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The Origin of the German-Russian People and Their Role in North Dakota

Joseph B. Voeller

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THE ORIGIN OF THE GERMAN-RUSSIAN
PEOPLE AND THEIR ROLE
IN NORTH DAKOTA

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the

University of North Dakota

By

Joseph B. Voeller

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Science in Education

July

1940

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This thesis, offered by Joseph B. Voeller as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Science in Education in the University of North Dakota, is hereby approved by the Committee under whom the work has been done.

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THE ORIGIN OF THE GERMAN-RUSSIAN PEOPLE AND THEIR ROLE

IN NORTH DAKOTA

Introduction

Purpose of Study

According to the United States Census for 1930¹ there were 86,072 people of Russian origin in North Dakota. Of these 22,617 were born in Russia and 64,455 were their native-born descendents. Approximately thirteen per cent of the population of North Dakota is of Russian origin or descent.

Only one other nationality outnumbers the people of Russian nationality in North Dakota. They are the Norse who number 124,522, or nineteen per cent, of the population of North Dakota.

The people designated as of Russian origin in the United States census for North Dakota are only to a small extent of Russian descent. Most of them are of German descent. They are the descendents of German families who moved into Russia between 1763 and 1830. They retained their German language, tradition and blood. They are the people known as German-Russians. Because the term German-Russian has been applied to these people for a long time and because they are well and widely known by it, the writer will likewise designate them by that term. It should be emphasized however that they are not Russians at all; they are pure German. They have no Slav or Russian blood in their veins. They are not even a mixture of German and Russian. In the compound noun, German-Russian, the word, Russian, should be regarded as an adjective. It merely indicates that the German to whom it is applied lived in Russia. In no sense were they Russianized.

¹United States Census for 1930, Population Bulletin, Second Series, North Dakota, pp. 28-29

Probably ninety per cent of the North Dakota people designated as of Russian origin are German-Russians. There is no way of determining the number of people of Russian blood in North Dakota. From observation it can be said that there are not many. For all practical purposes the people in North Dakota listed as Russians in the United States census may be regarded as German-Russians. Since foreign-born people and their descendants are classified in the United States census according to the country of their origin, both true Russians and German-Russians are listed as Russians. Since the German-Russian people talk German and call themselves German, it is possible that some of them are included with the Germans of whom the United States Census shows 44,431 in North Dakota in 1930.

The German-Russians are the problem people in North Dakota. They have been difficult to assimilate, Americanize, and educate. They have been in economic difficulties more so than their neighbors of other nationalities. Their standard of living is lower than that of their neighbors. They are socially and culturally retarded. No generalization of a group can be made without injustice to some within that group. There are German-Russians who are wealthy, cultured, refined, educated, and progressive. There are people of other nationalities in North Dakota who are poor, ignorant, unrefined and backward. As a group, however, the German-Russian people do not compare favorably with the other leading nationalities in the state. Anyone familiar with the people and history of North Dakota knows that the German-Russians have not made as great a contribution as have the Norse, the Germans, or the English, for instance. The writer does not wish to cast a reflection on the German-Russian people, nor detract from their many good qualities and usefulness to the state. It is not a disgrace to be poor, ignorant, and un-

cultured. It is a disgrace not to attempt improvement. The first step toward improvement of the German-Russian people is the recognition of their present status.

The welfare and development of a state depends upon its people. Since the German-Russians constitute approximately one-seventh of North Dakota's population, they exert a definite influence upon her progress. A state's progress cannot far outdistance that of its weakest group of citizens. The surest way to improve the welfare of a state is to improve its weak population elements.

No one desires to see a backward people in his midst. From a humanitarian standpoint the German-Russian people deserve the assistance of their fellow citizens. If their lot can be improved; if their standard of living can be raised; if they can be made to appreciate education so that their children will be sent to school; and if they can be Americanized, so that they will come up to the level of their neighbors of other nationalities, it should be all means be done. The effect will be greater happiness for them and a better North Dakota.

There must be reasons for the backwardness of the German-Russian people. There must be means of raising them to the level of other nationality groups in the state. There must be ways of improving their welfare and happiness. To find the reasons for their backwardness, to determine the manner in which they can be rehabilitated and transformed into progressive citizens so that their state may develop to its full capacity, and finally to point the way or suggest their improvement is the objective of this study.

Little progress can be made in helping a homogeneous group of people unless the helper understands them so that he can approach them sympathetically.

It is the parallel objective of this study to bring an understanding of the German-Russian people to the people who must deal with them, such as teachers, clergymen and public officials who can have great influence if they understand them.

Nature and Method of Study

No homogeneous group of people can be understood unless their origin and background is known. This is especially true of the German-Russian people. To many of their neighbors they are a people of Russian blood, or at best a mixture of German and Russian. The fact is they are as pure Aryan as can be found anywhere in Germany. Their language, tradition, and background is German. This fact must be understood by anyone who wishes to help them. Furthermore the German-Russians have been a migrating people. Their different locations have left their influences upon them. To understand them it is necessary to trace their migration from country to country. For these reasons their origin and history is given in this study.

To one who lives and works in a German-Russian community their backwardness is apparent. This is especially true when one can compare them with other nationalities. No person who visits the homes and schools of the German-Russians and their neighbors of other nationalities can come to any other conclusion. However, to demonstrate the backwardness of the German-Russians is more difficult than to state it. The participation of a people in education, politics, relief, and their involvement in court actions are an indication of their capability, culture, citizenship and economic status. These activities of the German-Russian people have been studied and compared with the performance of their neighbors of other nationalities. The conclusion of this study is based on that comparison.

Information for this study was obtained from questionnaires, government reports, public records and books. However, the conclusion of this study is not based solely on information thus obtained. They are based much more upon the convictions of the writer which are a result of being reared in a German-Russian home, living and working among them; and finally being placed in a position where comparisons could be made. Much of this information in the section on life in Russia was obtained through personal interviews of German-Russians who came to North Dakota from their homes in the Russian villages as adults and who were able to recall and relate their experiences in Russia.

Others have observed the problems created by the German-Russian people as residents and citizens of North Dakota. Of particular interest is a paper written by S. Joachim² who pleads for an understanding of these people. There are several books available which contain reports on the German-Russian colonies. They are written in the German language, however. To the writer's knowledge no one has previously studied the role the German-Russians play in North Dakota.

² S. Joachim, Toward an Understanding of the Russia Germans, pp.

Chapter I

ORIGIN OF THE GERMAN-RUSSIAN PEOPLE

The Former Homes of the German-Russian People

When the Allied and German armies massed behind the Maginot and Siegfried lines in the fall of 1939 they occupied the territory that was the home of the ancestors of many German-Russians now living in North Dakota. And interesting enough a similar massing of troops in that area almost a century and a half ago started those ancestors to migrate to Russia. At the turn of the Nineteenth Century when Napoleon and his armies were running rampant over Europe, and just as soon thereafter as the opportunity presented itself, the Germans from the French province of Alsace and the neighboring German provinces moved to Russia, Poland and Hungary, but chiefly to Russia. The German-Russian people in North Dakota are almost without exception the descendants of Alsacians, Wurttembergers, Bavarians and other southwestern Germans. This is evidenced by the place names they have brought with them. In North Dakota one finds towns and school districts named Karlsruhe, Selz, Baden and Mannheim. Cities and villages can be found bearing the same names in Russia and in southwestern Germany.

The Germans who migrated to Russia inhabited definite areas in which they maintained their German culture and language, and in which they preserved their German blood. These areas are in the vicinity of Saratov and Samara on the banks of the Lower Volga River, in the Ukraine around the Black Sea, and in Bessarabia across the Dniester River. Few of the German colonists from the Lower Volga migrated to North Dakota,

hence this study is not concerned with their origin. Suffice it to say that they migrated to Russia after the issuance of Catherine the II's Second Manifesto in 1763 and came from all parts of Germany. Those that left their Volga homes for the United States settled in Kansas and Nebraska, and probably other states. The German-Russians in North Dakota came from the Black Sea area and Bessarabia. It is the German-Russians from these areas with which this study is concerned, and it is they who can be traced back to their original homes in Alsace and Southwestern Germany. It is evident that over ninety per cent of the Germans who moved to the Black Sea area and Bessarabia came from Alsace and southwestern Germany.

In general the German Protestant colonists in the Black Sea area and Bessarabia came from Wurttemberg, while the Catholic colonists in the same regions came from Alsace, Baden and Bavaria. Tables I and II give the origin of the majority of people in forty-two Protestant and twenty-three Catholic German-Russian colonies in the Black Sea and Bessarabia areas. This information was obtained from books¹ containing reports on the number of colonies mentioned above. Some of these reports were written by the colonists themselves. Others were prepared by research students seeking information on this subject. All the reports tell from which province in Germany or France the majority of people in each colony came.

¹Georg Liebrandt, Die deutschen Kolonien in Cherson und Bessarabien.

J. U. Malinowsky, Die deutschen katolischen Kolonien am Schwarzen Meer.

Johannes Brendel, Aus deutschen Kolonien im Kutschurganer Gebiet,
pp. 13-20

Table I

ORIGIN OF MAJORITY OF PEOPLE IN PROTESTANT COLONIES

Province or Country from Which Colonists Came to Russia	No. of Colonies Receiving Majority of Colonists from Opposite Named Places
Wurtemberg	20
Prussia	7
Poland	5
Alsace	4
Russia	3
Baden	1
Bavaria	1
Hungary	1
Total	<u>42</u>

Table II

ORIGIN OF MAJORITY OF PEOPLE IN CATHOLIC COLONIES

Province or Country from Which Colonists Came to Russia	No. of Colonies Receiving Majority of Colonists from Opposite Named Places
Alsace	7
Prussia	5
Baden	4
Bavaria	3
Russia	3
Wurtemberg	1
Total	<u>23</u>

The reports on the forty-two German Protestant colonies in Russia were prepared by the village officials, usually the schoolmasters, mayors, board members, and clerks. Twenty such reports state that the majority of their people came from Wurtemberg; sixteen state that the majority of their people came from Prussia, Russia, Poland and Hungary. The people who moved into Russia from these four countries were largely

Wurttembergers and Bavarians who migrated to these countries during the first few years of the nineteenth century when southwestern Germany was the European battleground.

The Catholic colony of Krasna² was settled by migrants from Prussia and Poland who moved to these countries in 1800 from Bavaria upon the invitation of the King of Prussia, and later in 1814 when Napoleon marched to Moscow across Prussia and Poland, they again moved, this time to their new home in Southern Russia. A study of the reports of these forty-two Protestant and twenty-three Catholic colonies reveals that not only the majority of their inhabitants were originally from Southwestern Germany but practically all the other or minority inhabitants were from Southwestern Germany. The Catholic colony of Strassburg³ was founded by Germans more than two-thirds of whom came from Alsace and one-fourth from Wurttemberg. The Protestant colony of Bergdorf⁴ was founded by thirty-five families from Wurttemberg, twenty-one from Alsace, and twelve from miscellaneous towns, all of which are located in Southwestern Germany. The writer has interviewed several German-Russians now living in North Dakota who told him that their forefathers migrated to Poland from Southwestern Germany in the early part of the nineteenth century and later to Russia.

² Malinowsky, op. cit., p. 33
³ Brendel, op. cit., p.14
⁴ Liebrandt, op. cit., p. 66

Historical Background

On Christmas Day in the Year 800 A. D., the Pope crowned Charlemagne King of the Holy Roman Empire. Success teamed with Charlemagne following this coronation. During his reign, he gained control of most of Western and Central Europe. Possibly to maintain peace among his sons and preserve the Empire for his progeny, each one of his three sons was given a part of it by the Treaty of Verdun made in 843. Charles, the Bald, received the Western part which now roughly comprises France; Louis, the German, received the Eastern part which now roughly comprises Germany; and Lothaire, the oldest son and successor to the throne, received the Middle part between nucleus France and Germany which extended across the European continent from the North Sea to the Middle of the Italian Peninsula, and which contained Alsace and Lorraine. The word "Lorraine" is derived from the name of King Lothaire. Through this division of his Empire, Charlemagne created the "Middle Kingdom" which has been the cause of dispute between France and Germany ever since. Alsace-Lorraine and the neighboring provinces in Germany have been the scenes of these disputes. It is from this contested area in the Middle Kingdom that the forefathers of the German-Russians came. Their migration was started by the unrest and insecurity due to the wars between France and Germany for the ownership of this land. The following excerpt from a book⁵ on Alsace-Lorraine makes clear the tribulations these people experienced:

"By creating the 'Middle Kingdom' Charlemagne left uncertain the boundaries between France and Germany after the disappearance of the 'Middle Kingdom'. This uncertainty led to wars between the two countries. These wars

⁵ Putnam, Ruth, Alsace and Lorraine, From Caesar to Kaiser.

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brought hardships to the people inhabiting the disputed areas. They were a harassed people. Undoubtedly they were hindered in their economic, social and cultural progress. One city in this area was captured and recaptured by opposing forces eleven times during one of these wars. The sons of these people were often drafted to fight in these wars, and all the people were forced to contribute to the war chests".

It appears that religious disputes created unrest in Wurttemberg. This section was the center of reformation. Strasburg, in Alsace, is mentioned in histories as having had strong Protestant and Catholic factions. It is likely that religious persecution contributed to the migration of people from this area to Russia.

The Russian Invitation

It is not purely the unrest and insecurity due to wars and religious differences that caused the migration of people from Alsace, Baden, Bavaria, and Wurttemberg to Russia. There was a pulling as well as a pushing force. There were external as well as internal causes. The external cause was the attractive invitation extended by the Russian government to Germans to migrate to Russia and the active promotion of migration carried on by Russian agents in Germany.

There is an account of a Russian agent name Ziegler⁶ appearing in Ulm, Wurttemberg, in the year 1803, diverting German migrants to Russia who had planned on moving to Hungary.

According to Western European standards, Russia had always been a backward country. Up to the time of Peter the Great she was satisfied with that state of affairs. Previous to the reign of Peter the Great, Russia's eyes were turned to the Oriental East. During his reign she was

⁶ Malinowsky, op. cit., p. 29

to make an about-face. It was his ambition to Europeanize Russia. To aid him in his program of Europeanization he needed people from countries in Western Europe. When he died in 1725 the task of Europeanization was well started, and among the foreigners who helped him were many Germans in technical and professional stations. The Russians had an opportunity to know and appreciate the ability of the Germans.⁷

The program of Europeanization of Russia was resumed by Catherine II who ascended the Russian throne in 1762. The seven Tsars between her reign and that of Peter the Great, with the exception of one, were indifferent to Europeanization of Russia, though the spirit and objectives of Peter the Great were kept alive by the Western European advisors whom Peter the Great had in the Russian Court and who had so firmly established themselves that they became part of the Russian Court. Catherine II being German by birth and training knew the superiority of the Germans over her native Russian subjects in agricultural and industrial abilities and cultural development. She was especially anxious to develop the agricultural possibilities of her Empire. One of the first acts of her reign was to issue an invitation to all Europeans except Jews to settle in Russia. The response to her first invitation in 1762 was meager, due to its indefiniteness and the unstable affairs in Western Europe where the Seven-Years War was in progress, she issued her Famous Second Manifesto⁸ which made the following specific guarantees to the immigrants:

⁷ Hans VonEckerdt, Russia

⁸ Joachim, S., Toward an Understanding of the Russia Germans, pp. 4
Brendel, op. cit., pp. 9-10

1. Religious liberty
2. Exemption from taxation for a period of ten years
3. Exemption from military service
4. Cash grants to each colonist family to be repaid in twenty years
5. Equality with native Russians
6. Exemption from payment of duty on imports by colonists in the amount of 300 Roubles per family in addition to the movable property of each family
7. Permission to professional people and laborers to join guilds and unions
8. Grants of sixty Deszjatins¹⁰ of land to each colonist family, tax exempt for ten years and only nominal taxes thereafter
9. Permission to return to the Fatherland after payment of all debts due the Russian government and real estate taxes for a period of five years

The provisions of the Second Manifesto beckoned invitingly to the Germans whose security in their homeland had been threatened or destroyed by the Seven Years War. That war having ended in 1763 they were in a better position to immigrate. Before 1770, fifty thousand Germans had moved to Russia, mostly to the Lower Volga region. They were effective in developing the backward Russian agriculture. The Russian agents were especially active in Germany and within a few years they had persuaded enough Germans to migrate to Russia to form 104 colonies on both sides of the Volga. The first German colony on Russian soil was established on the Volga in 1764. By 1914, there were 192 German colonies in Russia¹¹.

¹⁰ Unit of land, approximately 2½ acres

¹¹ Joachim, op. cit., pp. 4-5

The German migration into Russia, started on a wholesale scale by Catherine II, was continued by her successor, Alexander I, who ascended the throne in 1801, though for different reasons. The many wars Russia waged on Turkey finally brought her success. Between 1788 and 1790 the Russians captured all the Turkish strongholds around the Black and Asov Seas. As a result Turkey was forced to cede to Russia all the territory from Astrakhan to the Dnieper River. This cession was confirmed by the Treaty of Jassy in 1792. The ceded territory was inhabited by Tartars who refused to submit to their conquerors, the Russians. The Russian government evolved the plan of settling their newly acquired territory with foreign people who would act as a buffer between the Russians and the Tartars, and at the same time bring civilization to the people in that territory. At first people from the Balkan countries were moved in but they were unsatisfactory because they could return too easily to their former homes and their civilization was of such a low order that it was not a desirable example for the Tartars.

The Russian government officials recalled the success of the Lower Volga colonization by German colonists who came in response to Catherine II's Second Manifesto. They concluded that what the newly acquired territory needed was German colonists. However, there was this difference in the two colonization schemes. Whereas the first German colonists went to the Lower Volga, an area that was at that time uninhabited, those that were to go to the Black Sea area were going to land that was already inhabited. It was to tame and civilize these inhabitants

that Alexander I invited more German colonists.

The Russians had learned much in their three decades of colonization. With the first colonists to the Lower Volga came many untrained, poverty-stricken, sick and old people, and a fair share of adventurers who were unable to establish themselves, and who, consequently, became a burden upon the Russian government. To avoid the error of the Volga colonization, the Russian government invited only a limited and a selected number of Germans for their Black Seas territory. Accordingly, Alexander I issued an Imperial Decree instructing his consuls and ambassadors in Germany to invite a select group for the Black Sea colonies. Only married couples with children and means, well-trained in farming, gardening and vineyard culture, as well as a few people with trades were to be selected. Not more than 200 families were to be sent in one year. No cash loans were to be promised to the colonists, however, their transportation could be paid with Russian funds. Following Alexander's Decree the Russian agents in Germany became active. Since Napoleon's troops had overrun the greater part of Germany, and these troops had to be housed and fed by the Germans, the work of the Russian agents in promoting migration to the Black Sea area was not difficult. The provinces of Baden, Bavaria, Wurttemberg and Alsace being closest to France suffered most. Their people were especially anxious to find more secure homes. The invitation to move to Southern Russia was welcomed by many. The coincidence of war in Southwestern Germany and Alexander's invitation to Germans to settle the Black Sea area explains the pre-

ponderance of Southwestern Germans in the German colonies in the Black
Sea area.

CHAPTER 2

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GERMAN MIGRANTS TO RUSSIA

Economic

The German migrants to Russia were with few exceptions poor people.

While there is a record of several of the colonies having cash in their treasuries two or three years after their establishment, there is also a record of cash advances made to them by the Russian government. For instance, the colony of Bergdorf¹ in Cherson founded in 1809 by sixty-eight German families mostly from Wurttemberg and Alsace, received a loan of 60,464 roubles for living expenses, building new homes, and seed, while they themselves brought with them only 3,000 roubles. Most of the colonies received loans from the Russian government which apparently were slowly repaid. This is true of those colonies established following the Decree of Alexander I. Colonies established in the third and fourth decades of the nineteenth century by sons and daughters of the earlier colonists appear to have received no government aid. The very fact that these colonists left their Fatherland to make new homes on the Steppes of Russia argues that they were poor people who moved elsewhere to seek their fortune. With few exceptions they were land-hungry peasants who owned no more than a pair of beasts, a few farm implements and tools, and a little cash money realized from the sale of such items that they could not take with them. Their objective was to obtain land of their own upon which they could live in peace and security. Land meant more to them than money or other forms of wealth. Coming from the war-torn section in Southwestern Germany, they were used to seeing their property destroyed or siezed. Land

¹ George Liebrandt, Die deutschen Kolonien in Cherson und Bessarabien, p. 65

could not be destroyed, and if it were located away from war zones, it would be the most desirable property to own. These colonists measured wealth in acres of land rather than in number of dollars. A man that owned land was wealthy. No inquiry was made about his bank account. This characteristic they brought with them to North Dakota. It explains their flocking to the farms. Eighty-four per cent of the German-Russians in North Dakota live in rural areas, and seventy-one per cent of them actually live on farms.² It is evident that they came to North Dakota in search of land. They migrated to Russia for the same reason.

Education

Not only were the German migrants to Russia poor economically, they were also poor educationally. Most of them were peasant farmers whose chief task was to provide the necessities of life. They lived during a time of great disturbances and at a place where peasants had few opportunities to become educated and cultured. It is stated that of the thousands of Germans who migrated to the Lower Volga, only about one thousand of them were business and professional people and men with trades. The others were farmers and untrained laborers. Most of them were illiterate. It appears that many colonies had difficulty in finding enough literate men to fill the few local village offices. Certainly they had difficulty in obtaining a sufficient number of pastors and teachers. Illiteracy was of course more prevalent at that time in all communities. It appears, however, that these people were below the average in literacy even for their time.

During the first years of the Volga settlements, the colonists were not

²15th Census of the United States, 1930, Population Bulletin, Second Series, North Dakota, p. 12

permitted to establish schools. Their first generation grew up almost illiterate. The Black Sea colonies were permitted to have schools from the start. In time schools were established in all the colonies, chiefly by the colonists themselves for the Russian government did not encourage education in the sense that the American government does. Some of the Russian Tsars were opposed to education of the masses on the ground that it would create discontent. The colonists' neighbors, the native Russians, had no schools in their villages. In such an atmosphere and under such a government policy, the colonists' education development was slow.

However weak, the German colonists did have a desire for education, and as soon as they were permitted and able to, they established schools in their villages. It appears that the Protestant colonists were more desirous of educating their children than were the Catholic. In time, however, even the most unenlightened colonies had schools of a kind. The first schools were often the spare rooms or parlors of private dwellings. Later separate buildings of one or two rooms were erected. Only the younger children attended school and it existed chiefly for them. The subjects taught were reading, writing, arithmetic and religion, with the emphasis on religion. They have been called the "Four R's".³ German was the medium of instruction without exception. Thus many of the colonists learned to read and write German in an elementary manner. This preserved their language. During the first years the Russian government did not attempt to force the colonists to use the Russian language in their schools. This accounts for the fact that despite

³S. Joachim, Toward an Understanding of Russia Germans, p. 6

the generations they lived in Russia, few of them can speak the Russian language. The schools they attended in Russia were German schools.

Those few children of the colonists who finished the elementary schools in their villages could go on into the government supported schools where both the German and Russian languages were used as mediums of instruction. The few that continued their education learned the Russian language.

The colonists' schools were of the most elementary kind. The equipment was meager; the term short -- usually three or four months during the winter; and the teachers were poorly trained, if at all. More often farmers, jacks-of-all-trades, or the village organists were the teachers. Discipline was severe. The rod was not spared. A pupil who received a whipping in school often received another at home. In some instances the village pastor supervised the instruction, especially the religious part of it. Few Catholic priests showed interest in education.⁴ The teaching methods made little appeal to the children. They had to learn the hard way. There is no evidence of compulsory attendance laws. Under the circumstances the attendance was irregular, and the pupils dropped out of school at the earliest opportunity. Only the exceptionally capable pupils finished the village elementary schools, and few of these entered higher schools. Coupled with uninviting schools was the colonists' need of the help of their sons and daughters on the land. They were practically all farmers, farming with poor equipment which made it necessary for the children of school age to help on the farms.

The colonists' miserliness and indifference was no less a factor in their educational and cultural backwardness. They were interested in acquiring

⁴Johannes Brendel, *Aus deutschen Kolonien im Kutschurganer Gebiet*, p. 49

land and farming that land. In their estimation, girls had no use for an education, and all able-bodied boys were to work the land for which they did not need an education. The physically weak they sent to school because they were unable to make a living on the land. Such were trained for white-collar jobs. In general, white-collar workers were despised. The Catholic colonists, as most Catholics, associated education closely with religion, and unless they could send their children to Catholic parochial schools, they were not interested.

An interesting account⁵ showing what little use the colonists had for schools has been preserved for us. The Russian officials decided to establish a high school in one of the Catholic German colonies. To that end they loaded the school equipment on a vehicle and ordered the driver to haul it to one of the larger colonies in the district in which the high school was to be established. Upon its arrival, the local mayor after due deliberation refused to accept it, fearing that the establishment of a high school in his village would become a financial burden. He sent the driver with his equipment on to the next village where it received a similar reception. It was finally unloaded in the last village of the district where the high school was established only to be closed within two years for lack of local support.

In 1892 the Russian government established public schools in the German colonies for which it hired the teachers, mostly Russians, and provided government supervision. Their cost, however, had to be born by the colonists. The use of the Russian language as a medium of instruction except

⁵Brendel, op. cit. p. 52

for religious instruction became mandatory, and no school could use more than one-third of the school time for religious instructions. The colonists were dissatisfied with this attempt to Russianize their schools. However, it did not affect the German-Russians in North Dakota now since most of them left Russia for the United States about that time.

Their background, the hardships encountered in their new Russian homes, their miserliness, indifference, and land-hunger caused the colonists to neglect education. According to documents of 1811 for six of the colonies in the Black Sea area, only eleven to thirty-one per cent of the colonists made their signatures in writing. The other sixty-nine to eighty-nine per cent indicated their signatures by making crosses. It can hardly be said that people who can write their names are literate. On the other hand people who cannot write their names are certainly illiterate. It would seem that at least seventy to ninety per cent of the colonists were illiterate when they moved to Russia. Reading of the available literature on this subject leaves the impression that they did not improve their literacy much in the following century.

Culture

Culture can hardly flourish without education.

In this respect the German colonists were just as retarded as they were educationally. There is not evidence of any of them becoming artists, musicians, writers, inventors, scholars or business or professional people of note. A few became pastors, teachers, minor government officials and businessmen. This is true of those who migrated to Russia and lived there during the nineteenth century. There is evidence, however, that some of their sons who became of age at the turn of the present century became more versatile and

entered fields other than agriculture. A few became noted students, writers, church leaders, and businessmen. Several of the writers listed in the bibliography of this study are sons of German colonists. Their daughters' accomplishments outside of housework appear to be nil. The overwhelming majority of German-Russians can be classified as unaccomplished, uncultured, and uneducated. They have no art. Their music and literature are simple and stereotyped. Songs sung and music played in Alsace, Baden, and Bavaria in 1800 are still being sung and played by the great, great grandchildren of those pioneer migrants to Russia. Stories and jokes that entertained and amused their great, great grandparents in those German provinces over a century ago are still being told and read by their descendants in North Dakota today. The prayers that consoled the Wurttembergers in 1800 are still being prayed by their descendants in North Dakota.

The German-Russian people are not only different; they are both backward and different. They are accused of being ill-mannered, unrefined, non-conforming, cruel and unsanitary. To some of these accusations and to a certain degree they must plead guilty. A few years ago the writer heard a University instructor make a statement during the course of his address to the effect that the German-Russians are difficult to assimilate and to Americanize. Not long ago a high school instructor who teaches in a city in which live many German-Russians stated that the German-Russians are the most difficult people to deal with of any foreign group he knew, and further, that their homes are among the most undesirable in that city. It has been reported many times that finding teachers for schools in German-Russian communities is a difficult task, and that only such teachers go there who cannot find positions in other communities.

The German-Russian people are called Russians with a vengeance. They are backward and have undesirable ways, habits and behaviors which appear offensive to other people, but which are not meant to offend. They are non-conformists because they have been trained to be that, because it is their tradition, and simply because they have not had the opportunity to learn to know better. Among the undesirable traits of the German-Russians may be mentioned the following: Speaking their own language among others who cannot understand it; boisterousness; wearing odd clothes; excessive drinking; discourtesy; lack of proper respect for women and children, and quarrelsomeness. These are sins and shortcomings of all people. The German-Russian has them to a greater degree. On the credit side for them may be listed friendliness, kindness, industry, thrift and fairness. They are religious, they are always friendly to visitors and whatever is at hand will be shared with them. They are hospitable. On the other hand, they are sceptical and suspicious. Anyone who is accepted will be treated well. In all these things the German-Russians are not bad but they are not as good as their neighbors of other nationalities.

The German-Russians lack vision, knowledge, and polish. This is not strange considering their background. In Russia they were in a strange country among people speaking a strange language. Due to their illiteracy and inability to use the Russian language, they were often the victims of shysters. In Russia at that time the "buyer beware" theory was in effect. Despite caution they were often cheated. In time they mistrusted everybody. As peasant farmers they lacked the necessary contacts to receive polish. Their interests took them away from those things that make for culture and refinement.

There are other reasons for their lack of culture and refinement but probably none more valid than environment. The colonists settled among people who were much farther down on the scale of culture than they. The native Russians with whom they first came into contact were semi-civilized nomads from whom little that was uplifting could be learned. Across the borders in the Balkan countries and Turkey lived people who were farther down the scale of civilization than the people of Western Europe. Contact with them had an equally demoralizing effect. It was inevitable that their own level of culture and refinement should be lowered, for these new neighbors were adept at drinking, cheating, and fighting which could be nothing but bad examples for some of the colonists, and which they learned to condone and imitate. To make matters worse, they lost all contacts with their homeland. The distance between the old and new homes were so great for those days that few made the trip more than once. Being poor and illiterate they could not keep in touch with the friends they had left in their former homes. They did not have the time, money or ability to buy and read books and newspapers. In a short time they were forgotten by their Fatherland. Those from Alsace lost contact with their former homes in a short time. Alsace belonged to France while the colonists spoke and were German. Those that migrated to Poland and Hungary first, and later to Russia, had even greater difficulty in keeping in contact with their Fatherland. It is the age old story of two people on different levels of civilization and culture meeting and becoming more alike, the one ascending and the other descending. What the colonists contributed to Russia is ably expressed in the following paragraphs taken from a history on Russia.⁶

⁶ Hans VonEckardt, Russia, pp. 86-87

"One of the first measures taken by the German Tsaritsa (Catherine II) was to issue a manifesto in which, in imitation of Peter the Great's example, foreigners were exhorted to settle in Russia. In this connection she had in view chiefly German colonists, to whom she looked for model agricultural methods, as well as for reclamation of waste lands. The Tsaritsa granted the colonists various privileges, rights and liberties, guaranteeing them maintenance allowances, advances free of interest for ten years, and sixty Desyatins of land each as a hereditary possession forever. Moreover, provisions were afterwards made for the appointment of physicians, pastors, and apothecaries for their special benefit, as well as for the building of churches. The Russian appeal was circulated broadcast in Germany and met with a ready response. The emigration which shortly afterwards ensued assumed such proportions that certain of the German government issued severe edicts prohibiting it.

Before the year 1770 some fifty thousand German peasants had been settled by Catherine on both banks of the Volga, in the provinces of Saratov and Samara. A few of these colonists were unable to endure the primitive conditions of Russia and soon returned home; but by far the greater number fulfilled the Empress' expectations by settling down and forming the parent stock of the German colonizing element which has been so extraordinarily helpful to Russian agriculture. In a comparatively short time oases of fertility sprang up along the banks of the Volga, and afterwards in many other provinces with amazing well-kept gardens and settlements in which a strong race grew up. The German colonists held aloof from the surrounding population of Russians and Tartars and were averse from mingling with them, but played an exemplary part as farmers and pioneers of civilization. From these colonists were ultimately derived hundreds of thousands of German artisans, builders, owners of small businesses, apothecaries, and schoolmasters who became scattered about the whole country and helped on the process of Europeanization. They supplied the numerous officials of the Tsarist's administration, whose innate sense of duty kept the machinery of government going, and created those principles of order which were always to be found in the Russian Empire in spite of all the darker features of the Tsarist's regime."

CHAPTER 3

LIFE IN RUSSIA

THE NEW HOME

The attractiveness of the Russian steppes reserved for the German colonists was enhanced and proclaimed by the Russian agents in Germany. They promised new homes on rich soil situated in a pleasant countryside which had a temperate climate with sufficient rainfall. Whole villages of houses equipped with tools and machinery and farm animals were said to be awaiting the colonists, and the Russian government would advance the money for transportation and living expenses until they were self-sustaining, the agents promised. What the colonists most often found at their destination were a few nomad huts or no habitations at all on treeless, semi-arid, sandy, alkali or swampy plain which appealed little to these Germans who had come from wooded areas with ample rainfall.

The Volga colonists¹ were especially disheartened upon arriving at their new homes. Their land was bare, and, for the most part, poor. Few trees grew on their windswept steppes. The rainfall was too meager for successive fair crops. No houses were awaiting them. As a result they were often lodged with native Russians whose huts swarmed with vermin. Others lived in hastily constructed huts. All living quarters were small, cold and leaky. Their allowance for food was reduced on their journey. Grafting officials, spoilage, and difficulties in transportation reduced it still further. Inadequate food and housing brought many a colonist to an early grave. Disease epidemics flourished and they often wiped out a large share of a colony's inhabitants. The Volga colonists soon learned that life in their new homes would be a hardship and a challenge. Instead of going to Russia to cultivate

¹S. Joachim, Toward an Understanding of the Russia Germans, pp. 5-7

the steppes they learned that they had been enticed there to reclaim lowlands along the Volga and hold the Tartars in check: who were living nearby and who would occasionally swoop down upon them to plunder their villages and make captive their inhabitants. Their situation was not unlike that of the American pioneers who lived at the frontiers before the Indians had been brought under control. There is evidence that entire German villages had been razed by the Tartars, their inhabitants killed or captured and sold into Siberian slavery. As in the case of the Black Sea colonies, the Volga colonists served as a buffer between Russians and Tartars.

In comparison, the colonists who settled in the Black Sea area suffered fewer hardships. In the first place they did not have to travel as great a distance as those who settled on the Volga. Then, too, the climate around the Black Sea is milder and the rainfall heavier. The land is better. Otherwise it presented the same monotonous and bare view. When the Black Sea colonists first arrived they found on their designated lands only huts some of which were the homes of Greek herders who were grazing their herds on the land which was to become the colonists' homes. Many of the colonists trusted implicitly the Russian agents who persuaded them to move to Russia. Most of them left their German homes without leaders, and they, themselves, had too little knowledge of the world in general and geography in particular to safeguard their own interests. They were dependent upon the Russian government and its officials who were working in the interest of Russia first and in that of the colonists' last. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that they were deceived. Being illiterate, ignorant, and unfamiliar with the Russian language, they were at a disadvantage. The Russian officials often took advantage of their helplessness. The homes which many of

the colonists were led to believe awaited them, did not exist; they had to be built first. That was difficult in a treeless country where even stones were scarce. Though faring better than the Volga colonists, the Black Sea colonists nevertheless lived through great hardships, and many of them, too, did not survive.

It is doubtful if the colonists had any conception of the nature of the country that they were going to inhabit. It is doubtful if they had any conception of the differences in climate and rainfall at the different localities. Their homes in Germany being situated in an area with a mild climate and sufficient rainfall, and consequently bountiful crops, forests and orchards, they pictured their new homes in the same setting. It is unlikely that they knew that the rainfall in their new homes was less than in the old, and the climate more severe. They were ignorant of these facts and had to go through a long period of readjustment before they led successful lives in Russia.

Although the government appointed officials for the colonies all too often made themselves wealthy through graft at the expenses of the colonists, the government itself appears never to have failed in bringing relief to the needy colonists. When the crops failed and the colonists were in need of food, feed, and seed, they appealed to the Russian government for help, and in most instances received the necessities which tided them over until the next crop was harvested. There are records of numerous instances where the government came to the rescue of the colonists with food, feed, seed and farm animals and equipment. Practically all the reports² available on the different colonies

²Georg Liebrandt, Die deutschen Kolonien in Cherson und Bessarabien, pp. 1-197
J.U. Malinowsky, Die deutschen katolischen Kolonien am Schwarzen Meer, pp. 1-36
Johannes Brendel, Aus deutschen Kolonien in Kutschurganer Gebiet, pp. 8-20

mention receipt of relief from the Russian government in one form or another. The instances when the colonists needed help were numerous. During their first few years the colonists raised practically no crops. The soil was hard and matted which made it difficult to break. Their machinery was poor and their power inadequate. Seed was often lacking, and the weather unfavorable. It is safe to say that only one year out of three produced an average crop, and one year in each five was a total failure. At first they were too unfamiliar with the land on their new farms to raise successful crops. It took them many years to become self-sustaining. Despite all obstacles, their farming became profitable in time. They not only repaid all the loans made them by the Russian government but in many instances bought the land around their villages. The records show that several of the colonists doubled their land holdings through purchase of land nearby.

In 1808, the colonists of Selz³ received 6265 deszjatins of land from the Russian government. By 1908 they had purchased an additional 4890 deszjatins. The colony of Strassburg⁴ likewise received at its founding in 1808, 3669 deszjatins to which it added by purchase an additional 3004 deszjatins. These lands were purchased from Russian noblemen and small holders; it was bitterly resented by the native Russians who lacked the thrift, industry, and acquisitiveness of the colonists. Inability to buy more land led many of the colonists to migrate to foreign countries, chiefly to the United States, but also to South America and Siberia.

Vegetation

Except for the grass covering the steppes and the rank growth of reeds along the banks of the rivers, streams and marshland, the vegetation on the

³Johannes Brendel, Aus deutschen Kolonien im Kutschurganer Gebiet, p. 15.

⁴Ibid., p. 17.

land assigned the colonists was meager. Blooming flowers during the spring, some brush, and an occasional grove of trees are reported to have been found on the steppes upon the arrival of the colonists. The latter, trees and brush, were all too scarce, and their scarcity was a serious drawback for the colonists.

The land settled by the colonists did not remain bare and treeless plains. The colonists were from sections in Germany where forests and orchards abounded. Many were capable orchardists and foresters; all had an inborn love for trees. The Russian government saw the desirability of wooded steppes and Russian grown fruits. It accordingly embarked upon a program of forestation and fruit raising. It made the planting of trees, both fruit and others, compulsory for the colonists, at least in the Black Sea colonies. In promoting migration to Russia, the Russian agents were to select German orchardists. With seed and seedlings furnished by the Russian government, the energetic and capable colonists soon transformed their bare homes into wooded areas and orchards. Droughts and hard subsoil often made their task a difficult one. Many of the groves died before they were useful or able to bear fruit. A few of the colonies were unable to grow trees. Others were favorably situated for tree culture. The river banks were often sandy. The climate around the Black Sea is mild and has a moderate amount of rainfall. There the colonists took full advantage of their opportunity. By the middle of the nineteenth century most of the Black Sea colonies had fruit-bearing trees and village forests. By the close of that century fruit raising was done on a commercial scale in many of the colonies. Most of the colonies listed orchards, shrubs, and forests as part of their assets. The trees and shrubs most often mentioned are the elm, willow, oak, ash, acacia or locust, and mulberry. The most common fruit trees

were the apple, pear, cherry, peach, plum and apricot. The colonists made special efforts to develop vineyards and were successful in producing grapes of many varieties.

One of the officials and overseers of the colonies in the Black Sea area was Count von Richelieu,⁵ an Alsatian Frenchman, who was a political exile during Napoleon's reign. In 1815 after Napoleon's final defeat, Richelieu returned to France from whence he sent the colonists four pounds of acacia seed with instruction on their culture. This was the beginning of the millions of acacia trees beautifying the colonies to this day.

The chief farm crops⁶ of the colonists were practically the same as those raised in North Dakota. Wheat, oats, and barley were the chief crops. Corn, rye, potatoes, and vegetables of all kinds were also raised in abundance. Winter wheat, flax, and tobacco⁷ were also raised. The latter was raised at first for home consumption. In time it became a marketable crop.

Stockraising

The farm animals found on the colonists' farms were the same as those found on North Dakota farms today, though not in the same number and proportion. In most of the yards the horses outnumbered any other one kind of farm animal. If the horses were not greatest in number, they certainly ranked highest in importance among the farm animals. This was due to their usefulness in the new country where draft power to turn the virgin soil and prepare it for the seed was of the utmost importance. Then, too, horses were the most

⁵Brendel, op. cit., p. 29

⁶Liebrandt, op. cit., pp. 1-197

⁷Brendel, op. cit., pp. 63-65

efficient means of conveyance. The colonists had a great pride in their horses. They loved them and tried their best to keep them in good condition. At first many of the colonists had to use oxen for draft purposes, but as soon as they were able to, they replaced the oxen with horses. A good team of horses was the talk of the village.⁸ Horses were guarded, fed, and groomed with the greatest care. Many of the younger men spent hours of their spare time with their horses. Men often slept in barns to protect their horses from thieves.

In contrast, the colonists showed little interest in cattle. Each family exerted itself to become the owner of a cow or two for the purpose of obtaining dairy products for household use. It appears that there was no demand in their villages for dairy products, and the colonists were not inclined to go into the dairy business with the object of selling or preserving dairy products. There is no evidence that they appreciated the health and food value of milk. It appears that they used it as food when available, and when not available, they got along without, apparently not missing it. There are records of colonists saving their butter for the market. On the whole, however, little income was derived from dairying. From observation of their descendants in North Dakota at the present time, it can be said that they still regard dairying as unimportant both with regards to furnishing food for the family table and family income. Undoubtedly their apathy to dairying was due to the difficulty of keeping the dairy products during the long summer months and the lack of markets. It is likely that they had little opportunity to learn dairying in their former homes. They knew little about cheese-making. However, each village had a

⁸Brendel, op. cit. pp. 63-65

sizeable herd of cattle owned by the different families. They were tended on the village-owned pasture by the village herder. Since all the cattle of the village were kept on the common pasture, epidemic diseases, once started, would spread rapidly over the entire village herd. All reports on the colonies mention cattle epidemics, several occurring in each colony in a quarter of a century. It was not uncommon for a village to lose over half of its herd during one of these epidemics.

Chickens, geese, ducks, pigs and sheep were the other animals and poultry found in the colonists' yards. The chief source of meat was hogs' meat which was pickled in a salt brine and smoked which preserved it for the greater part of the year. Sheep were raised in some of the colonies, both for the market and for wool for the home, for clothing was still made in the homes.

Medication, Sanitation and Health

Probably no other factor caused as much suffering and sorrow among the colonists as did diseases which usually attained epidemic proportions in a short time. Their circumstances were such that disease spread rapidly and left in its path many dead. Insufficient and poor food and inadequate housing invited disease. Upon their arrival in Russia they were often crowded in with other families, two or three families to one dwelling, until their own homes were completed. Their own early homes moreover were small and provided inadequate shelter.⁹ They often lacked windows and doors, and the roofs were covered with reed gathered nearby. They were neither water nor weather-proof, and were difficult to keep clean. Some dwellings were constructed entirely of reed in an ingenious manner.¹⁰

⁹ Liebrandt, op. cit., pp. 1-197

¹⁰ Joachim, op. cit., p. 6

This the colonists did by clearing an area of reeds to the desired floor space of the house, drawing the tops of the surrounding reeds together, and plastering the entire affair with clay. Openings cut through the walls would serve as windows and door. As soon as they were able the colonists replaced their makeshift houses with larger and more convenient ones. But the number of deaths due to poor housing often reached a large proportion before the improvements could be made.

To add to the difficulties of the colonists, building material was scarce. Lumber was high and difficult to obtain. Stone was found only in occasional places and it had to be transported long distances. Clay and reed were the only materials available in abundance. The early houses were mostly of clay walls and reed decked roofs. Later stone and clay houses with tile roofs replaced them. As late as 1890 the back rooms of the best houses still had earthen or clay floors.

In common with most people of their time the colonists were ignorant of preventative measures with regards to contagious diseases. They had no knowledge of the germ theory of disease. To this day the greater part of their descendents in North Dakota take no stock in the germ theory of disease. They do not believe that diseases are spread by personal contact. Quarantines are hard to enforce in their communities. They believe that vaccination prevents smallpox but not that a tiny germ from a smallpox patient can enter the body of a healthy person and infect him with the disease. They do not believe in germs. What they cannot see with their eyes, they do not believe regardless of what the doctors and scientists say.

Lack of cleanliness also contributed its share to the spread of disease epidemics in the colonies. While the average colonist housewife was clean,

her cleanliness was chiefly a matter of appearance. Not knowing anything about germs and not believing in their existence, she did not clean more than the exposed surface. She knew nothing about sterilization or pasteurization. Hers was a cleanliness gauged by the senses. Clothes were clean as long as they looked clean. The length of time they had been worn between washing had little to do with the time they were changed. These practices have followed the German-Russian housewives to North Dakota. Conveniences in the colonists' homes were entirely lacking.

The diseases that were most fatal to the colonists were cholera, smallpox, measles, and typhus. In the reports, dates 1848, on forty-two colonies established in the Black Sea area after 1803 are listed the fatal epidemics occurring in the following number of instances:

Cholera	25
Smallpox	5
Measles	6
Typhoid Fever	5
Typhus	5
Plague	5
Unnamed	1

The reports on four colonies do not mention epidemics of any kind. Reports on four other colonies specifically state that no epidemics disturbed them. The report on one colony states that an epidemic of cholera killed more than half of its inhabitants in one year. In the village of Gnadenthal, inhabited by twenty-two families, seventy persons died of cholera during the 1831. In 1829 the village of Klostitz lost 365 of its inhabitants due to an epidemic called "plague" (pest). No population figure is given for the year 1829. In 1850 it was the home of 134 families. It is doubtful if its 1829 population was above 600. Several colonies lost from a fourth to a half of

¹¹Liebrandt, op. cit., p. 130

¹²Ibid., 191

of their inhabitants during a single epidemic.

Despite the lack of knowledge on the nature and control of communicable diseases, the Russian government had a quarantine program not unlike that of our own days. It included reporting the appearance of diseases to the government officials, quarantining of homes and villages, guarding roads and houses during the quarantine, ceasing of travel, burning of infected material-huts, beds, clothing --, washing of contaminated objects in vinegar, and fumigation. The Russian officials tried above all to keep people from visiting one another. Guards were put on twenty-four hour duty to eliminate intercourse between the sick and well and between the different villages. Violation of quarantine rules was punishable by fines, imprisonment, and lashes. The government's task was a difficult one. The colonists lived in villages and were in daily contact with one another. They did not understand nor believe in quarantine, and hence evaded the rules whenever not under observation. The Russian officials meant well and employed the right methods of keeping the epidemics in check, but the colonists did not understand and often brought death to themselves. Though the rules forbade it, many a colonist made a furtive visit to another village where an epidemic was raging and on his return brought the disease to his own village.

13

Like all professional people, doctors were scarce in the days the Germans colonized Russia. One doctor had charge of four or five colonies scattered over a wide area. The roads were poor and transportation slow. A colony consisted of from a hundred to two or three thousand people. Even if the doctors had had the knowledge, ability, medicine and equipment to bring aid to their

¹³ Brendel, op. cit., pp. 22-27

patients, it would have been impossible to do so. But they did not have the knowledge, ability, medicine and equipment to be of much aid to their patients. There is no mention of any doctor stopping epidemics though they raged in the same village for months. A large number of deaths are reported as due to smallpox, measles, and typhus epidemics. It appears that doctors were helpless to cope with the deaths caused by these common diseases. The Russian doctors were paid by the government. Despite that they charged fees, which the colonists resented paying. They were too thrifty or poor. As a result most medication was of the home variety done by certain members who had acquired a reputation for being handy in relieving pain. In time such people did learn things about the human system and ailments and became helpful. Thus there were bonesetters who had never been inside a school or hospital, who made their living by farming or laboring. The colonists had many remedies of their own which were for the most part innocuous but which had acquired such a reputation through usage that they became indispensable. Old women picked the herbs, and made these remedies. Some superstition in regards to healing lurked in the hearts of some of the colonists. To this day some of them cure erysipelas by magic spells.

Scarce as the doctors were, hospitals were more so. Practically no hospitals' facilities were available to the early colonists. The closest ones were located in the larger cities such as Odessa or Kiev, twenty to a hundred miles away from the colonies. During the latter decades of the nineteenth century small hospitals were established in some of the colonies. But hospital facilities remained meager. Villages numbering 3000 inhabitants were without hospitals. Doctors, likewise, became more numerous but there never were enough.

Confinement cases were taken care of without exception by neighbors and midwives. Toward the latter part of the last century trained midwives were made available by the government. The colonists preferred their own relatives.

The Village and Yard

During the early period of colonization at least ninety per cent of the colonists were farmers. Their entire interest and attention was centered on agriculture. It should then be expected that everything was arranged for the convenience of the farmers. Just the opposite was the case. Colonies consisted of from thirty to one hundred house-holders or farmers at their establishment, usually sixty. Since each householder received sixty deszjatins of land from the Russian government, a colony had between 1800 and 3600 deszjatins of land. Invariably the colonists lived in villages. These land grants to the colonists covered large areas for those horse and oxen days. Due to the fact that Russian Nobles owned parts of the steppes assigned to the colonists, their holding could not often be in the shape of a square. In instances their land stretched along the banks of rivers or streams or along a valley. Moreover, the villages could very infrequently be located in the center of their holding. They had to be located where water was available and where the soil and topography was favorable for gardening. In instances they were located along river boundaries on one side of the land holdings. The location of the villages with respect to the land that belonged to them often placed the farmers great distances from their land. It was not uncommon for colonists to have had to go as far as ten miles to some of their land. Going back and forth between villages and land consumed a great deal of the colonists' time. During the planting and harvesting seasons they put in long hours. Their daylight hours were spent in the fields and their night hours on rigs traveling between fields and

villages. There was much hauling because the entire product of the harvest field was taken home to the yards. Nothing could be left unguarded in the fields so far from home.

All threshing was done in the yards and all straw and chaff was saved for feed. The use of straw for dairy feed explains the lack of milk in the colonies during the winter months. Threshing was done by running horses over the sheaves laid on a clay-hardened surface known as the threshing floor. After the grain had been thoroughly shelled, the straw was removed with forks. The remaining grain and chaff was separated by throwing it into the air and by screening. As late as 1900 this was the common method of threshing though grain separators of an elementary type were being introduced at that time. For these the power was furnished by horses hooked to a gear and endlessly going in a circle. Planting and harvesting were just as elementary. One bottom hand plow drawn by horses or oxen and requiring three farm hands -one to handle the team, another the plow, and a third with a stick walking along and cleaning the mouldboard to keep it scouring -- was the common method of turning the soil. Wooden pegged harrows were used to level and pack the soil. Seeding was done by hand. The farmer, with a sack of grain tied over his shoulder and resting on his abdomen and walking up and down his land while broadcasting the seed, constituted the drill. Cultivating likewise was hand work. During the summer months all grown members of the colonists families spent much of their time hoeing gardens, fields, and orchards. Haying and harvesting was entirely done by hand. All grain and hay was cut with scythes and bunched with the cradles on them. Following the men swinging the scythes came other men and women tying the sheaves. The greener stalks twisted together served as twine. There still remained the gathering and stacking of the sheaves, their loading

and hauling to the village yards. All this required a tremendous amount of physical exertion. Men, women and children worked in the fields. To this day women are seen working in the fields in German-Russian communities in North Dakota. Necessity started the practice. It is obvious that a colonist could not farm a large amount of land. He was limited by the size of his family and the number of hands he could hire. It was a physical impossibility for him to farm more than a few acres. That is why the sixty deszjatins, or roughly 150 acres, looked so large to him. It was more than he could farm; more than he needed. But as his many children grew to adulthood and the original holding was divided among his sons, there developed a shortage of land. This he tried to remedy by purchasing the land near the colony. When there wasn't any left to purchase, he moved to other lands.

The villages consisted of two or more rows of houses with yards along one or more long streets. The streets were in reality only roads between the yards. Almost invariably the gables of the houses faced the streets. Behind the houses were the barns and other farm buildings. A building common to all yards was the chaff hut where was housed the chaff gathered at threshing time. It constituted an important feed. In not a few yards one building housed everything the farmer owned. The front part was the family dwelling. The next division was the granary and storerooms. The back part of such a long, rectangular building was the barn and feed lofts. Farther to the rear of the yards were often gardens and orchards. The yards were often narrow so that when another house was erected in it for the son, there was barely room for a driveway. There were no alleys behind the yards, nor corrals, or pastures. The latter were not needed since each village had its common pastures and herders. The animals were driven out through the driveway on to the main street as the

different herders came by in the morning. They were returned in a similar manner in the evening. The task was simpler than it appears for the animals knew where to go when the herd came by in the morning, and each one knew its own yard when the herd was brought home in the evening. It appears that the colonists made little attempt to keep the barnyard and the front yard separate. Under the circumstances love for animals was a blessing.

As soon as the colonists could afford it, they built stone walls around their yards. These, with the variously and richly painted house gables, together with the many shrubs and trees that they planted in the yards and on the streets, presented attractive views to the passersby.

Of improvements the colonists knew little. Some of the villages boasted graveled walks along the street. As late as 1900 the streets themselves were still of dirt surface. Waterworks, electric lights, telephones, mail service, sewers, cement sidewalks, and hard-surfaced streets and roads were unknown. In 1900, Odessa, a city of half a million people now, had only a limited water and sewer system.

The colonist village was no more than a collection of farmyards stretched along the two sides of a road for a mile or two. The road would lead to and through other villages and on to a city. Occasionally one or two side streets would develop and become part of a village, or a road leading off in another direction would become flanked with houses and yards and become another village street, thus forming an intersection as do streets and avenues in America. Most villages were long and narrow in contrast with American villages and cities which are spread out in all directions. Since most of the villages were founded before the railroads were built, few of them are located on railroads and few have railroad facilities.

Common to most villages were the village hall, schoolhouse, church, market place, cemetery, and public granary. Unique to people of our day is the latter, which was found in practically every village. The village or public granary was a community or village-owned storehouse which was filled with produce from the crops raised on the village-owned land by labor of the villagers. A roster of the village householders was kept by the mayor. From it he called the men to work in rotation. Usually enough men were called to put in the village crop in one day; the same was true of harvesting. The provisions stored in the public granary were used to feed the poor people of the village. Another feature found in many villages was the market place, on which the bazaars or markets were held. A bazaar was a marketing day, usually occurring weekly or bi-monthly, to which sellers brought their wares for display and sale. It differed from our market days and fairs in that more non-manufactured goods were displayed. It was a cattle, horse, vegetable, and fruit market, as well as one for manufactured goods. Business establishments were few in the villages. Most of the buying and selling was done at the bazaar. Farmers sold their own commodities at the bazaar. No money was wasted on middlemen, for marketing was more direct. As late as 1900, villages of 2000 inhabitants would have only a store, a saloon, and a few shops in the line of business establishments. There were no banks, department stores, drug or hardware stores, no show houses or offices of professional people. For these the colonists had to go to the cities.

The Colonists' Government

The administrative machinery set up by the Russian government to govern the colonists is difficult to describe since it varied from place to place and from time to time. There is evidence that the Crown intended to give the col-

onists a just and liberal government, but that grafting and incompetent administrators and the scepticism of the colonists made it unjust and despotic. In general, most of the colonists had self-government in their communities. They elected their mayors and police officers. Their actions were however, restricted by the chief magistrates, each of whom supervised a group of colonies and to whom the mayors were responsible.

The Volga colonists¹⁴ were not governed directly by the crown. For them it set up a special department known as the Office of the Colonial Guardian.¹⁵ Its duties were numerous. In general it determined the colonization policies and carried out the colonization program. More specifically it provided sites and plans for the colonies, furnished the colonists with the necessities of life upon their arrival, built houses for them, advanced them money for the purchases of farm equipment, animals, and seed; advised them as to the nature of the local government that was to be set up, and as to the records that had to be kept, and appointed some of the officers for the administration of colonial affairs.

Since the Office of the Colonial Guardian was located at St. Peterburg, it was too far away from most of the colonies to be of immediate and practical assistance to them. To remedy this defect, sub-offices were established in cities near the colonies. The link between the Office of the Colonial Guardian and the sub-offices were the territorial commissioners. The personnel of the sub-office consisted of one chief justice, two aides, one secretary, one bookkeeper, one interpreter, one surveyor, and two doctors. The chief justice was appointed by the Crown, and he in turn appointed all the

¹⁴S. Joachim, *Toward an Understanding of the Russia Germans*, p. 9

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 9

other officers mentioned above. The chief justice was responsible to the Office of the Colonial Guardian and the Crown; all the other officers were responsible to him. In addition to the ones mentioned, the chief justice also appointed the district commissioners who were the links between the sub-office and the colonies and who were responsible to him. The chief justice had dictatorial power over the colonies. He and his appointees constituted the supreme court for the colonists, and from their decision there was no appeal save in cases involving disputes between colonists and native Russians which were referred to the regular Russian courts.

The Russian officials dealing with the colonists were often unjust, tyrannical, and dishonest.¹⁶ They were easily influenced by bribes. The supreme court was no better than the officials who composed it. The colonists complained to the Crown, and for a time they were governed directly by the Office of the Colonial Guardian with no more satisfactory results. Thereafter the sub-offices with their supreme courts were restored. The colonists soon learned not to complain, for complaining resulted in punishment for minor offenses, or for no offenses at all, such as failure to unbare their heads to officials whom they did not recognize, having a mud puddle in the yard after a rain, or staying out on the street after nine o'clock in the evening. The result was that the colonists made as little contact with the authorities as possible. They settled their differences among themselves. They soon realized that the Russian authorities always had the upper hand and the last word, and that without bribery there was no justice.

The Black Sea colonies¹⁷ fared better with regards to government administra-

¹⁶ Joachim, op. cit., pp. 8-10

¹⁷ Brendel, op. cit., pp. 21-22

tion and justice, but even there it was high-handed and influenced by bribery. The Black Sea colonies were governed by a committee of three consisting of a chief magistrate and two associates of whom the chief magistrate was appointed by the Crown, and who in turn appointed his associates.

Each colony elected its own mayor who was responsible to the chief magistrate. There was more democracy in this arrangement. Nevertheless the colonists could not do what they pleased. The chief magistrate had enormous power over them; his orders were law. Every birth, death, journey, building, alteration, sickness had to be recorded and reported to him, and every wedding, burial, journey, building, alteration had to have his permission. The colonists could not do anything of any consequence without the chief magistrate's permission. The affairs of minor importance were administered by the local mayor and his secretary and treasurer under the supervision of the chief magistrate. In addition to the administrative duties that the mayor and chief magistrate performed, they were also in charge of the administration of justice. The local mayor heard minor cases and made disposition of them. He had the power to sentence an offender to prison for forty-eight hours. More serious cases were referred to still higher officers and courts. In these colonies the chief magistrate was the government official who contacted the colonists and influenced their affairs.

From the meager reading available on this subject it appears that some of the chief magistrates were conscientious and had the interest of the colonists at heart. However, the colonists were ignorant and distrustful, probably remembering the more greedy magistrates. In instances they did not know what was good for them, and they did not know the Russian language. Under the circumstances misunderstanding would arise. They would resent the chief magistrate's

interference, and he their disobedience until it came to the point where most of his communications to them would begin with "I command, I order", or "I will". In brief, the chief magistrate had great authority and often used it. He was familiar with all activities and happenings in the colonies. Great courtesy had to be shown him by the colonists in dealing with him for he had the power to administer punishment -- penal, corporal, and monetary. His salary as late as 1900 was 600 roubles the year, and his tenure was fairly permanent. The local mayors were elected for a term of three years by the inhabitants of their colonies but could be removed by the chief magistrates for cause. Their salaries was about fifty roubles the year. For this salary the mayors had to spend a day or two at the village hall or court house each week throughout the year. It appears that some colonies had only mayors¹⁸ as local administrative officers plus their clerks and treasurers. Others had mayors and village boards¹⁹ much like the North Dakota school districts with their chairman or presidents and board members.

The village halls or court houses were unpretentious affairs. The colonies were unwilling to spend their money on public buildings. They were most often frame, stone or clay structures, not much larger than ordinary houses and not any more convenient. They were used in part as the living quarters of the permanent village clerk. It appears that the colonies' routine affairs were handled by the village clerks who were on duty all the time. Then on various days of the week the elected mayors would spend a day or so at the court houses to perform specific tasks such as hearing cases or collecting delinquent taxes.

¹⁸ Brendel, op. cit., pp. 1-108

¹⁹ Liebrandt, op. cit., pp. 1-197

Law enforcement was unique. The chief of police was elected each year by the inhabitants of a colony. Each village was divided into decades; that is, into districts consisting of ten village yards or houses on each side of the street. A roster of all the able-bodied men in each decade was prepared for the chief of police. From it he would call in rotation four men each night to serve as night guards in their decades. Despite this close guarding, robbery was a common occurrence. Often when the guards were at one end of their beats, thieves would be making off with horses at the other end.

Religion and the Church

Almost without exception the colonists were deeply religious and the church held the foremost place in every colony, whether Catholic or Protestant. They were as interested in religion as they were indifferent to education. No sooner were their dwellings completed than they erected the village church. The church was the outstanding building in the village, and it was the first one to be enlarged and improved. Where American communities spend their money on public buildings-- schools, court houses, city halls, the colonists spent theirs on churches. As an example, the colony of Neudorf²⁰ erected two village-owned buildings, a church and a school. On the church they spent 15,000 roubles and on the school 1500 roubles. The pastor's dwellings were provided by the colonists and were likewise kept in the forefront of their attention. The same can be said of cemeteries and church yards. What gave the colonists their keen interest in religion is difficult to say. Very likely it was their long years of insecurity and suffering both in their German and Russian homes. In those uncertain years they placed

²⁰Brendel, op. cit. p. 19

their trust in God, and there they have kept it to this very day. The German-Russians in North Dakota at the present time are still a deeply religious people which they evidence by their church membership, attendance, and support. In the purely German-Russian village of Balta, North Dakota, a community numbering about 200 families, the value of the church property is twice that of the school property, and the church budget approaches that of the public school budget though the latter has an enrollment of 160 pupils. The colonists believed firmly in the Biblical injunction, Seek first the Kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things will be given unto you.

Fortunately the inhabitants in each colony were all of the same faith which made for unity in church affairs within each colony and enabled the erection of one substantial church and adequate support. In 1811, the colony of Mannheim²¹ consisted of sixty-one families of whom fifty-nine were Catholic and two Protestant. The latter two families left in a short time, leaving this colony purely Catholic. The colony of Elsass²² consisted of 62 families in 1811 who were without exception Catholic. In 1847 the inhabitants of the colony of Johannesthal²³ numbered 421 practically all of whom were Lutherans, only a few belonging to the Reformed Church. The same could be said for almost every colony. With the exception of an occasional Jew or Russian, the inhabitants of a colony were all of the same faith.

One of the most influential men in a colony was the village pastor or priest. Unfortunately there were not enough of them. In too many instances the colonists could not secure a pastor or priest of their own people. They

²¹Brendel, op. cit., p. 19

²²Ibid., pp. 18-19

²³Liebrandt, op. cit., p. 86

were not available. The thousands of Catholics that moved into Russia from Alsace, Baden, and Bavaria had no priests to take with them. They had difficulty in getting any German priests during the first years of colonization. The result was that priests foreign to them, mostly Polish, became their spiritual leaders. One Pole, even though a priest, in a strictly German community, could scarcely exercise leadership. The Polish priests were interested in things Catholic, but hardly in things German. As a result the pious German colonists who looked so much to their priests for leadership were left without leaders. The lack of German priests had an unwholesome effect upon the Catholic colonists which is visible in them to this day. The Polish priests may have saved their souls, but they did not promote their education and culture. In addition to the lack of inspiring priests, the colonists lacked secular leaders. More than half of them moved to Russia without leaders. A few of the colonists grouped themselves under leaders of their own which was a great advantage to them. The Protestant colonists likewise had difficulty in finding pastors for their new homes. However, when they did secure a pastor, he was usually a German who had both their spiritual and temporal welfare at heart, who understood them, and who was understood and trusted by them. He was their accepted leader, and under his leadership they made rapid progress. It is probably for this reason that the Protestant German-Russians are more cultured and educated than their Catholic neighbors of German-Russian descent.

While the colonists were deeply religious, they were not superstitious - not any more so than were other people of their time. Beyond a few who believed in healing by magic, the writer has found them singularly free from superstitious beliefs. The written material on them makes no mention of superstition. Stories have it that the original colonists were afraid of their

shadows and were haunted by other superstitious fears. If they were superstitious, their descendents have lost all traces of it. Undoubtedly a few of their descendents in North Dakota today may affect fear of breaking a mirror or walking under a ladder, but so do other nationalities. These are acquired superstitions and may be practiced because they are popular or afford a certain thrill. The colonists believe in prayer and feared the devil. That, however, is religion and not superstition.

The Home

Strictness, respect for authority and old age, punishment for disobedience, characterizes the home life of the colonists. Their families were usually large, their resources often small, and the chores and duties for the children numerous. This demanded a certain amount of discipline, and not infrequently the assumption of the role of dictator by the parents, especially on the part of those parents who lacked tact and the ability to rear children in a congenial atmosphere. The male parent was the supreme dictator in such a home. If the children did not love their parents, they certainly feared them. Once beyond the infant stage, there was little comradeship between children and parents. Youth was not encouraged to talk, and certainly not to talk back. The father's word was law. Within the home the family did not congregate in one room. Wherever the space was available, the parents occupied one room and the children another. The parents lived in the living room or parlor and the children in a back room or kitchen. In church and school the children had to behave. Children remained dependent upon and obedient to their parents until their marriage and until they set up a household of their own. Even erring married sons did not escape the chastisement of their fathers. A redeeming feature as far as the children were concerned, was their early marriage. Boys

and girls married between the ages of fifteen and twenty years. A girl of twenty was approaching the old-maid stage, and a young man of twenty-five was taunted for his inability to find a helpmate.

Though these stern parents demonstrated little affection for their children, they nevertheless had their interests at heart as they saw it. In their estimation, schooling was of little value. It wasn't tangible; hence their children received little of it. A wealthy husband for their daughter and a wealthy wife for their son were tangible. For these things they worked. They were above all interested in giving their children a good start in life. To them a good start meant ownership of land and personal property. To this end they exerted themselves to give their daughters good dowries and their sons good endowments upon their marriage. The daughter's dowry would consist of a complete wardrobe with clothes for both Sunday and everyday wear, household goods, furniture, a few head of cattle, poultry, food and cash money. The wealthier the parents, the bigger the dowry, and the more desirable would the girl be in the eyes of other parents. The son received horses, farm machinery and tools, and, where possible, land. Parents often made the matches between their children and their future son- and daughters-in-law. Few of their children married without the consent of their parents and especially the consent of their fathers. The mercenary parents always kept an eye on what their prospective children-in-law would bring to the marriage. A cow in the dowry of their son's future wife weight far more heavily in evoking their consent than her ability to cook or keep house, sweet disposition or good looks. Marriage was an ordeal for the prospective groom and bride and a spectacle for the community. All marriages followed the same pattern. It was a procedure that

²⁴Brendel, op. cit., pp. 65-72

never varied, yet was always interesting. That procedure included asking for the bride's hand and making a nominal payment to her in evidence of the groom's good intentions; reading of the church bans; church instructions; wedding invitations; church ceremony; and a wedding celebration at the home of the bride which lasted several days and at which food and drinks were served in abundance. Usually it included dancing and feasting until the guests' endurance gave out.

The colonists' houses were simple affairs and its furnishings were likewise simple. Its object was utility, not beauty and convenience. A three or four room house sufficed, and a five or six room one was considered pretentious. It often had a second floor or at least an unfinished roomy attic but seldom a basement. The cellar was located in the yard. One room served as a parlor, dining, and bedroom; the other as a kitchen, dining, bed and utility room. Additional rooms if there were any would be bedrooms. The attic was used for storing and sleeping purposes. The fruits and vegetables which grew abundantly and which could be bought cheaply were kept in the attic. When the family became crowded, the bigger boys moved their beds to the barn lofts. During the summer months few of the male youths slept in the house. There was more freedom in the barn. There they could meet their comrades and visit with them without interference. Benches, a table or two, a kitchen cabinet, a wardrobe, a bed or two, a home-made heater and range, and a few household utensils constituted the furnishings of the house. The meal for the children was served on a long table around which they sat on benches, and as often as not, all ate out of one dish placed on the middle of the table. The parents ate in the parlor. The meals were simple, lacking in variety of food. Often only one dish, a soup or broth, constituted a meal. Desserts and beverages such as coffee and

tea were rarely served. Those were reserved for holidays. Cereals cooked in milk, or meat and vegetables cooked in water were common dishes, which, with bread, was the entire meal. Sugar and other commercially prepared groceries were scarce. During the summer months from May to October fruits and vegetables and milk were plentiful, and during that time the colonists' children were well fed. No canning of any kind was done. Some fruits and vegetables were dried and stored for winter use. With unlimited kinds and amounts of fruits, the colonists had to go without them for half of the year. Only grapes were preserved and those in the form of wine. During the winter months meat, fish, and dried cereal were the chief foods.

The colonists arose early and worked late. The entire week he worked hard. Shop workers started the day at four o'clock in the morning. Farmers often got up at three. A sixteen hour day was not uncommon during the busy seasons. On Sunday he donned his black dress suit and white shirt, polished his only pair of shoes with soot taken from the kitchen range, and walked to church. After church he sat around visiting with his neighbors, smoking his pipe or cigarettes or eating sunflower seeds. The talk was about his other neighbors, horses and crops. Liquor, especially wine, was in most of the homes, and would be passed around to the guests on the slightest excuse. His wife who had helped in the fields during the week was busy doing the housework.

All villages had their saloons. The government owned them, and their operation was a government monopoly, though leased to local residents. Drinking was a widespread and serious evil. A good percentage of the colonists were heavy drinkers, who ruined their health, well-being, and social standing through their drinking habit. They imitated the native Russian who were still

heavier drinkers. Their appetite for hard liquor was probably due to the lack of beer and wine during the first years of colonization. They not only drank heavily but believed in drinking. For sickness, sorrow or celebration, whiskey was the prescription. The women, though not habitual drinkers, supported their husbands in this vice. To this day the German-Russians are anti-prohibitionists and good customers of saloons. Their wives express the same sentiment, though they do not drink. They regard it as a man's right to drink liquor, and do not consider it a disgrace if they have to put up occasionally with drunken husbands. Certainly the German-Russian wife endures more than any known woman as a result of a drunkard husband. In time beer and wine became available in the colonies. The latter they made in their own homes. By that time the Russian national drink, vodka, (whiskey) had ensnared too many colonists.

The German-Russians are a singular people. They speak German and have German names, yet are called Russians. They have not a drop of Russian blood in them. The writer personally knows thousands, yet of these thousands there were only two that married native Russians. Culturally they are far behind their brothers who remained in Germany. They are disowned by their Fatherland, yet they admire intensely anything German. Their loyalty is first to Germany, second to Russia, and lastly to the United States. They haven't lived long enough in the United States to feel that they belong. The pioneer German-Russians who moved to North Dakota from Russia miss the fine villages and moderate climate they left behind them. They love to reminisce. At this great distance the past in Russia looks good to them. Despite the hard work they had to do there, they were probably happier in Russia than they are in America. In Russia they were the leaders; the upper stratum of people.

They were more advanced than the native Russians. They were more successful in making a living than their neighbors. Their leadership was evidenced by their better homes, villages, farm animals and more productive fields. Their prosperity enabled them to buy and rent land around their villages. They were driving out the native Russians in their own land. Here in America they are at the other end of the social and economic scale. Other nationalities look down upon them. They are the underdogs. Most of them have stuck to farming in sections where farming doesn't pay with their methods. Few of them have entered other callings. They are therefore poorer than their neighbors of other nationalities. Their indifference to education they have brought with them to this country. Having neglected education, they are behind other nationalities in culture and refinement. It is not surprising that others do look down upon them. Reason or no reason, the German-Russians resent being the underdogs. Resentment makes them recall better days in Russia. They recall their situation there and compare it with their present one here, and think Russia was a better land.

In their long wandering the German-Russians have had three precepts drilled into them. They are: never to lose their religion; never to lose their mothers' tongue; and never to lose their nationality. These precepts have been their inflexible guides. To them they cling tenaciously. The objectives set forth in these precepts they attained successfully in Russia during their century of residence there. Any attempts to swerve them from these precepts they withstood successfully. The German-Russians came to this country little changed from what they were when they migrated to Russia. These precepts explain the difficulty encountered in trying to Americanize them. Any attempt to change them, to Americanize them, must be made only with a full understanding of their attitude.

CHAPTER 4
MIGRATION TO AMERICA

Over a period of a century the population of a German colony in Russia had a manifold increase. In 1811 the colony of Mannheim¹ had a population of 190. In 1908 that population had increased to 1777 even though hundreds of its natives had migrated to other colonies and other lands. Many German colonies in Russia were founded by the excess population of the original or mother colonies. In Russia there existed at that time a system of inheritance known as the "mir".² It provided for the division of a father's land equally among his sons. Though not compulsory, the colonists followed this system of inheritance. The sixty deszjatins each family received from the Russian government was cut up into several parcels of five to ten deszjatins each. It was divided in that manner to equalize the distances from the village to the land. When these parcels of land were inherited by the sons of the farmers, they were further divided and became too small for profitable farming. Though the sons traded, bought and rented land whenever possible, time and large families brought them a shortage of land. Colonies that had ninety per cent of their inhabitants engaged in farming in 1811 had less than fifty per cent so engaged by 1890.

Shortage of land was probably the most important reason for the colonists' migration to America. Around 1870 they heard about free and abundant land in the United States, and from that time on they migrated to the United States. There were other reasons for their departure from Russia, and not a minor one was military service. It is not clear for what length of time they

¹Johannes Brendel, *Aus deutschen Kolonien im Kutschurganer Gebiet*, pp. 19-20

²Compton's Pictured Encyclopedia, Volume 12, pp. 179-194

were to be free from conscription. Some believed it was to be forever; others believed it was to be for a period of 100 years. The writer has been unable to learn what the Second Manifesto of Catherine II meant in this respect. When the Russian government announced about the middle of the nineteenth century that the colonists could take their choice between serving in the Russian army or emigration, many of them chose the latter. It appears that conscription of the colonists did not become fully effective until in the 1870's. At about that time they heard of free land in the United States. From then on they knew where to go. First the young men eligible for conscription left. Later their parents and other members of the families would follow.

It is not to be deduced from what has been written that the colonists refused point blank to serve in the Russian army, or that all of them preferred to emigrate rather than become Russian soldiers. The truth is many of them served as a matter of course without thinking of leaving Russia. It is rather what they experienced in their Russian military service that caused them to object. The term of service was long -- four years. Too many of them did not know the Russian language. Without that knowledge and with different traditions and attitudes in them, they could not be useful Russian soldiers, and on their part, life in the army was unpleasant. They were accordingly relegated to the lower ranks in the service. About that time the Russian government started its program of Russification. That program affected the Germans in their villages and in the army. During some of those years the relations between the Russian and German governments were not cordial which resulted in discrimination against the Germans in Russia. That discrimination extended into the Russian army. According to its regulations the colonists were eligible for conscription but not for advancement. They could not become officers

or hold positions of trust. This discrimination rankled in the breasts of the Germans who were in many respects superior to the native Russians. They resented it more than military service, and it prompted many to emigrate.

The colonists were unwilling to become Russianized. The Russian government on the other hand was unwilling to tolerate Germans in their land forever. The solution was emigration. The attitude of the Russian government was in part the result of the resentment the native Russians felt toward the colonists. That resentment was due to jealousy aroused by the industry, thrift, acquisitiveness and well-being of the Germans.

How North and South Dakota became the home of the majority of German-Russians in the United States may be explained by saying it was a coincidence. About the time their heavy migration started to the United States, North and South Dakota were opened for settlement. Having made known their desire for land, they were shunted to these two states. Aberdeen, South Dakota, was at that time a frontier town in the midst of the uninhabited free prairies. Aberdeen was the destination of thousands of German-Russians. Once a contingent was there, they wrote home to their friends in Russia giving them their new address. Many of their friends responded by coming to Aberdeen. From Aberdeen they spread out in all directions, but going mostly north. In time they reached North Dakota and even the Canadian border. Many went beyond the border into the provinces of Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Alberta. A great number of the German-Russian pioneers in North Dakota came by way of Aberdeen. The heaviest migration took place between 1885 and 1905. Those that came before 1885 settled in Nebraska and Kansas. Those that came after 1900 settled in western North Dakota, Montana and Canada.

Table IV

GERMAN-RUSSIAN POPULATION COMPARED WITH TOTAL
POPULATION IN GERMAN-RUSSIAN TRIANGLE

County	Total Population	German-Russian Population	Per Centage German-Russian
Burleigh	19,769	2,488	12
Dickey	10,877	1,613	14
Dunn	9,566	3,477	36
Emmons	12,467	6,574	52
Grant	10,134	4,649	45
Hettinger	8,796	2,342	26
Kidder	8,031	2,246	27
LaMoure	11,517	1,580	13
Logan	8,089	4,647	57
McHenry	15,439	3,224	20
McIntosh	9,621	6,708	69
McLean	17,991	3,901	21
Mercer	9,516	4,925	51
Morton	19,647	6,454	32
Oliver	4,262	1,600	37
Pierce	9,074	3,037	32
Ramsey	16,252	1,096	7
Sheridan	7,337	4,151	56
Sioux	4,687	1,267	26
Stark	15,340	5,292	34
Stutsman	26,190	4,254	16
Ward	33,597	1,263	3
Wells	13,285	2,818	21
Total	301,394	79,606	26

Two facts are evident from the figures in Table IV. They are these:

The German-Russians flock together; and they provide the largest single population element in many North Dakota counties, even having a plurality in some counties.

Table V⁴ give the German-Russian population and the populations of the next two largest foreign elements with percentages of the total population for the counties in the German-Russian Triangle.

⁴Fifteen Census of the United States, op. cit., 28-29

Table III

COUNTIES HAVING 1000 OR MORE GERMAN-RUSSIANS

County	Foreign-Born White From Russia	Native White of Russian Descent	Total Russian Descent
Bellevue	689	1799	2488
Beulah	395	1218	1613
Billings	913	2564	3477
Blaine	1468	5106	6574
Bozeman	1133	3516	4649
Butte	568	1774	2342
Cheyenne	562	1684	2246
Converse	494	1086	1580
Custer	1115	3532	4647
DeWitt	868	2356	3224
Dodge	1519	5189	6708
Fergus	1159	2742	3901
Golden	1271	3654	4925
Grant	1806	4648	6454
Hailey	387	1213	1600
Hemlock	760	2277	3037
Highmore	324	772	1096
Jackson	1100	3051	4151
Kimberly	293	974	1267
Laramie	1408	3884	5292
Liberty	1152	3102	4254
Madison	382	881	1263
Minnehaha	713	2105	2818
Total	20,479	59,127	79,606

For convenience the area covered by the counties listed on Table III will be called the German-Russian Triangle.

Table IV³ gives the total population, the German-Russian population, and the percentage the latter is of the total population for all the counties in the German-Russian Triangle.

³ Fifteenth Census of the United States; 1930, Population Bulletin, Second Series, North Dakota, pp 19-22, 28-29.

Chapter 5

THE ROLE OF THE GERMAN-RUSSIAN IN NORTH DAKOTA

Location in North Dakota

In North Dakota the area settled by the German-Russians forms a rough triangle with the base extending along the North and South Dakota line from Sargent to Adams County and the sides of the triangle to Bottineau and Rolette County. Every county within this area is the home of one thousand or more German-Russians. And every county in the state that has one thousand or more German-Russian inhabitants, except Ramsey County, is within this triangle.

Figure 1,¹ on the following page, shows the German-Russian Triangle and gives the number of German-Russian inhabitants for each county within it.

Table III² gives the German-Russian population of every county in the state with a thousand or more German-Russian inhabitants. It will be noted that every county listed on Table III, except Ramsey, is inside the German-Russian Triangle. Ninety per cent of the German-Russians in North Dakota live in this area.

¹Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930, Population Bulletin, Second Series, North Dakota, pp. 28-29

²loc. cit.

TABLE V
COMPARISON OF THREE LARGEST POPULATION ELEMENTS
IN GERMAN-RUSSIAN TRIANGLE

County	German-Russian	% of Total	1st Largest Element	% of Total	2nd Largest Element	% of Total
Burleigh	2488	12	1620 German	8	1499 Norse	7
Dickey	1613	14	1032 German	9	800 Norse	7
Dunn	3477	36	1024 Norse	11	540 German	5
Emmons	6574	52	497 Dutch	3	428 German	3
Grant	4649	45	710 German	6	614 Roum. ^a	5
Hettinger	2342	26	645 German	7	629 Norse	7
Kidder	2246	27	834 Norse	10	553 German	6
LaMoure	1580	13	1770 German	15	1388 Norse	12
Logan	4647	57	682 Roum.	8	360 Finn	4
McHenry	3224	20	2718 Norse	16	1671 German	10
McIntosh	6708	69	270 German	2	196 Roum.	2
McLean	3901	21	2101 Norse	11	1405 German	7
Mercer	4925	51	638 Roum.	6	623 German	6
Morton	6454	32	2996 German	15	1022 Norse	5
Oliver	1600	37	646 German	15	156 Norse	3
Pierce	3037	32	1968 Norse	21	410 German	4
Ramsey	1096	7	3802 Norse	23	1281 Can. ^b	8
Sheridan	4151	56	676 Roum.	9	380 German	5
Sioux	1267	26	186 German	4	141 Norse	3
Stark	5292	34	1271 German	8	1013 Roum.	6
Stutsman	4254	16	3061 German	11	2107 Norse	8
Ward	1263	3	6665 Norse	19	2541 German	7
Wells	2818	21	2216 Norse	16	1304 German	9
Total	79,606	26	38,028		21,061	

^aRoumanians, ^bCanadians

According to Table V, the German-Russians outnumber the next two largest population elements in the counties of the German-Russian Triangle. In all by LaMoure, Ramsey, and Ward Counties they are the single largest foreign element. The many Roumanians living in the Triangle are mostly people of German origin. They are German-Russians who moved to Roumania from Russia and later to North Dakota. They

are no different from the German-Russians described in this study. The writer has interviewed several of them. They speak German and hold to their German tradition. They are of the same original stock as the German-Russians.

Table V makes clear the clanishness of the German-Russians. They live together in communities of their own in which the inhabitants are almost solidly German-Russian. Other nationalities have little influence upon them simply because there is little contact between them. This table further shows that the German-Russians live on farms and in farm communities. Comparatively few of them are found in cities. The counties containing the cities of Bismarck, Minot, and Devils Lake have comparatively few German-Russian inhabitants.

Fecundity of the German-Russians

The German-Russians are in North Dakota to stay. They are a fertile and verile race. Their occupation and religion predisposes them to have large families. The birth-rate⁵ and school enrollment⁶ in German-Russian communities are higher than those in communities of other nationalities. Table VI gives the total population for each of the four largest foreign elements in North Dakota for the year 1930 and the increase and decrease in the foreign-born of these elements for the United States for 1920, as given in the United States Census.

⁵Twenty-Third and Twenty-Fourth Biennial Reports, State Department of Health of North Dakota, Bismarck, pp48-59.

⁶Twenty-fifth Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, North Dakota, Bismarck, pp. 50-51

TABLE VI
LEADING POPULATION ELEMENTS IN NORTH DAKOTA
AND INCREASE OR DECREASE OF THEIR FOREIGN BORN IN U. S. A.

Nationality	1920 Increase or Decrease	1930
Norse	9.9 -	124,512
Russian	29.6 +	87,072
German	27.0 -	54,545
Canadian	.03-	33,093

Education of the German-Russian

Except in a few communities and until recent years the German-Russian people have been indifferent to education. There are always exceptions, but, in general, their children did not go to school unless they were compelled to go. The parents' interests were absorbed in farming. Their children were only sent to school when they were not needed on the farms and when they wanted to go to school. Free public schools and compulsory attendance laws were new to the German-Russians, and were regarded as nuisances and impositions. To this day the shortest terms, the poorest schools, the lowest teachers' salaries, the most inadequate equipment, and the most irregular attendance, are found in German-Russian communities.⁷ In their poor schools are found corresponding teachers with exceptions, of course. In the clannish German-Russian communities where German is spoken exclusively, the teachers live an unpleasant life, and their influence is small. It takes an exceptional teacher to awaken these people to the responsibilities they owe their children. Teachers seldom

⁷ MacIntosh County, Twenty-fifth Biennial Report, Superintendent of Public Instruction, North Dakota, Bismarck, p. 51

stay long enough in their communities to appreciate the educational problems in them. And to this day their children are being neglected educationally.

It is difficult to get educational data on strictly German-Russian communities. Reports on them are always included with those of other communities to compose the county and state reports. However, it is significant that the county⁸ with the highest percentage of German-Russian inhabitants has the shortest school term, next to the lowest average rural teachers' salaries, and poorly trained teachers. Data on schools in such communities must come chiefly from their teachers and supervisors. Unfortunately such data is not published.

Upon personal observation and unpublished reports must be based much of this part of the study. The writer recalls a school in a purely German-Russian community with an average enrollment of twenty-five pupils not having a single eighth grade graduate until the year 1920. This instance could be duplicated in hundreds of other schools in such communities. In purely German-Russian communities thousands of boys and girls born in the state barely learned to read and write though schools were being operated for them from the first year their parents came to their new homes. In another instance a German-Russian village with 120 pupils enrolled in its school did not have a high school graduate until the year 1927. Schools with enrollments of a hundred pupils yet lacking high school departments have been common in German-Russian communities. To get German-Russian parents to send their children to school and keep them there

⁸ MacIntosh County, op. cit., p. 51

until graduation has been a major problem of county superintendents with such communities in their counties. Only slightly less difficulty has been the problem of getting them to erect and maintain adequate schools for their children.

Until very recent years very few of their children finished the eighth grade and still fewer entered high school. In the last decade some German-Russian communities have made remarkable progress with regards to eighth grade completion and high school attendance. Nevertheless, they still lag behind other nationalities in both respects.

Table VII gives the descent of North Dakota high school pupils for the leading nationalities in the state as it was tabulated from the replies received from high school superintendents to a questionnaire sent to all the high school superintendents in the state.

Table VII

DESCENT OF NORTH DAKOTA HIGH SCHOOL PUPILS

County	Ger.		Ger.	Norse	Swede	Scotch		All Others	Total
	Rus.	Rus.				Irish	Eng.		
Adams	6	3	5	40	4	5	0	10	73
Barnes	16	2	167	191	19	61	13	48	517
Benson	21	0	69	185	28	77	2	24	406
Billings	0	3	2	3	3	10	0	2	23
Bottineau	5	6	118	162	37	84	29	54	495
Bowman	2	0	31	66	7	38	2	18	164
Burke	0	0	26	58	33	26	3	71	217
Burleigh	36	2	89	26	9	73	12	33	280
Cass	3	1	265	251	55	156	19	154	904
Cavelier	18	3	134	98	10	111	4	53	431
Dickey	42	0	90	38	30	47	4	55	306
Divide	10	0	3	33	9	9	1	4	69
Eddy	2	2	34	28	25	10	4	1	106
Emmons	206	8	98	5	1	27	0	50	395
Foster	0	7	144	102	17	93	13	144	520
Golden Valley	0	0	29	6	0	13	1	0	49
Grand Forks	3	0	79	280	31	131	14	24	562
Grant	16	0	46	19	8	15	1	9	114
Griggs	3	2	37	193	21	7	4	28	295
Hettinger	21	7	60	14	5	20	7	25	159
Kidder	58	7	35	72	12	57	3	41	285
LaMoure	54	3	161	38	39	91	14	91	491
Logan	145	1	33	23	4	12	0	21	242
McHenry	35	19	143	172	28	58	5	44	504
McIntosh	91	2	23	0	0	0	0	8	124
McKenzie	5	1	5	1	0	0	0	3	15
McLean	58	55	175	66	46	27	3	53	489
Mercer	34	6	37	12	6	5	0	0	100
Morton	10	3	108	36	6	4	0	5	172
Mountrail	0	2	86	169	8	32	4	46	347
Nelson	0	0	54	269	28	77	10	48	486
Oliver	11	0	18	8	2	14	0	6	59
Pembina	0	1	118	60	11	164	109	98	561
Pierce	92	0	20	143	14	25	1	77	372
Ramsey	15	3	158	451	37	125	20	167	976
Ransom	2	1	79	183	15	57	8	44	389
Renville	0	2	59	85	29	62	3	37	277

Table VII (continued)

DESCENT OF NORTH DAKOTA HIGH SCHOOL PUPILS

County	Ger.		Norse	Swede	Scotch		Fr.	All Others	Total
	Rus.	Rus.			Irish	Eng.			
Richland	1	0	153	90	7	11	4	51	317
Rolette	0	0	23	58	14	39	24	24	182
Sargent	2	0	52	129	68	34	8	52	345
Sheridan	52	9	60	4	2	2	0	16	145
Stark	120	57	267	44	16	96	8	229	837
Steele	0	0	5	66	10	5	0	49	135
Stutsman	4	0	77	16	7	56	11	47	218
Towner	11	4	46	63	9	35	0	24	192
Traill	4	0	42	491	7	31	3	17	595
Walsh	1	2	48	340	42	139	36	275	883
Ward	9	6	71	104	8	87	1	41	327
Wells	14	8	328	116	14	45	6	54	585
Williams	0	0	53	279	40	28	8	109	517
Totals	1238	238	4063	5389	881	2431	422	2584	17246

No replies to questionnaires were received from the following counties:
Dunn, Sioux, Slope.

The questionnaires on which the figures on Table VII is based were mailed to every high school listed in the North Dakota Educational Directory.⁹ Replies were received from 323 high school superintendents, accounting for the nationality of 17,246 high school pupils, or approximately half of the high school enrollment in the state. Of the 17,246 high school pupils accounted for, 1238 or approximately seven percent, were listed as of German-Russian descent. It should be recalled that thirteen per cent

⁹ North Dakota Education Directory, 1939-40

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of the population of North Dakota is German-Russian. The discrepancy between German-Russian high school enrollment and population is greater than it appears from these figures. This is due to the fact that no replies were received to the questionnaire from the larger cities in the state where the German-Russian population is light, whereas the replies from the Superintendents of Schools in the counties where the German-Russian population is heavy were fairly numerous, making the count from those schools quite complete. The result is that most German-Russian high school pupils in the state are included in the count while many others of different nationality are not included. On the other hand, there appeared to be a tendency for German-Russian high school pupils to give their nationality or descent as German rather than German-Russian. Unquestionably some of the pupils listed as German are German-Russian. It cannot be many for there is a correlation between German-Russian population and German-Russian high school enrollment. The very fact that the German-Russian high school pupils gave their nationality as German when there were given a choice of giving it as German-Russian, German, or Russian is an indictment of the German-Russian people.

For Pierce County the count is complete, as well as accurate, since the nationality of every high school pupil enrolled in the county is known to the writer. In this county the German-Russians number about one-third of the total population, and compose about twenty-four per cent of the high school enrollment. Six years ago they composed less than fifteen per cent of the high school enrollment of this county. For Emmons County the count is practically complete. In it the German-Russians compose fifty-two per cent of the total population and fifty-two per cent of the

high school enrollment. The explanation is that the faculties of some of their high schools are composed of Catholic Sisters to whom the Catholic German-Russians prefer to send their children.

Comparing the German-Russian high school enrollment with that of the Norse, the former is far in the rear. Of the 17,246 high school pupils listed on Table VII, 5,389 or thirty-one per cent are of Norse descent while the Norse compose nineteen per cent of North Dakota's total population. In Pierce County the Norse compose twenty-one per cent of the total population but thirty-eight per cent of the high school enrollment.

While the results of this questionnaire are neither absolutely valid nor accurate, and subject to question and criticism, they do indicate that the German-Russian people are lax in sending their children to high school. They lag behind other nationalities in educating their children. The general trend of high school enrollment as to descent in North Dakota is indicated on Table VII.

Table VIII gives the nationalities in percentage of the total high school pupils reported for each county in reply to the same questionnaire on which Table VII is based. It shows graphically that the German-Russians who ranked second in number in North Dakota trail other nationalities in high school enrollment. Comparing the columns for the German-Russians and for the Germans, there are twice as many German-Russians as Germans in the State, yet the high school enrollment of the German-Russians is far below that of the Germans.

Table VIII

DESCENT OF NORTH DAKOTA HIGH SCHOOL ENROLLMENT IN PERCENTAGE

County	Ger.		Ger.	Norse	Swede	Scotch		All others	Total
	Rus.	Rus.				Irish	Eng.		
Adams	8	4	7	55	5	7	0	14	73
Barnes	3	1	32	37	4	12	2	9	517
Benson	5	0	15	46	7	19	1	7	406
Billings	0	14	9	14	14	40	0	9	23
Bottineau	1	1	24	32	8	17	6	11	495
Bowman	1	0	19	40	4	24	1	11	164
Burke	0	0	12	27	15	12	1	33	217
Burleigh	13	1	32	9	3	26	4	12	280
Cass	0	0	29	29	6	17	2	17	904
Cavalier	4	1	31	23	2	26	1	12	431
Dickey	14	0	29	12	10	16	1	18	306
Divide	15	0	4	48	13	13	1	6	69
Eddy	2	2	32	27	23	9	4	1	104
Emmons	52	2	25	1	0	7	0	13	395
Foster	0	1	28	19	3	18	3	28	520
Golden Valley	0	0	59	12	0	27	2	0	49
Grand Forks	1	0	14	50	5	23	3	4	562
Grant	14	0	40	17	7	13	1	8	214
Griggs	1	1	13	65	7	2	2	9	295
Hettinger	13	4	38	9	3	13	4	18	159
Kidder	20	3	12	25	4	20	1	15	285
LaMoure	11	1	33	8	8	18	3	18	491
Logan	60	0	14	11	2	5	0	8	242
McHenry	7	4	28	34	6	11	1	9	504
McIntosh	73	2	19	0	0	0	0	6	124
McKenzie	33	7	33	7	0	0	0	20	15
McLean	12	11	36	14	10	5	1	11	483
Mercer	34	6	37	12	6	5	0	0	100
Morton	6	1	63	21	4	2	0	3	172
Mountrail	0	1	25	49	2	9	1	13	347
Nelson	0	0	11	55	6	16	2	10	486
Oliver	19	0	29	14	4	24	0	10	59
Pembina	0	0	21	11	2	29	20	17	561
Pierce	24	0	5	38	4	7	0	21	372
Ramsey	2	0	16	46	4	13	2	17	976
Ransom	1	0	20	47	4	15	2	11	389
Renville	0	1	22	31	10	22	1	13	277
Richland	0	0	48	29	2	4	1	16	317
Rolette	0	0	12	32	8	22	13	13	182

Table VIII (continued)

DESCENT OF NORTH DAKOTA HIGH SCHOOL ENROLLMENT IN PERCENTAGE

County	Ger.		Ger.	Norse	Swede	Scotch		All others	Total
	Rus.	Rus.				Irish Eng.	Fr.		
Sargent	1	0	15	35	20	10	3	16	345
Sheridan	36	6	42	3	1	1	0	11	145
Stark	15	8	32	5	2	12	9	27	837
Steele	0	0	4	49	7	4	0	36	135
Stutsman	2	0	35	7	4	26	5	21	218
Towner	5	2	24	33	5	18	0	13	192
Trail	1	0	7	83	1	5	0	3	595
Walsh	0	0	5	39	5	16	4	31	883
Ward	3	2	22	32	2	27	0	12	327
Wells	2	1	56	20	2	8	1	10	585
Williams	0	0	10	54	8	6	1	21	517

No replies to questionnaires were received from the following counties: Dunn, Sioux, and Slope.

With regards to higher education the German-Russians make a poorer showing than they do in high school enrollment. This must necessarily be true if their high school enrollment is proportionally below that of other nationalities. Table IX gives the enrollment at North Dakota higher institutions of learning according to the leading nationalities in the state. The information was obtained from questionnaires sent to the registrars of these institutions. As in the case of the questionnaires to high school superintendents relative to the nationalities of their high school pupils, some German-Russian college students have given their nationality as German. For instance, The Minot Teachers College shows no German-Russian students enrolled. The writer is certain, however, that between ten and twenty German-Russian students are enrolled there. On the other hand the number 133 standing for the enrollment of German-

Russians at the Dickinson Teachers College includes both Germans and German-Russians according to the registrar's explanation. The Registrar's figures were in most cases taken from the students' registration cards on which they had given their nationality. It is the writer's opinion that there are more German-Russians attending institutions of higher learning than Table IX shows, but not many more. Even if that figure were doubled or trebled, it would still be too small to compare favorably with the college attendance of other nationalities. A compensating factor is the attendance of a few German-Russians in denominational colleges outside the state. The German-Russians may attend denominational schools to a greater extent than other nationalities.

Table IX

ATTENDANCE AT STATE INSTITUTIONS ACCORDING TO DESCENT

	German Russians	Rus.	Ger.	Norse	Swede	Scotch Irish Eng.	Fr.	All others	Total
Grand Forks University	2	10	258	404	97	424	37	596	1828
Fargo Agri. College	1	4	276	449	206			948	1784 ^a
Valley City Teachers College	3	1	210	167	40			261	682
Mayville Teachers College	1	1	59	251	19	69	4	74	478
Minot Teachers College	0	15	97	263	38			453	866
Dickinson Teachers College	133 ^b	4	45 ^c	61	14	60	3	174	494
Ellendale Nor. & Ind. School	7	3	88	34	11	48	9	33	233 ^d
Wahpeton School of Science ^e									
Bottineau school of Forestry	0	0	29	33	9			56	127
Total	147	38	1062	1662	334	601	53	2595	6492

^aRepresents enrollment of second semester up to Jan. 25, 1940

^bGerman and German-Russian

^cGerman plus some other nationality not including German-Russian

^dNumber of students reporting; about 57% enrollment

^eSchool has no data on nationalities of its enrollment

German-Russians in Professions

Obviously a people which does not send its children to high schools and colleges cannot have many professional people among them. The German-Russians are conspicuous for their absence in professions. Among the thousands of them the writer knows personally, not one is a medical doctor or a dentist, two or three are lawyers, and a few are teachers and pastors and priests. In commerce and trades they are likewise rare. There are a number of small businessmen among them; very few control large business establishments. To this day they have clung to farming with only an occasional one going into business in a nearby country village, to the factories in the cities, or to college to take up a profession. Whatever he is, the German-Russian is not a white-collar worker. The one ambition of many Catholic German-Russians is to send their sons and daughters to seminaries and convents with the hope that they will be accepted for priests and nuns, for, in their eyes, priests and sisters are secure both in this world and in the next.

Very little published material on the German-Russians in the professions is available. However, this matter is easily observable. Table X is the result of an attempt to learn how many German-Russians are teachers in North Dakota schools with high school departments. Questionnaires were sent to all high school superintendents in the state from whom approximately 275 replies were received. With the exception of unintentional errors made by superintendents in recording the nationalities of their teachers, the table should be accurate. It shows the German-

Russians far behind other nationalities in the teaching professions. In rural and departmental schools without high schools the percentage of German-Russian teachers should be higher.

Table X

DESCENT OF NORTH DAKOTA TEACHERS
IN SCHOOLS WITH HIGH SCHOOL DEPARTMENTS

County	Ger. Rus.	Rus.	Ger.	Norse	Swede	Scotch Irish Eng.	Fr.	All Others	Total
Adams	0	0	0	7	1	4	1	0	13
Barnes	0	0	8	26	2	17	1	10	64
Benson	4	0	1	21	3	13	0	0	42
Billings	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
Bottinesu	0	0	11	12	0	9	7	10	49
Bowman	0	0	6	7	2	3	0	1	19
Burke	4	0	1	2	1	0	0	1	9
Burleigh	1	0	19	2	0	9	2	3	36
Cass	2	0	15	32	5	12	0	1	67
Cavalier	0	0	9	12	1	15	2	13	52
Dickey	0	5	0	4	1	4	0	0	14
Divide	0	0	2	6	0	0	1	0	9
Eddy	0	0	3	4	3	2	0	0	12
Emmons	11	0	11	5	0	5	0	2	34
Foster	5	0	1	14	5	8	1	1	35
Golden Valley	0	0	4	3	0	3	0	1	11
Grand Forks	4	0	6	27	7	17	0	2	63
Grant	4	0	2	0	0	6	2	0	14
Griggs	0	0	2	16	1	5	0	4	28
Hettinger	0	0	9	0	0	7	0	2	18
Kidder	0	0	3	9	0	7	0	1	20
LaMoure	10	0	14	11	3	11	2	4	55
Logan	1	0	8	4	0	5	1	4	23
McHenry	2	1	12	22	2	13	0	6	58
McIntosh	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
McKenzie	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
McLean	1	1	5	8	1	5	0	2	23
Mercer	5	0	1	2	0	1	0	2	9
Morton	0	0	1	4	1	5	0	2	13
Mountrail	0	0	3	12	0	6	0	10	31
Nelson	0	0	7	28	0	5	0	3	43
Oliver	1	0	1	2	2	1	1	0	8
Pembina	0	0	1	7	0	4	10	5	27
Pierce	1	0	4	11	1	14	0	5	36

Table X (continued)

DESCENT OF NORTH DAKOTA TEACHERS
IN SCHOOLS WITH HIGH SCHOOL DEPARTMENTS

County	Ger.		Norse	Swede	Scotch		All Others	Total	
	Rus.	Rus.			Irish	Eng.			Fr.
Remsey	0	0	4	21	2	12	2	9	40
Ransom	1	0	9	25	6	9	0	0	50
Renville	4	0	4	4	3	8	1	0	24
Richland	0	0	21	7	1	6	1	2	38
Rolette	0	0	3	4	3	3	0	0	13
Sargent	0	1	5	12	3	11	0	5	37
Sheridan	0	1	3	3	2	0	1	0	10
Sterk	2	0	23	2	1	14	0	3	45
Steele	0	0	0	8	2	3	1	1	15
Stutsman	3	0	8	3	0	11	0	3	28
Towner	0	0	2	9	1	6	0	5	23
Trail	2	0	5	33	2	5	0	1	48
Walsh	0	0	5	16	6	10	2	9	48
Ward	1	0	1	9	1	6	0	1	18
Wells	2	0	4	15	0	6	0	3	30
Williams	0	0	1	9	1	7	0	15	33
Totals	78	9	269	500	77	334	39	150	1456

No questionnaires received from these counties: Dunn, Sioux, and Slope.

The Economic Status of the German-Russians

Whether or not the German-Russian people are as secure economically as are the people of other nationalities within the state is an interesting question that is difficult to answer. Having once determined their economic status, it would be even more interesting to determine the causes of that status. Is it the people themselves or is it external circumstances and chance that placed them in their particular economic niche?

On the whole it can be said that the economic well-being of the German-Russians is below that of the other leading nationalities in the state. There are reasons. In migrating from central South Dakota north-

ward they settled on the poorer land in North Dakota. They got very little of the richer land in the eastern half of North Dakota. The few who farm there at the present time are renters, and if owners, they got their land through purchase. Coupled with their poorer land is the less favorable climate in the western and central part of North Dakota. Droughts, due to insufficient rainfall and dry, eastern winds, are more common in their area than in eastern North Dakota. Since these people are practically all farmers, poor crops diminish their economic well-being more so than they do for other nationalities who have spread their interests. As farmers they have stood practically alone. They have no well-to-do relatives and friends in business and in the professions to help them. They have specialized too much in farming, and when crops failed as they have almost consistently during the last decade, the German-Russians became poor people. These are the external reasons for the economic backwardness of the German-Russians. There are also innate or personal reasons for their economic backwardness.

As farmers there is much lacking in the German-Russians. While they are industrious, thrifty and ambitious, they lack training, initiative, imagination, and diversity of interest that is necessary for successful farming at the present time. They are too prone to farm as their fathers did in Russia. They are slow to change, slow to conform to newer methods, and the methods demanded by their type of soil and climate. They are, first of all, extensive farmers. Their main ambition is to farm many acres. Too many of them care little how well their farming is done. Secondly, they are one-crop farmers. They know little about and care less

for diversified farming. Up to the present time they have depended too much on wheat crops. Too many of them have neglected dairying, cattle, hogs, poultry and feed raising. They have neglected the steady, day to day, farm income in favor of a large fall income. Their system of one-crop farming they have brought with them from Russia where dairying and meat producing were not profitable. In Russia the one-crop method was successful. There they needed little money. There was little to buy. Whatever they needed, machinery and tools included, was made on their farms, or in their villages. In Russia they had little opportunity for spending money. Villages with two or three thousand inhabitants had only one or two small stores the stock of which would not fill the shelves of the general merchandise store in a North Dakota village. Most of the things they needed they obtained at the bazaars through barter. In their new North Dakota homes they found things reversed. Here everything had to be bought with money, and so many more things were needed. When they didn't have the cash, they used their credit. In time their credit and farms were gone. In one Pierce County township of good soil, inhabited and homesteaded purely by German-Russian farmers, only eight or ten of the original homesteaders still own their land. The others have lost theirs through foreclosures. Farmers of all nationalities have lost their farms through foreclosures. The German-Russian farmers have been especially unfortunate in this respect.

No farmers are more reluctant to diversify than the German-Russians. None are more determined to stay away from dairying and raising animals for slaughter. The older German-Russian men considered it beneath their

dignity to milk, and this chore on their farms is most often done by the women. For a long time they were inept in raising corn and feed crops. They knew too little about legumes, rotation and soil conservation. To this day a North Dakota farm with a large barn and silo is more than likely to be the home of a scandinavian or American farmer. On the other hand, a farm with an inconspicuous barn and without a silo is more than likely to be the home of a German-Russian farmer. Especially wanting are they in animal breeding. To them all animals are alike. That herds can be improved by providing them with good sires is a fact they have not yet learned.

One method of determining the economic situation of the German-Russian people is to study their participation in public relief programs during the last several years. Their relief receipts should be a fair indication of their economic status. Unfortunately this is a difficult undertaking. While adequate records on relief disbursements are available, they are prepared in terms of political subdivisions rather than according to nationality of the recipients. One must rely on personal observation for a discussion of this subject. From personal observation the writer feels justified in saying that the German-Russians have been more dependent upon relief than their neighbors of other nationalities. Their needs may not have been greater than that of other nationalities, but their demands for and acceptance of relief has been greater. The writer is convinced that the German-Russians are not afraid to ask for, nor too proud to accept relief. It is more than likely that their needs have been

greater than those of other nationalities. There are several reasons for their greater need. Among them are larger families, a greater proportion of farmers, less farming ability manifesting itself in less diversification and less home produced produce and year-around farm income. Their poverty is often due to raising too many children and not enough cows.

Table XI is a comparison of two similar townships, the inhabitants of which are well known to the writer. Township A is settled exclusively by German-Russians; Township B by Scandinavians and Americans but mostly by people of Norse descent. All other factors are much alike. Both were settled about the same time. They are in the same longitude and county and only twelve miles apart. Note the contrast in farmers receiving federal assistance.

Table XI

COMPARISON OF GERMAN-RUSSIAN AND SCANDINAVIAN
INHABITED TOWNSHIPS

	Township A German-Russian		Township B Scandinavian	
	1938-39	1939-40	1938-39	1939-40
No. inhabitants, 1930 census	215	215	187	187
Farm Security Clients ^a	28	7	15	2
No. Farm Units ^b	26	--	37	--
No. Acres Owner Operated ^c	8000	--	8840	--
Assessed Valuation	\$101,214	\$104,915	\$145,239	\$150,289
No. miles railroad	2½	2½	0	0
No. rural schools	3	3	2	2
Grade Enrollment	46	43	26	26
Percent attendance	95	89	93	95

^aCertified eligible for relief by Farm Security Administration. Information was obtained from County Welfare Office.

^bNumber of separate farms

^b ^cInformation was obtained from County Soil Conservation Office

It is apparent from Table XI that the German-Russian farmers in Township A need and receive more public assistance than their Norse neighbors in Township B. Their families are larger. They have more children in school and have a greater educational burden. However, much of the poverty in Township A is due to their method of farming. Continuous cropping has depleted their soil to the point where its returns do not support them. Through lack of diversification and insistence on wheat farming, they were forced upon public relief. The people in Township B on the other hand long ago started dairying, hog, cattle, and poultry raising. When the weather was unfavorable or their soil gave out, they were able to maintain themselves from these sources. Methods of farming had its effect upon the assessed valuation of the two townships. In the latter the buildings, land, and herds were kept from deteriorating, whereas in the former no efforts appear to have been made to preserve the property.

Table XII gives the number of relief clients in Pierce County for the fiscal years 1938-39 and 1939-40 under the different relief programs according to the two leading nationalities. The Norse and Swedish nationalities were combined because it is difficult to distinguish between the two from their names. Since the Swedish people in the county are so few as to be negligible, their combination for this purpose will not appreciably affect the results. Nationalities of the clients were determined by their names. Inasmuch as the writer knows most of the German-Russians on the relief lists and since the names of the Scandinavians indicate their nationality, the results should be fairly accurate. All

other nationalities in the county were lumped because it was difficult to tell their nationalities from the list of names and because there were so few of each one nationality. For instance, there are only 410 people of German descent in the county, and only a few of these on the relief lists.

Because so many factors enter into the situation creating the need for relief, it is difficult and venturesome to say that one nationality is more prone to receive relief than another. However, where observation reveals the German-Russians living in the same county, township, and even section occupied by their Norse neighbor receiving relief when the latter do not receive it, one is forced to the conclusion that the German-Russians are less capable of supporting themselves, and are on a lower economic level than are their neighbors of other nationalities. Table XII shows the German-Russians receiving a greater amount of relief than any other nationality group in the county, relatively and absolutely.

Table XII

PIERCE COUNTY RELIEF CLIENTS ACCORDING TO
LEADING NATIONALITIES^a

Type of Relief	Number and Nationality of Clients					
	German - Russian		Norwe and Swede		All Others	
	1938-39	1939-40	1938-39	1939-40	1938-39	1939-40
Farm Security Adm.	361	79	113	18	123	15
Old Age Assistance	41	48	45	49	38	34
Works Progress Adm.	102	111	67	61	79	75
General Relief	184	140	85	64	101	88
Aid Dependent Child	14	15	7	7	6	7
Aid to Blind	0	0	1	1	2	2
<hr/>						
Population						
Number in County	3037		2254		3783	
Per Cent of total	32		24		44	

^a Table includes names of all clients under each type of relief. In instances a particular client may have received two or three types of relief during one fiscal year. For example: an indigent laborer may be on WPA while living in town. If he should move to the country to farm, he might become eligible for FSA grants. Again, if a member of his family should become sick, necessitating extraordinary expenditure, he would become eligible for general relief. This information was obtained from the Pierce County Welfare Office.

In fairness to the German-Russians in Pierce County it must be said that the rainfall for the last ten years has been lighter in the section of the country where the great majority of them live. In general their land is poorer than that inhabited by the other nationalities. The few people of other nationalities living in the German-Russian section have also been on the relief lists. On the other hand the German-Russians who live in the best section of the county where the rainfall has been heaviest also have been on the relief lists to almost the same extent as their kinsmen in the poorer section of the county. And again, in townships of mixed nationalities the German-Russians have been on relief to

a greater extent than their neighbors of other nationalities.

Table XIII gives the relief picture for the entire state as of December, 1939. Nothing conclusive can be said about the susceptibility of the German-Russians to public relief since counties within the German-Russian Triangle stand both at the bottom and next to the top in per cent of total population on relief. And, too, the state is too large, and too many factors enter into the picture to enable one person to speak from observation. However, it is significant that most of the counties in the German-Russian Triangle are grouped near the center and top of the list.

Table XIII

RELIEF FROM ALL SOURCES TO NORTH DAKOTA RESIDENTS
FOR DECEMBER, 1939, BY COUNTIES¹⁰

County	Estimated No. Persons on Relief	Population 1930	% Popu- lation on Relief	No. German- Russian	Percent German- Russian
Billings	1230	3140	39.2	445	14
Bonhom	3580	12467	28.7	6574	52
McIntosh	2675	9621	27.8	6708	69
Williams	4990	19553	25.5	213	1
Kidder	1983	8031	24.7	2246	27
Eddy	1502	6346	23.7	2612	41
Burke	2290	9998	22.9	46	.5
Rolette	2388	10760	22.2	106	1
Morton	4345	19647	22.1	6454	32
Lamoure	2401	11517	20.8	1580	13
Nelson	2052	10203	20.1	21	.2
Sioux	921	4687	19.7	1267	26
Dickey	2076	10877	19.1	1613	14
Ward	6388	33597	19.0	1263	3

¹⁰

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Table XIII (continued)

County	Estimated No. Persons on Relief	Population 1930	% popu- lation on Relief	No. German- Russian	Percent German- Russian
Sargent	1749	9298	18.8	59	.6
Burleigh	3691	19769	18.7	2488	12
Barnes	3341	18804	17.8	180	1
Foster	1132	6353	17.8	178	3
Grant	1797	10134	17.7	4649	45
McKenzie	1711	9709	17.6	291	3
Sheridan	1294	7373	17.6	4150	56
Stark	2680	15340	17.5	5292	34
Adams	1106	6343	17.4	609	10
Divide	1658	9636	17.2	192	2
Benson	2230	13327	16.7	557	4
Pierce	1506	9074	16.6	3037	32
Logan	1333	8089	16.5	4647	57
Grand Forks	5173	31956	16.2	867	3
Mountrail	2092	13544	15.4	171	1
McHenry	2367	15439	15.3	3224	20
Mercer	1441	9516	15.1	4925	51
Dunn	1435	9566	15.0	3477	36
Stutsman	3924	26100	15.0	4254	16
Oliver	623	4262	14.6	1600	37
Remsey	2378	16252	14.6	1096	7
Steele	995	6972	14.3	20	.3
Renville	1024	7263	14.1	49	.7
Bowman	712	5119	13.9	264	5
Wells	1761	13285	13.3	2818	21
Bottineau	1926	14853	13.0	306	2
McLean	2285	17991	12.7	3901	21
Cass	6076	48735	12.5	507	1
Ransom	1378	10983	12.5	293	3
Golden Valley	480	4122	11.6	24	.6
Richland	2393	21008	11.4	49	.2
Griggs	700	6889	10.2	9	.1
Slope	422	4150	10.2	319	8
Towner	854	8393	10.2	310	4
Pembina	1460	14757	9.9	249	2
Trail	1091	12600	8.7	10	.1
Walsh	1701	20047	8.5	145	.7
Cavalier	1210	14554	8.3	810	6
Hettinger	667	8796	7.6	2342	26

Delinquency

There is no evidence that the German-Russian people are criminally inclined to a greater extent than people of other nationalities. All evidence obtained by the writer points to the contrary. It may be said that the German-Russians have their share of involvement in petty crimes and bickerings, but manage to avoid major crimes more so than people of other nationalities. There are several reasons for this. They compose a small part of the city population where crime is more prevalent. They live mostly on the farms where contacts with people outside their families are fewer and where opportunities for committing crimes are fewer. By nature they are timid. They do not take chance on being caught. Their strict discipline in the homes and their tendency to avoid mingling is conducive to a favorable no crime record. Their fervent faith should aid them to steer clear of crime to some extent. They contribute their share to the number of misdemeanors but are seldom involved in felonies. Probably only a small percentage of the inmates of the penal institutions are German-Russians, though no information was obtained on this subject.

Information on the criminal tendencies of nationalities is difficult to obtain. The crime records do not always give the nationality of the criminals. An attempt was made to get some information on this subject. The information contained in Tables XIV, XV, and XVI was obtained from a questionnaire sent to all county clerks of court in the state. Replies were received from forty of them. The questionnaire asked for the number of court action in criminal, juvenile

and civil proceedings and for the nationalities of the defendants. Many of the clerks of court who responded to the questionnaire frankly stated in their replies that they had to use their best judgment in determining the nationalities of many of the defendants. The fact that many actions involved several defendants complicated the problem of filling out the questionnaire. Sufficient information may be deduced from their replies to enable the writer to say that the German-Russian people contribute little to the crime problem of the state. Their involvement in serious crimes is probably in a smaller proportion than that of the average citizen. Their experience in Russia has taught them to distrust lawyers and courts. If there is one group that believes that all lawyers are dishonest, it is the German-Russians. The practice of settling their differences among themselves they have brought with them from Russia to this country. During prohibition they were involved in many actions on the score of making and selling alcoholic beverages. Prohibition was foreign to them. They saw nothing wrong in violating the prohibition laws.

Table XIV is a summary of the replies received from forty clerks of court. It will be observed that several of them made no attempt to determine the nationalities of the defendants. They simply listed the number of court actions under the three headings in their counties. It is regretted that many of the clerks in the German-Russian Triangle failed to respond. This table gives the figures exactly as they were given by the clerk of courts.

Table XIV

COURT ACTIONS IN NORTH DAKOTA COUNTIES
ACCORDING TO NATIONALITIES

County	Court Actions			Ger. Rus.	Rus.	Ger.	Norse	Swede	Scotch	All	
	Crim- inal	Juv- enile	Civil						Irish Eng.	Fr.	Others
Adams	2	0	53								
Criminal				3		1					
Juvenile											
Civil				4		29		1			35
Barnes	29	5	129								
Criminal											
Juvenile											
Civil											
Benson	118	2	125	15	2		8	1			79
Criminal											2
Juvenile											
Civil											
Bowman	5	0	47								
Criminal							5				
Juvenile											
Civil						15	51	2	20	2	10
Burke	11	0	97								
Criminal						2	6				3
Juvenile											
Civil					1	13	51	3			40
Cass	107	49	574								
Criminal											
Juvenile											
Civil											
Cavalier	5	2	65								
Criminal						2	1				2
Juvenile						7					
Civil				5		38	12		15	9	25
Divide	14	10	88								
Criminal				2			7	1			4
Juvenile					3		4				3
Civil					1	8	46	8			25
Dunn			68								
Criminal											
Juvenile											
Civil				27	20	6	15	1			66
Eddy	5	4	45								
Criminal						1	1		2		1
Juvenile						3					1
Civil				3		15	7	5	6		10

Table XIV (continued)

COURT ACTIONS IN NORTH DAKOTA COUNTIES
ACCORDING TO NATIONALITIES

County	Court Actions			Ger. Rus.	Rus.	Ger. Norse	Swede	Scotch Irish		All Others
	Crim- inal	Juv- enile	Civil					Eng.	Fr.	
Emmons	3	7	65							
Criminal				2				1		3
Juvenile				2					8	3
Civil				20	1	16		2	2	17
Foster	13									
Criminal						4	2			7
Juvenile										
Civil										
Golden Val.	3	0	20							
Criminal						1		1		1
Juvenile										
Civil						3	1	2	1	13
Grand Fks.	58	17	268							
Criminal										
Juvenile										
Civil										
Griggs	17		67							
Criminal						3	8			6
Juvenile										
Civil						17	38	1		11
Kidder	1	1	45							
Criminal				1						
Juvenile										1
Civil				1						44
Lamoure	15	4	68							
Criminal				4		3	2	3		3
Juvenile				1		1	1			1
Civil				12	12	22	9	10		7
McHenry	24	2	104							
Criminal				5		3	1	2	3	5
Juvenile						6	1			
Civil				31	2	16	46	12	1	29
McKenzie	56	7	72							
Criminal						7	1	12		2
Juvenile					1	2	1	2		
Civil					2	5	29	4	2	11

Table XIV (continued)

COURT ACTIONS IN NORTH DAKOTA COUNTIES
ACCORDING TO NATIONALITIES

County	Court Actions			Ger. Rus.	Rus.	Ger.	Norse	Swede	Scotch		All others
	Crim- inal	Juv- enile	Civil						Irish Eng.	Fr.	
Ransom	39										
Criminal						9	17	1	10		1
Juvenile											
Civil											
Richland	18	5	132								
Criminal						50	56				52
Juvenile						4	6				3
Civil						5	6				7
Rolette	34	4	37								
Criminal											34
Juvenile						2					2
Civil							4	3			30
Sargent	15	7	80								
Criminal				2	5	2	1				5
Juvenile						2			4	1	
Civil						15	40		18		7
Sheridan	1		80								
Criminal				1							
Juvenile											
Civil											
Slope	2										
Criminal				2							
Juvenile											
Civil											
Stark	10	5	187								
Criminal				4		2					7
Juvenile							2				4
Civil				78		14	22				135
Stutsman	79		240								
Criminal											
Juvenile											
Civil											
Traill	34	5	62								
Criminal				2		14	12	2			4
Juvenile							5				
Civil						10	46				6

Table XIV (continued)

COURT ACTIONS IN NORTH DAKOTA COUNTIES
ACCORDING TO NATIONALITIES

County	Court Actions			Ger. Rus.	Rus. Ger.	Norse	Scotch		All others		
	Crim-inal	Juv-venile	Civil				Irish Eng.	Fr.			
Cash	29	6	160								
Criminal						4	1	11	2	11	
Juvenile						1		2		3	
Civil					12	50	2	49	8	38	
Grand	69	36	549								
Criminal											
Juvenile											
Civil											
Williams	35	6	218								
Criminal				3	1	5		2		24	
Juvenile					4			2			
Civil											
Totals	1036	242	4399	381	61	389	810	55	266	59	962

replies were received from the clerks of courts of the following thirteen counties; Billings, Bottineau, Burleigh, Dickey, Grant, Hettinger, Logan, McIntosh, Renville, Sioux, Steele, Towner and Wells.

Table XV gives the number of court actions under the criminal, juvenile, and civil categories as reported by the forty clerks of courts who replied to the questionnaire, and in addition, the German-Russian and the Norse populations for each county and their percentages of the total population. There appears to be no correlation between the German-Russian population and the number of court actions. On the other hand, the counties that have a large Norse population also have a large number of court actions. However, it cannot be inferred that the Norse people have a greater tendency to be brought before the courts than have people of other nationalities. They do not congregate in North Dakota cities where the greatest number of court actions take place, but these court actions do not necessarily involve the Norse to a greater extent than other nationalities.

Table XV

COURT ACTIONS WITH GERMAN-RUSSIAN AND NORSE POPULATION IN NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE BY COUNTIES

County	Court Actions			German Russ.	½ German Russ.	Norse	Per cent Norse
	Crimi- nal	Juve- nile	Civil				
Adams	2	0	53	609	10	1273	20
Barnes	29	5	129	180	1	4462	24
Benson	118	2	125	557	4	4292	32
Billings				445	14	139	4
Bottineau				306	2	3941	27
Bowman	5	0	47	264	5	970	19
Burke	11	0	97	46	.5	2625	26
Burleigh				2488	12	1499	8
Cass	107	49	574	507	1	9118	19
Cavalier	5	2	65	810	6	2186	15
Dickey				1613	14	800	7
Divide	14	10	88	192	2	4209	44
Dunn	0	0	68	3477	36	1024	11
Eddy	5	4	45	166	.2	1130	18
Emmons	3	7	65	6574	52	383	3
Foster	13			178	3	919	14
Golden Valley	3	0	20	24	.6	344	8
Grand Forks	58	17	268	867	3	8576	27
Grant				4649	45	416	4
Griggs	17	0	67	9	.1	3123	45
Hettinger				2342	26	629	7
Kidder	1	1	45	2246	27	834	10
LaMoure	15	4	68	1580	13	492	4
Logan				4647	57	247	3
McHenry	24	2	104	3224	20	2718	16
McIntosh				6708	69	50	.5
McKenzie	56	7	72	291	3	2999	39
McLean	24	15	96	3901	21	2101	11
Mercer	10	3	62	4925	51	243	3
Morton	17	6	115	6454	32	1022	5
Mountrail	17	1	20	171	1	4401	32
Nelson	8	0	83	21	.2	4241	42
Oliver	0	0	20	1600	37	156	4
Pembina	42	12	51	249	2	772	5
Pierce	15	5	64	3037	32	1968	21
Ramsey	52	16	143	1096	6	3802	23
Ransom	39			293	3	2727	25
Renville				49	.7	1422	20
Richland	18	5	132	49	.2	3905	18
Rolette	34	4	37	106	1	1493	14

Table XV (continued)

COURT ACTIONS WITH GERMAN-RUSSIAN AND NORSE POPULATION IN NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE BY COUNTIES

County	Court Actions			German Russ.	% German Russ.	Norse	Per cent Norse
	Crimi- nal	Juve- nile	Civil				
Sargent	15	7	80	59	.6	1753	19
Sheridan	1	0	80	4150	56	244	3
Sioux				1267	26	141	3
Slope	2	0	0	319	8	519	13
Stark	10	5	187	5292	34	563	4
Steele				20	.8	2957	42
Stutsman	79	0	240	4254	16	1107	4
Towner				310	4	1406	17
Trail	34	5	62	10	.1	6261	50
Walsh	29	6	160	145	.7	4809	24
Ward	69	36	549	1263	3	6665	19
Wells				2818	21	2216	16
Williams	35	6	218	213	1	6245	32

The figures contained on Table XVI were obtained from the same source as those on Tables XIV and XV. Table XVI gives the number of court actions under the criminal, juvenile, and civil categories and the percentages the German-Russian and Norse populations are of the total population for each county in the German-Russian Triangle. Table XVI shows few criminal and juvenile actions in this area.

Table XVI

COURT ACTIONS AND GERMAN-RUSSIAN AND NORSE POPULATIONS IN PERCENTAGE
IN GERMAN-RUSSIAN TRIANGLE

County	Criminal	Juvenile	Civil	% Population German-Russ.	% Population Norse
Burleigh				12	8
Dickey				14	7
Dunn	0	0	68	36	11
Emmons	3	7	65	52	3
Grant				45	4
Hettinger				26	7
Kidder	1	1	45	27	10
LaMoure	15	4	68	13	4
Logan				57	3
McHenry	24	2	104	20	16
McIntosh				69	.5
McLean	34	15	96	21	11
Mercer	10	3	62	51	3
Morton	17	6	115	32	5
Oliver	0	0	20	37	4
Pierce	15	5	64	32	21
Ramsey	52	16	143	6	23
Sheridan	1	0	80	56	3
Sioux				26	3
Stark	10	5	187	34	4
Stutsman	79	0	240	16	4
Ward	69	36	549	3	19
Wells				21	16

No replies were received from the clerks of courts in the following counties:
Burleigh, Dickey, Grant, Hettinger, Logan, McIntosh, Sioux, and Wells.

The German-Russian People in Politics

Despite the prevalent belief that the German-Russian people lack interest in governmental affairs, the writer is of the opinion that the opposite is true. Living on the farms they lack opportunity and training to take part in the affairs of their government. The fact that few of them are office holders does not mean that they are not interested. They evidence a keen interest in issues and candidates and are often good voters if not wise ones. In the understanding of issues and candidates they are wanting. This is in part due to their lack of ability to read and understand the American language. Their opinions are often molded by German-language newspapers. From Russia they brought with them a suspicious attitude toward government officials. They distrust especially the well-groomed and cultured appearing candidate. They have always held in contempt the white-collar class. Hence a candidate on their own level of culture and appearance appeals to them. So does the rough unrefined campaigner. Not being well-read they have difficulty in understanding the political issues before them. To them the candidates mean more than the issues or platforms. They are not greatly concerned with principles. All is fair in politics. They are easily swayed by emotional appeals. They consider themselves the downtrodden class and therefore feel that they can gain by change. Their naivete makes them expect something for nothing, hence they most often support the candidates that promise the most. Not being familiar with American procedure they are impatient and easy preys of panaceas or cure-all promises. They like the

rough, boisterous, dramatic, and unprincipled campaigner. To them the end justifies the means.

In Russia they participated in cooperative fire insurance and cooperative provisional granaries for the poor. Some villages even had cooperative accident insurance. Herding and grazing farm stock was done cooperatively. Tree planting was compulsory but was done cooperatively by the people of the villages. Due to the investment of the Russian government in the colonies and their significance to that government, there was much regimentation of colonial affairs. The saloons and the railroads were government owned and operated. Liquor was cheap; railroad and fire insurance rates were low; cooperative herding was convenient, and compulsory tree planting became one of their great assets. It is probably for these reasons that cooperatives and government ownership appeal to them.

They are suspicious of the man who makes money and who apparently does not work. To them only such activities that callous the hands is work. They are not aware of time, place, and form utility. People that make money handling farm produce are robbing the farmers, in their opinion. Whatever profits are made belongs to the farmer or the state, hence most of them are opposed to big business.

In proportion to their number in the state the German-Russians hold few political offices. Even in counties where they number a substantial portion of the population, they have difficulty in getting elected to office. Jealousy and bickering often keep them from supporting candidates

of their own nationality. Until recent years few of them were capable of holding public offices. Their ignorance and credulity often makes them the pawn of demagogues. Their suspiciousness makes them distrust the scrupulous and principled. As a result their support has often gone to causes and candidates which have been detrimental to the state.

Upon their arrival many of the Catholic German-Russians became Democrats. Democrats they remained until the coming of the Non-Partisan League. In the German-Russian communities the League made rapid progress; there it gained many members. To it they gave money for memberships and schemes. To the League or its Heir they cling to this day.

Much of the turbulent and regretful political activities in the state during the last eight years would not have been possible if it had not received the almost solid and consistent support of the German-Russian voters. Table XVII gives the votes cast for William Langer and his nearest opponents at the general elections for the years 1932, 1936, 1938, and the German-Russian population in percentage for all the counties in the state. This table reveals that Mr. Langer has received a consistently strong support in those counties that have a heavy German-Russian population.

Table XVII

VOTES CAST FOR LANGER AND NEAREST OPPONENT IN GENERAL ELECTIONS FOR YEARS 1932, 1936, and 1938 AND GERMAN-RUSSIAN POPULATION IN PERCENTAGE BY COUNTIES¹¹

County	1932		1936		1938		% Popul. Ger.-Russ.
	Langer	Opponent	Langer	Opponent	Langer	Opponent	
Adams	1728	651	738	969	922	983	10
Barnes	3976	3342	2035	3496	2497	5163	1
Benson	3239	1488	1983	1465	2312	2433	4
Billings	651	354	614	391	525	499	14
Bottineau	3278	2008	2342	2141	2755	2539	2
Bowman	1505	562	764	656	700	1005	5
Burke	1894	1412	1682	1296	1595	1649	.5
Burleigh	4597	3812	2860	3450	3276	5705	13
Cass	8120	10819	5292	9293	6115	12746	1
Cavalier	2581	2421	2274	2063	2455	2561	6
Dickey	2139	2154	1549	1655	1891	1893	14
Divide	2420	888	1538	1043	1529	1474	2
Dunn	1702	1174	1604	1011	1567	1461	36
Eddy	1733	715	1015	846	1091	1411	.2
Emons	2234	1683	1879	1367	2269	1855	52
Foster	1212	1147	864	923	1010	1284	3
Golden Valley	907	639	330	718	440	836	.6
Grand Fks.	5177	7050	3914	6284	5288	7440	3
Grant	2403	1083	1740	1138	1876	1151	45
Griggs	1449	866	845	966	885	1766	.1
Hettinger	2072	1048	1638	987	1560	1187	26
Kidder	1885	864	1507	926	1695	1135	27
LaMoure	2465	1915	1884	1758	1970	2278	13
Logan	1785	923	1554	759	1621	1199	57
McHenry	3257	2089	2419	2217	2642	2776	20
McIntosh	2423	909	1900	1201	1871	1524	69
McKenzie	2372	1068	1405	1037	1780	1628	3
McLean	3807	2005	3427	1617	3617	2508	21
Mercer	1911	912	2006	534	2136	1203	51
Morton	3970	3108	3526	2370	3764	3052	32
Mountrail	2535	1682	2059	1166	2366	1790	1
Nelson	2043	2012	1363	1533	1709	2340	.2
Oliver	1010	385	803	520	881	589	37
Pembina	2521	2916	1879	3059	2339	3264	2
Pierce	1702	1457	1774	1220	2029	1519	32
Ransom	2471	3306	1917	2400	2495	3814	6
Ransom	2583	1734	1169	1878	1193	2854	3
Renville	1270	1303	911	963	1140	1272	.7
Richland	4374	3013	2543	2550	3296	4231	.2
Rolette	2030	1313	1506	1477	2527	1693	1

Table XVII (continued)

VOTES CAST FOR LANGER AND NEAREST OPPONENT IN GENERAL ELECTION FOR YEARS 1932, 1936, and 1938 AND GERMAN-RUSSIAN POPULATION IN PERCENTAGE BY COUNTIES¹¹

County	1932		1936		1938		% Popul. Ger.-Rus.
	Langer	Opponent	Langer	Opponent	Langer	Opponent	
Sargent	1978	1433	1169	1495	1481	1838	.6
Sheridan	1707	701	1865	577	1762	914	56
Sioux	1157	428	890	437	906	577	26
Slope	1082	465	548	482	608	661	8
Stark	2621	3250	2346	1883	2527	2770	34
Steele	1654	959	1203	953	1253	1476	.3
Stutsman	3755	4767	3380	3294	3622	4314	16
Towner	1710	1177	1269	1061	1294	1537	4
Trail	2742	2065	1753	2101	1898	2898	.1
Walsh	1724	5390	2555	2863	3508	3652	.7
Ward	5739	6363	3956	5154	4605	7522	3
Wells	3051	1736	2462	1472	2523	2221	21
Williams	3880	2594	2302	2582	2371	3817	1
Totals	134231	109863	99750	95697	112007	131907	

Table XVIII gives the votes cast for Mr. Langer and his nearest opponents at the general elections for the years 1932, 1936, and 1938 in the German-Russian Triangle. It is clear from a study of this table that the German-Russian people are consistent supporters of Mr. Langer. It makes clear their loyalty to a candidate once they have placed their confidence in him. It is evident that he owes his 1936 election to the people in this area. So strong is his support in the German-Russian communities that he is able to overcome the heavy anti-Langer vote cast in such cities as Bismarck, Devils Lake and Minot which are located in the Triangle. That his success at the polls is to a large extent due to the German-Russian support as well as that of other foreign elements appears obvious. Mr. Langer's election contests are used in this study because he personifies political turbulence in North Dakota, and because he is one of the few candidates who has been on the ticket at most of the elections during the last decade.

¹¹Abstract of Votes Cast at the North Dakota General Elections for the years 1932, 1934, and 1938.

Table XVIII

VOTES CAST FOR LANGER AND NEAREST OPPONENTS
IN THE GERMAN-RUSSIAN TRIANGLE¹²

County	1932		1936		1938	
	Langer	Opponent	Langer	Opponent	Langer	Opponent
Burleigh	4597	3812	2860	3450	3276	5705
Dickey	2139	2154	1549	1655	1891	1893
Duna	1702	1174	1604	1011	1567	1461
Emmons	2234	1683	1879	1367	2269	1855
Grant	2403	1083	1740	1138	1875	1151
Hettinger	2072	1048	1638	987	1560	1187
Kidder	1885	864	1507	926	1695	1135
LaMoure	2465	1915	1884	1758	1970	2278
Logan	1785	923	1554	759	1621	1199
McHenry	3257	2089	2419	2217	2642	2776
McIntosh	2423	909	1900	1201	1871	1524
McLean	3807	2005	3427	1617	3617	2508
Mercer	1911	912	2006	534	2136	1203
Morton	3970	3108	3526	2370	3764	3052
Oliver	1010	385	803	520	881	589
Pierce	1702	1457	1774	1220	2029	1519
Ramsey	2471	3606	1917	2400	2495	3814
Sheridan	1707	707	1865	579	1762	914
Sioux	1157	428	890	437	906	577
Stark	2621	3250	2346	1883	2527	2770
Stutsman	3755	4167	3380	3294	3622	4314
Ward	5759	6363	3956	5154	4605	7522
Wells	3051	1736	2462	1472	2523	2221
Totals	59,863	46,378	48,886	37,947	53,105	53,167

Table XIX gives the votes cast for Mr. Langer and his nearest opponents for the general elections of the years 1932, 1936, and 1938 in four Pierce County precincts of almost solid German-Russian inhabitants. It illustrates their characteristic of voting for a candidate or issue in a solid block. Their voting in these precincts is certainly a fine example of loyalty. An examination of other precincts with heavy German-

¹² Abstract of Votes Cast at the North Dakota General Elections for the Years 1932, 1934, and 1938.

Russian populations would reveal the same situation. In Pierce County the German-Russian precincts could be selected from the election returns, and the vote for Langer is in proportion to the German-Russian population.

Table XIX

VOTES CAST FOR LANGER AND NEAREST OPPONENTS
IN GERMAN-RUSSIAN PRECINCTS¹³

Precincts	1932		1936		1938	
	Langer	Opponent	Langer	Opponent	Langer	Opponent
Jefferson	80	9	82	7	98	6
Alexander	102	1	107	20	93	9
Sandale	54	10	63	8	52	5
Belta Village	66	24	67	37	88	19
Total	302	44	319	72	331	39

¹³ Abstract of Votes Cast in Pierce County, op. cit.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

REHABILITATION AND UPLIFT OF THE GERMAN-RUSSIAN PEOPLE

Much concern is often expressed over the backwardness and hard lot of the few thousand Indians in North Dakota. Great interest is evidenced on every side in the illiterate mountaineers. Social workers write volumes about the poverty of the poor whites on the Southern plantations. Sympathy for the backward and underprivileged is easily aroused, and often plans and programs for their rehabilitation are the result. In the last few years the federal government has undertaken the rehabilitation of many underprivileged groups.

In North Dakota there are nearly one hundred thousand German-Russians who though not as indolent as the Indian, nor as poor as the poor whites, nor as ignorant as the mountaineers, are nevertheless incapable, poor, and ignorant enough to make them worthy of our sympathy and the object of plans and programs for their improvement. Among them are thousands of illiterates, thousands of poverty-stricken, thousands of underfed children, thousands of ailing, and thousands of socially undeveloped persons who can profit from outside assistance. The entire state can profit through the uplift of its lower class. This is especially true when that lower class is so large, and the individuals in it are so much alike. To the rehabilitation and Americanization of the German-Russian people there is probably little objection. The debatable matter is the method of rehabilitation. This study was made with the object of proposing the methods of rehabilitation. They should be along two lines: educational and economic.

Educational Rehabilitation

The backwardness of the German-Russian people in the many phases of life

is due mainly to their lack of education. If their shortcoming in this respect could be remedied, their shortcomings in other fields would remedy themselves. To help the German-Russian in any field of human endeavor, one must understand them. This is even more true in the field of education. To get desirable responses, they must be approached properly. It is necessary for the reformers to appreciate the difficulties under which they have lived in the past. It is necessary to be aware of their suspiciousness. No one can understand them better than people from their own group. No one has their confidence as much as leaders from their own group. It is necessary, therefore, that their leaders in education be German-Russians. They trust no one as much as they do a person who speaks their own language, has their own background and blood, and religion. A mediocre teacher of their own nationality would accomplish more with them than an expert of another nationality. The teacher of their own nationality will get across a barrier that few others can cross. To that end one of the most important moves for the state to make with regards their improvement is to train adequately for leadership a large number of German-Russian students. The very students who need training, most often get the least of it. They come from poor homes, have foreign backgrounds, speak broken English, have few friends, and make the poorest impression upon their teachers. They have few friends to help them along. The North Dakota institutions of high learning should recognize the necessity of training German-Russians for leadership in their own communities.

But before the sons and daughters of the German-Russian people can qualify to enter the institutions of higher learning, they must finish the grade and high schools. There is a large amount of important work to be done in this field, for too few of their children finish their elementary and high

school courses. Due to the lack of parental interest in education, they are not being sent to school regularly nor for the duration of their school years. Boys and girls are kept home at the age of thirteen and fourteen before they have completed the eighth grade. Persuasion of the right kind can work wonders in this respect. With too many German-Russian parents no amount of persuasion is effective. For this type of parent there should be a stringent and effective compulsory attendance law on the statute books. North Dakota's compulsory attendance law is ineffective since it must for the most part be enforced by the county superintendents who are holding political offices. The enforcement of this law should be the duty of an appointive officer, for instance, the juvenile commissioner, and the reporting of delinquent parents with regards to sending their children to school should be mandatory upon the county superintendent. The German-Russians have a healthy respect for enforceable laws, and their response to such a law would solve the problem of school attendance to a great extent.

With regards to improving the educational opportunities of children in Catholic German-Russian communities, the Church can be very effective. The Catholic German-Russians have just as much faith in their spiritual leaders as they have mistrust in outsiders. This is evidenced by the great educational progress that has been made in communities of this type where there have been parochial schools or public schools taught by Catholic Sisters. Up to the present time many of these parents have been indifferent to sending their children to school unless they could send them to Catholic schools or public schools taught by Sisters. Many Catholic priests have exhibited the same frame of mind. Their attitude all too often has been, better no school than public schools with non-Catholic teachers. There is much room for co-

operation between clergy and public school teachers. There is a need for forgetting prejudices and remembering the children. The clergy must recognize that this nation is a democracy whose foundation rests on free public schools, and that if one sect is entitled to denominational schools, all the others are. There is no objection to denominational schools outside of the fact that they are not practical in small communities. On the other hand, public school officials must recognize the desirability of providing communities with teachers of the faith demanded by the parents. The writer does not argue to make religion a qualification for teachers. However, in communities where a Catholic teacher would have a larger enrollment, better attendance, and more cooperation from the parents than would a non-Catholic teacher, such a community should be provided with the teacher that can evoke the greatest education response from it. It should be remembered that many such communities due to the flocking together of the German-Russian people are as near completely of one faith as communities can be, and the desires of so great a majority should be respected.

In addition to acceptable leaders and teachers the German-Russian communities need better school plants, better equipment, better roads, and longer school terms. These things under the present state laws are provided by the local school boards with money secured to a large extent from local taxation. It is unreasonable to expect people untrained in school administration, without public school background, to provide the school plants, equipment, roads and terms needed by their children, and then tax themselves heavily to pay for them. Few school administrators question the sincerity of the many board members in such communities; they do question their ability. The schools should be administered by trained school administrators to make the administration

effective and efficient. Larger school units, fewer school boards, appointive school administrators, and wider tax bases would be effective in raising the standard of education in German-Russian communities.

Within the schools in German-Russian communities the method of teaching must be adapted to the needs of the pupils in order to insure effective teaching. Hundreds of schools in such communities are attended by thousands of pupils who know only the German language. In such schools the foreign language problem is real, and little progress can be made in teaching until the pupils have been taught a working vocabulary in the American language. Many schools are attended by pupils exclusively from German-Russian homes where German is the only language used. In such schools the problem is all the more serious, and the teachers' task all the more difficult. Trained and alert teachers who are aware of reading readiness and the handicaps under which such children labor can do effective teaching in such schools. Providing such schools with abundant easy-reading material and tying up the school work with the pupils' home experiences are prime necessities. No teacher who holds the German-Russians and their homes in contempt will be successful in their communities. Teachers colleges should be aware of the foreign language communities within the state, and their students and prospective teachers should be taught the methods and means of meeting the problems that are inherent in the schools of such communities.

To promote attendance, longer terms, and the hiring of better qualified teachers, the final state seventh and eighth grade examinations should not be compulsory for pupils who have attended at least 160 days each year for a period of eight years at a school that has a nine month term, that has been taught by a teacher holding a professional certificate, and which meets other desirable requirements.

Economic Rehabilitation

The economic uplift of the German-Russian people has been given a good impetus by the soil conservation program of the federal government. Since such a large proportion of them are farmers, they need to be taught how to farm. This training the federal farm program appears to be giving them with the advise of the farm experts at the agricultural college. At the same time they are receiving benefit checks which should tide them over until they have adjusted themselves to a more profitable system of farming.

Since the German-Russians settled relatively poor land in a semi-arid area, they must be taught to farm in a manner that will enable them to make a living on such land, for it appears that they will continue to live on such land. They appear to be taking over the farms of their neighbors of other nationalities. If they are going to be permanent residents in their areas, money spent in training them to farm properly will be well spent.

There remains much to be done aside of what the federal farm program is doing for them. These people have been one-crop grain farmers too long both in North Dakota and in Russia to make it easy for them to diversify. In general they have too few animals on their farms, and they know too little about stock and feed raising and stock feeding. Their flocks are of a poor grade. The Greater North Dakota Association has been doing fine work in purchasing good sires and seed for North Dakota, but their efforts have hardly reached the German-Russian farmers. The Association and others have a large field that has barely been touched in the thousands of German-Russian farmers. Farm leaders of German-Russian origin would find a ready response among them. For their sons and daughters 4H clubs should be organized in their communities. Farm cooperatives will find a ready response among the German-Russian

Farm leaders, the Agricultural College, the Greater North Dakota Association should make a special study of the German-Russian Triangle with regards to the needs of its farmers, and after their agreement on the program that would better the economic well-being of the farmers within it, they should put it into the hands of people or leaders who have the confidence of its German-Russian element.

Uplifting the German-Russian people educationally and economically will go a long way in uplifting them in every other way, socially, politically, and culturally. It will go a long way in bettering the state of North Dakota.

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Dear Superintendent: In my work I have observed that some nationalities send over 50% of their children to high school; others only 5%. Is this situation statewide? To find the answer I am sending this questionnaire to every H. S. in the state. Here is yours. Please oblige for the sake of this study which will be summarized in my thesis. It will be valuable only if all schools are included. Perhaps you can make it a class or student project. Interpretation: For this study it will be satisfactory to determine a student's descent by that of his father; or by his dominant strain. For example: the son of a Swedish father and German mother is to be listed as of Swedish descent; the son of an English-Irish father and a German mother as of German descent. The German-Russians are distinguished from Germans or Russians in that they migrated from Germany to Russia to the U.S.A. I am especially interested in them since they form about 1/7 of our population. Thank you. Sincerely, Joe B. Voeller, Co. Sup't.

County _____		School _____		
Descent	No. of H.S. Students	No. of H.S. Teachers	No. of Gr. Teachers	
German-Russian				
Ruscian				
German				
Norse or Norwegian				
Swedish				
Scotch, Irish English				
Other Dominant Nationality				
All Others				
Total				

German-Russian
German
Russian

Norse
Swedish
Scotch

Irish
English
French

Polish
Old American
Other Nationality)

Name of H. S. Student Grades 9-12 inclusive)	Nationality of Father	Nationality of Mother	Do Not Write IN This Column
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2
3
4
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