



An gravemarker made by Karl Rennich, Mercer, ND blacksmith. See page 11.

Beresan District Odessa Newsletter

A publication for those who have a genealogical interest in the Beresan District of Odessa, South Russia.

Volume 4 Issue 2

October 1999

Beresan District Villages (Those in bold are first villages.)

Alexanderfeld, Alexandrovka,
Annenthal, Annovka, Antonowka,
Bagdanovka, Bendeerhof, Biswanje,
Christina, Christofovka, Domanevka,
Dvorjanka, Eigengut, Felsenburg,
Friedensdorf, Friedrichstal, Gaaregai,
Gotta, Gradenfeld, Grise, **Gulden-
dorf**, Halbstadt, Heck, Hoffnungstal,
Hoffnung, Hoffnungsburg, **Jo-
hannestal**, Kantakusenka, Kapi-
tanovka, Karlevka, **Karlsruhe**,
Katharinental, Kavkas, Klein Kar-
lsruhe, Klundovo, Kratovka, **Landau**,
Lerisk, Lichtenfeld, Lubo-
Alexandrovka, Manov, Marienfeld,
Marlanavka, Michaelowka,
Munchen, Navaselevka, Neu Kar-
lsruhe, Neu Lustdorf, Neu Munchen,
Neu Rohrbach, Neu Speyer, Neu
Worms, Neusatz, Novo-Amerika,
Novonikolajevka, Olgino, Otschakov,
Petrowka, Pokrovskaja, **Rastadt**,
Rohrbach, Rosenthal, Savidovka,
Schlosser, Schmatz, Schonfeld, Sebas-
tiansfeld, Selingera, Skarupka,
Sjepucha, **Speir/Speyer**, Stadnaja-
Bulka, Steinberg, Steingut, Stuttgart,
Sulz, Swenigorodka, Vossessensk,
Waterloo, Weidenberg, Wilhelmthal,
Wolksov, **Worms**, Wowsche.

(this list is not all inclusive — if you have additions, please provide to the lead editor)

Many of these identified chutors and villages need much research. If you have any background information on them, please share with us.

Thanks

Through the German Colonies of the Beresan District

by **Herman Bachmann**
Translated by **Roland Wagner**

(Editor's note: This a continuation from the last four issues of the Beresan District Odessa Newsletter. The June 1998 issue also contained the translator's introductory comments. In summary, Herman Bachmann was involved in a scholarly research project of folk song and dialect literature. During the summer of 1927, he and Victor Schirmunski, a professor of German Language and Literature at the University of Leningrad toured the Beresan colonies, wandering from village to village collecting songs and stories and recording them. It is from these accounts that Bachmann wrote his book from which the following was taken.)

From Katharinental across to Karlsruhe (or: a battle between Gaul and Gahl)

While I was working with the beggar-woman Minna (in Katharinental) the professor went to the colony of Karlsruhe, which was two kilometers away, in order to pursue a linguistic problem. He had discovered an interesting speech characteristic there, namely, that the Karlsruhers pronounced the sound "au" as an elongated "a" with a tendency toward "ä." When the professor imparted this to me and to the teacher, the latter asserted that it was irrelevant. He maintained that he understood the Karlsruhe dialect very well and that the professor had either heard it incorrectly or perhaps had met a person who didn't grow up in Karlsruhe. The professor stood his ground and he suggested a trip through Karlsruhe in order to do some tests.

We had intended to travel directly from Katharinental to Sulz, without staying over in Karlsruhe. Since evening was approaching, we had to hurry. The teacher helped us find a driver and he made the journey with us to Karlsruhe to help resolve the linguistic disagreement.

When we arrived there we went to the residence of the teacher where the professor had previously stayed and where he had discovered the new speech phenomenon. The host wasn't home and his sister, an older spinster with an unusual set of false teeth, received us.

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(The addresses for most of the Editors and most of the Village Coordinators can be found in the latest issue of the *GRHS Der Stammbaum*.)

Wilma Heckenlaible Spice
 Pittsburg, PA

I have been following with great interest the series from Herman Bachmann's book, "Through the German Colonies of the Beresan District." He is such a good writer and his report makes such entertaining reading! And I was thrilled a while back when my grandfather's village of Waterloo was described! I look forward to the coming episodes.

Is this book available for purchase somewhere? I tried Amazon.com and Mail Order Kaiser, with no success. I assume the the SONGS are reproduced in the original book: (I hope) I would love to have them!

If this book is not in print, perhaps it should be. I suppose by now the original copyright has expired, though Roland Wagner's TRANSLATION surely must still be under copyright.

Thanks for the wonderful job everyone is doing with the BDO Newsletter!

Reply from Roland Wagner:

Thanks for the comments on my translation of Herman Bachmann's book, which has been appearing in the BDO Newsletter. Wilma, concerning your question about where I found the book, it was published by the Landsmannschaft der Deutschen aus Russland in Stuttgart in 1974, and I assume it has long been out of print. I found a copy about 10 years ago in Lincoln at the AHSGR library. Bachmann originally published this material in German magazines in Russia in the 1920s, and it was long out of print until the Landsmannschaft collected it in 1974. In addition to the travelogue, he also wrote a series of dialect tales about everyday life in the colonies, called "Kolonischtageschichtla."

I have spoken with Michael Miller who has expressed an interest in publishing both translations (the travelogue and the tales) in book form through the GRHC at Fargo. I told him that they could hold the copyright and use any funds generated to further their activities.

Roland



Cindy Goldsworthy

I came across this letter written on Jan 1, 1922 in Karlsruhe by a John Renner to his Uncle Joseph Renner in America. The letter is about bandits coming to the village on Oct 27, 1919 and killing just all the men of the village. I found it very interesting and sad; I thought that I would share it with everyone.

Translated from German
 Jan 1, 1922

"It is a
 revered thing
 to see an ancient
 castle not in decay,
 But how much more it is
 to behold an ancient family
 which has stood against the waves
 and weathers of time."

- Francis Bacon

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Dear Uncle Joseph:

Received your December 17, it made us very happy, also shared it with my mother, sisters, and brothers. First, I want to thank you for being so friendly towards us. The money you are going to send me is almost worthless here, no matter from where it is. So your good will is holy to me. Russia has more paper money than the whole world, so there is no shortage. But of bread, there is the greatest of need.

This winter millions will die of hunger, our village has 85 homes, and one of the more productive ones, and now more than 400 are without bread. I with my family and sister, 5 persons have bread for about 3 months, then we are not sure if we live till spring. The hand of the hungry, like a shadow is all day with us begging for bread, it is impossible to say no.

Yes, dear Russia is an area where one catastrophe follows another, first it is the war, then the revolution, the murders, then the dry spell and hunger deaths. I could write a lot more, but you will see in the news how things are going in Russia, and now I will try to fulfill your wish in a few lines to describe the murder of my family.

October 27, 1919, 1:00 p.m.; the village of New Karlsruhe with 33 homes was surrounded by about 500 men bandits on horse and foot. The shooting and hollering brought great fear to the people. At first they thought it was just a robber band going by. The people thought they were more intent on goods than killing, therefore the people didn't flee but hid in their houses. But they soon found out that this hellish brood did not come to rob, but to organize the people against the army of Dinikins, so they should not fear. And all the men should go to the school right away. As always our father was the leader and first in the schoolhouse, and trusted the devilish band. By and by almost all the men came to the school. The the hellish work started. First, they demanded that all the money be brought in. The demand was obeyed. When the robbers had the money, they made the men undress to the underwear, locked them in the schoolroom and locked it from the outside, and shot them through the windows. To the number of those unlucky ones belonged also our dear father and two of my brothers. The second oldest and the youngest were to be shot but through God's intervention they both lived. The oldest was saved by a small favor of his wife. The youngest was saved in a wonderful way by the death of his father and that happened this way.

Before the beginning of the shooting, father stood in the corner of the room between the door and the window. My young brother and Uncle Frank Joseph Lanz knelt behind the stove and prepared to die. But when the shooting began father wanted to join the two behind the stove. He got barely to the corner of the stove as a bullet went through his head and silently he fell on

the other two knelling ones, and covered them as a blanket with his lifeless body. The shooting finally ceased. The robbers looked the place over and all lay in a bloodbath, looking dead to them. So they left the school and went to rob the homes. Meanwhile the two under the dead body of father took the opportunity to flee. Seventeen men were shot that day in New Karlsruhe.

The letter goes on and tells where and what the mother and several children went and did.

□

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After the professor gave her a brief explanation of why we traveled there, he asked her to pronounce in dialect the High-German words "Gaul" [horse], "Haus," and "Maus." The answer was: "Gahl," "Hahs," "Mahs." The professor looked at the Katharintaler teacher and smiled. The latter, however, shook his head and maintained that the spinster was a "Chutoranerin" [woman raised on an isolated farm estate], and therefore she shouldn't be used as an example of Karlsruhe speech. (To me he whispered in my ear: "she doesn't have any more teeth, that's why she sounds like that"). He glanced out the window and noticed three men sitting on a courtyard bench in front of the house across the street. Quickly he ran outside and called them in. Without explanation, he asked them the question about Gaul, Haus, and Maus. Each one said to him: "Gaul," "Haus," "Maus." The teacher looked triumphantly at the professor.

At that moment the host appeared. He was a practitioner of the "ah" - pronunciation. Now a heated debate ensued. The host asked the three men to clarify that in their normal speech they always said "Gahl," "Mahs," and "Hahs." After awhile, these men weren't sure how they spoke these words, although it seemed that they didn't completely stand by the 'ah,' and were more inclined to "au," with the "u" following the "a" pronounced rather lightly and clipped.

Finally a 15 year old girl entered. With keen interest everyone latched onto her pronunciation: "Haus," "Maus," "Gaul," she said.

The Katharintaler rubbed his hands in victory; but the host didn't give in. He explained that the girl was a student under the influence of the written language.

The linguistic debate wasn't resolved. Then it was decided that we would travel through the village and ask everyone we encountered.

Our driver had a surprised look on his face because now another

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passenger, the Karlsruhe teacher, was coming with us. We traveled a small stretch farther through the main street, then turned into a side street that led to a cattle trough. A 16 year-old girl was called over the the wagon.

“What’s that?” asked the Karlsruhe teacher, pointing toward a horse. The answer was indistinct, though it sounded more like “au” than “ah.” The Katharintaler’s face lightened, as the Karlsruher’s darkened. Then a young farmer came up to the water trough. The teacher asked him the same question. He seemed somewhat puzzled at us, doubtful of our right state of mind, and he also answered indistinctly.

Then the Karlsruhe teacher impatiently interrupted. He explained to the man that a disagreement had developed and we sought a resolution.

The farmer thought for a bit, spoke the word “Gaul” a few more times, then declared himself strongly and unequivocally for “Gahl.”

The Katharintaler teacher protested and demanded that the search be continued, but the Karlsruher was against it. Since the time was moving on and we wanted to reach Sulz, the professor explained that the results of the test were satisfactory and didn’t merit further research. We bid our good-byes and drove out of the village.

After awhile I looked around and noticed that both scholars had left the alley in a contentious mood. It didn’t seem like they had called a truce yet, and perhaps even today they are on the war-path because of Gaul and Gahl.

Sulz

Comrade [“Genosse”] K. spoke his mind very openly. That was only a foretaste of the type and manner of person that we encountered: he didn’t engage in expansive questions about other people, origins, or background; no artful replies or over-bearing politeness.

“First of all wash yourselves,” he said in a tone that one uses with old acquaintances, and pointed to the wash-table in the corner.

We gladly followed those instructions because the fine dust had penetrated all the pores of our body and was unpleasantly palpable. The housewife handed us a towel. Then we were introduced to both the guests sitting at the round table, and comrade K. slid two chairs over to us.

We eased into a general conversation about life in the village

and in the district [“Rayon”]. It was a free-floating chat; we casually went from one topic to another, from picture to picture, like in a movie theater. One of the guests, a young man of 19 or 20, explained about the work in the community hall (he himself was the leader). He confirmed that very little was accomplished; only he and comrade K. had any interest in it. The host spoke a bit about teacher conferences, music and singing. The bad harvest was also mentioned.

My memory fails me in trying to relate all the topics of the conversation.

The hostess had meanwhile set the table and offered us the evening meal. Comrade K. then led on open attack on me and my violin case. He explained briefly and uncompromisingly that a concert would take place after the meal, with me playing the violin and that he would accompany me. I explained that I couldn’t play anything from memory, but he replied: “we’ll also find a musical score.” My further attempts to weasel out of it, saying that I was a poor violin player, that I was long out of practice and other such things, were answered with the words: “we will soon see.”

So, regardless of whether I was well or sick after the meal, I had to play my violin and embark on a concert. I thought to myself: “if you understand anything you will soon have enough of my music; if you don’t understand anything, maybe I will seem like a great artist to you.”

While I was rubbing by bow with resin, a young lady appeared with a tote-bag under her arm. The host introduced her to us in a jovial fashion, led her to the piano and arranged for the concert to get underway. The woman struck the keys, I scraped over the strings, the other listened. After the sister, the hostess performed. She had a rich voice and soon the room resounded with folk-songs. Comrade K.’s eyes sparkled. After awhile he stepped up to the piano, gave a signal with a raised hand, and said: “now I want to perform one of my own numbers. I am not a trained musician, I hardly know the notes, but I have already composed some pieces. Now I sing my song, ‘the cow-stall’.”

He stood before the piano, half bent over, and struck some chords. I didn’t expect much from a cow-stall, but I reacted in astonishment as the song came forth. One seldom heard such a powerful bass, such a fine sound! The deepest notes had such a fullness and power that the floor shook. At one place in the song the bellowing of a bull was imitated in a two octave chromatic tone, starting from a deep bass tone. This scale was carried by the singer with admirable purity, confidence and ease. Despite the horrible difficulties of the song, the entire piece was simple, easily understood, and the lyrics were very folksy.

I saw immediately that comrade K. had extraordinary talent and that nature had endowed him with a good voice. This conviction

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was reinforced in me as more songs were sung. He was especially good at pieces requiring a powerful, deep bass, like for example "in the deepest cellar."

I asked comrade K. if he had ever considered entering a conservatory [for training].

"I would do that today, if it could be done," he answered.

"And why couldn't it be done?"

"In order for me to travel to Odessa and stay there for a long time, I would need more money than what I have left over from my teacher's salary," he said. "I have tried to get a commission through our union, many promises were made to me, but nothing has been done."

This explanation disturbed me.

I have never heard that our musical-dramatical institute has an excess of talent. The shortage of good bass singers is generally well known. Seldom do you find a bass piece in the concerts performed by our contemporary artists; mostly there are dull baritones, now and then a meager little tenor. As a special treat, sometimes a bass solo will take place. An over-weight athlete with a double-chin appears, takes a light, condescending bow, which makes a third chin-wrinkle appear beneath the other two, he pauses gravely, electrifying the whispering crowd, who are preparing themselves for a great pleasure. The singer clears his throat, gives a ready glance to the pianist, unhinges his lower jaw and breathes out the first tone. You don't make a judgment yet: he is still in the middle register. One hopes deep down inside that he will display his ability for the deepest register during the performance. Then he really begins to sink lower. The listener holds his breath. But the singer descends only to a superficial depth, and the deepest notes are merely passed over. The audience gets nervous at that point because they sense that his voice has already over-stepped its range, and if he goes a half tone lower he will totally fall apart. The listener helps him: he squeezes his teeth together, pushes his feet against the floor, digs his finger-nails into his hands in order to bring the bass singer over the dangerous spots. He, meanwhile, swims across the abyss and returns to his middle register, where he reaches the conclusion. The audience breathes a sigh of relief: they are happy that the obstacle has been passed relatively free of damage, they clap their approval for the young artist and shout out "bravo!" for his daring.

But there in a corner of the Landau district, in the middle of the gray steppes, sits a person who has all the ability to become a great talent, who easily accomplishes what others can't do despite tremendous efforts, a person who with the proper train-

ing could become a treasured artist, a person who burns with the desire to develop his abilities, — he sits there and waits for the district union to find a roundabout way to get him into the musical-dramatical institute. His hair will probably be gray, or perhaps already have fallen out, by the time he is finished waiting. In the end, his fellow citizens will comfort him with the notion that on the Day of the Second Calling, he will be allowed to blow the heavenly bass-horn.

On my return trip to Odessa, I offered to take some steps to contact a musician known to me there, in order to put the Sulz singer on the right life-path. On the day of the appointment, comrade K. came to the city. He was tested by knowledgeable professors and pronounced to be a good "basso profundis." Now the administration had the last word. They officially processed the request and added comrade K. to the list of students. But since there wasn't any stipend available and since the prospect for one in the future was dim, our country singer returned home disappointed.

I advise you, comrade K., don't give up too quickly! You have knocked on only one door where the administration sits. But there are other doors behind which there is no bureaucratic smokescreen. Keep knocking a bit more and you will find the right door. It is not conceivable that a talented farmer's son, who doesn't give up, will be left standing due to the indifference of bureaucracy.

Our impromptu concert with teacher K. lasted until deep in the night. At the first signs of general tiredness, the guests began to depart. The matter turned to the preparation of quarters for the evening. Comrade K. had only a single bedroom, which served alternately as a guest-, work-, eating-, and bedroom. Besides two available beds, he also had two extra mattresses. He offered us both of the beds, while he and his wife would sleep on the mattresses. However, we objected to this and explained that we felt more comfortable on the floor than on a high spring bed. Then comrade K. took two matches, bit a piece off one of them, and said: "Let's draw. Whoever draws the shortest one, sleeps on the mattresses." It fell to us. This decision was preferable to us, since it relieved the host from feeling embarrassed about putting up his guests impolitely.

The next morning we were busily at work. Comrade K. had accompanied the professor to a farmer who had resided there in the village for a long time. Meanwhile, I was led to a widow who was supposed to be a living treasury of Sulz songs. She was a clear, steady voice and she repeated the smallest portions of the songs without any difficulty, so it was easy for me to write it down. Towards noon I had recorded the most important of her collection of songs. The professor returned at that time, we had our lady sing into the gramophone. We also recorded for eternity the teacher's song, "the cow-stall."

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After lunch we took a stroll on the nearby hill, from where there was a good overview of the entire village. The two-story schoolhouse, with its shiny zinc roof stood out the most. In other respects Sulz is very similar to the other German colonies in this region: two, occasionally three or four parallel rows of houses. Everywhere on the threshing-grounds there are yellow and gray stacks: the former built of new straw, the latter of old. The courtyard walls are partly rebuilt and whitewashed, but in many places they are still stone gray and have holes.



**The bridge over the Beresan River near the site of Sulz.
The town no longer exists.**

Photo taken 29 May 1998 by Merv Rennich.

After I took a snapshot of the total scene, we went to the lower end of the village in order to take a closer look at the main street from that side. It was unbearably hot. Not even the slightest breeze was discernable. It was like standing in the midst of great heat generated by ovens on all sides. We fanned ourselves with our hats and our handkerchiefs, but that didn't make much noticeable difference. The shade of the trees along the walls also didn't ease the heat. We tried to ignore it and wished that we were on the shores of the Arctic sea.

On the way, we struck up an acquaintance with a teacher. He resided in Sulz, owned a house, farm and land, had a business and a considerable number of children. Judging from his clothing, he didn't belong to the impoverished class. In his mannerisms, he projected an image like: "don't think that I'm just a common village schoolmaster; I can also hold my own, and I'm not a dummy."

We inquired about his business. He spoke about it casually and said: "I want to sell everything, including my house, and move to the city."

— "What do you want to do there?" asked the professor.

— "Well, be a teacher," he replied.

I asked him if he had any prospects for a position.

"There aren't enough schools and institutes there," he answered. "All I need to do is to desire it seriously, and I will have more hours [of instruction] than I can provide."

"In what field would you teach?" asked the professor.

"Well, the German language," was the answer.

"Listen," I said, "aren't you making a mistake? From what I know there are many men and women German teachers in Odessa, and it is not so simple to get a position very quickly."

— "I can teach Latin, I've already finished a seminar. It occurred to me that I could debate with teachers of the Latin language - they understand less Latin than me," he explained pompously.

"Yes, but where do you plan to teach the Latin language?" asked the professor. "Latin is only used to a very limited extent, but there are still many Latin teachers in the cities from earlier days."

"I have good connections, someone will take me on as a colleague," he replied.

Since we saw that he wanted to always emerge as the winner in any word-battles, we let the matter drop. Meanwhile, we came to our quarters, he left, and we went into the residence in order to prepare for our departure.

By 4 o'clock we were already sitting in the wagon, and we waved our hats in a final farewell to our host and his wife.

(Editor's note: In the next issue we will continue with Roland Wagner's translation of Hermann Bachmann's book "*Through the German Colonies of the Beresan District*": and his visit to Johannestal.)

□

What do you know/have about your old Beresan families, the history of a village, or anything similar, that you would like to share here in the newsletter . . . please think about it and offer it up if you will . . .

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

by Dieter Joos
Ueberlingen, Germany, Djoos@nikocity.de
August, 1999

Abstract

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

Social Classes

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

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

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

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

Occupations

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

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

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

Lower class: weaver, ropemaker, tanner, etc.

There was one profession which has to be considered separately:

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

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

Marriages

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

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VILLAGE - continued from page 7Emigration

For the most part, emigrants were recruited from the middle and lower classes. Often a family group put all their money together in order for one of their sons to emigrate. They hoped that he would earn enough money in the New World to later pay for their crossing. In many cases, this happened. Upper class people only emigrated when a farm had been willed to one son (not rare, the youngest one!) and this heir would give his brothers some money to find a new existence outside the village. Another social group for emigration consisted of those persons who were a permanent burden to the community: e.g., extremely poor families, unmarried or widowed women with children, violent persons and prisoners. In these cases, the community paid partly or fully for the crossing. In 1884, the fee for the Bremen-New York crossing was 80 Mark (equiv. 60 fl.).

Names and Ancestor Research

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

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

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

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

Village Government/Officials

There were rights for self-administration and self-jurisdiction of the villages. The head of the village was the Vogt (= Governor). The lord selected him out of the members of the community. Under him, two or three Buergermeisters (Mayors) were selected

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

Final note

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

References

For those who understand German, I'd like to give some references. Most of the information for this paper I extracted from books, edited by the "Verein für Geschichte des Hegaus" (Society for the History of the Hegau County). Their address: Verein für Geschichte des Hegaus, Schwarzwalstr. 7, 78224 Singen/Hohentwiel, Germany.

Specific references:

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- Concerning the professions, as I am a lover of fairy tales I would highly recommend a booklet, in the preface of which historical information on the "ehrbaren" (honest) and "nict ehrbaren" (non honest) trades can be found.
6. Frieder Stöckle (Hrsg.), "Handwerkermärchen", Fischer Taschenbuchverlag, Frankfurt 1986, ISBN 3-596-22866-2

Acknowledgement

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

8 Dieter Joos, Ueberlingen, Germany

□

New Source for Homestead Files

The family researcher often places a high premium on finding their ancestor's homestead files. Now, finding the correct property descriptions and the three step process of obtaining that homestead file has been reduced to a simple procedure!

Many family researcher has not been able to go through all of the effort required to find the original homestead location, gain a "description" of the homestead, successfully go to the proper federal offices to gain the patent number so they could then go to the archives that holds the "homestead file" itself.

Over the years the cost for gaining a copy of the homestead file has been one of the most reasonable records the family researcher could gain. The cost of the patent paperwork itself at one time was only about 50 cents a page, and from it one could then go to the archives and gain a copy of the whole file for about 35 cents a page. The files themselves range from a regular set of the papers that the homesteader had to file and comply with, to in some cases, very thick files when there were some sort of peculiar circumstances involved with the claim or claimants.

It is with great happiness that we can now point to the great work that one of our key German Russian researchers has been able to pull together for us. Her name is Joy Fisher. She is the person who started the South Dakota Internet USA GenWeb site which has been of extreme value to the family researcher who finds their families in South Dakota. We all owe Joy a great round of thanks for all the work she has done to bring these records on-line for us. She has added North Dakota counties and also part of Montana to the data base with more to come.

The USGenWeb home page is at: <http://rootsweb.com/~usgenweb/>. From here just follow the links to the state you want, then the county and then the data.

Here is some of the front matter that Joy has provided with the data.

This file is part of the Bureau of Land Management Database for the states of Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

Data edited and prepared by Joy Fisher, jfisher@ucla.edu. This file may be freely copied by individuals and non-profit organizations for their private use. All other rights reserved.

Any other use, including publication, storage in a retrieval system, or transmission by electronic, mechanical, or other

means requires the written approval of the file's author.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) inherited the functions of the General Land Office when it was established by Congress in 1946. The South Dakota land Patents Database, derived from General Land Office and BLM information, contains deeds (primarily patents) issued by the United States in the region now known as the State of South Dakota between 1859 and 1995. While BLM has been referred to as the "Nations record keeper", it is the National Archives that actually keeps the files. The BLM maintains diagrammatic plats known as Master Title Plats, which depict lands which are owned by the United States and lands which are patented. However, these plats do not have any information about who the lands were patented to. That information which has only been available after tedious research, is available now in this database.

The North Dakota Land Patents Database contains the following information for each land transaction: date, location (township, range, section, meridian), name of person the land was patented to, case type, conveyance type, county, and the patent document identification number (DOCID).

Using this information you can obtain copies of the patent file for \$10 from the National Archives at the following address: Reference Branch (Lands), National Archives, Washington, DC 20408, tel. (202) 501-5428.

You need to submit your request on a copy of Form 84. To get the form, send an e-mail message to inquire@nara.gov. In the body of the message, be sure to ask for Form 84 "Order for Copies of Land Entry Files", tell them how many copies you want (get a least 2, in case you make a mistake) and give your name and snail address so they can send you the forms. Or you can request the forms via snail mail at the above address.

The front matter further explains the casetypes and land conveyance codes.

This is just another reason for the serious genealogy researcher to have access to the Internet. We would like to hear from those who successfully end up with homestead files and especially those who tried in the past without success. Good luck.

Example: Some extractions from McLean County, North Dakota

<u>Name</u>	<u>Meridian</u>	<u>TWP</u>	<u>Range</u>	<u>Section</u>	<u>Acreage</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Casetype</u>	<u>DOCID</u>	<u>mo/day/year</u>
Hofer, Emanuel	05	1470N	0800W	012	160	251101	PA	85407	10/25/1909
Kleingartner, Balthaser	05	1450N	0790W	004	160	251101	PA	73631	07/22/1909
Laib, Johann	05	1470N	0790W	004	160	272002	PA	16636	09/28/1908

Emigration Routes

(Editor's note: The following came across the Internet from Donald Tucker)

Someone asked why our ancestors did not emigrate via sea from Odessa rather than by rail from Germany.

Here are the basic reasons, with data that will help you sort out where and when your ancestors traveled.

In the decade before WWI, the period with the highest volume of emigration, the combination of rail from Odessa to Germany and fast steamship from Hamburg (Bremen) to North America was much faster and cheaper than by ship from Odessa via the Mediterranean.

For example (according to Karl Baedeker's Russia 1914), it was possible to travel from Odessa to Berlin in 37 hours by express train - fares 105 Marks, 70 Marks, seat ticket 1 1/2 Ruble extra - via Pdwoloczyska, Lemberg, Cracow, and Oderberg, a distance of 513 Vertst plus 1211 kilometers (a total of 1744 kilometers or about 1084 miles). The train journey via Brest-Litovsk, Warsaw, and Alexandrovo (or Kalisz), took 42 hours - fares 102 Marks 45, 68 Marks 15 pfennig; seat ticket 1 1/2 Ruble 70 copek extra. There were cheaper fares for lower class tickets, which would have been purchased by most emigrants. From Berlin it was only a few hours by rail to Hamburg.

Fast steamships crossed the North Atlantic in a small fraction of the time that a sea voyage from Odessa would require. The cost of the sea passage was also much less.

The Crimea was not linked by direct rail to Odessa. To reach either Odessa or Western Europe, the Crimean traveler had to travel via Kharkov (from Simferopol 635 verts, or 678 kilometers, i.e. 421 miles. The express took 12 1/2 hours, fares 18 rubles 50, 11 Rubles 90 copeks; seat ticket 1 1/2 Rubles. Ordinary train took 19 hours). Some persons traveled from Sevastopol to Odessa via ship and then by rail to Western Europe.

Ticket purchases from South Russia to North America might have been in Rubles, Marks, US Dollars, British Pounds or a combination. Use the following conversion rates to calculate the total cost of passage:

100 Rubles = 216 Marks
100 Rubles = 51.25 US Dollars
100 Rubles = 10 Pounds 11 Shillings 2 1/4 Pence

After the 1870's Odessa and Crimea were linked by rail to Western Europe and sea passage was not an economic option. Also there were political problems between Russian and Turkey.

Back Issues of BDO Newsletter Now On The Internet!

The Beresan District Odessa Newsletter is now on the Internet. The first three years of publication, Volume 1, Issue 1 through Volume 3, Issue 3 are available for computer access. They have been formatted into PDF (Portable Document File) and placed on the data base at Virginia Technical University (Pixel). Because they are in PDF format, the Adobe Acrobat Reader is necessary to view them. This format was chosen because it allows for small file size of an entire newsletter including pictures that can be downloaded in a relatively short time and it maintains the look of the newsletter just as it appears in this paper format.

The fourth and current year of publication will be placed at the Beresan home page site where it can be accessed in the same format. When the fifth year becomes available, the fourth year will be transferred to the pixel and only the fifth year current issues will be on the Beresan home page site.

The first three years of publication can be found at this Internet address:

<http://pixel.cs.vt.edu/library/newsletters/Beresan/>

We encourage anyone wishing back issues to obtain them using the pixel location.

The current year issues and downloading of Adobe Acrobat Reader can be found at this Internet address:

<http://www.beresan.com/BDOnews.html>

1858 Census Status

The 1858 census for two more Beresan villages is now available. They are the 1858 census for Karlsruhe and Sulz. This brings to eight the number of Beresan District villages that have the 1858 census available. The others are Johannestal, Katharinental, Landau, Rohrbach, Speier, and Worms.

There may be more by the time you receive this newsletter. To check this out, just access the GRHS homepage on the Internet. If you don't have access find a relative, friend, or neighbor who has the ability to go on line and check out the "New Publications" list on the homepage. The GRHS home page address is: <http://www.grhs.com/>

The census can also be obtained by contacting GRHS at 1008 East Central Ave., Bismarck, ND 58501. The cost of the census is as follows:

(CENSUS - continued on page 11)

CENSUS - continued from page 10

<u>Village</u>	<u>Member Cost*</u>
Johannestal	\$ 10
Karlsruhe	\$ 15
Katharinental	\$ 10
Landau	\$ 15
Rohrbach	\$ 15
Speier	\$ 15
Sulz	\$ 15
Worms	\$ 15

* For non-members, double this cost. For each item, both members and non members add \$2.75 SH for first item and \$1.00 for each additional item.

Note: Correction for Johannestal Census. House 46 (male side) - the entry that says "Illegitimate son of Christian Ulmer" has been reviewed and determined that it should read "Christina" rather than "Christian".

July 2000 - Bismarck, North Dakota

The dates for the GRHS 30th year convention next year in Bismarck, North Dakota are July 13 - 16, 2000. As in past years in Bismarck, the convention will be held at the Radisson Hotel.

This particular convention is expected to be the biggest and grandest yet. While the intent is to have "2000 in Bismarck in 2000 for the 30th," it is expected that the attendance will be the biggest ever for a GRHS convention.

If you have never been to a GRHS convention, this is the one to plan on. A number of special events are being planned. So mark your calendar and get your reservations made as soon as you can.

Research Outline for Germany

If you are researching your GR roots back in Germany, you may find the LDS Research Outline for Germany to be helpful.

It is a comprehensive guide that gives step by step instructions on how to proceed in certain areas. It also has information and explanations on maps, German State Archive information and addresses, census information, church directories, church records, civil registration records, emigration records, historical geography, and information on genealogy societies among others. It also includes links to many other relative information sites.

The site may be accessed at:

**McLean County Cemetery Crosses
Made By Ex Waterloo Blacksmith
Karl Rennich**



Three of the seven iron crosses made by Mercer blacksmith Karl Rennich located in the Zion Lutheran Cemetery six miles south of Mercer, North Dakota. This photo and one on page 1 taken by Merv Rennich 22 September 1999.

A round about e-mail last summer from Linda Schlafmann of Turtle Lake, ND led to the discovery and identification of seven iron crosses located in the Zion Lutheran Cemetery south of Mercer, North Dakota.

While corresponding on another matter, Linda happened to ask if I knew a Karl Rennich and anything about some crosses he made. She has been doing documentation of cemeteries around Turtle Lake and Mercer. In the records of the Zion Lutheran Cemetery and verified by a number of people, it was known that these crosses were made by my grandfather. So while in North Dakota last September I visited the cemetery with Linda and took these pictures. There is also a fence around the gravesite plot of Philipp Wahl that was made by him. It has the exact same construction as a cemetery gate I have that was taken from the Rennich family plot some years ago and known to have been made by my grandfather.

When not in the Russian Army, Karl Rennich was the blacksmith in Waterloo, Beresan District Odessa. He immigrated to America in 1909 with his wife and three children - Carl age 5 (my father), Amelia age 3, and Emanuel age 1 1/2. They sailed on the SS Southwark arriving in Halifax, NS on December 19, 1909. He first settled in Turtle Lake and after about a year moved to Mercer where he was the blacksmith until his death in 1933.

The seven crosses were made about 1919 or 1920 for seven children of Friedrich and Rosina Just.

Merv Rennich

Beresan District Odessa Newsletter

This is the 2nd issue for the fourth year of publication. The next issue is scheduled for February 2000.

4th year dues can be submitted to receive all 4th year issues.

Subscription rates are:

USA: \$3 per year* Canada: \$4 per year*
Europe/Other \$6 per year*

* - all in US funds please! Send checks payable to:

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20919 Little Valley Road
Polsbo WA 98370

This newsletter is being published for those who have an interest in the villages of the Beresan District Odessa South Russia. The staff consists of Lead Editor Merv Rennich; Assistant Editors Carol McCormack, Roland Wagner, and Dale Lee Wahl; with subscriptions handled by Arletta Baskins.

Many others contribute to each issue but there is always room for more participation. If anyone wishes to get involved they are more than welcome and should contact Merv Rennich at the

return address below or by e-mail to: mrennich@midwest.net.

All submitted material should include a statement that gives permission for use in the newsletter. Pictures are welcome. We have a scanner to digitize images and all output is done on a laser printer. Material will be returned when requested and if possible return postage or an SASE is greatly appreciated.

Every attempt is made to keep the copyright of the items carried in the newsletter as reusable as possible. That means you have the freedom to use this data in your family work, unless we have noted otherwise. However, before using any data please examine the cited sources carefully and make sure you don't use anything in a manner that it was not intended to be used. Using any of this data for anyone to gain a profit is not the intent of this newsletter and is prohibited.

Subscription rates are set to recover material and mailing cost only. All time and most other expenses are donated by the editors and those involved in producing each issue including the use of computer equipment, printers, and phone lines.

Ideas for articles and improvements to the newsletter are most welcome. Please address them to the Lead Editor.

Beresan District Odessa Newsletter

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