering at Christmas and Easter in all the Protestant colonies.

In spite of the settlement of the salary question, there has always been a great lack of Protestant ministers on the Volga. Between the years 1803 and 1820, when Jesuit priests were serving the Catholic colonies, this need for clerics was so great, that quite frequently the priests had to enter the Protestant villages to baptize new-born children and perform marriage ceremonies.

Later, students were sent to the Volga from the Mission School at Basel, Switzerland, but because of their extreme ignorance in the essentials of the Christian faith, and the lack of education that they displayed, their activity was discontinued by an imperial decree of 1883. From then on, most of the

84. Beratz, op. cit., 245.
85. Bouwens, op. cit., 83.
pastors came from the Baltic Provinces, after having received a very good education at the University of Dorpat. On the whole, hardly any of them were native Volga Germans.

Until 1810, a constant quarrel went on between the Reformed or Calvinistic colonists and their Lutheran ministers. In Warenburg, for example, the Lutheran pastor, a man named Littfass, refused to give communion to his people in the Reformed fashion—that is, to allow the people themselves to hold the goblet and put the bread in their mouth, and as a result, such a violent quarrel broke out, that the chief-justice, Roggenbucke, and the elders of both faiths had to intervene. According to the decision that they made then, all Lutheran pastors were to give communion to the colonists as they desired it.

From that time on, relations between the two Protestant groups became much more peaceful, and through intermarriage all friction between them was abolished, although some Reformed people with a slight feeling of superiority still speak of certain Catholic tendencies of the Lutherans. In those villages where the population is mixed, the communion

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Ibid.
question is settled by allowing the smaller group to take communion in their own way first, and then the rest of the congregation follow.

Although some of the early pastors, such as Littfess, caused a great deal of trouble by their narrow views, and at times were even accused of getting drunk, others cannot be praised enough for the encouraging example that they set. One of these men, the Rev. Janet of Anton, is especially praised by Bonwetsch for the work that he did in holding revival meetings and creating a strong religious spirit in his parish. Through his activity and that of a travelling lay-brother, Johannes Scheuerl, small groups of converted brethren and sisters, who held Sunday afternoon and evening prayer meeting and concerned all weekly practices, were organized in many colonies.

The second pastor at Norka, Reverend Cataneo, is also praised by Bonwetsch. He seems to have been especially interested in the introduction of new plants and trees, and better methods of agriculture. For this reason he sent to Germany for apple and pear tree seedlings, and it is said he had quite a

89. Bonwetsch, op. cit., 55.
lovely garden next to the parsonage. He also tried
to tame wild wolves, was interested in finding his-
toric remains of earlier civilizations, and introduced
inoculation against small-pox. His fame as a doctor
became so wide-spread, that even nomads from the
steppes came to him for aid, and we are told that he
successfully performed sixteen amputations and twenty-
seven cancer operations. According to another story,
when any dissatisfied couples came to him to get a
divorce, he would first listen to their complaints,
and then picking up his cane, beat them both and
send them home. Needless to say, very few divorces
occurred in Worka as long as he was there.

A third important religious character, Reverend
J. Fessler, is famous for his administrative work in
the German colonies. This pastor was born in Hungary
in 1756, came to Petersberg in 1809, and ten years
later began his work along the Volga. He first organ-
ized all of the Protestant Churches into the Saratov
Konsistorium, and then, after an extensive tour
through the colonies, instituted the following
reforms: large parishes, which in many cases contained

90. Bonwetsch, ibid., 56-57.
91. This was given up in 1833 and the Moscow and
Petersberg Konsistorium for Protestant churches
established. -- Bonwetsch, ibid., 78.
eight to twelve colonies, were divided, and an attempt made to reduce them to four or at the most, five, colonies; the salary of the pastors increased to six hundred rubles; the office of two supervising Pröpste, who were to visit the colonies every three years, introduced; and careful rules for the liturgy and government of the church laid down. Besides this, he also called yearly synods of all the pastors at which the Volga Gesangbuch with its 823 songs was prepared.

A word should also be said in regard to clerical buildings, and the kind of Sunday services held. The church square is usually found in the center of the village, and on it the church, parsonage, school-house, prayer house, and bell tower may be seen in the following way.

92. Clerical overseers.
94. Bonwetsch, op. cit., 72-75.
The church is usually of white painted wood, the first one of stone having been built in Schaffhausen in 1832. Because of the expense of heating such a large building, (during the winter months), all church services are held in the schoolhouse. The bell tower has steps leading to the top, and is constructed in such a way that the church choir can gather here on the evening before Easter and Pentecost to sing hymns. The bells are rung every evening at seven o'clock, and on Sunday nights no one is allowed to leave the village for his week's work on the fields, until he has heard the evening chimes. Whenever an inhabitant of the village dies the bell-ringer designates by the first few peals whether the person was a man, woman, or child, and then tolls out his age. The bells are also used in case of a fire, and are rung steadily for hours on nights when a blizzard is raging on the steppes, in order to designate to possible wanderers where the village is located.

On Sunday morning, all the inhabitants of the village may be seen walking to church, arrayed in their best clothes, and with their Volga Gesangbücher under their arms. Services last from about ten to eleven

95. Bonwetsch, ibid., 81.
96. Liphart, op. cit., 88.
97. Jacob Weitzel, Berthoud, Colo.
forty-five, but practically half of that time is spent in the recitation of creed and the performing of the rather long Lutheran ritual. A choir, usually consisting of the unmarried boys and girls sing a selection or two, and the schoolmaster plays the really beautiful pipe organ, which can be found in all the larger villages. (The colony of Norka, which bought their organ in 1792, proudly claims to have been the first one to do so.) On Sunday afternoon the confirmed young people are sent to the school teacher for a review of their religious instruction, and the converted inhabitants of the village hold their weekly prayer meeting.

Even at the present time, every pastor is forced to take care of an extremely large parish called the Kirchspiel, which often contains 15,000 to 20,000 inhabitants. The parsonage is situated in the largest colony of the parish and from here the pastor goes alternately to the other colonies. However, during the spring, the floods often make the roads so bad that it is impossible for him to leave his home. On all Sundays when he is not present in a village, his right hand man, the school teacher, reads a printed sermon from some book to the congregation. Other religious duties of

the school teacher are to bury the dead, keep the
church records, and give religious instruction to
the children.

The following chart gives the name, population,
and date of foundation of eight representative Pro-
testant parishes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>German Name</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Members</th>
<th>No. of Colonies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesser</td>
<td>1766</td>
<td>14,535</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorke</td>
<td>1767</td>
<td>23,179</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grimm</td>
<td>1767</td>
<td>24,179</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beileck</td>
<td>1767</td>
<td>9,496</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dietel</td>
<td>1767</td>
<td>15,667</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank</td>
<td>1768</td>
<td>28,039</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selka</td>
<td>1768</td>
<td>15,667</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These statistics merely show under what conditions
the German-Russian pastors had to labor before the war.
At that time there were 58 such Kirchspiele along the
Volga, and an equal number of Catholic parishes, but
after 1917, a few of the larger ones were again divi-
ded. The Protestant parishes are under the Cath-
Konzistorium at the present time, while
the Catholic parishes are supervised by a bishop, who
has his seat at Saratov.

100. Bonvetsch, op. cit., 121.
102. The independent Saratov Konzistorium was given up in 1835.
Education in the Colonies.

During the first few years on the Volga, the educational problem did not seem to trouble the German immigrants as much as it did later. This was due to the fact that enough educated colonists that could undertake this work, had come from Germany, but as soon as they had died, a great want of teachers was felt. It now became customary to pick out as teachers those men that could sing and pray the best, shout the loudest, and would serve for the least amount of money. In 1815, for example, the colony of Beleistock paid the schoolteacher a yearly salary of 30 rubles, and as he naturally could not live from it, he was forced to do outside work during the summer months. In many cases the school-teacher himself had difficulty in reading and writing, and as he usually had hundreds of children under his care, it is easy to assume that he was not able to teach them very much. In 1819 Dr. Fessler remarked, "The ordinary colonist regards the schoolteacher as a community burden; a farm servant or herdsmen is better paid than the schoolteacher; he takes very little interest in the instruction of his children, and would rather use

103. Beratz, op. cit., 278.
104. Bonwetsch, op. cit., 75.
them as beasts of burden."

During the first years, the colonists showed such small interest in the education of their children, that it was not until the beginning of the 19th century that school houses began to be built. Before this time, the pupils had to meet in their instructor's house. About this same time the plan was suggested that an orphan child that was especially talented, be sent from each volost to Saratov to be educated, and then serve as a teacher and recording secretary for the district, but according to Beratz, this was done in very few cases.

Finally in 1815 a professor by the name of J.P. Erismann sent to the school commission at Kazan a report with the following recommendations for reform.

(1) A teacher's seminary, in which instruction would be given in history, geography, religion, and the teaching of the Russian language, should be founded.

(2) The village pastors should spend more time supervising the schools. (3) Summer schools should be held, so that the children might not forget the things that they had learned during the winter.

(4) More schools should be built and more teachers

105. Beratz, op. cit., 278.
106. Bonwetsch, op. cit., 76.
employed, and (5) The teachers should be paid by the Kontor, in order that they might be independent of the Gemeinde.

However, as far as we can tell, nothing whatever was done in the way of carrying out any of these suggestions. Reverend Fessler, on the other hand, who was also extremely interested in this problem, did succeed in getting laws passed stating that every teacher be required to pass an educational examination made out by the Saratov Konsistorium, and that the choosing of the teachers be in the hands of the pastor instead of the Gemeinde.

At the outbreak of World War practically all of the children of the village attended the Gemeinde school lasting from October to Easter. From the year 1840 on, attendance began to be compulsory, but it has always been more common to send the boys instead of the girls. Each child had to furnish his own paper and pencil, and was taught simple arithmetic, reading, writing, Biblical stories, religious songs, and the answers to questions in the Catechism. Most of the children ranged from seven to fifteen years in

108. Bonwetsch, op. cit., 76.
age, and in the larger colonies, only four hours of instruction were given to the older children and the remaining four, to the younger children.

The congested conditions, which were so prevalent during the early years, became even worse as time went on. In 1860 for example, the colony of Grimm had only two teachers for 700 pupils, and in one part of Norka 1,100 students were instructed in one room by a teacher and his assistant. In these village schools, the most primitive seating arrangements imaginable prevailed. Long benches were always used, and when any writing had to be done, the children knelt on the floor and used the benches as desks. However, in spite of all deficiencies, practically all of the children at least learned to read, and in that respect were ahead of their Russian neighbors, 52 per-cent of whom were illiterate.

At the age of fourteen or fifteen, children from all the parish churches were sent to the pastor for a special period of instruction leading to Confirmation on Pentecost Sunday. (This period usually lasts about six weeks.) Here again practically nothing except Biblical knowledge, the learning of hymns,

111. J.C. Schwabenian, Berthoud, Colo.
112. Bonwetsch, op. cit., 79.
and answers to religious questions was emphasized. Children were placed in rows according to the ability that they displayed, and even yet, those that sat at the head of their class mention this fact with great pride. After Confirmation the names of the boys and girls in the class were enrolled in the church books as members and they were now considered ledig.

Another test of instruction was the Brautecumen that all couples had to pass before getting married. At this time their ability to read, and their knowledge of the Bible and Catechism were examined. All those that answered important questions to the satisfaction of the pastor were then allowed to get married, and the others sent home and told to come back later.

Along with the Gemeinde school, we also find that a Russian Volkschule existed in all the larger colonies. These did not take the place of a High School, but they did have a wider range of subjects than the church schools that I have just described. Most colonists objected to sending their children to such a school, because of the expense and also because it was feared that a Russian nationalistic spirit

113. J.C. Schwabenland, Berthoud, Colo.
114. Grown-up, having reached their majority.
would be instilled in them.

Two advanced schools which are distinctly German, are the Zentralschulen, which were founded at Grimm and Katharinenstadt in the year 1835 with twenty-five students in each place. The purpose of these schools is to train teachers for the German colonies, but according to Schleuning, neither are recognized by the Russian government.

Besides the three kinds of schools mentioned so far, there is also a university at Saratov, several private schools, and a girls' and boys' gymnasium; while charitable institutions for the ill, the poor, and for orphans have also been established.

In a typical German-Russian home on the Volga, a visitor would seldom see any books except the Bible, the Volga Gaskangbuch, a catechism, and a Bibliische Geschichte. In some homes there might also be one or two books on religious subjects, or a biography of religious men, but outside of that, hardly any others would be found. One of the first successful German newspapers, the Clemens, was started by the Catholics in 1897, and from about that time on, several others have been published. Of these, Der Saratower deutsche

117. Schleuning, op. cit., 15.
Village Life.

The German-Russian villages are usually divided into an Unter and Oberdorf, and have rather wide straight streets, which are carefully swept every Saturday. These streets are neither paved, nor bordered by side-walks, but according to all accounts, are very good except during the spring rains. The following diagram shows how they are laid out.

An ordinary German-Russian house on the Volga is of white painted wood, and covered with straw or tin, but the parsonage and the homes of the wealthier people are of stone or brick, while the poorer people live in limestone or sod shacks. As is shown above,

120. Lower.
121. Upper village.
the garden faces the street, and in the large courtyard to the rear, one finds a Backhaus, chicken fences, stables, barns, a stone cellar, and a manure pile.

The architecture of the houses, which contain two to ten rooms, according to the wealth of the owner, shows a strong Russian influence, but inside the house, German furniture, pictures, and kitchen utensils predominate. The only two exceptions to this rule are the Russian samovar, and the large primitive oven over which the family cooking is done. The most interesting article of furniture is usually the large, extremely high German bed, with its feather quilts, crocheted spread, pillow slips, and Vorhang.

Fresh sand is scattered on the floor of the house every morning, after the old has been swept out. Whether this custom was adopted in Russia or taken from Germany, I cannot say. As a means of protection against possible thieves and also against the coldness of the winter, heavy shutters are placed over the windows, and never opened night during the long winter months. As a result, we are told that a

122. Bonwetsch, op. cit., 86.
123. Curtain, Léphart, op. cit., 34.
rather strong musty odor can be found in all the houses along the Volga. Two other means of protection against enemies are the placing of strong iron bolts on the doors, and the enclosing of the court- yard by a wall.

In front of the houses we find long benches upon which the family sits in the evening enjoying the fresh air, and chewing sunflower seeds with great gusto. Mrs. Liphart states in one of her stories, 124. that whenever neighbors come Um Rot zu Halle with the father, the wife usually gets up and goes inside, since "it is not customary that she should listen to their discussion". The men then light their pipes, and proceed to discuss the affairs of the day. All the girls spend their evenings at home, but the boys gather in large groups on the streets, playing games, singing songs, or merely standing around talking. At such times frequent fights break out between the boys of different streets, or between those of the Unter and Oberlorf.

The average German-Russian family is extremely large, but no matter what the size, the oldest male member wields the greatest authority, and is allowed

124. To sound or seek counsel.
to rule in an almost patriarchal manner. It often happens that four or more married sons with their families all live with their parents. In such cases frequent quarrels break out between the mothers-in-law, who love to assert their authority, and daughters-in-law, who possess a will of their own, and refuse to obey.

In regard to the clothes worn in German-Russian colonies, we find that in the case of the men, the only unusual things, that we would notice, are the high Russian boots, and the fur caps and pleated overcoats worn during the winter months. The average dress of the women, however, is a dark extremely full pleated skirt, a soft, or tight-fitting blouse hanging over the skirt, and a three-cornered shawl for the head. In the winter, a woolen shawl and a fur-lined jacket are worn.

The food of the people is extremely simple and lacks all variety. The ordinary dishes are heavy dumplings called Klößle, potatoes, sauer-kraut, porridge, milk soup, and rye bread that is baked in enormous large loaves. The most common beverages are tea, kvass, and vodka. On Wednesdays and Sundays white bread, and sometimes Richel or fruit coffee-cakes, are

126. Fel tepelz.
baked. In most homes, meat or sausage is to be had on Sundays only, and a chicken dinner reserved for important occasions. For an ordinary dinner, a large bowl of Kartoffel and Klöße or Kraut and Bret is placed in the center of the table, and the members of the family, using large wooden spoons, reach from their places and help themselves to the food in an extremely noisy and informal fashion. Such things as cake, pie, salads, silverware, and fruits, come to the table.

This is naturally a little different during the spring and summer months when fresh vegetables, pumpkins, watermelons, and wild strawberries and blackberries are on hand, while during the Christmas holidays, candy, Pfeffermüss, and frosted cookies are either bought or made in the homes.

Most German-Russian families living on the Volga, produce all of their own food and clothing, with the exception of such articles as sugar, salt, pepper, coffee, and kerosene, that from necessity must be bought. However, the trade in these articles is of such little importance, that at the beginning of the 20th century, the colony of Norka, with its 17,000

127. Mr. Giebelhaus, Berthoud, Colo.
inhabitants, possessed only three stores.

A more important role is played by the weekly markets that are held in the villages on different days, (Warenburg having one on Saturday, and Balzar on Tuesday). On this day, booths in the market place are rented by bakers, butchers, merchants, and women selling fancy-work; and it is here that most of the family purchases are made. In Norka and other larger villages semi-annual fairs are also held at Pentecost and Erntefest days. Such fairs are of great importance to the colonists, because they give the people an opportunity to buy many articles of luxury, and even of necessity, that they could not otherwise obtain. That is of greater interest to the children, is the circus that comes to town during these two festival days. According to the descriptions given by German-Russian Americans, side-shows with acrobats, fat women, etc., are set up; magicians perform feats that both astonish and delight their audience, and clowns walk around making witticisms.

On the whole, we might say in conclusion that although "the words telephones, telegrams, railroads, electricity, street cars, automobiles, daily news-
papers, and piped water always possessed a magical
sound to the colonists", their life on the Volga
was far from being an unhappy one. And even though
they did not succeed in raising the industrial and
cultural level of their neighbors, they at least
gained a reputation for honesty and hard work that
has never left them.

Chapter IV

Emigration of German-Russians to America.

1. Historical Background.

In the third chapter of this thesis, we saw the German-Russians living on the Volga in a fairly contented and happy condition. To be sure, their methods of agriculture were still very primitive, their schools inadequate, and all of the finer things of life were lacking, but as long as nothing better was ever seen, it is not surprising that the young people accepted the customs of their elders without question.

After the death of the first two generations, all connection with Germany had been completely broken, because of the difficulty of communication, and although the people still considered themselves much better than their Russian neighbors, they looked upon the Volga valley as their home, and felt a certain amount of loyalty to the Russian government.

For these reasons it might at first seem surprising to learn that a constant stream of emigration began taking place from the German colonies after 1870. To explain this phenomenon it is necessary
to open our Russian history text books again, and to find out what events were happening in Russian political affairs during these years.

Alexander II, a rather kindly, humanitarian man, became czar in 1855, and for nearly ten years carried out a very comprehensive reform program. Under his direction an imperial bank was established, school laws passed, popular assemblies called zemstvos instituted, judicial reforms carried out, and most important of all, serfdom abolished in 1861. These reforms were unfortunately cut short by a series of events beginning after 1863. In that year an insurrection took place in Poland, and after the insurgents had been overcome, the Russian language was introduced into the Polish schools, churches, and courts; and the native language even forbidden in the homes. Alexander II was further offended by the ingratitude of the serfs and the dominating spirit of his nobles. To make matters worse, an attempt was made to assassinate him in April, 1866, and from that time on, he became thoroughly reactionary. Many of the reforms already granted were repealed, and all persons suspected of revolutionary tendencies

were exiled or imprisoned. However, in spite of all measures to guard his own safety, Alexander was finally attacked again in March, 1881, and died of wounds received from a bomb thrown at him by a Nihilist.

Alexander III then became czar, but he, unlike his father, never favored the passing of liberal measures, and throughout his reign ruled in a very autocratical manner. One of his outstanding characteristics was a thorough belief in the necessity for unity in government, language, and religion; and his slogan was always "Russia for the Russians." For this reason, the national language of the country was imposed upon all German subjects in the Baltic provinces; the professors at the University of Dorpat were carefully watched; and all foreign institutions in Poland, Finland, and the Ukraine were abolished. The Jews were so persecuted that large numbers emigrated to the United States and South Africa, and all suspected anarchists were banished. It is said that in some years as many as 12,000 persons would be exiled to Siberia, and that quite often the entire country would be placed under martial law.

2. Pares, ibid., 387.
It is true that during the reign of Alexander III, loans were made to the peasants and nobles, the number of volks shops decreased, and an attempt made to introduce better methods of agriculture; but historians will always have to condemn this czar for the persecution and even murder of thousands of his innocent subjects.

If we now examine what influence the reactionary measures of both of these czars had on the German colonists along the Volga, it will be easy to understand why thousands of them left Russia for foreign countries after the year 1870.

2. Reasons why German-Russians came to America

A. Governmental Factors

We have already mentioned the fact that in January, 1864, Alexander II issued a decree providing for the establishment of both district and provincial zemstvos with popularly elected representatives that were to meet annually. The chief duties of these assemblies were to look after the interests of the agrarian population, to build roads and hospitals, to supervise education, to give medical aid and veterinary service, and to look after public welfare in general.

4. Parens, ibid., 361.
The German colonists at first paid no attention to this decree because of the fact that they had been enjoying so many rights of self-government, but these privileges were being gradually tampered with after the beginning of the 6th decade of the 19th century. For example, in 1860 the jurisdiction of the Kontor over criminal cases was abolished; in 1866 a further curtailment was made in that its regulation of educational and religious affairs was taken away; in 1871 the German colonists on the Volga were placed on an equal basis with the Kronbeuern, and in 1876 the final blow to their freedom was given, in that the office of Kontor was definitely abolished. They now had the privilege of sending representatives to the zemstvo meetings, but because of the predominance of Russian representatives, this was of little value to them.

/\B. Military Law of 1874

However, the indignation felt by the German colonists, when their powers of self-government were revoked, never reached the anger that was displayed in 1874 when another even more precious privilege was


* Crown or imperial peasants
taken away. Catherine II in her Manifesto of 1763 had promised that the German colonists für ewige Zeiten (for an eternity) need not serve as soldiers in the Russian army, but Alexander II now passed a new Military Law commanding that the German men serve under the same rules that their Russian neighbors had to obey, and according to one story, the czar is supposed to have made the remark that "100 years is a kleine Ewigkeit". (a small eternity.)

It is impossible to over estimate the importance of this measure in causing the colonists to leave Russia. I have heard my own grandparents tell that when the first conscription of young men had to leave for the army, the entire village followed the boys to the edge of the town, and that the mothers and fathers wept as if they were certain that they would never see their sons again. Even yet, German-Russians feel that the injustice done to them was unparalleled in history, although I once heard one German-Russian merchant remark that the colonists were simply spoiled and had no reason to feel abused when they were called upon to defend their adopted country. On the other hand, it does seem that quite

7. Mr. Jacob Miller, Loveland, Colo.
often, impartiality was shown toward the German boys, and that the work assigned to them was much harder, and the food given to them much poorer than that given to those soldiers of Russian descent.

C. Unsatisfactory Educational Conditions

During the reign of Alexander III, the influence of the imperial policy is again seen, because a law of 1890 commanded that a Russian teacher be placed in every German church school, and that if the colonists showed any objection, the school was to be closed. These Russian teachers did everything in their power, not only to teach their pupils how to speak the Russian language, but also to instil a Russian nationalistic spirit in them, and as a result, the German fathers and mothers began to fear that the German language and customs that they had managed to retain for over 100 years would be gradually taken away from them.

This condition was changed somewhat after the Revolution of 1905, when it was decided that the German language could be used in the lower grades, but it was not until 1917 that complete freedom was given to the colonists to conduct their educational

8. Mr. Henry Strassheim, Berthoud, Colo.
affairs without any restrictions.

D. Economic Distress

A fourth important reason why Germans on the Volga came to America was the economic distress prevalent in most colonies after 1875. We have already told how the amount of land per *dusche* had steadily decreased from 30 dessiatenes in 1765 to 3.2 in 1857, and in spite of the new colonies that were founded, each manly soul on the Bergseite was receiving only 1.5 dessiatines by 1869. This was enough to make a large number of colonists consider the advisability of emigration, and to add to their dissatisfaction, a series of famines began taking place from about 1875 on. These famines were partly due to the fact that the *mir* system with its periodic re-distributions of land gave the farmers no incentive to improve their methods of agriculture and also because the soil was beginning to get worn out, since nothing had been done in the way of fertilization to improve it.

During the winter of 1879-1880 the famine was so bad that aid had to be sent from the Baltic provinces

and from Petersburg, as well as from the treasuries of both Catholic and Evangelical religious organizations. According to Bonwetsch, about 4000 rubles were sent to the German colonies during this one winter, and permanent kitchens were established in all of the churches of Saratov. These people that attempted to get loans in order to save themselves and their families from starvation, were forced to go to Jews, and consider themselves fortunate if the interest rate charged was not more than 30 per-cent.

Four years later, another crop failure occurred in certain colonies on the Bargaeite, and an even more terrible one took place between the years 1889 and 1892. For the first time aid was now sent to the colonies from Germany -- a certain Reverend Balton organized a relief society that collected 264,471 marks alone, and other organizations sent 100,000 marks. Besides the actual money raised, about 30,500 rubles worth of seed wheat was shipped to the Volga, and individual gifts of both clothing and money sent from Germany and the United States.

In all these famines, many deaths could have been avoided, if the individual colonies had put a suffi-

cient amount of grain aside in preparation for those years of crop failures, or if the Russian railroads had been in such a state of efficiency that food could have been transported readily from one part of Russia to another.

The fifth reason why so many Volga Germans left Russia was due to the Russ-Japanese War of 1904-1905, the Revolution of 1905, and the rumor of a World War in the year 1913.

The importance of these various factors in causing emigration to the United States is shown in the following statistics gathered by Mrs. Williams for her thesis, *A Social Study of the Russian German*. These figures merely show the date of immigration of those German-Russians living in Lincoln, April 1914, but because this city contains more German-Russians than any other place in the United States, they may be taken as representative of the entire group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Immigrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1873</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15. There were 6,100 German-Russians living in this city in 1914 according to Mrs. Williams, *A Social Study of the Russian-German*, 35.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Immigrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1877</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1879</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>1886</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>1887</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td>1888</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>1889</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>1890</td>
<td>32</td>
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<td>1891</td>
<td>91</td>
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<td>1892</td>
<td>113</td>
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<td>1893</td>
<td>32</td>
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<td>1894</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>1895</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>1896</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>1897</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>1898</td>
<td>76</td>
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<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>114</td>
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<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>124</td>
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<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>107</td>
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<td>1902</td>
<td>124</td>
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<td>1903</td>
<td>141</td>
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<td>1904</td>
<td>101</td>
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<td>1905</td>
<td>157</td>
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<td>1906</td>
<td>224</td>
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<td>1907</td>
<td>346</td>
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<td>1908</td>
<td>127</td>
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<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>576</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>20 16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We thus see that immigration to the United States took place in waves; that it began in 1872.

16. Williams, ibid., 16.
showed quite an increase in 1887, reached the 100 mark in 1892, had jumped to 200 by 1906, to 300 by 1907, and to 576 in 1913. The importance of the various measures passed by Alexander II and III, and the influence of the famines of the 1880's and 1890's in causing immigrants to leave as they did, is further shown when we examine the answers given by German-Russian Americans, to the question as to why they left Russia when they did.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Reason(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Mr. and Mrs. Lenhardt</td>
<td>1886</td>
<td>military service; influence of friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Mr. J.O. Miller</td>
<td>1887</td>
<td>famine; economical betterment; influence of friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>J.C. Schwabenland</td>
<td>1891</td>
<td>military law; desire for a better education; economic reasons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Mr. Jacob Miller</td>
<td>1892</td>
<td>military law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Mr. and Mrs. Strassehein</td>
<td>1899</td>
<td>military law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Mr. and Mrs. Weitzel</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td>military law; economical betterment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Mr. Carl Wagner</td>
<td>1905</td>
<td>economical betterment, Japanese War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Mrs. Klein</td>
<td>1906</td>
<td>Revolution of 1905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Mr. David Ruchl</td>
<td>1908</td>
<td>sent by his village to see what opportunities America had to offer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Mr. J.H. Giebelhaus</td>
<td>1913</td>
<td>fear of World War</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If these cases may be taken as representative, and I have been told that they are, we are safe in drawing the conclusion that the two biggest factors in causing Volga Germans to leave their homes were the Military Law of 1874, and the desire of the colonists to escape the frequent periods of economic depression. As I was told time after time in my conversations with German-Russians, *Wir wollten unser Leben besser machen*. Another important factor to keep in mind is that the emigration of these people took place by families, and that in the majority of cases it was done only through the assistance of friends or relatives already in America. The fact that the Volga Germans came to America penniless, and in a few years were able to save enough money not only to repay their passage but also to buy land and homes of their own, is one of the most praiseworthy things in their entire history.

3. The New Settlements in Foreign Countries

So far we have mentioned only North America as the chosen home of dissatisfied Volga Germans, but in studying the history of these people we find that the United States was only one of the many foreign coun-

17. We wanted to better our living conditions.
tries in which they settled. Even before the first colonists began coming to this country, land had become so scarce that it was necessary to found new settlements in both Siberia and the region of the Caucasus, but these new colonies never became very popular and in 1910 the ten Siberian villages near Omsk contained only 3,804 inhabitants while two others near Akmolinsk had 1,743 people.

The Mennonites were the first group of Volga Germans to leave Russia for a new home across the Atlantic. According to Reverend Hölzer they probably arrived in America in 1866, and settled for the most part in Marion and McPherson Counties, Kansas. An immigrant house was built at Newton, Kansas, and here many of them stayed until they found a permanent place to live. The Nebraska Journal also reports that large groups of them settled in that state during the year 1872.

In the 1870's, settlers also sailed for Brazil, but it would seem that life here was never as happy as

18. Bonnetach, op. cit., 114; Otto Goetzsch in his Russland, on the other hand, states that 20,000 to 25,000 Germans may be found in Siberia. (p. 361.)
it might have been. According to Bonwetsch "the conceit of the colonists, which at that time had not been lessened by any economic distress, and their insufferable characteristic of considering all Volga customs unsurpassable, immediately came to light in this new land where a rather low state of culture existed." In a scornful way they demanded that they be given the same kind of land that they had had in Russia, and because this was impossible, many of them refused to take up agriculture, but instead became coachmen or day laborers in the cities.

Most of these Brazilian immigrants were Catholics, 234 such families having arrived there between the years 1876-1887 alone, but many of the colonists settling in the neighboring country of Argentina were Protestant. I have been unable to determine just how many Volga Germans are living there now, but I do know that 21 German Congregational churches were organized in Argentina between 1924 and 1929 by a former Fort Collins minister and two other pastors. In many cases immigrants would land at Ellis Island, and having been refused admission on account of trachoma, would go on to South America where the

exclusion acts were not so strict.

Besides the large numbers of emigrants going to those countries already mentioned, others left for their ancestral home of Germany. At first these were merely laborers that would work in Germany during the winter months and then return to Russia in the spring, but at the beginning of the new century, people began to settle there in family groups. Many of the men were so over-whelmed by the progressive industrial methods to be found in all the factories that they were unable to compete with native-born Germans. For this reason the Fürsorge-

23. verein für deutsche Rückwanderer was founded in Berlin in 1909. The purpose of this organization was to induce Germans to leave Russia and to care for them after their arrival. The members of the society soon saw that it was impossible to use their backward Volga kinsmen in the factories, and, to solve the problem, placed them on farms where they had to work as day-laborers. About 5,000 such German-

24. Russians had settled in Germany by 1910.

Another rather important group of dissatisfied

22. Williams, op. cit., 11.
23. A society for the care of returning German immigrants.
Germans chose Canada as their future home, and at the present time may be found in Alberta, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan, where most of them are members of the Lutheran Church and are engaged in agriculture.

However, in spite of the fact that so many different countries were bidding for immigrants at the end of the 19th century, the United States has always been the chosen home of the German-Russians. Ballensky believes that the reason why so many of them came here was because several railroad companies were extending their lines during these years, and needed hundreds of laborers. He imagines that some of the pamphlets printed by these companies to entice foreigners to come to America, fell into the hand of the German-Russian people and caused them to leave for America. It is true that many of the earliest immigrants worked on railroad section gangs, but in all my conversations with these people, I have been unable to find anyone that stated that he came to America because of the advertisements of such companies.

In some cases, as in the colony of Norka, the Germans would send two or more representatives to the United States to discover what prospects of work
there were, and whether it would pay for the people to come. Usually these men were so satisfied with conditions here, that they would send for their own families and also persuade a host of friends, relations, and acquaintances to sell their possessions and set out for North America.

Three years ago a German Congregational minister by the name of Hölzer wrote a paper on the subject of the first immigrants to come to the United States. This paper was read in Sutton, Nebraska, June 27, 1926 when German-Russians from every part of the United States gathered in that city to celebrate the semi-centennial anniversary of their coming to America. According to the information gathered by this minister, the first important group of people to come to the United States left Balzer, Russia, in 1875. There were eight families in this group, and they at first settled in Iowa, but were so homesick for people of their own kind, that when they were told that Germans from the Black Sea were living in Sutton, Nebraska, they packed their few belongings and left for that town. The number of families arriving during the next four years and their first place of settle-

Table is shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
<th>Place of Settlement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>Seven families from Norka</td>
<td>Sutton, Nebraska</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>Seven single men and twelve families from the colony of Eckheim</td>
<td>Russel, Kansas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>Nine men (unmarried?)</td>
<td>Bluffton, Ohio; later to Sutton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wisconsin; later to Sutton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1877</td>
<td>Five men (unmarried?)</td>
<td>Sutton, Nebraska</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1877</td>
<td>Twelve families from Norka</td>
<td>26.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878</td>
<td>Twenty-seven families from Norka</td>
<td>Sutton, Nebraska</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1879</td>
<td>Six men (unmarried?)</td>
<td>Sutton, Nebraska</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hülzer tells that in the case of those colonists from Eckheim, the seven unmarried men and one family came to America in the spring of 1876 and settled on land near Russel, Kansas. They liked it so well that in the fall of the same year, eleven more families from this colony set out for America. It happened that when they arrived in Russel, a four-foot snow lay on the ground, and as there were not enough wagons on hand to transport the entire party, the women and children were given a ride, and all of the men and the older boys and girls forced to walk the eleven miles to the homes of their friends. An attempt was made by this particular group of people to lay out a German colony similar to the one that they had had in Russia, but because of the different

conditions prevailing here, they soon realized that this was impossible.

After 1880, so many immigrants began coming to America that it is impossible to give definite statistics as to their numbers, but for many years, Sutton, Nebraska and neighboring towns became the temporary homes of hundreds of German Russians. In 1887 a railroad was built between Sutton and Strasburg, Nebraska, and many of the new immigrants earned their living by working on construction gangs. Some of these men were then transferred to Denver, Colorado, and even to Portland, Oregon to work for companies there; others became day laborers in Lincoln, Nebraska, or worked for farmers that paid them less than a dollar a day. They would then write to their friends and relatives telling them to come to the particular city or hamlet in which they were living, and in most cases sent enough money for their fare to the United States, and promise to provide work for them upon their arrival. In this way the German-Russians became scattered and founded important settlements in many different towns of the west.

27. Ibid., 46, (1927).
That large sums of money were sent to Russia during these early years is shown by the fact that sixty-five per cent of the Russian-born Germans living in Lincoln in 1914 had come to America on prepaid tickets. This willingness of the Volga Germans to help their kinsmen across the ocean is one of their outstanding characteristics, and according to Mrs. Williams "is a sign that they are keeping fresh in their minds the condition under which they came to America, and that they have not yet become grasping and selfish in their newly-found prosperity."  

4. The First Years in America

The experience of the first German-Russians settling in North America was in most respects quite unlike what their ancestors had gone through one hundred years earlier, but some rather interesting similarities in the two movements can be pointed out. Here again the immigrants found themselves in an entirely new environment and were thrown into contact with people speaking a strange language never heard before. To make matters worse, they were now placed completely on their own responsibility instead of being taken care of by a paternalistic, supervising

30. Williams, op. cit., 16.
government as had been the case in Russia. Then too, the hustle and efficiency of the average American town even in the seventy's and eighty's was enough to overwhelm the comparatively slow-moving, easy-going Volga Germans.

As we mentioned previously, most of these immigrants had come to America without a cent of money, and in many cases had to build dug-outs similar to the Russian *zemlinken* in order to have some kind of shelter during the first winter in Kansas, Nebraska, and the Dakotas. According to the accounts of the early historians all of the younger children and even some of the women went barefoot for months at a time; in many cases the food for entire meal would often consist of nothing except milk and corn bread; and a man considered himself fortunate if he had a clean pair of overalls to put on when he went to church on Sunday. Hölzer also tells of one particular German-Russian immigrant who wore two different kinds of shoes off his feet because he was too poor to buy a new pair, and in another place we hear how the sheepskin overcoats of two other men attracted the attention of some naughty

little American boys in Kansas City, Missouri, who ran after the strangers shrieking "baa baa" at the top of their voices.

A certain German-Russian woman now living in Berthoud, Colorado, also told me how frightened she was when she got off the ship at Galveston, Texas, and saw a particularly black American negro; and another woman in Brush, Colorado, laughingly related that the earliest housewives would often scrape out all the ashes in their stoves and try to bake their bread directly above the live coals, as they had done in Russia, instead of placing the loaves in the oven.

In order to illustrate a little more clearly the experiences of some of the earlier immigrants to America, a brief sketch will be given of two rather representative German-Russian families -- the Lenhardt's of Brush, Colorado, and the J.O. Miller family of Portland, Oregon.

The former family came to Sutton, Nebraska, in 1886 in order that Mr. Lenhardt might avoid serving in the Russian army, and also because a friend of theirs named Walker had returned to Russia with stories of the wonderful opportunities for ad-

32. Jacob Volz, Lincoln, Nebraska.
33. Mrs. Jacob Seitzel, Berthoud, Colorado.
34. Mrs. Paul Lenhardt, Brush, Colorado.
venement in the United States. They, unlike most of the people interviewed, had enough money of their own with which to pay their travelling expenses to Sutton, and even tell how they loaned a rather large part of their funds to a friend of theirs that ran out of money in New York. After reaching Sutton, they soon discovered that it was practically impossible to get work of any kind in this town, and were advised to go to the larger city of Hastings, which was only about thirty miles away. Mrs. Lenhardt told how they got off the train, and after deliberating on what to do next, began walking down one of the streets of the city hoping to meet someone that they might know. They had their two small children with them, but both of them were so tired and worn-out that they began to cry, and the parents themselves were almost ready to give up all hopes of getting any. Just at that particular moment, a man from their own native village of Frank appeared, and after talking to them for a few moments, asked them to stay with him until Mr. Lenhardt found work of some kind to do.

After living in Nebraska for nineteen years, this family as well as several others was sent to Brush
one summer to work in the best fields that were being laid out in northern Colorado. By that time they had saved enough money to buy some land of their own, and, according to their story, were the first German-Russians to spend the winter of 1905-1906 in Brush. During the next few years so many other German-Russian families came to this part of the state, that important settlements are now found practically everywhere.

Mr. J.O. Miller and his wife came to the United States with seven children in 1887. They, just like the Lenhardtts, made a temporary home in Sutton, Nebraska, where the father and the two oldest sons worked on the railroad. From here they moved to Lincoln, Nebraska, and after three years residence in that city were transferred to Portland, Oregon, to work in the railroad shops there. Some of the interesting stories still told by the members of this family are that they ran out of money after landing in the east, and that the father had to go on to Sutton alone in order to borrow enough money for the rest of the family. Just before leaving his family, he was enjoined by his very hungry five-year-old daughter to come back "with a whole sack full of
bread," and although he did not carry out this request literally, he was able to find friends and relatives in Sutton that gave him the required amount of money needed.

After the family moved to Portland, Oregon, in 1891, Mr. Miller's eyes became so weak that he was unable to do any very active labor, and as the mother was then forced to work for other people in order to help support the family, the little five-year-old girl mentioned above and her twin sister were told that one of them would have to stay home from school in order to take care of the smaller children of the family. They still relate with great glee that instead of doing this, they took turns going to school on alternate days for three years, and that because of the extraordinary resemblance between them, their teachers firmly believed that only one girl was attending classes.

Many more pages could be devoted to the telling of other incidents such as these, but as the purpose of this thesis is to give only a general history of the German-Russian people, it is necessary for us to turn our attention to a discussion of their religious, educational, and social life in America.
Chapter V

Life in the United States.

Although we had great difficulty in Chapter III in attempting to determine the exact number of German-Russians on the Volga, an even greater problem is before us, when we endeavor to find out how many are now living in the United States. The usual estimate given by the people themselves is 100,000, although a Portland, Oregon, merchant, who has always been extremely interested in this subject, believes that there are probably as many as 200,000 German-Russians that either immigrated to, or have been born in the United States.

The latter figure is merely an estimate, but if we should include in it the German-Russians from the Black Sea, many of whom came to America during the same years that the Volga Germans did, and settled in the same communities with them, it would seem to be a fairly conservative estimate.

So far it has not been necessary to mention these Germans from Southern Russia, because they lived so far from their kinsmen on the Volga, that practically no communication whatever took place between them,

1. Mr. George Repp, Portland, Oregon.
but because their lives are so intimately connected here in the United States, a brief summary of their history should be given at this point.

The northern Black Sea region was settled between the years 1781 to 1859, but it was not until the reign of Alexander I (1801-1825) that Germans from Saxony, Bavaria, Hessen, Baien and other South German provinces came in any great numbers to this territory. The privileges granted to these colonists were very similar to the ones promised to the Volga Germans, and their life in southern Russia was practically identical to what we described as having taken place further north. It is true, however, that because these Germans came to Russia more than thirty-five years after the settlers on the Volga, they naturally brought with them more advanced methods of agriculture and were able to cultivate their land more scientifically. I have also been told that their land was never re-divided according to the mir system, that they carried on greater missionary activity among the neighboring Turkish tribes, and that more inter-marriages took place between them and their Russian neighbors.

2. Ballensky, Die Süd-Russland Deutschen, 4-5.
3. J.C. Schwabenland, Berthoud, Colo.
The reasons why these Germans in Southern Russia came to the United States were very similar to the ones given for the Volga Germans, since here again in the military law of 1874, the famines of the eighties and the ninety's, the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War, and the Russification policies of Alexander II and Alexander III, all tended to make the people dissatisfied and leave for a new home.

According to Reverend Ballensky, twenty-three families left this part of Russia in 1848, at the same time that a great migration took place from Germany to the United States. These people settled in Sandusky, Ohio, and were so contented with their life in America, that in 1872, one of them -- Ludwig Bette -- returned to his native village to persuade friends and relatives to come to America. As a result of his visit, two different groups of immigrants, the first consisting of four families and the second of more than ten, set out for America that same year. The winter of 1872 and 1873 was spent in Sandusky, Ohio, but the next spring, twelve men were sent to the west to discover just which state offered the best opportunities for new-comers. They soon discovered that all the best homesteads in Michigan,
Illinois, and Wisconsin were already taken, and that it was impossible to get a piece of land in Nebraska large enough for this group of Southern Russians, because in that particular state, one section of homestead land alternated with company land.

Four of the men then went on to South Dakota where they finally discovered large stretches of uncultivated territory around Yankton. After carefully investigating the homestead laws of that state, they returned to Saniskvy, and gave a full report of their trip at an assembly of all the German-Russians. The people present unanimously decided that South Dakota was to be their future home, and on April 16, 1873, the entire party with the exception of four families left Ohio for that state. On the way there, a few families decided to remain in Sutton, Nebraska, and thus attracted the first Volga Germans to this town in 1876, as we mentioned previously, but the other members of the party took up either a forest or timber claim near Yankton, South Dakota. Friends and relatives soon followed these first immigrants and settled in groups either in or around Scotland, Menno, Freeman, Tripp, Parkston, and Yank-

ton. Then as land began getting scarce in South Dakota, the movement to North Dakota began, and thus German-Russians located in such towns as Kulm, Coaharbor, Underwood, and Harvey. At the beginning of the 9th decade of the century, later immigrants moved to Washington, and are to be found in Odessa, Ruff, Ralston, and Endicott, where their wheat fields are pointed out with pride by even native Americans.

German-Russian ministers that have served congregations of both Volga Germans and South Russian Germans point out the following interesting differences between the two groups of people:

1. The South Russians are inclined to be much more emotional than their Volga German neighbors. This is best shown by the frequent revival meetings held in the Dakota churches, where the shouting, praying, and testifying are all very similar to what one would find in an ordinary Pentecostal Mission.

2. On the other hand, these people are credited with much greater generosity than the other group. This seems to be especially true with regard to church affairs, because the amount of money raised in south Russian churches for religious purposes is always

larger than that raised in other denominations.

3. I have also been told that they are more good-natured, confiding, and hospitable than the more reticent, conservative Volgaer; and one minister also remarked that they are on the whole more interested in the education of their children, and more willing to spend money for this purpose than the Volga Germans with whom he has come into contact. Whether this latter statement can be proved, or not, I am unable to say.

2. Distribution and Occupations 64

Although it is impossible to give more than an estimate of the total number of German-Russians, living in the United States, we are able to tell in what states most of them have settled, what the approximate date of settlement was, and how their numbers in one state compare with those of another, by examining the statistics given in the Congregational Year Book for 1927. This is due to the fact that whenever a few families make a permanent home in a new community, one of the first things that they do is to organize a church and to call a minister, and as many of the church-going German-Russian Protestants in the United States are members of the

   Reverend Carl Lippenberger, Fort Morgan, Colo.

64 See Enata ship at end of volume.
Congregational Church, we have chosen the statistics of this particular denomination as being especially pertinent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Number of Members</th>
<th>Original Home</th>
<th>Church Organized</th>
<th>Where</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calif.</td>
<td>3,470</td>
<td>Volga (maj.)</td>
<td>1892</td>
<td>Fresno</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colo.</td>
<td>3,602</td>
<td>Volga</td>
<td>1894</td>
<td>Denver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idaho</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>1910</td>
<td>American Falls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>Volga</td>
<td>1892</td>
<td>Chicago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>Volga</td>
<td>1903</td>
<td>Alexander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>Volga</td>
<td>1911</td>
<td>Au Gras</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montana</td>
<td>1,018</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>1908</td>
<td>Laurel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nebraska</td>
<td>3,220</td>
<td>Volga</td>
<td>1873</td>
<td>Sutton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>Volga</td>
<td>1912</td>
<td>Pine Island</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. Dakota</td>
<td>2,069</td>
<td>S. Russian</td>
<td>1886</td>
<td>Kulm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>Volga</td>
<td>1903</td>
<td>Weatherford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Dakota</td>
<td>2,113</td>
<td>S. Russian</td>
<td>1884</td>
<td>Tripp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oregon</td>
<td>817</td>
<td>Volga</td>
<td>1892</td>
<td>Portland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Volga</td>
<td>1925</td>
<td>Bollet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wash.</td>
<td>1,819</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>1884</td>
<td>Enidicott</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misc.</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>Volga</td>
<td>1913</td>
<td>New</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyoming</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>Volga</td>
<td>1921</td>
<td>Milwaukee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We thus see that Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota, and Washington were settled in the 1870's and 1880's; California, Oregon, Illinois and Colorado in the 1890's, and the rest of the states mentioned in the 20th century. It is of course not correct to assume that the date of organization of the first Congregational Church took place simultaneously with

7: This does not include children.

74 Correction - data information has shown that this assumption is incorrect. For example, Kansas is one of the oldest German-Russian states. E. Schumacher
March 12, 1941
the settlement of that state, but these statistics at least give us a foundation upon which to base some general conclusions as to how the German-Russians moved from one state to the other.

In again quoting German-Russian ministers, who would naturally know more about these people than anyone else, Colorado, Oregon, and Montana were settled for the most part by immigrants that made a temporary home in Nebraska first and then moved further west; Wyoming has quite a few families that came from Colorado; Washington contains dissatisfied farmers from both of the Dakotas and from Nebraska, and from Nebraska, and California was settled mainly by people coming directly from Russia.

Reverend Schwabenland, pastor of a German Congregational church in Berthoud, Colorado, tells that when he was a boy in Russia, pamphlets advertizing the wonderful fertility of the Californian soil and showing pictures of the mountains and great Redwood trees were sent to his village and induced many people from the Wiesenseite to choose California as their home.

As is shown in the statistics above, Colorado, California, and Nebraska contain more German-Russians than any other states in the union; the two Dakotas
come next, and Washington, Montana, and Oregon after these. Lincoln, Nebraska, contained 6,100 of these 8.

people in 1914, Portland, Oregon, has approximately 9. 3,000, and Fresno, California, even more. Consequently, the Congregational Year Book statistics would have to be multiplied by the number five, at least, in order for us to begin to conclude how many men, women, and children of German-Russian descent are now living in the United States.

If we would now give a list of the occupations in which German-Russians are engaged in these various states, we would find the following to be the case: 10.

1. The first Californian immigrants came to Fresno at the end of the 1880's, and earned their living as either day laborers or farm hands. Then after having saved some money, they bought land around the city, and now to be found either in Fresno or in such surrounding towns as Sanger, Dinuba, Biola, Berenda, etc. There is also a rather important settlement of south Russian farmers to be found in Lodi, farther north. These people, for the most part, were early Dakota immigrants that came to

8. Williams, op. cit., 72.
10. The following information was given to me mainly by Dr. R. Obenhaus, Chicago, Illinois, and J.C. Schwabenland, Berthoud, Colo.
California after 1909, and are now engaged in the cultivation of the Tokay grapes that have made this town famous.

The German-Russians around Fresno raise many different kinds of grapes most of which are dried into raisins, but they also have large orchards containing peach, apricot, oranges, plum, and fig trees, as well as a plot of ground reserved for watermelons, canteloupes, and muskmelons. During the late summer and early fall months, the entire family from the father down to the small children work in the fields picking and drying the fruit. Many girls and women also earn quite a bit of money packing table grapes for exportation, and both men and women are engaged by the hundreds in the many huge fruit-packing plants in and around Fresno.

Besides the farmers, there are quite a few men that earn their living by working in the city itself. At least four stores in the German-Russian settlement are owned by such people, and countless young men work in garages, factories, stores, and shops of various kinds, while an equal number of German-Russian girls take care of children in the wealthier homes, or become housemaids, clerks, and even sten-ll. Known from personal experience.
2. If the statistics given on page 124 may be taken as a criterion, it would seem that Colorado has more German-Russians than any other state in the union. Some of the more important settlements are in Denver, Greeley, Loveland, Windsor, Berthoud, Longmont, Fort Morgan, Brush, Sterling, Rocky-Ford, and Brighton. In all of these places except Denver, the principal occupation of the people is agriculture, and particularly the raising of sugar beets. Less than half of the people in these towns own their own land; the others, either renting it, or working as contract families during the spring and fall months when the beets are thinned, blocked, hoed, and topped.

Other crops are wheat, barley, alfalfa, beans, etc. Then around Berthoud, Fort Morgan, and other northern Colorado towns, sheep are fattened during the winter months; in Rocky Ford melons are grown. At Yuma and Bethune dry farming is carried on, and in the vicinity of Montrose large orchards are planted. The principal occupation of German-Russians living in Denver are repairing cars, clerking, working in factories, and railroad shops, or as street-cleaners, ditch-diggers, carpenters, paper-hangers, etc.
3. Practically all of the German-Russians living in Oregon, have settled in Portland where they have become Americanized very rapidly, as is usually the case with immigrants in large cities. The comparatively well-built houses and fine clothes of these Germans so overcame a certain Berthoud farmer, who visited his grand-daughter in that city last winter, that he returned home filled with tales of the pride and shocking conceit of the inhabitants.

The following quotation is taken from a letter written March 22, 1929, by a German-Russian woman living in Portland. "Our German people in this city are to be found in all ranks of society. We have a judge, a doctor, a dentist, several law students, five preachers, many business men, and several lumbermen. Many of the men work in machine shops, grocery stores, meat markets, shoe stores, and dry goods stores. Our girls work in banks, offices, laundries, and factories. A rather important number of the men are street cleaners or have scavenger wagons. It would be impossible for me to give an estimate of the percentage of people engaged in each of these different occupations, although the larger number of people perform hard,

12. Heard from a personal conversation.
daily work. On the other hand, each year finds us a little more improved: more of our children are going on to high school and colleges; better homes are being built, and an increasing number of men and women rising out of the laboring classes." In this same letter she remarks that in probably thirty or forty years the German-Russians as a separate class will have disappeared, since the older people are rapidly dying off, and an increasing number of boys and girls are inter-marrying with native Americans, and refusing to mix with their less-advanced kinsmen.  

4. If we should make a survey of the thousands of German-Russians living in Lincoln, Nebraska, we should undoubtedly find the same conditions prevailing here, although a more important per cent of the men would probably be found working in the railroad shops of that city. The principal crops raised on the large farms owned by German-Russians in this state as well as in Kansas, Oklahoma, North Dakota and South Dakota are naturally wheat, corn, alfalfa, and in some places, sugar beets.  

Wheat is also the principal crop of the Washington farmers, although the apples raised in the
The Wenatchee and Yakima valleys are famous everywhere.

Most of the German-Russians living in Idaho have either dry or irrigated farms upon which they raise potatoes, wheat, beets, and other crops. As our statistics showed, the total number of German-Russian people in this state is exceedingly small.

The same thing is true of the Volga Germans scattered in Illinois, Michigan, New York, Texas, and Wisconsin. In the first two states, the principal settlements are in Chicago and Saginaw, where most of the people work in shops of various kinds or have small farms outside of the city. The German-Russians in New York carry on various activities; those in Texas raise wheat and many of those in Wisconsin work in factories located in or around Sheboygan.

Fleuna, Montana, is the home of the oldest group of German-Russians in that state. The people here and most of the other towns in which they have settled are engaged in agriculture, but those around Billings and Laurel work in the railroad repair shops to a large extent.

The three most important towns in which German-Russians have settled in Wyoming are Casper, Cheyenne,
and Wheatland. Here the railroad shops, oil refineries, and agricultural pursuits engage most of the German-Russians.

Up to the present time the number of German-Russians to be found in such professions as law, dentistry, and medicine has been exceedingly small, no matter where they have settled, but as we shall show again in a later connection, the number of boys and girls going on to colleges and universities becomes greater every year, and even at the present time, a list of all the nurses and teachers coming from German-Russian homes would astonish many native Americans.

3. Religious Life of German-Russians Living in the United States

A. Denominations

In regard to the religious life of the German-Russian living in the United States, one fact never ceases to astonish native Americans and that is the rather peculiar affiliation of so many of these extremely conservative, old-fashioned, German-speaking immigrants with a denomination whose modernism is admitted by everyone. This fact is explained by German Congregational ministers in the following way.
At the time of the great Reichsdeutschen migration to the United States in 1848, many of these Germans settled around Sherrill, Iowa, and here the first German Congregational church was organized in 1849 by Reverend Mandaulet, and a church built in the following year. In 1854 other churches were organized in Muscatine, Davenport, and Grandview; in 1858 in Pine Creek, and in 1862 the Iowa Conference of German Congregational churches was founded.

Consequently, when German-Russians from the Volga settled in Nebraska in the 1870's without being affiliated with any particular denomination, a former sergeant in the German army, named Wilhelm Süss, left Iowa for Nebraska, and after having been ordained by the Congregational ministers of the Nebraska conference, began to work among the new immigrants settling in that state. The first churches organized here were the ones at Sutton, in 1873, at Inland in 1876, at McCook in 1876, at McCook in 1887, and at Lincoln in 1888. After this beginning had been made, Wilhelm Süss and a Reverend Emmanuel Jose journeyed to the Dakotas, where they organized the

next group of German Congregational churches. The work in these two states was then turned over to Reverend Henry Hetzler, the first permanent pastor there.

We have already shown how the German-Russians left Nebraska for such states as Colorado, Oregon, Montana, and Washington, but no matter where they went, they immediately organized churches similar to the ones at Sutton, McCook, and Lincoln. Some of the men that deserve a great deal of credit for their work in this respect, are Johannes Koch, a lay evangelist from the Volga, who was ordained in Washington in 1888 through the assistance of an interpreter, and organized many churches in that state as well as in Oregon; Reverend Lägler, a school teacher from the colony of Straub, who organized the first German Congregational church in Fresno, and Dr. M.E. Eversz, superintendent of the German Congregational churches between 1888 and 1919, who organized the church at Denver, Colorado.

At the present time the work of this denomination among German-speaking people is divided into the following conferences: California, Colorado, Illinois.

Iowa, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Pacific, Southern and Argentina. Besides these, there are thirty-one German Congregational churches in Canada, and a few scattered ones in the east that belong to the English associations. Among these eleven conferences only the ones in Iowa and Illinois are not practically 100 per cent German-Russian. The ministers for the 256 churches in the United States and Argentina come from both Volga German and South Russian German homes as well as directly from Switzerland and Germany. All of these ministers are under the supervision of the present superintendent of German Congregational churches, Dr. H. Obenhaus.

The work of this particular denomination among the German-Russian people has proved of invaluable service to them. The church Building Society has furnished money for the construction of many churches and parsonages, and because of the individual freedom granted to all Congregational churches, the German-Russian people have been allowed to retain all their old customs and services without being restricted in any way. Two years ago the remark was made at a

18. J.C. Schwabenland, Berthoud, Colo.
Nebraska conference that "the German branch of the Congregational Church is the only large foreign-speaking religious body in the United States, that can point with pride to its great increase in size during recent years."

However, in spite of the importance of this work, other denominations are also able to claim German-Russians among their members. Of these, the Ohio Synod of the Lutheran Church has approximately twenty-five churches in such states as Colorado, North Dakota, Washington and Kansas, as well as nearly two hundred small churches in Alberta, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan, British Columbia. The Iowa Synod of the same denomination has about an equal number of churches in the United States, but the Missouri Synod has fewer.

Other German-Russians are members of the Evangelical Church. In our own state of Colorado the one at Windsor is probably the most important. Other towns such as Lodi, California, contain Baptist, Mennonite, and Pentecostal churches with German-Russian members, although the exact number of these members

would be extremely difficult to determine. Then there are also the increasingly large number of German-Russians that have already become so Americanized that they feel they can get more out of an English than a German service, and the even greater numbers of people attending no churches whatever.

B. Quarrels in German-Russian churches.

One of the outstanding characteristics in the religious life of German-Russian Americans, is the extreme quarrelsome ness prevailing in most of their churches. This is partly due to the fact that the more progressive members desire to introduce innovations of various kinds in the church services, while the more conservative members insist on the retention of old customs.

Consequently some of the most violent quarrels imaginable have raged in various German-Russian churches over such questions as whether the minister should wear a black surplice, how the service should be conducted, whether individual goblets for communion should be used, over the introduction of the English language in the Sunday School and Christian Endeavor, whether any humorous dialogues or monologues should be given in church programs, what kind
of confirmation pictures should be taken, and over the cutting of hair, the wearing of short skirts, sleeveless dresses, etc. The cutting of hair and others are considered of such importance that I have heard many brethren and even one minister raise an objection to allowing girls with bobbed hair to sing in choirs, and in another church in northern Colorado, the members voted to put a curtained railing in front of the choir benches so that the measure dresses of the girls be hidden from the eyes of the pious brethren below.

In Loveland, Colorado, individual goblets were introduced in the German Congregational church, and the furor aroused was so great that even yet communion is given in the following way. All of the members go in turns to the altar (the men always preceding the women) and here the bread or host, and the wine in one large goblet is successively offered to the older people in strict Lutheran and Reformed fashion. After this has been done, individual goblets as well as either bread or host are given to the younger men and women that desire them. It is thus possible to take communion in four possible ways in this church. The almost child-like adherence to
an ancient custom displayed in this instance, is only too typical of the attitude taken by the members in all religious affairs.

Another fruitful cause of strife to be found in practically every German-Russian church is the division of the members into the two hostile camps of Brüder and nicht-Brüder. The hostility displayed by these two groups towards each other would be often ridiculous if it were not for the trouble and anxiety that it has caused many a minister. This division of members is an inheritance of the revival meeting carried on in Russia during the winter months, during which all of the men and women that had become converted male a complete break with their past life, attended prayer meetings, discontinue all dances and amusements, and in fact, condemned everything that they considered worldly.

A very similar state of affairs exists in the churches here in the United States. The Brüder are usually the older, more serious, uneducated men, quite a few of whom are extremely narrow-minded, refuse to wear neckties because they fear that they will be accused of pride, are continually quibbling over non-essentials, believe that the taking out of
an insurance policy denotes a lack of faith in God, and in some extreme cases even feel that a pastor is one of the "necessary evils" of life. These brethren hold monthly union meetings and yearly conferences in most states, and at these meetings solemnly explain difficult passages in the Revelations, and indiscriminately condemn radios, "movies", dances, and evolution.

One must not assume that all of the brethren are of the same type, because just as many of them are loyal church workers, are generous to a fault and are willing to stand by their pastor no matter what may happen, but I often have to think of a remark made by a Fort Morgan lawyer that "the infernal brotherhood of an average German Congregational church has caused more strife than anything that I have ever seen."

C. The Sunday services.

In a typical German Congregational church, Sunday School begins at 9:30 and lasts until 10:30 or 10:45. The children are placed into various classes according to age, the younger ones being taught the German alphabet and how to read, while those a little

older read the Sunday School lesson in German and listen to an explanation of it by their teacher. Between the ages of thirteen and fifteen the boys and girls attend the pastor's Saturday confirmation class for a special period of instruction beginning some time after Christmas and lasting until Palm Sunday. On that day they sit in chairs arranged in front of the altar and answer Biblical questions and recite passages from the Bible and Catechism. From then on, they are allowed to sit in the pews reserved for the leige young people of the church, and are under the instruction of the pastor in Sunday School.

The Sunday morning service usually begins at 10:45, and is on the whole very similar to what one would find in any ordinary Protestant church. A choir of young people sing a selection or two; the pastor preaches a "fundamentalist" sermon of varied length, and the entire congregation joins in the singing of three or four hymns. In the evening a Christian Endeavor meeting lasting from about seven to eight o'clock is attended by both old and young, (in fact, the brethren often play a more important role than the young people themselves) and in most cases is followed by a preaching service from eight to nine.
The customary songbook used for all services except prayer meetings and the Sunday morning preaching service is a German Gospel Hymn with translations of common English hymns. In a few cases the Volga Gesangbuch has been changed to a new edition with musical notes, but in practically all churches it is still carefully retained for the morning worship in the same form that it was used out in Russia.

4. The Educational conditions in German-Russian homes

In our discussion of the educational conditions in the German colonies on the Volga, we mentioned the fact that the ordinary colonist took no interest whatever in the education of his children. To all intents and purposes a very similar situation seems to prevail here in the United States, although the change of attitude already beginning to take place in many German-Russian families is quite noticeable. Even yet a boy or girl managing to graduate from High School is looked upon with awe by his friends and in some of the states in which German-Russians have settled, it is practically impossible to point to anyone that has attended an institution of higher learning.

This is a little different in our own state of
Colorado where the number of students going on to college is comparatively high. At the present time six are attending the University of Colorado and about an equal number the University of Denver and the State Teachers College at Greeley. Two of these students and one boy, who has been enrolled at the University of Chicago this last year, are working for Master's degrees, and two other boys, the one from Greeley and the other from Loveland, have Ph.Ds. Then there are many girls that are already teaching school, and an even greater number of high school graduates attending business schools or various nurses' training schools in Denver, Greeley and Cheyenne.

It is extremely difficult to answer the question of how German-Russian children compare in ability with native Americans of the same age. Most teachers in the grades agree that their work is not up to the class average, but usually add that this may be due to the fact that they come from uneducated immigrant homes, in many of which the parents are unable to read, write, or speak a word of English. Even in those cases where an attempt is made to speak the language of this country, a barbarous mixture of German dialect and
English results, and the expressions "I seen" and "I have did" occur so frequently that it is not surprising that the poor younsters are unable to detect mistakes in grammar.

However, this comparative backwardness seems to disappear after the boys and girls enter high school or go on to college, mainly because the students that do receive a higher education have had to contend against so many difficulties in order to get it that they are willing to work much harder than the children of native American parents. A good example of this is to be found in the Berthoud High School at the present time, where the girl receiving the highest grades in the senior class, and the star pupil of the sophomore class, who will graduate with high honors after three years of high school work, both came from German-Russian homes. At our own University the average grades of the six students mentioned above is at least six points higher than that of the university as a whole.

A second factor to consider in relation to the backwardness of so many German-Russian children, is the child labor problem existing in many of these families. This is especially true in northern Colorado towns where hundreds of children are kept out of
school during the fall months to work in the beet fields. The best survey of this particular problem was made in the fall of 1924 by Miss Sara A. Brown and published under the title, *Children Working in the Sugar Beet Fields of Certain Districts of the South Platte Valley, Colorado*. We are unfortunately unable to give very many definite statistics for the German-Russian people alone since the survey included people of other nationalities as well, but the following information seems to be of special significance for our subject.

Miss Brown interviewed 435 families with child workers, and of these 61.1 per cent were German-Russians, 26.3 per cent Spanish speaking and only 12.6 per cent of other nationalities. Of these families, 271 were contract laborers, 119 were tenants, and 44 were owners. More than one-half, or 53.5 per cent, of the contract labor families were German-Russian, and 40.2 per cent were Spanish speaking people. The remaining 6.3 per cent were divided among five different nationalities. In the case of tenant families, 73.9 per cent were German-Russian; 4.2 per cent were Spanish speaking people,

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and 8.4 per cent American. And of the 44 owners, 32, or 72.7 per cent, were German-Russian; none were Mexican or Spanish American, and the remaining twelve were divided among four different nationalities.

In the case of all the families surveyed, the 325 foreign-born fathers averaged 16.1 years in the United States, and the 328 foreign-born mothers, 14.3 years. These figures were naturally lower for the contract labor people and much higher for the owner families. Among the 255 contract labor fathers, 45 were unable to speak English whatever, 175 could not read, and 192 could not write it. Of the 259 living mothers, 126 could not speak, 206 could not read, and 217 could not write English. The statistics for the tenant and owner fathers and mothers were naturally quite a bit higher. In the case of the German-Russians this did not mean that they were illiterate because as is shown below the majority were able to read and write German:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Contract Labor</th>
<th>Tenant</th>
<th>Owner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>German-Russian</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenure</th>
<th>Parent</th>
<th>Read</th>
<th>Write</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contract Labor</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenant (G. R.)</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner (G. R.)</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In regard to the time lost by the children forced to work in the beet fields of Morgan, Logan, and Weld Counties, Colorado, Miss Brown tells us that in the case of the 3,574 children of the 34 schools interviewed, 2,217 children lost school time on account of work, and that of these 91.3 per cent lost time on account of beets. By adding the number of days lost by these 2,217 children, she discovered that the total sum amounted to 65,478.5 days. Consequently, it is not surprising to see the following statistics on one of the next pages of Miss Brown's survey:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenure</th>
<th>No. of Children</th>
<th>Accelerated</th>
<th>At Age Retarded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contract Labor</td>
<td>1,698</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>33.1 60.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm</td>
<td>1,933</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>64.4 29.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>3,631</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>52.1 43.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If we should eliminate the Spanish speaking contract labor children, the above statistics are changed in the following way: accelerated 1.6; at age 46.6; retarded 52.8 per cent. These figures give us a

25. Brown, ibid., 130.
better estimate of the influence of beet work on the German-Russian children alone, but even at that, the amount of retardation is simply appalling.

Miss Brown found that with few exceptions the loss of school time was considered an extremely difficult and perplexing problem by everyone, but that no superintendent or school board seemed to be able to solve it to their own satisfaction. In some towns, as in Windsor, a summer school was held for the beet-working children; at Port Morgan permits were given to those parents able to prove that it was impossible for them to support their family without the assistance of their children; and in one rural school, the name of which is not given, an attempt was made to begin school at eight o'clock in the morning and to dismiss it at 2:30 in the afternoon so that the boys and girls could at least work a good half-day after school. I was also told by the superintendent of the Port Morgan schools that he has attempted the plan of dispensing with an extra week of Christmas vacation, in order that the children might be given more time to work in the fall.

In other places absolutely nothing seems to be

27. Brown, ibid., 149-151.
done to require the parents to send their children to school. We are told of one two-room rural school in which 36 children were enrolled in the "lower room" but only eleven attended at any time during the month, while in the "advanced room" 24 children were enrolled but only three attended at any time. In another school district there were families with children of compulsory school age that had not attended school even as late as the middle of December. Such facts are openly admitted by both teachers and parents, but as long as people say that "work is good for children," and that "if every child has a high school education, who will labor?" nothing will be done to solve the problem.

5. Customs and Superstitions of German-Russians in the United States.

A. Superstitions.

In spite of the increasing amount of education that is taking place in German-Russian homes, it is surprising to notice the many superstitions still prevalent among these people. For example when a small child was drowned in Windsor Lake about three

29. Brown, ibid., 112.
and one-half years ago, the frantic parents at first tried to dredge the lake and after this attempt had failed, immediately resorted to ancient superstitions used along the Volga. A rye loaf was baked by one of the women and set afloat on the lake with the belief that it would sink in the same spot where the body had gone down. When this act proved unsuccessful, dreams were interpreted in various ways to designate specific places where the bodies might be found; cotton was burned and allowed to float on the water, and even a magician from Greeley called in. What would have been done next, we unfortunately do not know, because the body was washed ashore one night just when the parents were about to give up in despair.

Many other of the peculiar German-Russian superstitions are connected with the so-called Braucher, to be found in practically all German villages along the Volga, and in many settlements here in the United States. The prevalence of such men is due to that fact that trained doctors have always been exceedingly scarce in the German colonies, and have usually had to serve as many as 10,000 to 15,000 people. As a result, a great deal of healing was done by unlicensed men called Brauchers or Besprechers that would heal boils, sores, burns, tooth-aches, and in fact, all
natural and supernatural ills that might come up, by the recitation of a simple religious rhyme usually ending with an invocation of the Trinity. The belief in such men is so thoroughly engrained in all the older German-Russians that in many cases it is absolutely impossible to break them of the habit. Such a man is now carrying on his practices in Berthoud, Colorado, and although the fact is openly known, he is a member of the German Congregational church of that town and is well-thought-of by the congregation.

It must always be remembered that such a man is in no way comparable to a witch or a woman with "an evil eye", many of whom were also to be found in the German colonies. According to the stories that I have heard told, these evil women often had no children of their own, and as a result, felt a great deal of animosity toward the more fortunate women of the village and attempted to harm their children in various ways. For example, a certain woman now living in Berthoud, Colorado, told me how her two small daughters would always weep incessantly whenever a neighbor of hers entered the room in which the children were, and that it was finally necessary for her to go to the Breuchener in order to protect them from the wicked woman.

Another man from this same Russian village tells how he once saw such an old woman in Russia pass in front of some horses that were being driven down a road and that they immediately stopped short with such evident terror that it was impossible for the driver to force them to go on.

Then there are the many hair-raising stories of all the events taking place in the middle of the night. I have been told time after time of how the cows out in Russia were milked by hostile spirits, how the horses would be found in the morning covered with sweat, as if they had been ridden all night long, and how one particular farmer had to pay the Braucher to write the words, des Blut Jesu backwards on the barn door in order that the livestock within might have some rest from the beings that were tormenting them. The extremely ancient belief in an Alpdrücker, that attempts to harm sleeping people by sitting upon their breasts at night can also be found in the folklore of the German-Russians, and even yet a member of one of the German churches in Berthoud claims that he can hear spirits walking in his room at night, and that he is often held down so tightly by them, that

31. Mr. J. Aschenbrenner, Berthoud, Colorado.
32. J. H. Giebelhausen, Berthoud, Colorado.
he is unable to get out of bed.

The younger generation of German-Russians naturally laughs at such stories as these, but on winter nights when neighbors come in to gossip, the old people still sit around the fire nodding their heads as they agree to the tales recounted by those present, and when the pastor or his wife expresses disbelief in such supernatural events someone is certain to say, "Ihr könnt es glauben oder nicht, aber so und so ist's geschehen."

B. German-Russian weddings.

If we were attempting to pick out the most interesting custom retained by German-Russians living in the United States, it would undoubtedly be in connection with the marriage ceremony of these people. This topic was not discussed under the chapter heading of Life on the Volga because of the desire of the author to avoid useless repetition, but to show just why certain customs and modes of procedure continue as they do, we shall give a brief sketch of a German wedding on the Volga at this point.

33. "You may believe it or not, but this is the way it happened."

These practices and beliefs, while seemingly trivial, are a part of the folklore and psychology of the people herein described, and give an insight into their mental outlook.
Just as in many European countries, the amount of communication between the young men and women in a German village on the Volga is extremely limited as compared to the free and easy companionship found in American towns, and as a result, practically all marriages in these colonies are arranged for, by the parents of the couple concerned. This does not necessarily mean that the young people have not already shown a preference for each other, but in order to do things properly, a certain set formula must always be followed.

On a lark winter night the godfathers, friends, and perhaps even the groom with his own father will knock at the door of the young girl kicked out by them, and upon being admitted will sit for an hour or more talking about everything except the real purpose of their coming. After a considerable amount of time has elapsed, the fraiers (wooers) will begin telling about the wonderful qualities of the specific young man whom they are representing, and attempt to win the consent of the girl's father to a match between them. At this particular point the mother, who often has known ahead of time of their coming, will begin to shed violent tears, and sobbingly exclaim that she could not possibly give up this, her best and most be-
loved daughter. The suitors are then obliged to exert all of their ingenuity to overcome the scruples of the parents, and after "a recent hesitation" has been shown, the wooers usually win from the girl's parents, a reluctant consent to the wedding. In some cases, the suitors are forced to stay practically all night before they have accomplished their purpose, and at times have to come back evening after evening.

After the engagement has once been made, the young couple go to the minister to announce their intended marriage and to pass the required brevetment previously. The bride also has to embroider a beautiful white shirt for her fiancé, and the parents of the groom begin the elaborate preparations for the wedding dinner. Another characteristic custom is the public announcement of the wedding by the pastor for three successive Sundays. In this way, anyone in the village, that feels that he can prove the existence of moral indiscretions on the part of either the bride or the groom is given an opportunity to do so during these weeks.

Immediately before the wedding takes place, a friend of the family bears a long rod from one house

34. This custom is never followed in the United States.
to the other inviting all desired guests. Those people wishing to accept the invitation show their willingness by tying brightly colored ribbons to the rod. When the chosen Sunday finally comes, the groom with all his friends and godparents sets out to escort his bride to church; and after a tearful farewell on the part of the girl's parents, the entire party departs. As practically all German-Russian weddings take place either in January or February, there are often as many as ten to fifty couples all getting married on the same Sunday. The young couples then go to the homes of the grooms where they receive the congratulations of their friends, and are served a comparatively elaborate dinner. In some villages the mother-in-law comes out and leads the bride into the house as a sign that this is to be her future home.

During the eating of the prepared meal, some member of the family steals one of the bride's shoes and refuses to give it up until it is purchased by the groom's attendants. After this has been done, a beautifully decorated pillow is passed around, and upon it gifts of money are laid. One of the cooks also comes into the room with her hands wrapped up with bandages and begins a tale of woe of how she
burned herself preparing the dinner, and begs that she be given a gift of money by the assembled guests. Whenever the parents of the young people are nicht-Brüder, a dance often lasting as many as three days, will then take place, although it is understood by all the men, that no one can dance with the bride without pinning some paper money on her; and before going home the first night, all the unmarried girls present form a circle around the bride and as they sing a song, take off her bridal wreath as a sign that she is now a married woman. The significance of this wreath as a token of virginity can be found not only in the German-Russian colonies, but in many other European countries as well. (Sandra, Watteau 2, 101)

The retention of these old customs here in the United States naturally varies according to the Americanization of the contracting parties, but in most cases a large wedding dinner is still given by the parents of the groom; the shoe is sold; money laid on the pillow; a special fund raised for the cooks, and a dance often given in the evening. (Some of the other outstanding differences, between an American and a German-Russian wedding are the throwing of corn or wheat instead of rice, the decorating of the cars
with extremely bright crepe paper, the serving of a few traditional German-Russian dishes at the dinner, (and the choosing of as many as eight or ten attendants to escort the young couple to the church.)

Practically all German-Russian weddings in the United States take place during the winter months, and in some cases the procession is preceded down the streets by a four or five piece band attempting to play by ear "Jesu geh voran" or some other religious hymn. It was my privilege to attend such a wedding in Windsor during the winter of 1923-1924, and I shall never forget how in spite of the freezing temperature of that particular day, the bride and bridesmaids clad in their thin white dresses resolutely followed the Bläser (musicians) down the streets of Windsor to the German Congregational church.

In some cases it still happens that the young people will attempt to live with the parents of the bridegroom, but the increased spirit of independence that the German-Russian girls have very quickly adopted from their American sisters, is already so noticeable that most such attempts are doomed to failure.

35. A survival of the Russian system; also because there is less work to be done on the farms, etc., in winter.
C. Clothing and homes in America

Our biggest difficulty in writing a paper about as large a group of people as that of the German-Russians in the United States, is that it is practically impossible to make any general statements about them, since they vary from wealthy lumbermen or merchants speaking perfect English and having sophisticated sons and daughters in college, to those of German-speaking, foreign-looking immigrants eking out a miserable existence as a contract labor family. These more backward men and women still live in a world of their own, and in spite of the progress to be seen around them, to all intents and purposes eat the same dishes, dress, speak, and act just as their ancestors did a century and a half ago in Russia. It is usually true that the men in such families mix more with their American neighbors and learn to speak the language of this country much more readily than their domestic wives, who continue to create a foreign atmosphere in many towns because of their three-cornered shawls and long dark skirts.

The usual house belonging to a German-Russian family is smaller than that of the neighboring Americans. In 1914 Mrs. Williams found that the average
dwellings of such families in Lincoln, Nebraska, had four to five rooms, although in quite a few instances a summer kitchen was also used. However, the problem is made much more complicated when one considers the enormous size of many of these families, and discovers that in 1914 the average number of persons per dwelling was 6.0 as compared to 4.6 for the city at large.

On the other hand, the congested conditions in these houses has never hindered the German-Russian women from maintaining homes that are kept extraordinarily clean both within and without. According to Mrs. Williams, "such a housewife is a persistent and furious scrubber. No mop disgraces her home, and a broom is too valuable an article to be spoiled by this process. Armed with soap and a cloth or brush, she drops upon her knees and vigorously attacks parlor and kitchen oilcloth alike. Even porches and walks, or "stepping stones", which may replace the latter, are subject to the same process, although in this instance she rises from her knees and assumes a stooping posture possible only to a seasoned athlete as she gradually works her way down the walk."

37. Williams, ibid., 27.
38. Williams, ibid., 30.
In another place she remarks that although the German-Russian homes are faultless as far as soap and water are concerned, many of them do suffer from the lack of ventilation. This is probably an inheritance from Russia, where the long winters are so severe that every crack and crevice of the houses has to be closed to reserve the heat. There is also an almost universal notion "that some especial danger lurks in the night air", and as a result, the people seem to lack any desire for fresh air in their houses. A second inheritance is the sparing use of water as a cleansing agent, resulting from the need of carrying the family supply of water in Russia from neighboring springs, creeks, or rivers. Mrs. Williams believes that this helps to account for the fact that the German-Russians both on the Volga and in the United States have always contented themselves with a weekly "tub", and that "the mark of their complete assimilation in America appears when they consider a bathroom a necessity and not a luxury."

The extraordinary thrift and desire of these people for home-ownership is another one of their outstanding characteristics. If we may again borrow some

39. Williams, ibid., 31-32.
statistics from Mrs. Williams's valuable thesis, we find the following condition to have been the case in Lincoln, Nebraska in 1914.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Residence in U.S. more than 5 years</th>
<th>Residence in U.S. less than 5 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total heads of families</td>
<td>No. 696  100</td>
<td>No. 359  100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free homes</td>
<td>422  60.8</td>
<td>31  8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mortgaged</td>
<td>95  13.7</td>
<td>40  11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rentel</td>
<td>178  25.5</td>
<td>268  80.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We thus see that "three fourths of those who have been in America five years or longer own their homes either free or mortgaged; while one fifth of those who have lived in the country less than that period are home owners."

5. German-Russian Characteristics.

A. Thrift and industry.

In all my conversations with both German-Russian and American people, I would usually end our interview with the question as to what particular characteristic of the people with whom we are dealing seems the most outstanding, and in practically every case the answer was thrift and industry. The German-Russians have never been afraid to work, and as a result of their labor have managed to buy some of the

40. Williams, ibid., 26.
best farms in our western towns. This was brought to my attention particularly at Brush, Colorado, where the superintendent of schools pointed out one well laid-out farm after another owned by German-Russian immigrants.

Native Americans often say "Well, they ought to save money, just look how they work their women and children!" It is true that the wives of practically all German-Russian farmers perform hard manual labor out in the fields, and we have already shown the amount of school time lost by their children, but as their standards of living gradually rise, it is to be hoped that this problem will solve itself.

B. Satisfaction.

A second characteristic of German-Russians living in the United States is their apparent satisfaction with their adopted country. Most of them correspond with friends and relatives living on the Volga and in Southern Russia, and they all realize how extremely fortunate they are to have escaped the suffering caused by the World War, the Revolution of 1917 and the famine of 1920-1922.

In one case, I did hear a Berthoud farmer remark
that if he were now in Russia, he would not have to work nearly as hard as he does here in America, but his wife immediately responded that she was perfectly happy in this country, and had not forgotten how she was forced to live in a Russian house without any conveniences whatever, and to stand with frozen clothes doing the family washing at the banks of a river when the temperature was often below zero.

C. Antagonism between parents and children

Another interesting point to mention is the slight feeling of antagonism between parents and children that is found in many German-Russian families. This seems to be true in the case of native Americans also, but is probably a little more prevalent in immigrant homes where the daughters wish to dress and look like American girls, and the sons want a great deal of "spending money" and at times refuse to go to what they scornfully call the "Russian church". In such cases the parents stand helpless, separated from their children by an unmountable wall of misunderstanding, and unable to assert the old authority that their own parents wielded over them. In other families the boys and girls that have gone on to high school feel ashamed of their foreign-looking
parents that are unable to speak English at all, or at least not without an accent, and at times secretly envy their apparently more fortunate American friends.

D. Lack of courtesy.

A fourth characteristic noticeable mainly in the older immigrants is the lack of courtesy shown by the men to their wives. Most German-Russian women would never dream of standing aside to allow her husband to open a door, of entering an automobile first, or of giving him her packages or even a heavy child to carry. In many cases a married couple do not even walk down a street together, but instead, the husband, in a genuine German fashion, may be seen several paces ahead of his wife who struggles along behind vainly endeavoring to keep up with him.

These are only minor things and must not be taken to designate a lack of affection on the part of the husband toward his wife, but they are often noticed and misunderstood by American bystanders.

E. Clannishness

It is partly as a result of this misunderstanding of native Americans that the German-Russians have acquired a spirit of clannishness and isolation noticeable in practically all of the towns in which they
have settled. In some cases this has led to a feeling of inferiority experienced by even high school and college students, unless they are in an entirely new environment and can keep their nationality a secret from their friends.

F. Few divorces

A word should also be said in regard to the lack of divorces to be found in German-Russian families. This is also changing as the younger generation becomes daily more Americanized, but in the case of the older men and women, the sacredness of the marriage tie is considered inviolable by practically all. Among the 500 German-Russians living in and around Berthoud, Colorado, there are just two women that have been divorced, while in Lincoln, Nebraska, only 34 such cases occurred in that city between the years 1900 and 1914. In fifteen of these cases the couple had been married less than a year, and in twenty-one cases there were no children by marriage. This fact would tend to show that children are a decided binding force between husband and wife.

Mrs. Williams also remarks on the aversion shown to divorced persons by saying, "After the divorce has been granted, tales defaming the character of the di-
voced person, particularly if it be a woman, soon begin to spread; and though the individuals be entirely innocent, neighborhood gossip aids the burden of suspicion to their already troubled existence. Girls in factories and laundries have been known to refuse to work beside a divorced Russian-German woman of good moral character, giving as their only reason, "She's divorced." 41.

G. Birth and Death Rates

The birth rate in German-Russian families in the United States just as out in Russia, is extremely high. For example, in Lincoln, Nebraska, the German-Russians in 1914 comprised less than one seventh of the total population but approximately one third of the births occurring in that year were to be found in such families, while in 1910 the number of births per 1,000 total population was 60.8 among the German-Russians, and 25.1 in the city at large. The main reason for this difference is to be found in the fact that the proportion of married women between the ages of fifteen and forty-five was only 54.7 per cent in the entire city, but that of the German-Russian 42. between these two ages was 80 per cent. These sta-

41. Williams, ibid., 90-95.
42. Williams, ibid., 47-49.
tistics show that those towns in which German-
Russians have settled will soon have to take much
greater cognizance of them than they have done in
the past.

Even yet it is agreed that many of these famil-
ies look upon children as an economic asset instead
of as an expense, and that the average size of the
families of women past the child-bearing age lies
between six and seven children. I happen to know
personally of one woman in Berthoud that has given
birth to sixteen children and of another in Windsor,
Colorado, that had had seventeen children.

In spite of the large number of children born
in German-Russian homes, the infant mortality rate
is a little lower in such families than it is for
the cities in which they have settled. The same
statement can be made for their general death rate.

II. Importance of religion

An eighth characteristic is the very important
part that religion plays in the lives of these
immigrant people. This is partly due to the fact that
such things as literature, art, concerts, plays, and
operas mean absolutely nothing to most of them. A

43. Williams, ibid., 50, gives the average age in 1904.
44. Williams, ibid., 71.
few of the more worldly-minded men and women as well as all the young people attend "movies" once or twice a week, and some of them even go to dances, but such things are consistently frowned upon by most parents. As a result, going to church is practically the only outside activity of thousands of German-Russian men and women, and religious affairs naturally form a much greater topic of conversation among them than it does among any other group of people that I know of.

I. Lack of literature

The lack of books and reading matter of a secular kind is another distinguishing characteristic of the German-Russians living in the United States. Most homes still contain a German Bible and a Volks Gesangbuch just as was the case out in Russia. Then there is a weekly German Congregational periodical called Der Kirchenbote as well as the annual Illustrierter Kirchenbote-Kalender that are to be found in many German-Russian homes. Besides these and other religious periodicals, such German newspapers as the California Post, (Fresno), the Zelt Post (Lincoln, Nebraska), and the Dakota Freie Press (Aberdeen, South Dakota) are read by thousands of these people, and in some cases even sent to relatives on the Volga. In
the more Americanized families, daily city newspapers are taken, and current magazines of the better kinds bought.

J. Conservatism, hospitality, cleanliness, honesty, etc.

Other important characteristics that have been sufficiently brought out in previous connections, are the extreme conservatism of so many of these people in their dress, family customs, and particularly in religion; the cleanliness of their homes both within and without; the lack of interest shown by many of them in civic affairs; their law-abiding spirit, hospitality, honesty, and willingness to help one another. In fact, nothing could sum up their chief qualities as well as the remark of Edward A. Steiner that "the German in America has not produced many great men but he has filled the country with good men which is infinitely better".

Chapter VI Conclusion.

The Volga and American colonies -- binding ties and contrasts.

By way of conclusion, a word should be said of the indescribable suffering of the Volga Germans during and after the World War. The suspicious reflections cast on the colonists by their Russian neighbors was even greater than those awarded the despised pro-Germans in the United States during the same period. In spite of the fact that the colonists had settled in Russia in response to the invitation of a Russian Czarina, they were accused of being German spies and of having come to that country in order to establish posts of propaganda for Germany. As a result, all German churches and schools were closed and the inhabitants of the villages forbidden to speak the German language. Then in Feb. 15, 1915, the so-called Ausländer Gesetz was passed, by which the property of all foreigners living in Russia was to be seized in ten months.

This anti-foreign policy of the government was suddenly ended by the Revolution of March 1917, and in April of the same year, a great colonist congress,

hell at Saratov, expressed a desire for self-government and asked to be recognized by the Kerensky government. However, all such hopes were shattered in the fall of 1917 when the Bolsheviks came into power. The brutality of some of these men toward the colonists, and their disastrous policy of forcing the people to give up their seed wheat is described by all contemporary writers. Then in the fall of 1920 and 1921, total crop failures occurred along the Volga, and one of the greatest famines in recent years set in. Approximately 170,000 men, women, and children died of starvation in the German colonies alone, and many others managed to live only by eating the most horrible food imaginable.

One letter after another was sent from the Volga to Germans here in America, describing the terrible conditions that prevailed in the colonies and begging for financial aid. As a result of these letters, Relief Societies were organized in many different states in which German-Russians had settled. The one that undoubtedly deserves the greatest amount of credit is the Volga Relief Society, organized in Portland, Oregon, in the fall of 1921. The president of

2. Ballensky, ibid., 27.
this society, Mr. John W. Miller, sent a telegram to the American Relief Administration asking whether he could send a representative to the German colonies under the protection of our government. Secretary Hoover consented to this plan, and on Sept. 21, 1921, Mr. George Repp, a Volga German merchant living in Portland, Oregon, left for Russia. Ex-governor Goodrich of Indiana and Mr. Repp at first made a preliminary survey of conditions existing in the colonies, and then began the enormous task of feeding the thousands of starving, pestilence-stricken people.

Another American organization called the Central States Relief Society sent a Reverend Wagner of Lincoln, Nebraska, to the colonies in January, 1922. Both Mr. Repp and Reverend Wagner did immeasurable good on the Volga by the feeding of 60,000 adults and 75,000 children, and by distributing medicine, shoes, and warm clothing. The secretaries of the various relief societies state that approximately one half million dollars were raised by German-Russians living in the United States and sent to their friends either through the general funds or by means of food drafts and clothing drafts. This is only another example of

3. Personal information.
the strong unmaterialistic spirit of most of these people.

The appreciation of the work done by Mr. Repp is expressed in the following letter written by Secretary Hoover, September 14, 1922.

Dear Mr. Repp:

The German-Russian people both in this country and along the Volga owe you a great debt of gratitude. The American Relief Administration realizes this perhaps more than your own people do, for we have seen the efficiency and devotion displayed in your work at first hand.

I should like to express to you both in the name of the A.R.A. and myself, personally, our hearty appreciation and thanks.

Yours faithfully,

Four years later when Hoover was in Portland, Oregon, the following statement appeared in the Oregon Journal, August 23, 1926, under the caption Hoover seeks local herp: There is one man in Portland that Hoover asked particularly to see again. He is George Repp, proprietor of a butcher shop at No. 774 Union Avenue north. "Repp is of German extraction, but he is really a Russian, or was until he became an American," Hoover said. "He left his butcher shop when Russia was in such a bad state and made up a relief

4. A copy of this letter was sent to me by Mrs. C. Repp, Portland, Oregon.
fund among his people in this country. It was when
the American Relief was extending help to those peo-
ple of the Volga that Repp came to me in Washington.
As soon as I saw his face I sent him right over. Why,
those people over there worshipped him like a god.
And when his work was done, he came back to his butcher
shop."

At the present time, a great deal of information
regarding the Volga colonies is printed in such German
newspapers as Die Welt Post and the California Post.
In this way such things as marriages, deaths, births,
village gossip, Gemeinde meetings, religious affairs,
and even personal news, and complaints of the weather
are brought to the attention of the Volga Germans in
the United States.

One man from Marxstadt wrote the following letter
printed in the Welt Post March 25, 1929. "It might
interest you to know that the German colonies now
form an independent Republic of Volga Germans with
their own internal government. This republic is
divided into 12 cantons, each of which consists of
several colonies and is governed by a general council
elected by all self-supporting men above the age of
eighteen." In another letter written by Mrs. George
Rapp January 13, 1929 she remarks. "He had a letter from our aunt about two months ago in which she said that they had had a fairly good crop last summer, but that the Bolsheviks came five times to collect taxes, each time taking so much grain that they the colonies had hardly enough left to last them as food during the winter. I talked to a man the other day who came from Russia not long ago, and he told me that the reason why the colonists were taxed so heavily was that the Bolsheviks needed this grain to feed the workers in the cities, whom they want to keep quiet since they are afraid that such workers will organize against them, while the farmers are too scattered to unite. A certain Henry Walker of Portland went to Russia last summer and upon his return showed pictures that he had taken in the colonies, and lectured on conditions out there. Among other remarks, he said that the people in our colonies are in a bad state, and that all of them would come to America or Canada if they could."

Although many more things could be written about the German-Russian people, it is necessary for us to close, leaving the one group of Germans vainly struggling to solve their problems for existence, and the other group rapidly becoming Americanized in their new home.
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2. Ballensky, J. J. *Die Wolga Deutschen an der unteren Wolga und in Nord Amerika*. Denver, Colorado, 1924. A brief account of the Volga Germans from the time of their settlement in Russia through the famine of 1921. Is not as good as some of the other German books listed.

3. Ballensky, J. J. *Die Sibiriland Deutschen*. St. Louis, Missouri, 1925. An excellent piece of work but of value only as it concerns the Germans from south Russia.


5. Bonwetsch, Dr. Gerhard. *Geschichte der deutschen Kolonien an der Wolga*. Stuttgart, 1919. The only scholarly German book on the subject. Mr. Bonwetsch has used both Russian and German records in writing his account of the colonies and is to be highly commended for the careful historical work done.


19. Rambaut, Alfred. *History of Russia from Earliest Times to 1862*, II. Boston, 1886. Briefly mentions the German colonies. Tells of the privileges granted to them by Catherine II.


29. Williams, Hattie Plum. *A Social Study of the Russian German*. Lincoln, Nebraska, 1916. Up to the present time this is the only scholarly work done on the subject of the German-Russians living in the United States. Mrs. Williams is both sympathetic and accurate in her treatment of the subject.
PERIODICALS AND NEWSPAPERS

II. B. All of the articles in the Literary Digest, Deutsche Rundschau, and Das Deutschtum im Ausland, which are listed below, deal either directly or indirectly with the subject of the influence of the World War on the Volga Germans. None of them have been used to any great extent in the writing of this thesis.

1. Das Deutschtum im Ausland.
1. Deutschur in Siberia. Heft 7; March 1911, 353.

2. Deutsche Rundschat.

   Vol. 200, 316-327.

   Vol. 192, 163-168. Ag. 1922.

3. Literary Digest.


4. Congregational Way. (probably December, 1928.)


5. Illustrierter Kirchenbote Kalender.


b. Der Ursprung und die Entwicklung der deutschen Kongregational-Gemeinden in Amerika, und die Riehtung welche das Werk in der Zukunft nehmen sollte: Reverend G. G. Baumann. 84-98. Year 1928. A description of the origin and development of the Congregational churches in America; and "the direction" the work will take in the future.
c. Das Brauchen Dafür-tun ist Südle: Georg Margart, 86-91, Year 1929. A simple one-act play illustrating the prevalence of superstition in German-Russian families.

   a. The Congregational Year Book for 1927.
   c. Conversations with Reverend Loeske, a Lutheran pastor at Loveland.

7. Der Kirchenbote (Congregational Church Periodical).
   a. Reverend Johannes Koch. August 4, 1927, 5. An editorial and a story of one of the earliest German Congregational ministers in the United States, and his work among the German-Russian people.
   b. Das Problem unserer Jugend: Reverend J. J. Ballensky. September 8, 1927, 2. A report on the problem of the young people in German-Russian homes written from a religious viewpoint.
   c. Das Kirchenleben in der Volga Republic: J. D. Gross, October 6, 1927, 6. This article tells of the enormous size of the parishes on the Volga and the lack of pastors in these parishes.
   g. Festgruss. September 6, 1928, 1. Program of the 25th conference of German Congregational churches, held in Greeley, Colorado, September, 1928.
   h. Die Entstehung der Brüderkonferenz. December 13, 1928, 12. A brief sketch of the organization and development of the "brethren" in German-Russian settlements.
N. B. Conversations were held or letters exchanged with the following people.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Home</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. and Mrs. J.C. Schwebenland</td>
<td>G. R.</td>
<td>Minister</td>
<td>Berthoud, Colo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. and Mrs. Jakob Neitzel</td>
<td>G. R.</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Berthoud, Colo.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Margaret Ostermiller</td>
<td>G. R.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Berthoud, Colo.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. and Mrs. K. Strassheim</td>
<td>G. NR.</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Berthoud, Colo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. and Mrs. A. Giebelhaus</td>
<td>G. R.</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Berthoud, Colo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. and Mrs. Aschenbrenner</td>
<td>G. R.</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Berthoud, Colo.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Jacob Miller</td>
<td>G. R.</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Loveland, Colo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Loeske</td>
<td>G.</td>
<td>Minister</td>
<td>Loveland, Colo.</td>
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<td>Mr. Carl Wagner</td>
<td>G. R.</td>
<td>Blacksmith</td>
<td>Ft Morgan, Colo.</td>
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<td>Mr. Stevenson</td>
<td>N. A.</td>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td>Ft Morgan, Colo.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. W.E. Baker</td>
<td>N. A.</td>
<td>Supt. of Schools</td>
<td>Ft Morgan, Colo.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Carl Lippenberger</td>
<td>G.</td>
<td>Minister</td>
<td>Ft Morgan, Colo.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. and Mrs. F. Lenhardt</td>
<td>G. R.</td>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>Brush, Colo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. David Reuhl</td>
<td>G. R.</td>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>Brush, Colo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. and Mrs. George Repp</td>
<td>G. P.</td>
<td>Merchant</td>
<td>Portland, Ore.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. G. Graefel</td>
<td>N. A.</td>
<td>Minister</td>
<td>Odessa, Wash.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Herman Obenheimhaus</td>
<td>G.</td>
<td>Supt. of German Congregational churches.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. G. R. -- German-Russian.
2. G. ---- German
3. N. A. -- Native American
CORRECTION

According to the 1920 census returns, there were approximately 180,000 Volga Germans of the first and second generation living in the United States in that year. The states in which they had settled have been listed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protestant</th>
<th>Catholic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. California</td>
<td>8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Colorado</td>
<td>16,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Idaho</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Illinois</td>
<td>6,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Iowa</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Kansas</td>
<td>9,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Ohio</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Michigan</td>
<td>6,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Minnesota</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Missouri</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Montana</td>
<td>4,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Nebraska</td>
<td>19,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. North Dakota</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Oklahoma</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Oregon</td>
<td>3,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. South Dakota</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Texas</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Washington</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Wisconsin</td>
<td>7,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Wyoming</td>
<td>1,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other States</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>39,750</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, an equal number of German Russians had arrived from the Odessa region of southern Russia. About 35,000 of these Odessa Germans lived in North and South Dakota, and the rest were scattered in other western states.

There were also about 30,000 German-Russian Mennonites living primarily in Kansas, Oklahoma, and South Dakota.


Emma Schwabenland
March 12, 1941