

The Center for Ethnic Studies
Forsyth Library
Fort Hays State University

Story of the Volga Germans of Ellis and Rush Counties

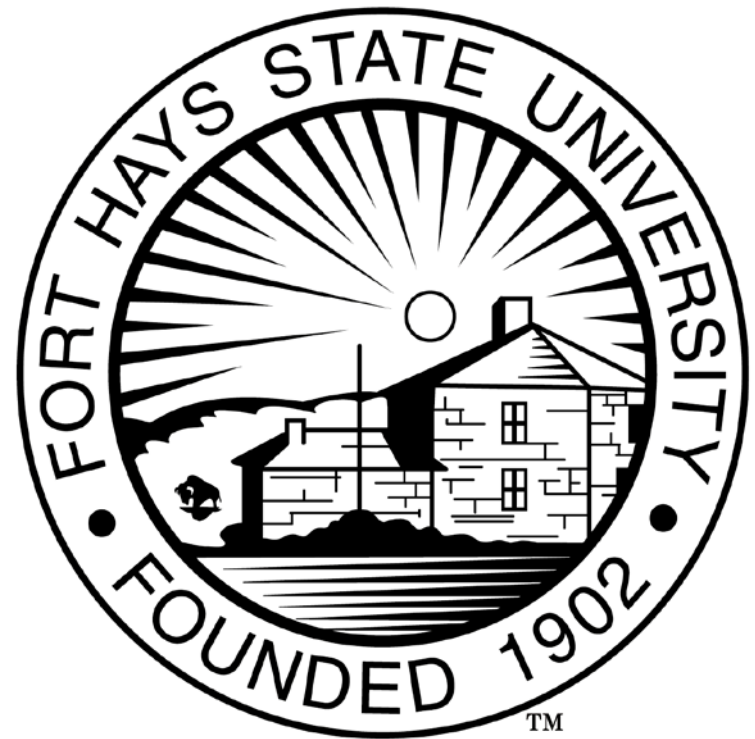
Kansas Genealogical Society
Annual Meeting
June 8, 2013

Fort Hays State University

Patty Nicholas
Special Collections and
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Center for Ethnic Studies Room



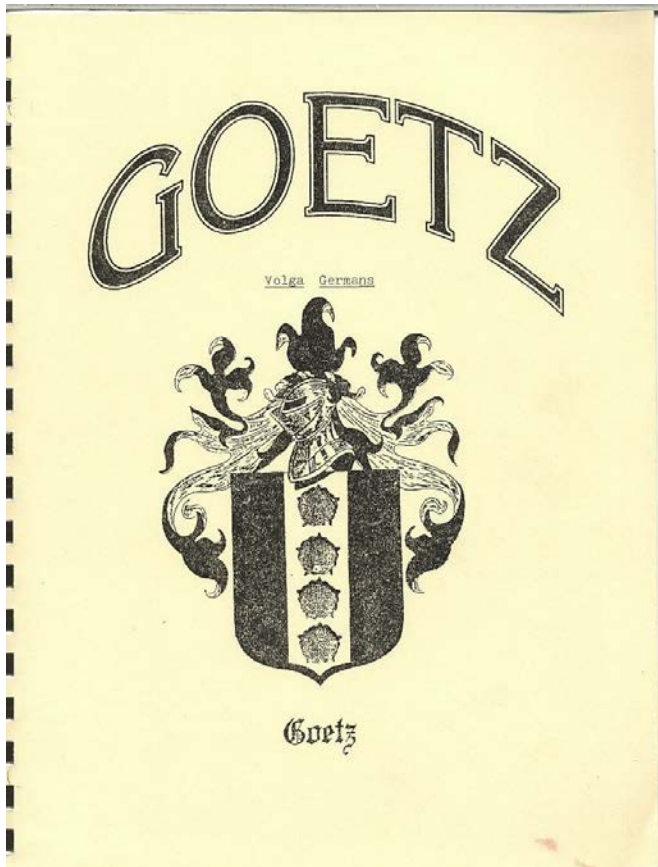
Focus of the Room

- Center for Ethnic Studies
 - Established for the study of Ethnic Groups which settled in Kansas
 - Main focus is on the Volga Germans
 - Bukovina Germans – Ellis
 - African Americans - Nicodemus

Items in the Center

- History books
 - Germany, Russia and the Volga region
 - Areas in U.S. with Volga-German population
 - Volga-German settlement in Ellis and Rush Counties
- Novels
- Obituaries
- Journals and newsletters
- Column from the Ellis County Star
 - “Volga German Traditions” by Lawrence Weigel
- Speeches
- Videos

Family Histories

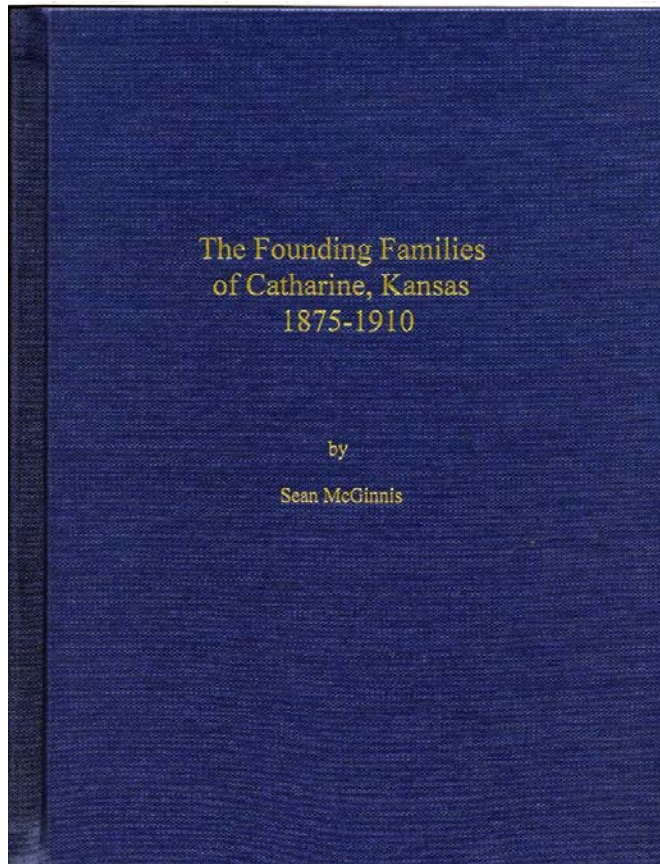


- Brungardt
- Goetz
- Weigel
- Braun
- Pfannenstiel
- Werth
- Stecklein
- Younger

Family Genealogy Compilations

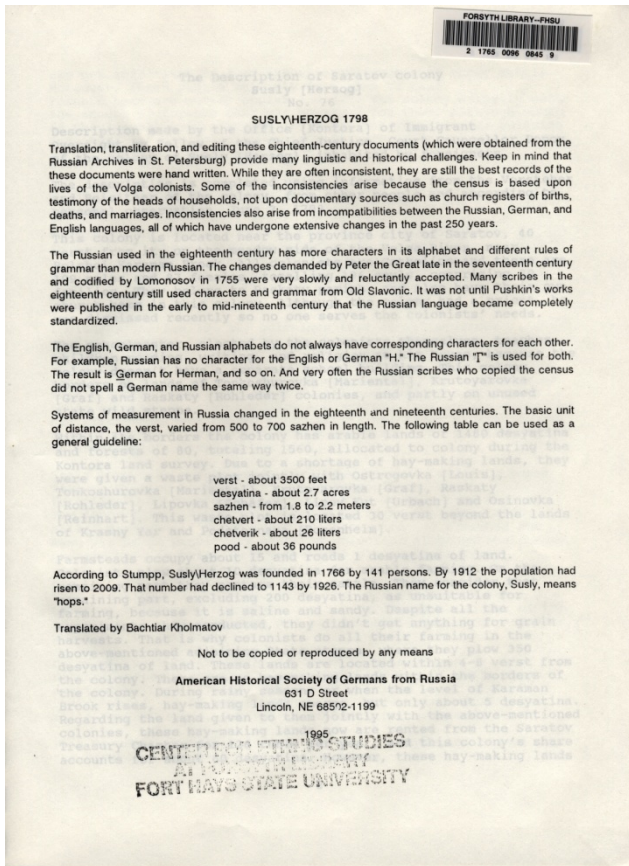
- Kevin Rupp, an avid genealogist and historian, has compiled a number of family genealogies which can be purchased from him.
- See the following web page:
 - www.volgagerman.net

Town Histories



- Catharine
- Liebenthal
- Munjor
- Pfeifer
- Schoenchen
- Victoria (Herzog)

Census Records



- Records from the colonies along the Volga River
- Most are from the 1798 census
- AHSGR in Lincoln has a much larger collection

Haberkorn Letters

- Anna Maria (Haberkorn) Dinkel, who lived in Walker, received letters from her siblings in Russia
 - Joseph Haberkorn
 - Apollonia (Haberkorn) Dieser
 - Margaret (Haberkorn) Burgardt
- Picture is of their parents Johannes and Elizabeth Haberkorn



Haberborn Letters

Letter received by Mrs. Peter A. Dinkel of Walker, Kansas from her sister Joseph Haberborn in Russia. Letter donated to FHSU ethnic heritage studies FHSU by the Peter A. Dinkel family.

Jan. 21, 1931

to you, dear brother-in-law and sister-in-law Peter A. Dinkel, from us your brother-in-law and sister-in-law Joseph and family. Hearty greetings from me Joseph Haberborn and family. We wish to let you know that yesterday we received your letter of Dec. 15. We are all well and hope you are the same.

I am going to send you the address you wrote me, and let you know you should use this address. This address is all right, even though it is in German. I would like to know who gave you this address? I believe it is he who you wrote is in Siberia. Hopefully he isn't any further away from you than Herzog? *

Nothing is especially good here. This is the second letter I am sending today. Hope you receive both. All other brothers are well and send greetings.

Our children are all in school. What they learn I can't tell you, because I don't know what will result without religion. I believe there will be good Communists.

Farewell, greet all who ask about us.

Your brother-in-law and brother

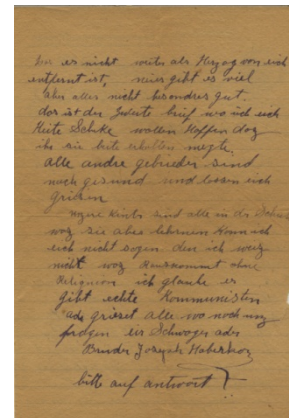
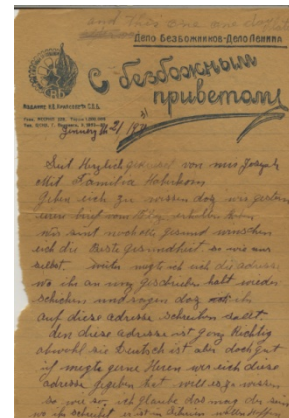
Joseph Haberborn

Please answer soon.

* Note: Fr. Kappes was here in Ellis Co. in 1921 with Bishop Kessler to raise money for the starving people in Russia, and may be the one he refers to. (Translator).

Joseph Haberborn, the writer of this letter was born in the U.S. and returned with his folks to Russia in 1909, and then later was caught up in the revolution, the famines of 1921 and 1931 and later the deportation to Siberia. (Translator)

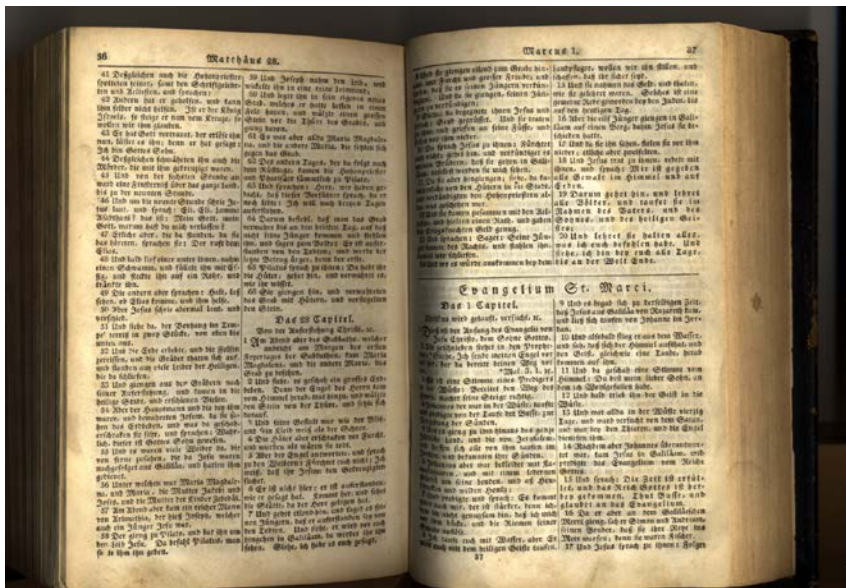
Translated by L.A. Weigel



Maps

- Germany
 - Russia
 - United States
- Some of the maps are in the German language
 - The rest are in the English language

Bibles and Songbooks



Oral Histories

- Interviewees subjects
 - History of Ellis County
 - Their ancestors
 - Their customs and social life
- Cassette tapes

Photographs - Families

Anton Dreiling Family



Nicholas and Eva Eberle



Nick A. and Anna Pfannenstiel



Peter A. Gross Family

A Guide to the Collections

- Available at the following URL:
 - <http://www.fhsu.edu/library/ethnic/center-for-ethnic-studies/>
 - At the bottom of the page, there is a link to click on to retrieve the PDF

Hours and Parking

- Regular hours are:
Monday through Friday 8:00 – 4:30
- Exceptions:
Summer hours (usually begins the 3rd or 4th week in May and ends the first week of August)
Monday through Thursday 7:00 – 4:30
- Library is closed for legal holidays and the week between Christmas and New Year's Day.
- Parking – will need a visitor's permit if there are no available visitors parking spaces during the weeks that school is in session

Story of the Volga Germans

- Began in Germany after the Seven Years War
- Catherine the Great issued a manifesto
- Approximately 25,000 Germans moved to Russia
- Nearly 200 German villages and towns were established
- In 1873, only 100 years after moving to Russia, the promised freedoms were threatened

Scouts

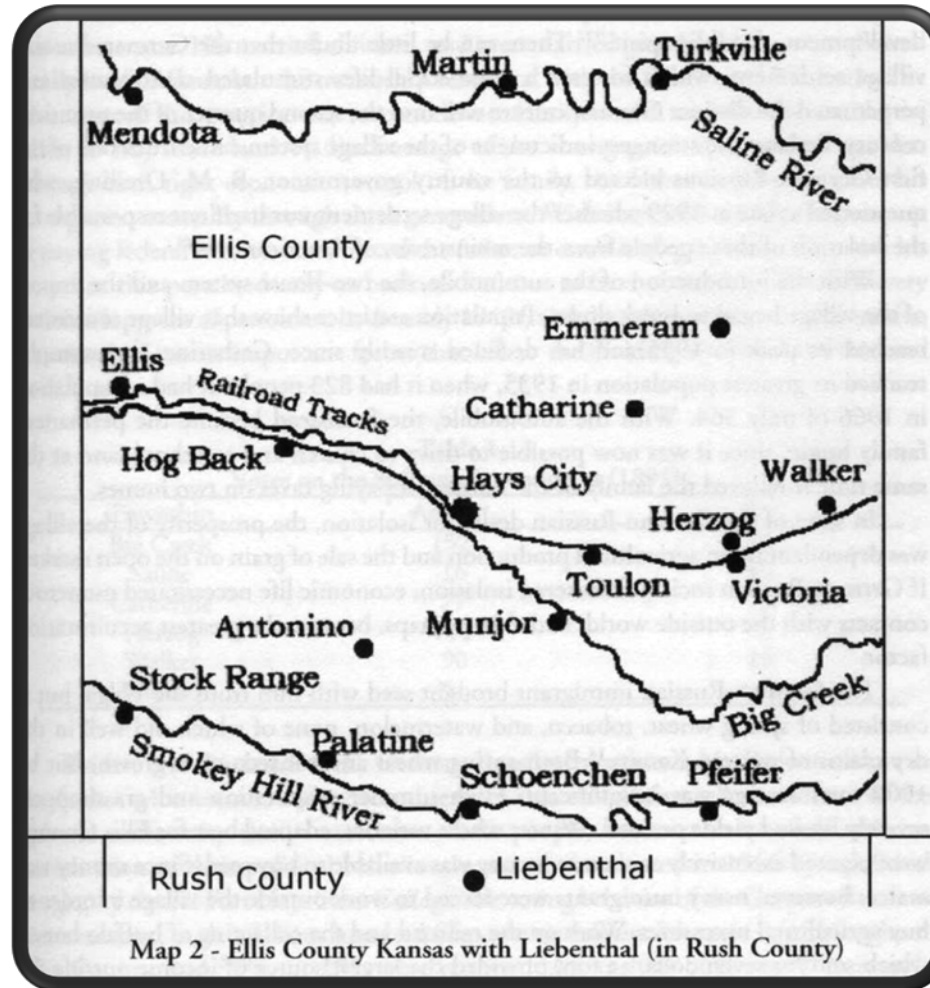
From left to right:
Peter Stoecklein
Jacob Ritter
Nicholas Schamme
Peter Leiker
Anton Wasinger



Schools and Churches

- The two most important things in the lives of the Volga German settlers were education and faith. The school and church were the foundation of each community.
 - Children were taught in people's homes until school buildings were built
 - 1st Parochial School – Herzog (1879)
 - 1st Church Building – A frame structure added to Alois Dreiling's house in Herzog (around 1876)

Map of Volga German Settlements



Map 2 - Ellis County Kansas with Liebenthal (in Rush County)

Liebenthal (Rush County)

- First Volga German village to be established in Kansas
 - February 21, 1876 by settlers from Liebenthal, Russia
 - Two more groups arrived in August and September
- Most of the people of the latter two groups established the town of Schoenchen in Ellis County at a later date

Liebenthal

- First Parochial School
 - Built in 1890; addition built in 1897
- First Church building
 - Built in 1877-1878
- St. Joseph's Church
 - Built 1902-1905
 - Fire gutted the church in 1917 and again in 1959 – rebuilt both times
- School
 - Built 1917
- Rectory
 - Frame structure 1889
 - Stone structure 1910



Catharine (Katharinstadt)

- Largest of the German colonies along the Volga River
- Emigrants left on October 22, 1875 and arrived in Baltimore on November 23
- Came to Hays on March 1, 1876 after staying in Topeka for the winter
- Town was established about 10 miles northeast of Hays on April 8, 1876
- Residents of Catharine were better off than their neighbors
- Several Moravian Austrian families joined the community between 1878-1883

Catharine



- School
 - Built in 1879
 - Both classes and worship
- Catharine School
 - Built 1902 by Justus Bissing, Jr.
 - Identical school building was built in Munjor
- St. Catherine Church
 - Built 1891-1892

Story of two towns – Victoria (Herzog)

- Colony of Victoria was established in 1873 by Scotch and English families
- George Grant brought what is believed to be the first Polled Angus cattle in America
- His dreams of a colony of cattle and sheep ranches for sons of nobility fell through
- George and Alex Philip were more successful
 - Philip Hardware Store in Hays
 - Philip Ranch is still a working ranch
- Emigrants left Russia on October 24, 1875 and arrived in Baltimore November 23
- Wintered in Topeka through March 1876 and founded the town of Herzog on April 8
 - Located ½ mile north of the English colony of Victoria
- Largest single group to leave the Volga region arrived in Herzog on August 3
- Herzog became the largest colony in Ellis County
- Absorbed its English predecessor, but kept the name Victoria

Herzog/Victoria

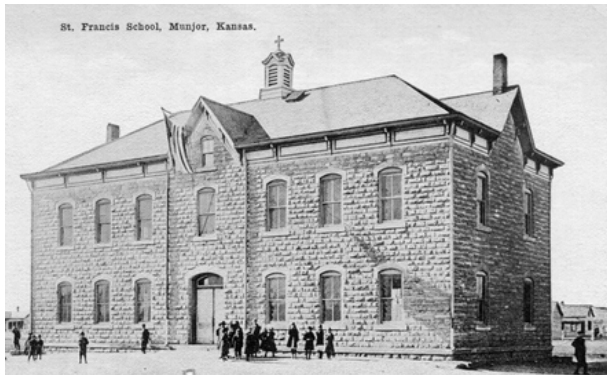
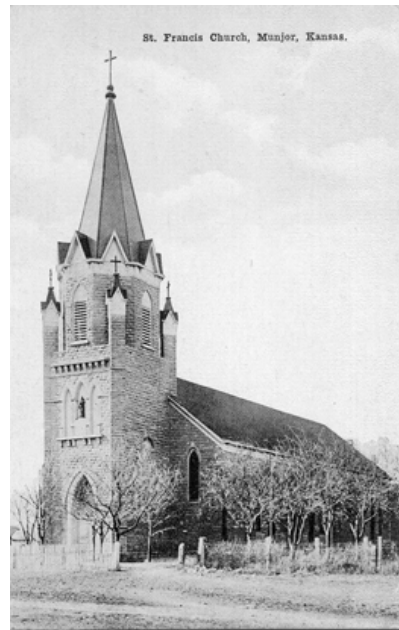
- First Parochial School
 - Opened in 1878
- First Churches
 - Frame structure that was built onto a house
 - Stone church built in 1877 quickly became too small
 - Another building was built in 1884
- St. Fidelis Church
 - 225 families of the parish
 - Built in 1909-1911



Munjor (Obermonjour)

- Founded by settlers that were part of the largest group to emigrate from Russia in August 1876
 - Settlers stayed in Herzog and moved to Munjor in October
- Several more groups joined them over the next couple of years with the last group coming in September 1878

Munjor



- First Church
 - Frame – built in 1877
- St. Francis Church
 - Built 1890
 - Steeple was damaged and never replaced
- St. Francis School
 - Built in 1893 by Justus Bissing, Jr.
 - Identical school building was built in Catharine in 1902

Pfeifer

- Founded on either August 21 or 24, 1876 by emigrants from Pfeifer, Russia
- Located along the south bank of the Smoky Hill River
- Final group came from Kamenka, Russia and arrived in Pfeifer on June 20, 1878

Pfeifer

- First Two Churches
 - Frame – built in 1879
 - Stone – built in 1890-1891
- Holy Cross Church
 - Built in 1915-1918
- School
 - Built in 1898



Schoenchen

- A conflict among the 1st settlers in Liebenthal lead to the founding of this village
 - Settlers had begun building homes in Section 16 because of better water supply
 - Johann Schaefer donated 4 acres in Section 21 to be used for building a church
 - People who had homes in Section 16 moved their residences to Section 28 in Ellis County
- Original name was San Antonio
- Settlers were from Schoenchen and Neu-Obermonjour in Russia and wanted the town to have one of those names, so they came to a compromise
 - Village was named Schoenchen
 - Church was named for the patron saint of the church in Neu-Obermonjour, St. Anthony

Schoenchen



- First Churches
 - Stone – 1880
 - Frame – 1881
- St. Anthony's Church
 - Built 1900-1901
- First Public Schools
 - Stone – 1880
 - 1926-1927
- Parochial School
 - Stone - 1917

More Information

- <http://www.fhsu.edu/library/ethnic/center-for-ethnic-studies/> - Center for Ethnic Studies located in Forsyth Library
- <http://www.fhsu.edu/library/ksheritage/Volga-Germans-in-Ellis-County/> - Web pages that are part of the Kansas Heritage Project at Forsyth Library
- <http://www.volgagerman.net> – a wonderful website put together by some local historians
- <http://www.ahsgr.org/> - American Historical Society of Germans from Russia with headquarters in Lincoln, Nebraska