

# GALKA

## A German Settlement on the Volga

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submitted by

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# The German Settlements on the Volga

## Introduction

### A) History of Settlement

In 1907, European Russia was only sparsely populated. This massive land area had a population density of 23.1 people per square kilometer. (European Russia - minus Poland and Finland). In Astrakhan and Olonez provinces<sup>0</sup> the population density was 0.6 and 3.1 people per square kilometer, respectively. From the beginning it was clear that an intensive economic development of the massive and in some locations extraordinarily fertile land area, the magnificent forests etc., could only be undertaken with great effort. The population density alone made this a difficult task. For this reason it has continually been the goal of the Russian rulers to recruit new as well as capable people to work on their Estates. Until the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, foreign settlers were granted very favorable conditions.<sup>1</sup> The settlement of [the Eastern border of Russia] the Volga region, which is our concern, developed slowly. Until the time of Catherine II, the entire area south of the city of Samara, which lay along the Volga, remained unpopulated. To be sure, there had been fortresses built here in former times (on the Volga this was the case in the cities of Samara, Saratov and Tsaritsyn; in the Ural Mountains in Ufa).<sup>2</sup> However there was no way that one could speak of a regular agricultural settlement at that time. This was because of the uncertain economic situation in this region. The manifestos of Empress Catherine II on December 11, 1762 and on July 22, 1763 brought a large number of foreign colonists to this area. [See Manifesto page 62]

The content of these manifestos<sup>3</sup> was sent to all Russian ambassadors in foreign countries. They were ordered to make them public and did so. As a result of this invitation, a large movement of people began and this was especially true of Germany,<sup>4</sup> Some were driven by dire need. The Seven Years War (1756-1763) had just ended and had caused much devastation in regard to the economic life of the individual person. Because of these conditions, the Russian manifesto fell on fertile ground. Eight shillings per diem in support was paid out to each and every settler as soon as he/she registered for emigration.<sup>5</sup> This was very tempting for those who had nothing to eat and drink! Apart from this, the manifesto of the Empress Catherine II proclaimed in the year 1763 listed several very favorable provisions. Among other things, the following were guaranteed:

1. Freedom of religion
2. Freedom from taxes and tributes for a specified number of years
3. Enough land
4. Freedom from continuous obligatory military service
5. Internal self-government

More specific regulations regarding the way in which the colonization was to take place were a part of the so-called "Law for Colonists"<sup>6</sup> that was proclaimed on March 19, 1764. It was only then that the above-mentioned guarantees took on proper form and practice. This law directly limited the area of settlement. The colonists were granted the territory between the Don and the Volga rivers. On the Volga, this was the section between Saratov



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and Tsaritsyn. The law also determined the way in which the individual villages were to be established. The settlers were to be settled in districts, which encompassed enough fertile land for 1,000 families. The length of each district was to be 60-70 verst <sup>7</sup> [40-46 miles]. Each family, without regard to the number of members in it, received an allotment of 30 desyatins <sup>8</sup> of land [2.7 acres X 30 = 81 acres].

Each allotment was to consist of 15 desyatins [about 40 acres] of arable land, 5 desyatins [13.5 acres] of hay land, 5 desyatins of forest, a home lot, a threshing-ground, a garden and a meadow, which altogether were to be 5 desyatins in terms of size. Consideration was to be taken at the time of the establishment of the colonies for a reserved area of arable land. This was to be reserved for the future descendants of the colonists. The families were to be given their allotment of land and could give it over to their children as an inheritance, but only insofar as they remained residents and members of the respective colony. They could not sell their allotment nor could they mortgage it nor divide it up. The community, as such, was the actual owner of the entire land grant.

Using this system, the government established the principle of community ownership within the German colonies on the Volga. This is the so-called Russian "Mir" system of land ownership. A further adjustment to the "Mir" system is found in the statement, which Haxthausen expresses with conviction, that the German colonies on the Volga "introduced the Russian system of equitable land division of their own free will". <sup>9</sup> According to this system, all the agricultural land was periodically re-distributed. This was done with regard to the numbers of farmers who were given the rights to cultivate the land. The numbers of such farmers changed from time to time.

During the initial years after the proclamation of the manifestos promulgated by Catherine II, over 100 German colonies were established on the Volga. The initial total population consisted of about 8,000 families with 23,000 souls of both sexes. <sup>10</sup> It is commonly agreed that the first settlement in this area was the Colony of "Anton" (called "Sebastianovka" in Russian). It was named after the first village mayor. It was located in the Volosty of Zoznovka [a Volosty might be equated with a political subdivision similar to a township – or a county] of the province of Saratov, on the right-hand shore of the Volga, this being on the so-called "hilly side" <sup>11</sup> [Bergseite]

In general, the first colonies established up until the year 1768 were: "named, at times arbitrarily and at times after the name of the first mayor". This was stated in the: "earliest register of baptisms and deaths in the parish archive of the colony of Grimm". A different Russian name was added on at a later time. <sup>12</sup>

At first, the settlers were not very happy in their new homeland. This is made obvious by the many attempts that were made to flee from it. They had entered a completely different environment where they had to adjust to a new climate, diseases of all kinds and finally the Cossack Rebellion led by Pugatchev (1772-1775). All these factors caused much suffering in their midst. Besides this, they suffered through many attacks by the Kirghiz during this period. Because of this, the number of colonists dropped precipitously during the first years of settlement. In 1775 there were only 5,502 families with 11,986 males and 11,168 females; altogether 23,154 souls remained. It did not take long before the general confusion turned into a more normal situation. By 1797, all the reserved land area was no longer divided per family, but per enumerated individual <sup>13</sup> At the time of the



general land survey and the 5<sup>th</sup> census adjustment, which had taken place that year, the allotted land for the Volga colonists was set at 20 desyatins per individual. This amount of land was decreased to 15 desyatins per individual at the time of the 8<sup>th</sup> census in the year 1840. Because the colonists of the province of Saratov owned less than 15 desyatins of land per individual in 1840, new land was allotted for them. This was mainly on the "Meadow Side" [Weisenseite] of the Volga in the present-day province of Samara where 260,000 desyatins were surveyed for their settlement. This allotment of land was not finalized until 1859.<sup>14</sup> During the time from 1848 to 1867 the colonies founded 61 daughter colonies.

In 1902, the most-recently founded colony was established in Neuwahrenburg {Neu-Warenburg}. For the year 1910, we have the following statistics:<sup>15</sup>

In the middle Volga region, there were German colonies with a majority of:

1. Evangelicals {Lutheran and Reformed} in the population:

a) 44 colonies with 198,259 souls on the "Hilly Side"

b) 94 colonies with 237,408 souls on the "Meadow Side"

Altogether: 138 colonies with 435,667 souls.

2. Catholic population:

a) 17 colonies with 47,883 souls on the "Hilly Side"

b) 21 colonies with 64,993 souls on the "Meadow Side"<sup>16</sup>

Altogether 38 colonies with 112,876 souls.

The number of residents that are to be found in the cities located directly along the Volga River<sup>17</sup> as well as in the Moravian settlement of Sarepta:

a) on the "Hilly Side" 27,942 German colonists

b) on the "Meadow Side" 3,500 German colonists

c) in Sarepta 2,465 German colonists

Altogether 33,907 German colonists

The total number of German settlers in the middle Volga area consists of:

1. Village (rural) Population:

Evangelical {Lutheran and Reformed} 435,667 souls

Catholic 112,876 souls

2. City (urban) Population, including Sarepta 33,907 souls

Altogether 582,540 souls

Apart from these settlements, there are 10 Mennonite communities with a total of 1,199 souls located on the "Hilly Side". There are also several smaller settlements of Volga colonists in Siberia. They are located:

1. near Omsk: 10 colonies with 3,804 souls

2. near Akmolinsk: 2 colonies with 1743 souls



B) The History of the Administration<sup>18</sup>

The so-called "Trustee Office for Foreigners", which had all the rights of a state ministry,<sup>19</sup> was established as the highest administrative authority in matters concerning the immigration of foreigners. It was established on the basis of the manifesto proclaimed in the year 1763 and began operations in the same year in St. Petersburg. It had oversight of the colonies that had been established by the foreigners. In order to build dwellings for the settlers and to help in the initial purchases for seed grain, cattle, horses, agricultural machinery etc., this office was granted the yearly sum of 200,000 rubles in the state budget.<sup>20</sup> The responsibilities pertaining to the local administration initially rested on the shoulders of special "commissars" who were appointed for the position. However, as early as 1766, a subsidiary local administrative center of the above-mentioned government office was opened in Saratov. It was the so-called "Bureau for the Trustee Office for Foreigners". The commissars were under its authority. The colonists were placed under the administration of another agency in the year 1782. Their administrative office was amalgamated at the same time with the institutions that served the landowners who had received grants by the crown. The amalgamation of all of the agencies took place in the year 1782 including the Kronspalaten {meaning unclear}, the chief of rural police, the commissars, and district and circuit courts of law. The "Trustee Office" and the "Bureau" in Saratov were closed. The practice of having local commissars was ended. Soon after this event, there was a new change that took place. "In view of the obvious decline of the colonies as well as the general complaints of the settlers, various abuses and because of all kinds of oppressive acts",<sup>21</sup> the "Bureau" in Saratov was re-opened in the year 1797.<sup>22</sup> At the beginning, the Bureau (Kontor) was placed under the administration of the "Office for National Commerce, the Trustee Office for Foreigners and the Village Budget" of the Ministry of the Interior. Following this arrangement, the Bureau in Saratov was placed under the administration of the newly established Ministry of Crown Land. The Bureau was not completely dissolved until the year 1876.

In the year 1871, the colonists were placed on the same standing as the farmers who had received grants of crown land. This meant that the freedom granted to the farmers {serfs?}, which became law in 1861, was expanded to include the German settlers who retained several privileges beyond that which was given to the farmers in 1861. At the same time, they received the name: "Settlers-Proprietors of Property."

At first the privileges that had been granted to the colonists in the Manifesto, promulgated in the year 1763, furthered the blossoming of new settlements. However, at the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century there were efforts to limit and to modify the laws pertaining to the colonists (volume XII, of the R.-G.-S). The privilege of special administration for the prosecution of criminal cases was removed in the year 1860 (later this included every case which had to do with the area (in German: Landschaft; in Russian: zemstvo). Following this, in the year 1866, the settlers were placed under the administration of the "General Provincial, County and Local Administration for Farmers". The influence of the "Bureau" (Kontor) now was restricted to matters pertaining to the churches and to the schools.

At the time of the initial settlement, the sum of approximately 3 million rubles had been loaned to the Volga colonists. This had to be repaid to the state Office of the Treasury. In the year 1775, this came to an average of about 250 rubles per enumerated male individual. The repayment of this debt was not required until the year 1786. From that



year onward, it was covered by an annual tax of 3 rubles per "worker". However, the settlers were unable to pay this tax and were only able to repay it in an irregular fashion. In 1809, the entire debt, which weighed on their shoulders, still consisted of 2,765,356 rubles. After the year 1797 (when the Bureau {Kontor} in Saratov was re-opened), the prosperity of the colonies grew at a rapid pace and the 3 ruble tax was regularly paid. After the year 1809, in order to pay off the debt, the colonists were required to pay 1 ruble annually per "worker". By the year 1846, the debt was finally paid off. After the year 1813, the general system of having a poll-tax was introduced for the colonists.

At this point, the colonists were only exempt from military conscription. In the year 1874, this privilege was withdrawn as well.

Self-administration, which had been granted to the rural communities following the liberation of the serfs, was undermined by the election of county and provincial representative assemblies. These elections had taken place as a result of the law regarding the Estates that had been introduced on January 1, 1864. This was a part of the "Estates Assembly" (zemstvo), to which the rural communities sent their representatives. When the colonists were given equality with the crown farmers in the year 1871, this legislation also included the German colonists on the Volga. A large number of German settlers represented the interests of their own people.

After the year 1890, the powers of the rural government were severely restricted. The rural communities, which until that time were represented by delegates in the sessions of the Volost, now were restricted to the nomination of candidates. The governor of the Zemstvo then appointed the representative members to the Zemstvo from this list of nominees.

The system of having certain people [land captains] in charge of the rural regions was introduced for the area of the middle Volga in the year 1892. This included the German colonies. These men are given wide-ranging powers of administration for the communities of farmers. They also have the right to confirm or reject the elected candidates who have been chosen by the sessions of the Volost for the Volost court. In this way, the land captains became very influential in regard to the affairs of the German colonists. This was especially true concerning their responsibility to scrupulously examine all the decisions made by the community. Unfortunately, there is often still a dearth of suitable individuals who can carry out the duties in this important office.

## **Galka**

### **I. Geographical location and settlement history**

The German colony of Galka <sup>23</sup> or "Ust-Kulalinka", as it is known in official language documents, is situated one hundred and fifty verst [99 miles] south of the provincial capital of Saratov. The rise upon which the colony is located runs parallel to the Volga. Here there is a noticeable drop in altitude from a southwesterly to northeasterly direction, so that Galka is situated on a gentle slope. At the northeastern end of the colony there is a wide ravine that runs through the land toward Holstein (in Russian: Verchnaya Kulalinka), which is located seven verst [4.6 miles] from Galka. At one time the Kulalinka (or Galka) Stream, to which the colony owes its name, flowed from its source in Holstein into the



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Volga. Now everything here is totally dry. Only in springtime does a rushing current of dirty water from melted snow pour down the ravine. Until recently, the spring melt, which was carefully diverted towards the valley by small clay channels, provided for several water mills. For two years now, this spring melt has been neglected and the mills have stopped working. In addition, two further ravines in the proximity of the village are to be mentioned. They also owe their formation to the spring melt water run-off.

The smaller one, which is situated approximately one verst [0.66 mile] northeast of the settlement, does not have a special name. The larger one runs into the countryside at an approximate distance of three verst [2 miles] southwest of Galka in the direction of the district town of Kamyshin; forty verst [26.4 miles] from Galka. The people in the area call it "Drugalka" which is supposed to be the same as saying "Dry Galka". Both ravines go into the Volga and both of them, in contrast to the first one mentioned which lacks almost any tree growth on its slopes are slightly overgrown with bushes and stunted oaks.

Two islands are situated to the southeast facing Galka. They lie in the bend that the Volga forms here. One of them is the heavily wooded, large island of Galkin. This island is 5 verst [3.3 miles] long and at the southern extremity is 3 verst [2 miles] wide. South of it, opposite Galka, lies the small island of Oslyony. The latter island is completely inundated in the spring, so that the large Volga steamboats can easily pass over it. Numerous sandbanks cover the stream between the colony and the aforementioned islands. Directly across from Galka, on the so-called "Meadow Side" the medium-sized Yeruslan River flows into the Volga. [The daughter colony of Neu Galka is on the lower Jeruslan River.] Its bed forms the boundary between the province of Samara and the province of Astrakhan. Galka belongs to the province of Saratov, county of Kamyshin, Volost of Ust-Kulalinka.

According to A. Klaus<sup>24</sup>, the settlement of Galka falls in the time period between 1764 and 1766. The governmental administration records state the first year of the colony as being 1768<sup>25</sup>. In opposition to this, the historical material in the rectory in Volskya (province of Samara) by the resident Pastor Johannes Erbes<sup>26</sup> definitely states that Galka was built by 1764. Colonists continued to move here until the year 1767.<sup>27</sup>

Very definitive dates about the earliest times of the history of Galka village are to be found in the Ust-Kulalinka parish church chronicles, which were composed by the respective pastor during his time of ministry. Pastor E. Hinsch, in 1853, in his introduction to the chronicle, provides statistical data on the first settlers of the Ust-Kulalinka parish, - insofar as it is possible to ascertain this data. This information was extracted by him from the church records and given to him in statements made by the oldest men. His notes state, "Because of the Manifesto of Czarina Catherine the Great of July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1773, colonists from almost every area of Germany moved to the province of Saratov in order to found a new home there. [See the Manifesto on page ]

The colonists who selected the southern-most areas of the hilly side of the Volga as their future residence settled in nine colonies (in the county of Kulalinka) and built a parsonage in Ust-Kulalinka that really was only meant to serve the five closest colonies, as the four other colonies of the present Vodyanoi-Buyerak parish, which had been declared to be an independent parish, were only to be served from Ust-Kulalinka until they had obtained their own pastors.



## Galka

The Number of Families and Souls in the Parish and the Original Home of the Immigrants

Ust-Kulalinka .....	81 families settled. 15 moved away or died out.
Nishnaya-Dobrinka (Dobrinka).....	18 families settled. 22 moved away or died out.
Verchnaya-Dobrinka (Dreisnitz) .....	71 families settled. 5 moved away or died out.
Buidakov-Buyerak (Schwab).....	71 families settled. 13 moved away or died out.
Verchnaya-Kulalinka (Holstein) .....	76 families settled. 12 moved away or died out.

The number of souls of both sexes who settled here was about 1,000. A complete and accurate count cannot be determined. The immigrants came from Wuerttemberg, Prussia, Baden, the Palatinate, Saxony, Hesse, Darmstadt, Holstein, Denmark and even a few came from Sweden, England and Poland. They were almost all of the Evangelical Lutheran confession. The original number of families increased such by the year 1836 that:

Ust-Kulalinka (Galka).....	had 164 families
Nishnaya-Dobrinka (Dobrinka).....	had 165 families
Verchnaya-Dobrinka (Dreisnitz) .....	had 105 families
Verchnaya-Kulalinka (Holstein) .....	had 114 families
Buidakov-Buyerak (Schwab).....	had 89 families

Many families moved onward to the Trans-Caucasus and in recent times to the city of Kamyshin, so that the present number of families has only increased by about 63 families during the past 17 years.

Namely:

Ust-Kulalinka (Galka).....	has 162 families
Nishnaya-Dobrinka (Dobrinka).....	has 195 families
Verchnaya-Dobrinka (Dreisnitz) .....	has 119 families
Verchnaya-Kulalinka (Holstein) .....	has 112 families
Buidakov-Buyerak (Schwab).....	has 112 families

The present number of souls is about 8,000 of both sexes."

This is as far as the "Chronicle" goes. Specific data regarding the earliest history of the colony of Galka comes from the aforementioned (see: page 9) "Historical Material" in the parsonage in Volskaya. According to the documents found there, the number of inhabitants of Galka in the year 1768<sup>28</sup> was 195 souls of whom 106 were male and 89 were female. The number of families was 64. Three hundred and twenty desyatins were being cultivated at that time and the size of the planting area (only rye was being seeded) was 40 chetvert and 4 chetverik.<sup>29</sup> Almost all of the newcomers gave their profession as "being that of an agriculturalist"; six listed themselves as having come from the military, one was a surveyor and one was a tradesman. The age of the heads of households ranged from 23 to 50 years. It is difficult to determine the origin of individual families because the aforementioned documents were in the Russian language and were mostly written illegibly. It is only certain that Hessians, Wuerttembergers, Palatines, and Badeners made up the



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greater part of the colonists and those from Hesse were, by far, the largest group represented.

### II. General Conditions Today

The colony of Galka finds itself today at the end of a development which has taken it, since the beginning of its existence, for almost 150 years, on a rather calm, even track; all property and land in Galka has thus far been and is still today the collective property of the municipality. This will, however, shortly change. This transformation of the entire economic foundation of the colony is changing as a direct result of the imperial decree placed before the governing Senate on the November 9<sup>th</sup> / 22<sup>nd</sup>,<sup>30</sup> 1906, a decree that clearly indicates that the government is trying to totally eliminate collective property. At the same time, the government has taken other all-encompassing measures in order to bring about this future reform as quickly as possible and to make the transition a smooth one.

The Land Facility Commission was formed without a sufficient number of surveyors to carry out the work that was needed. Additionally, the local people in power were instructed to contribute as much as possible on their part to make this reform come into effect as quickly as possible. In general, it is very difficult for a Volga German farmer to be moved to make even the smallest change in the economic system that he inherited from his forebears. In this case, the officials have a very difficult situation vis-à-vis the settlers because it has to do with a complete transformation of the farmers' views regarding property. People in Galka were originally in opposition to these reforms; then they had a wait and see attitude, but as reports came in regarding the advantageous divisions of land which had taken place, especially from the Meadow Side, more people publicly stated that they were clearly in favor of the transition. There were also other reasons which played a role and on March 6<sup>th</sup> / 19<sup>th</sup>, at the communal assembly in the school house in Galka and in the presence of the Land Captain, it was agreed upon almost unanimously to make the transition to privatization of property. [Daughter colonies on the Weisenseite had already made the change. Galka was the first of the 104 Mother colonies to vote for privatization.]

I arrived in Galka four days after this so very important event had transpired. I was able to make the observation that the mood of the colonists, in regard to the decision that they had made, seemed, in general, a good one. With satisfaction, the people recounted the details of the way in which this last communal assembly had proceeded and when the Land Captain called for the deciding vote, it simply "echoed" of "yes" in the small hall. So Galka now stands at the beginning of a new period in its economic and social life and in spite of all its joyful hopes, is looking ahead to its uncertain future somewhat anxiously.

Part of my assignment in the section following will be to investigate how this colony is prepared for these changes and which advantages and disadvantages this new system will bring for Galka.

#### **A) The Village**

Whoever takes the trip on the Volga downstream from Saratov will note that the German colony of Galka is situated approximately 10 verst [6.6 miles] above the steamship dock in Nishnaya-Dobrinka (Dreisnitz). It is located on a low ridge on the right hand [west] side of the river. The first impression which one receives is not unfriendly. There are long rows of



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gray one-story houses often separated by trees. This is where the village is located; there on the northern slope of this bare elevated piece of land. The gray houses extend close to the steep slope of the shore and some of them are equipped with wooden supports so that they are not affected by the erosion of the spring floods. In the middle of the village, the slender tower of the Lutheran church reaches skyward with its light green sheet metal roof. Behind it, more to the east, you can see the stationary vanes of a few windmills, mostly motionless in the air. A small ravine, which leads toward the Volga, forms the border between the so-called "upper village" and "lower village". Finally, on the northern end of the village, there is a valley that cuts deeply into the countryside. That was the former bed of the Kulalinka River.

We enter Galka from the south. A wide, bumpy road brings us between two rows of somewhat poor-appearing houses past the communal (town) office which is only distinguished from the other buildings by a flagpole which stands in front of it. We get to the center of the village. Here, in the center of a large square, the pretty whitewashed village church reaches heavenward. The wooden building makes quite an imposing impression. The building is surrounded by a stake fence. A few stunted trees grow within this enclosure. From the Church Chronicle, we know that the settlers had already built a church in the 1780's. This church was seemingly not able to meet the growing needs of the colonists. A note from May 3, 1881 in the aforementioned chronicle points out that, on this day, a new church was dedicated. Further, it is noted that on September 21, 1883, the second church was struck by lightning and burned to the ground. It was not until 1892 that a new, third church was dedicated in Galka and this is the one which stands today.

The church is cleanly furnished according to the style of the Lutheran village churches, but with little taste and with two rows of wooden benches with backs attached to them. Seating for the men is located to the right of the main entrance and seating for the women to the left. Two chandeliers, carved out of wood and gilded, hang from the ceiling. They are almost the only decoration in the church. One peculiarity is that the pulpit is located right above the altar about halfway up the wall. It is really more like a small balcony than a pulpit! The colonists are accustomed to this and do not want to give up this arrangement. Similar types of pulpits are found in almost all the German colonies of the Volga area. Since 1898, the church has had a small organ. The "sound of bells" emanates from a simple wooden belfry that stands outside of the enclosure. There are three bells, each with a different tone. The same set-up was found in all of the colonies that I visited. The bells are kept in a special belfry, which is separate from the church building.<sup>31</sup> Not far from the church, on the same square, there is a wooden barn with the community's fire equipment - hoses, barrels, etc. In front of this stands a post with a glass lantern, the only one in the village that is dedicated to the public good. It has apparently been here for a long time and is totally useless for its specified purpose.

Diagonally across from the church, on the northern corner of the square, stands the roomy parsonage. It also has the same green sheet metal roof. As the church chronicle reports, it was built in the first years of the existence of the colony. During the passage of time, it has often been subject to remodeling and to additions, mostly according to the wishes of the then-serving pastor. Today it is a building that is little lacking in comfort compared to parsonages in the West. A pretty, medium-sized, well-maintained fruit garden is next to the main building. Some stalls for horses and cows are also a part of it; behind which there is a small yard for the storage of farm equipment as well as the materials used for fuel.



Further along the Volga side of the square we take note of the relatively roomy schoolhouse. Galka already had a schoolhouse about the year 1780. In the year 1850, a new schoolhouse was built which was 12 faden long and 6 faden wide. [84 x 42 ft.]<sup>32</sup> At the same time, this schoolhouse also serves as the place for community meetings. In the winter, because the church cannot be heated, worship services are also held here. The whole structure consists of one spacious, bright room filled with school benches. The small altar for the winter church services is located on one wall. The usual teacher's desk stands in front of it.

The above-mentioned settlement office is situated on the same side of the square where the schoolhouse is located. This is the headquarters for the mayor and his office.

Now we go down to the Volga. Here there is a small, motorized mill that is known to the villagers by the name of "Feuermuehl" (Fire Mill). It stands there quite unpretentiously and now represents the {new} competition by an important power source, which needs to be noted. It stands across from eight windmills built in the Dutch style that are located in a semi-circle on the raised side of the village. Several drawing wells, which have been dug into the clay subsoil of the land, are located close to the Volga. They provide the daily supply of water and also, as evidenced by the long wooden troughs that are located at the foot of each well, serve as cattle-watering troughs. Several other such wells are found further away in the valley of the Kulalinka. There we also see the huge and very impressive granary that serves this area. It belongs to a milling company in Saratov. At the edge of the village, lined up with the windmills, the visitor will note the two community granaries. They are simple gray buildings constructed of boards. Still further towards the west, on a plateau that runs close alongside the village, we take note of the "new" village cemetery. It has almost no trees and is surrounded by a plastered clay brick wall that is almost 1 ½ arschins [42 inches] high. The "old" cemetery is located a little below the new one and somewhat closer to the Volga.

Apart from three blacksmith shops, four small stores "for general goods", a crown [state] liquor store and a seldom-frequented "Beer hall", which are all scattered about the village and outwardly insignificant, we have now viewed all the important sights in the village.

The village has been laid out according to a plan developed by the "Bureau for Foreign Settlers" [the Kontor] in Saratov. Because of this, it is set up as a fairly regular squared-off piece of land. It is about one verst in length and ½ verst in width. [0.6 X 0.3 miles] Four streets lead down to the Volga and four run through the village parallel to the river. There is only the odd little side lane.

Let us now examine, in greater detail, one of the normal farmers' properties. The home properties are almost all of the same size and are 15 faden wide [105 ft.], 30 faden [210 ft.] long (a so-called "entire" property), and are all set up in the same way. [Approx. ½ acre.] And yet there are two different kinds of houses here; the "simple one" of a length of 5 faden [35 ft.], or the "double" house, which is 7 faden [49 ft.] in length. The width is the same for both kinds of houses; about 3-3.5 faden [21-24.5 ft.]. A property with a "simple" house is set up in the following way. On the side facing the street, next to the neighboring property, there is a space (of land) which is 2/3 of a faden [4 ½ ft.] wide and which cannot be planted because of the danger of fire. The house is located next to it and is 5 faden [35 ft.] long. The property yard gate, which also contains a smaller door, is 2 faden [14 ft.] long. Then there is another free space that is about 4 faden [28 ft.] long.



The cookhouse, which is 3.5 faden long and 2 faden wide [24.5 X 14ft], is the last building. It extends right up to the fence shared with the neighbor. Two cellars are located in the front yard, which is 14 faden [98 ft] wide. One of them is an ice cellar and is more of a deep hole that has been dug vertically into the ground. It has a wooden covering. It is a place to preserve summer supplies that spoil easily. This would include milk, butter, meat and similar items. One climbs a ladder down into the cellar. The other one, the so-called "domed" cellar, is walled up on the inside with fieldstones. A set of wooden steps leads from the covered cellar house up to the "cellar neck" and down into the domed cellar. This is where most of the supply of potatoes for the household is kept. Of course the ice cellar is not utilized at all throughout the winter. A little further on, closer to the end of the front yard, is the place where the pig barns are located. The space between the front and the back yards, about 3 faden [21 ft.] wide, is the place where cattle stalls, wagon sheds and granaries are found. They are situated as follows: first the cow barn (3 faden wide = 21 ft.), then the chicken coop (1.5 faden = 10.5 ft.), horse stall (3 faden = 21 ft.), wagon shed (4.5 faden = 31.5 ft.) and the granary (3 faden = 21 ft.). The horse and cow stalls are built to hold 8 animals each.

The wagon shed has a gate that opens to the front yard and one that opens to the back yard. A sheep stall covered with a roof is located in the rear yard on the far side of the granary. From time to time it is also used as a storage place for a wagon. Lastly, in the far corner of the back yard there is a very primitive room, covered with straw, that is used to store the fuel that is used in Galka, the "Miststeine" (literally manure stones). One quarter of the way up the far wall of horse as well as cow barns there is a hole through which the manure is removed from the stalls into the back yard. This manure is divided up into two layers and then is dried in order to become manure stone. The rest of the empty space in the back yard is, without exception, used as a plot for rows of vegetables. A farm property with a "double" house is set up in exactly the same manner as the above-mentioned one with the singular difference that the space on the side facing the street, between the yard gate and the cookhouse, is not 4 but only 2 faden [14 ft.] wide. It would be too much to describe in detail all of the buildings here. For the most part, they are very roughly built of wood or made of clay bricks. In contrast, the inside furnishings of the farmer's home are of greater interest. [See the drawing of the yard and double house plan. 60 ]

The entrance to the house is always located on the property side of the yard. It is found above a small, covered outside stairway (sometimes this is lacking). The colonists called it a "krylets", a somewhat distorted way of pronouncing the Russian word. The "double" house is furnished in the following manner. Via the entrance door you enter the dark vestibule or "Hausern". Usually there is a ladder that goes up to the attic. To the right of the vestibule, there is a door that leads into the room for the "alte Leute" (old people); that is for the master and the mistress of the home. This room is 1.5 faden [about 10.5 X approx. 22 ft.] wide and is as long as the width of the entire house. A window is located on each of the smaller walls. If the house is a corner house with its wide side facing the street, then there are two windows located there as well. Whoever enters this room through the vestibule, immediately notices the huge "Himmelbett" (heavenly bed). It fills up the opposite corner. Feather pillows, firmly stuffed, are piled up here behind the pleated drapes. The pillows are piled up almost to the ceiling. In any case, this is the showpiece of the house. It is set up like this with much painstaking care. The heavy wooden trunk, which is usually painted reddish brown or yellow, is next to the door. It is the place where the winter clothes and the good clothes are stored. In most cases it is also where the



money is kept.

There is also a thinly upholstered couch in the room. It is placed against the wall. It is there for the "Nachmittagsstundchen" (afternoon nap). A bench, which is wooden and painted, stands along the rest of the wall. A solid table completes the furnishings. Very seldom one sees a dresser or several chairs. Devout religious verses such as those on the "Konfirmandenschein" (confirmation certificate) hang on the walls. There are yellowed photographs, in simple frames, of dear relatives in America or somewhere else in the wide world. Finally, there are also some color prints of members of the royal family. The flat oven, which is more like a stove, is built to project into the room. It is located in the kitchen, which is next to the above-mentioned room. The brightly polished warming kettles are placed into the upper part of the oven. The oven, just as is the case with the "Himmelbett" heavenly bed, is a steady cause for concern for the mother of the house. Woe if even the smallest piece of white mortar, which covers its upper outside layer, should split off! The scene that is before us is a friendly one; the sun beams through the small glass windows into the room and causes all the white objects to shine and alights on the wrinkled cheeks of the "old people". They usually sit in their little corner rarely working and are quietly lost in thought, with their hands folded. Sometimes green plants are placed on the windowsills and fill the small room with a special aroma.

We enter the kitchen. This is a simple room with one window. It is the same size as the vestibule; the oven in the room belonging to the old folks is stoked from here. A second oven in the kitchen also heats the room belonging to the married children. Both of these ovens, which extend from the kitchen to the bedrooms, can also be utilized as stoves. Because of this, the old and young people can cook separately. There is nothing to be noted in the kitchen besides a few wooden racks that are on the wall or on the ceiling in order to hang up braided onions or in order to dry the laundry.

From here we enter the room of the "Kinder" (children) that is 4 faden long and 3-3.5 faden wide [28 X 22 ft.] and which consequently takes up over one-half of the house. Usually this room makes a bit of a disorderly impression. This is usually the result of the fact that two to three couples are living together here and they may often crowd one another. In the rarest of instances the room is divided into two parts by a "Spanish wall". One also finds the same "Himmelbett" heavenly beds as in the aforementioned room.

These have perhaps not been set up in as orderly a manner and do not have as many feather pillows as the others. A large table fills up the space in the one corner of the room, which is opposite the kitchen door. Behind this, there are wooden benches that are situated alongside two walls. The family beds are in the two other corners. There are four or five windows here; two on each side where the benches are located. There is also one that looks out onto the yard. If the room is inhabited by a third family, then this fifth window is missing and, in its place, a bed is set up next to the wall. The wooden bedsteads of the older children can be pushed under the "Himmelbett" heavenly beds during the daytime. At night they are pulled out again. If there are infants present in the family, then a small wooden crib, which is similar to a box without a covering, is hung from the ceiling. Here the crib floats about freely in the air suspended by four strong lengths of rope. From there it is so close to the foot of the bed that it can be set in proper motion at any time. There is usually a wooden trunk as well and with it the room furnishings are thereby complete.



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censuses" which were customary in Russia during the years leading up to the freeing of the serfs, he gives us the following table.

**Table I.**

	Year	No. of Families	Number of Souls		
			Male	Female	Altogether
5.	Rev. 1788	49	146	139	285
6.	Rev. 1798	65	191	189	380
7.	Rev. 1816	94	332	337	669
8.	Rev. 1834	178	640	658	1298
9.	Rev. 1850	218	970	875	1845
10.	Rev. 1857	176	1037	967	2004

Compared to the figures stated in the Church Chronicle, there does not seem to be any real difference. There are only differences in the various parts of the chronicle regarding that which one understands under the term "family". I am also going to include a table (II) of the numbers of people in Galka between the years 1849-73. I have put collated this from the continuous notes in the Chronicle. I obtained the figures for the years 1903 and for 1905-08 from the pastor of the Ust-Kulalinka church parish. I found the figures for 1897-1902, 1904, 1909 and 1910 in the "Friedensboten-Kalender" (Messenger of Peace Calendar).<sup>35</sup>

**Table II**

Year	Numbers of Souls			Year	Number of Souls		
	male	female	total		male	female	total
1849	916	898	1814	1874 - 87	-	-	-
1850	980	884	1864	1888			2709
1851	995	899	1894	1889			2725
1852	1018	921	1939	1890			2725
1853	1018	913	1931	1891			2626
1854	1037	928	1975	1892			-
1855	950	899	1849	1893			2717
1856	976	912	1888	1894			2744
1857	981	933	1914	1895			2744
1858	1062	988	2050	1896			-
1859	1052	989	2041	1897			2828
1860	638	597	1235	1898			2815
1861	654	614	1268	1899			2907
1862	695	667	1362	1900			2955
1863	-	-	-	1901			2995
1864	753	734	1487	1902			3059
1865	792	773	1565	1903	583	1567	3150
1866	817	784	1601	1904	-	-	3033
1867	847	810	1657	1905	1647	1613	3260
1868	892	847	1739	1906	1671	1642	3313
1869	984	889	1873	1907	1702	1660	3362
1870	1009	905	1914	1908	1730	1677	3407
1871	1040	910	1950	1909	-	-	3379
1872	1067	937	2004	1910	-	-	3426
1873	973	980	1953				

If we set the number of the first immigrants to Galka at the round figure of 200, which



somewhat justifies the previously stated estimate, and we compare it to with the number of souls recorded in Table II for the year 1910 = 3,426 inhabitants, then it shows that during the period of approximately 145 years there was seventeen-fold increase in the population. This impressive figure is significantly higher when one considers that Galka was also affected by the emigration movement that caused many German colonist families from the Volga to move to the Caucasus, to Siberia and especially to America.

Both the years 1859 and 1860 are also important in order to understand the population increase in Galka. Table IIa gives us the following data:

**Table IIa**

Year	Number of Souls		
	male	female	total
1859	1052	989	2041
1860	638	597	1235

The aforementioned "Church Chronicle" gives us insight as to the peculiar results of the figures. Amongst other data, we read the following for the year 1860: "During this year 386 families from this local parish resettled on the Weisenseite (Meadow Side) of the Volga close to the Yeruslan River (to the so-called salt-tract), of whom 101 were families from Ust-Kulalinka, with 419 males and 414 females; a total of 833 souls."... This emigration is explained by the decision that was confirmed by the royal ministerial committee. According to this, the German colonies in the province of Saratov were apportioned 15 desyatins of land per person according to the 8<sup>th</sup> census revision (1840).<sup>36</sup> The colonists of Galka received their added portion in the above-mentioned area of the Meadow Side and sent 101 families there. If this migration had not taken place, the enormously high rate of growth for the population of Galka would probably even be significantly higher. [The founding of Neu Galka on the Jeruslan.]

In 1850, the "Church Chronicle" registers a migration to the Caucasus as the result of a complete crop failure. The majority of the emigrants turned back again when they were halfway there. In the year 1875, the chronicle also reports that the introduction of military service for the colonists had affected them deeply and that in many of them the desire was awakened to remove themselves from service in the military by emigrating. In the year 1866 we read: "There were numerous emigrations to America caused by the fear of compulsory military service" - and also in the year 1887: "Many families emigrated to America and lastly, in the year 1891: "A entirely bad season! Many emigrated to America."

The information, which I received from the Galka colony office regarding the emigration movement, is generally very sparse. What I was able to actually determine was only the fact that there was a strong emigration movement to America in the years 1899 and 1900 and that this movement resumed anew in the year 1907. Since the year 1906, 200 male souls have immigrated to America. They kept their land apportionment. However, as I heard, a large number of colonists have relinquished the right of ownership to their piece of home property. I was not able to ascertain the numbers of these colonists. During the summer of this year (1910), a further number of 16-17 families want to emigrate to America because, as it was decided to divide the land, they may now have the possibility of selling their portion of land.

The fact as to why the population of Galka still increased significantly despite all of these movements and emigrations is explained by the following factors. On the one hand the



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migration of the colonists is made very difficult by the government as well as by the community itself. This was especially true during the first years after the founding of the colonies. The government officials were concerned about the eventual desire of the settlers to return back to Germany (at that time such attempts were very frequent). They set up impossible hurdles for these people. Even the "movement to the city" was never of great import in the German Volga colonies. Last but not least the conservative feelings of the people, with which they are born here, are a strong influence. This conservative feeling has formed the sedentary character of the population.

In so far as the relationship between the numbers of the male and female sexes is concerned, I can only refer to the years 1849-73 as well as to 1903 and to 1905-08. This is because of a lack of pertinent material. According to this data there were the following numbers of males per 100 female persons and this according to the five-year average:

**Table III.**

1849-53	109.0
1854-58	107.4
1859-63	106.0
1864-68	103.9
1869-73	109.8

And on average for the six years 1903-08 102.1

From the table it is clearly evident that there is a tendency in Galka for the numbers of both sexes in Galka to be equalized. Concerning the five years from 1869-73 with its very high number of males in the population, an explanation for the same is perhaps partially to be found in the information in the "Church Chronicle" for these years. During these years there were several good harvests noted in Galka. For this reason more than the usual number of field workers was required. This situation probably acted as a restriction for the emigration of male members of the community. The "Church Chronicle" also gives information in regard to the numbers of births and deaths in Galka during the years 1849-73. As a result of this data, I have collated the following tables (IV and V).

**Table IV**

The average for the years	boys	girls	for 100 girls there were the following number of boys
1849-53	48.2	41.6	113.5
1854-58	50.6	51.8	97.7
1859-63	58.5	55.0	106.4
1864-68	56.8	53.4	106.3
1869-73	58.2	55.4	105.0



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### Table V

#### Numbers of deaths

average for the years 1000 inhabitants      the average number of deaths per

	males	females	together	males	females	together
1849-53	33.8	35.4	69.2	17.9	18.7	36.6
1854-58	28.8	26.6	55.4	14.9	13.7	28.6
1859-63	38.25	29.0	67.25	25.9	19.7	45.6
1864-68	24.2	23.4	47.6	15.0	14.5	29.5
1869-73	28.2	26.2	54.4	14.5	13.5	28.0

This table (V) indicates that the average number of deaths per 1000 inhabitants was especially high during the years 1849-53 and 1859-63. In regard to this first five-year period, we do again find some references in the "Church Chronicle" which can serve in order to clarify this fact. Here there is a report of a completely "failed harvest" for the year 1850; the year 1853 reports that there was "hot fever" in Galka. The church chronicle gives no information in regard to the high numbers of deaths in the years 1859-63.

The following Table (VI) indicates that you can hardly speak of an exodus of the population from Galka which is worth mentioning (apart from the years 1859/63, in which, as was indicated earlier, 833 souls from Galka moved to settle over on the Meadow Side).

### Table VI

	1849-53	1854-58	1859-63	1864-68	1869-73
births	448	512	459 <sup>37</sup>	550	568
deaths	346	277	269 <sup>38</sup>	238	272
surplus of births/deaths	+102	+235	+190	+322	+296
increase in population	+117	+119	-593 <sup>39</sup>	+252	+224

The great majority of the adult male population of Galka is mainly employed in the occupation of agriculture. The number of people who work mainly as trades people is small. However, one can yet truly refer to a list of occupations. The following Table (VII)<sup>40</sup> is meant to describe more clearly that which has been stated.



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**Table VII**

Years	Souls	of whom are mainly tradesmen	as % of people	of whom a trade is their main occupation	as a % of pop.
1906	3313	35	1.05 %	-	-
1908	3407	53	1.55 %	39	1.14%
1909	3379	51	1.5 %	37	1.09 %

It remains for a summary of the buildings that can be found in Galka to be listed at the end of this section. There is a Lutheran church here as well as a Baptist prayer house, both constructed of wood. The buildings which belong to the community are as follows: one school house, one sexton's residence, two granaries, one fire hall, one community blacksmith's shop and four water mills

The mills that are located in the village can be classified in the following way:

Motor driven mills - 1      Water driven mills - 4      Wind driven mills - 8

(All of the above are constructed of wood)

The statistical figures from the Galka colonists' office state the number of out buildings ("not used as dwellings") for the years 1908 and 1909 as being 1,012. Of these, there are: the summer kitchens (bake houses) of which every property has one. They are constructed of clay mixed with sandstone {bricks}. The following table indicates the distribution of the inhabitants per dwelling.

**Table VIII**

Year	number of souls	dwellings	average number of souls per each dwelling
1860	-	165	-
1886	-	199	-
1891	-	202	-
1893	-	204	-
1906	3313	232	14.3
1908	3407	238	14.3
1909	3379	238	14.2

The number of out buildings, compared with the number of dwellings in Galka during the years 1908 and 1909 shows that for each "farmyard" in Galka, (or each dwelling; these terms are almost always synonymous as used here) there are an average of 4.2 - 4.3 outbuildings.

According to nationality, the population of Galka is comprised almost exclusively of Germans. The only exceptions are 10-11 Russians who come to Galka in August of every year from the province of Simbirsk in order to practice their trade as felt-makers. They leave the locality each January. Besides this there is also a tanner of Russian nationality in Galka.

According to their confession of faith, the inhabitants of Galka are entirely Lutherans; only



0.9% of the population is made up of Baptists; one belongs to the Greek Orthodox Church.

The language of the colonists is German and, to be sure, is composed of a mixture of the original homeland idioms of the settlers. The Hessian dialect predominates. Every once in a while a few French words are used. One often hears the words "charmant" {charming} and "Plaisier-Vergnuegen" {pleasure-enjoyment}. The influence of Russian on the language is very minimal here. In several other German colonies on the Volga it is a much stronger influence than in Galka. The relative purity of the German mother tongue in this colony is doubtlessly a result of the fact that Russian government until recently did not especially emphasize school instruction in the Russian language here. Apart from this, the fact is to be noted that, from the beginning, the German population of the Volga colonies on the whole, and in particular in Galka, practiced quite a blunt, rejecting attitude toward the Russian serf population which had a much lower level of culture. This fact certainly was a factor in helping to make the colonists somewhat old-fashioned in terms of economics and of education. On the other hand however, because of this it became possible for the German culture in the Volga colonies to be remain more or less pure right up to the present.

### **C) Administration**

The agencies of local administration in Galka are the following: 1. the community assembly and 2. the so-called "colony office". The community assembly forms a small village parliament, to which every single "property" sends one representative. As a rule this is the respective head of the family, the "Hausvater" {house father} - in the case of illness or absence of the same, he is represented by the next-eldest member of the family -, with the exception of the women, who are not at all allowed to cast votes here. The community assembly is usually called into session during the winter. In any case it is called into session, as much as is possible, when there is no more work to be done in the fields. It usually is held on a Sunday afternoon.

During this season a meeting is announced according to need every two to three weeks. The meeting place is always the schoolhouse. Attendance at these assemblies is not obligatory except when a "strenge" (strict) assembly takes place. This means that items of special importance are to be resolved or if the responsible local government official for land management is present. The person who absents himself without excuse must pay a penalty in the amount of one ruble. A town crier who goes up and down the streets in the village always announces the assemblies in advance. At the same time he adds to his announcement whether or not the assembly is a "strict" one or not.

The responsibilities and powers of the community assembly are quite extensive. The election of officials for the administration of the village must take place here. Colonists who desire to leave the community can be allowed to leave only by means of a vote of the assembly. Decisions are made here to exclude or remove members of the community if they have in some way or other incurred the displeasure of their fellow citizens. The main work of the community assembly has to do with the examination and judgment of complaints and proposals in regard to the needs of the community as well as the decision in regard to the amount of tax that is levied on each single "property". Lastly, the community has to deal with the examination of the reports given by the local officials and, if necessary, approve them. Every resolution of the assembly becomes a "Beschluss"



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(decision - adopted motion) only if it has been signed by at least 2/3 of the voters. In order to come into effect, each of these decisions must first be passed on to the responsible government official for land management. The latter has the responsibility of examining the legality and usefulness of the same and thereafter to affirm or to reject the "decision".

The "Colony Office" which is the regular administrative authority in Galka is composed of the community administrator (mayor) and the village clerk (secretary). The mayor and a candidate for the office of administrator (vice-mayor) are elected anew by the community assembly every three years. If the mayor must, for some reason or other, resign from his office during the time between two elections, the vice-mayor immediately takes his place.

The office of the village clerk, in contrast to both of the previously mentioned offices, is conferred upon the individual by the community for an indefinite period of time. The colony office, which includes the mayor and the clerk, has to take care of all current business of the village administration, must collect the various village taxes from the colonists, must call meetings of the community assembly of which he is the chairman and must present a report on his activities. Besides this the mayor also has to see to it that the peace is kept in the village. Individuals among the farmers who are unruly may be imprisoned by him and kept there until further notice. A paid so-called "day watchman" is at the disposition of the colony office. He is usually one of the poorer colonists and is responsible for taking messages to people on behalf of the mayor or the clerk. If something needs to be announced in the community, he has the responsibility of being the town crier. He has the same responsibility at public auctions. While the mayor is to function among the colonists more through his public appearances and act as a peacemaker when there are disagreements among various parties, it is the duty of the clerk to give exact information in regard to all the members of the community when it comes to questions regarding the same. The two representatives of these offices in Galka do, according to my personal observations, function in their respective offices in a very adroit manner.

The annual expenses of the community of Galka can be divided into the following main categories: 1. Crown taxes, 2. Zemstvo levies; these are the obligatory contributions of the individual communities of a 'county' for the expenses that the zemstvo has to cover in regard to various improvements in regard to economic and social programs in the same county which are of benefit for the rural communities. 3. Obligatory contributions for the expenses of the Volost-self-administration. 4. Expenses of the village self-administration. Besides these main general items, two further small expenses are the responsibility of the community and, to be sure, they are (a) a yearly levy for the "administration of the fishing industry and the hunting of seals in the Caspian Sea and on the Volga". This is a contribution of 21 rubles and 16 kopecks. This an obligatory contribution toward the administrative costs of the above-mentioned institutions which, on their part, take care that there is a closed season in the fishing industry between May 15<sup>th</sup> and July 15<sup>th</sup>. (b) An annual contribution for the support of the "Central School in Katharinenstadt" {today this is the city of Marx}. This consists of a contribution of 41 rubles and 86 kopecks.

Crown taxes such as the zemstvo levies are assessed according to the number of desyatins of "usable" agricultural land and, to be sure, this takes place in the following manner: On an annual basis, a tax evaluation is sent to the county office of the zemstvo. In this tax evaluation the total sum of the crown taxes and zemstvo levies are listed (in separate



places). The county office calculates the figure for the share of taxes for each individual community according to this tax evaluation. The taxes are then divided among the individual "properties" according to the size of the amount of agricultural land area that has been planted. In a similar way, the rest of the community expenses are divided among the individual "properties" of the village. The basis for the assessment of taxes when the expenses for the Volost as well as the village self-administration are calculated is, apart from the area of "useful" arable land utilized by each "property", also the number and type of animals which belong to the "property" and which are sent to graze on the community pasture.

Besides the noted tax expenses, a tax from various businesses also goes to the zemstvo - as examples; for fishing rights {leases} and for the mills which are located in Galka. The expenses of the community, as they are annually assigned by the crown assessment agency that comes through the Estates via the volost administration, accordingly are the following:<sup>42</sup>

1. Crown taxes.....	337 rubles 84 kopecks
2. Levies to the Estates.....	2,378 rubles 78 kopecks
3. For the "administration of the fisheries industry etc.".....	21 rubles 16 kopecks
Altogether: .....	2,737 rubles 78 kopecks

As far as the sums which need to be sent to the volost are concerned, one must consider on the one hand the obligatory contribution of the community for the expenses of the Volost administration as well as the part of the salary which is apportioned to the congregation {community and congregation among the Germans in Russia were usually synonymous with each other} for the pastor of the church parish and for the assistant of the dean of the "Hilly Side" who resides in Saratov. Accordingly, the expenses of the community consisted of the following for the year 1909.

1. Contribution of the community toward the expenses of the volost self-administration	954 rubles 88 kopecks
2. Expenses of the village self-administration	1,946 rubles - kopecks
3. Support of the "Central School of Katharinenstadt"	41 rubles 86 kopecks
Altogether:.....	2,942 rubles. 74 kopecks

The main expense items of the village self-administration are the following:

Salaries:

of the mayor .....	70 rubles
of the clerk.....	450 rubles
of the schoolmaster.....	450 rubles
of the Russian teacher.....	60 rubles
of the watchmen (forest, field, community armory watchmen).....	about 500 rubles
of the village carrier (carter).....	160 rubles
for the village fire department.....	about 113 rubles

As well as the above, there are also several minor expenses for the repair of buildings, for a recruiting office etc. Altogether the community of Galka had to come up with the following figure for taxes and for levies in the year 1909:



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A. Crown taxes and zemstvo levies	2,737 rubles 78 kopecks
B. Expenses for the volost & Village self-administration	2,942 rubles 74 kopecks
Total	5,680 rubles 52 kopecks

This sum is covered by the community in the following manner. Public sources of revenue can be noted as follows:

- a) the public pasture. Every colonist pays 30 kopecks for each mature head of large animals {cattle and horses} that belongs to him and is driven to the community pasture.
- b) gardens and "Gumnen"; the latter is understood as the fenced in threshing-floors upon which, at the same time, the winter supply of hay and straw is stored. The expense consists of  $\frac{1}{2}$  kopeck per square faden. [One square faden = an area of approximately 49 square feet]
- c) the forest. The tax for the cutting of wood in the forest is collected from each family and is called "family money". It annually fluctuates between 2 and 4 rubles.
- d) leased communal property
- e) the so-called "Americaner land".

The last-mentioned source of income for the community, by which a large portion of all taxes, about 42%, are covered, needs to be explained more thoroughly as it sheds a special light not only upon all the legal views of the colonists but also to a certain extent upon the work of the higher administrative agencies. This source of income can be described in the following way. Whoever had previously moved to America did not need any special permission from the community, but only needed to obtain a special passport for foreign countries. Among this group of emigrants, whoever did not return for the periodic division of land was considered to be "missing", and the community confiscated his land. If such an "American" did not shrink from taking the long journey and appeared on time for the re-division of land in his home community, then he could, in the meantime, lease out his property and had a continuous right to the same. At the time of the last division of land in Galka in the year 1898, the community became aware of the fact that in actuality every new "American" had to be released on the basis of a community decision (vote), before he could leave. Pressure was put on these people: - the decision of the community in regard to the release of the respective party who wanted to go to America was denied for so long that it came to the point he relinquished his rights to his portion of land in favor of the community. The latter always happened. This was done in such a way that during the first two years all emigrants still retained the rights to their share. If they did not return after that, then the land was simply "taken" by the community. For seven years, from 1898 until 1905, this was done in an arbitrary manner without having the community make a decision. Of course, each decision had to be affirmed by the government official responsible for land management. A community decision was to be made in regard to the matter in the year 1905. This motion was not, however, passed as it had been signed by less than  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the voters. Of course, because of this, the decision could not be forwarded to the government official responsible for land management. So everything remained the way it had been before. The so-called "land belonging to the Americans" was, however, auctioned off on a yearly basis and the proceeds from this were considered to be net income for the community. It was used to pay off the rest of taxes for which the community bore responsibility. This was the sum of about 2-3,000 rubles. On November 9, 1906 an imperial decree directed toward the Acting Senate was promulgated which made the transition to private property significantly easier. After the year 1907 the



emigrants began, based on this decree, to make sure that their share of the property was "determined"; that is to have their property holdings in future guaranteed by the community. Soon after this happened, the earlier emigrants to America also managed to have their old and discarded rights to the land validated by the community. None of them took the issue to a court of law. They were able to come to a good compromise so that all parties were satisfied. As of the next year, after the entire community has changed over to private property, both parties will then be satisfied.

It is the case with the Galka colonists that a special viewpoint has developed here. Because of this viewpoint, they feel that they have the right to deny further rights to inherited land to those settlers who have left the home colony. This is also a viewpoint that has, in the meantime, not been entirely static. This is exemplified by the fact that the motion made in 1905 has not yet been ratified by the community. It can hardly be the case that the government official responsible for land management in Galka has not somehow privately heard of this news and therefore it is hard to understand why he has not, as a result of his so-called power of trusteeship in regard to the individual villages, ordered that it come to an end. Because of the profits from the "land belonging to the Americans", each individual inhabitant of the village has only a small annual tax payment that he has to make. To be sure, this will be radically altered as of next year. The taxes will become much more of a significant issue with each person.

Besides the aforementioned financial burdens, the inhabitants of Galka have several payments that must be made in kind. Their value, when calculated in terms of money, is not an insignificant amount. This work, which every single inhabitant of Galka is obliged to carry out and from which no one can be freed, is called "frohnnden" {compulsory labor}. There are quite a number of kinds of compulsory labor. For the purpose of facilitating an easier division of this compulsory labor, the number of village families is divided up into six groups. There is also labor that requires that all the people work in the service of the community at the same time. Most of this united form of service is the aid given when fire breaks out in the village. In case of fire, everyone must immediately come to the place where the fire has broken out and help with fighting against it. He has to arrive with that fire-fighting equipment which he has in his possession; a barrel, pails or just with his own strength in his own two hands. In the same way, all the adult men in the village are sent out into the field by the mayor if an accident has taken place somewhere out there. This could be when someone has gotten lost during a storm and another such instance. A common work front is also required in the battle against the greatest enemy in the Volga region. This is the "Zieselmaus" (ground-squirrel). These rodents devastate the fields. Annually, every family in the village is required to deliver a certain number of their tails to the colony office. If someone delivers fewer than his quota, he must pay a fine. Lastly, the wood for the heating of the schoolhouse must be chopped in a community effort and brought to its place of future use. Every family must deliver a "Scheiter" (pile); that is wood that has been cut and split one faden long and one arschin high. [7 ft X 42 in.]

Every year five faden [35 feet] of the best wood from the reserves set aside for the schoolhouse are selected and delivered to the Volost office. In earlier times, when there were still wolves, there was an annual wolf hunt determined for a particular day in which the whole county area participated. The men in all the villages had to go. This activity, as I have heard, provided a great deal of diversionary enjoyment for all concerned. Up until just three years ago, the entire community of Galka had to systematically roam through



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the entire Island of Galkin in order to look for wolves.

Those compulsory community labor efforts which require the services of one-sixth of the populace at a time, are the following: When the roads through the community land are in bad shape because of rain or because of the spring run-off, then each family must send a worker for the necessary work as needed for the repairs. As there are six main roads that run through the Galka village land, every "sixth" has one road to keep in a state of good repair. Every section works under the leadership of a "desyatnik" (foreman) who has been appointed to the position by the mayor.

Another common work duty is that during the winter and after strong snowfalls all the communal roads must be marked off by bundles of straw that are tied to sticks set down on both sides of the road. The same roads must once again be packed down right to the side of the road after a snowstorm. In the fall, the settlers go out to another special type of work - to "Dammachen" {to make a dam} As soon as the community has decided to construct dams against the spring high water, all must join in the work - on the first day, the first "sixth" works and so on. Whoever owns horses or oxen, has to work with them; the poorer people just work with a shovel. The fact that the poor contribute relatively little to the communal work effort generally is justified by the colonists because they state that the poor people need a dam less than the rich people.

The women of Galka must also carry out "compulsory labor". They are divided up into "sixths" just as the men are and their work consists of a twice-annual general cleaning of the church as well as of the schoolhouse. In this manner, only four "sixths" of the women have work to do for the good of the community during a given year.

There is one other act of "compulsory labor" in Galka. This labor is carried out by the individual families. This work is the night watch in the village. Four families must watch the streets every night. In order to make sure that the families do it, they have to report by knocking on the mayor's window each night at 1:00 a.m. Of course this is not a very effective means of reporting, as the people can quietly go home again after 1:00 a.m. This is, from time to time, supposed to even be the case in Galka. Two years ago, following a community decision, two night watchmen were hired for a period of two years. This way of carrying out the work was still more disadvantageous for the community than the first way. As I heard it, the night watchmen pocketed their earnings and did not keep watch at all. In earlier times, there was another kind of compulsory labor service in Galka. If there was a mentally ill person in the village, he had to be watched so that he was not able to hurt himself or to hurt others. This very unpleasant task of watching these people has now been delegated to a person who is willing to do it and who receives a wage for doing so. This wage is about 10 rubles per month.

From discussions that I have had with various colonists in Galka, I could determine that everyone in the village gladly and willingly did the "compulsory community labor". This is an old traditional custom and the work is carried out in equal measure by all concerned.

In so far as the activities of the higher agencies of administration are concerned, I can only report very little from first-hand experience. According to the statements by the colonists here in Galka, the first Land Captain (1891), a lawyer, had been a very capable individual. He had gotten rid of abuses in the volosty and colony offices. Up to that time, the taxes



and levies had only been collected from the farmers on a completely arbitrary basis. The amount of taxation was not checked over by anyone. The surplus ended up in the pockets of the mayor and the clerk. The same Land Captain had also worked tirelessly to hinder the general destruction of the few areas of forest around Galka. He did this by issuing various regulations. The present Land Captain seems to be very popular among the farmers. He has shown a lively interest in the local question regarding land. Thanks especially to his activity in regard to the change in the community to private land ownership; this community decision in Galka was attained with a high majority of favorable votes.

The community of Galka receives material aid from the Estates, which has constructed dams over several ravines in the communal land area and has had dams built. It also receives material aid from the "Department of the Charitable Institutions of the Czarina Maria". The funds from this department, which have been designated for Galka, amount to about 2,000 rubles. Last year, the government took seven desyatins of poor land near the village which is now, for this money, being cultivated and forested by workers from Galka in order to return it back to the community six years later as a part of its indivisible property.

As such, the village community of Galka is completely debt-free. This took place when, during the fall of the previous year, [1909] the loan which had been given by the government to the colony during years of emergencies and for which payment had until then been delayed, had been collected with quite a bit of severity on the part of the Estates. At the same time, strict attention was paid to the fact that the storage granaries of the community were filled with the required amount of grain.

Despite the relatively excellent harvest of the previous summer, some of the farmers were not pleased that they had to take care of these two responsibilities so suddenly. Many of them were forced to directly buy grain in order to take care of the delivery that they had to make to the storage granary. Upon a petition by the mayor to the Land Captain, half of the grain which had been transported there for storage was given back again to the farmers for seeding in the spring. However, the other half, about 10,000 pud<sup>43</sup> [400,000 lbs.] is lying quite unused and under lock and key in the granaries. The good harvests of the previous year have given the farmers new courage and new hope for the future after many years of poor harvests. The unexpected strict demand for the debts from the Estates has taken away the chance from many to make use of the favorable business situation. On the other hand, people in Galka now feel completely free of debt and this makes up, to a certain degree, for the expensive efforts necessary during the winter. Some farmers had to do without enough food and some had to put one's son or daughter out to service with another person when he had hoped to keep them at home during this winter.

This evil time is now at an end in Galka. Everyone somehow got over it, for all stuck together.

#### **D.) Economic Life**<sup>44</sup>

##### **1. The Agriculture**

The soil conditions for agriculture are not particularly favorable in Galka. According to Minch<sup>45</sup>, the soil of the entire community land here consists of up to ½ sand, ¼ of the



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same is covered with a layer of black soil ("chernosyem") at a depth of 6 vershok up to one arschin. [10 to 21 in.] The rest of the area, also about  $\frac{1}{4}$  is loamy and is nitrous (has potassium nitrate) mixed with rocks. The lower layer of the soil here everywhere consists of red clay. As I learned in Galka, the land gets better the further one is away from the Volga. There are supposed to be places here where the black earth is, at times, as thick as two arschin [42 inches] and sometimes even deeper.

A big disadvantage is the fact that the soil in Galka is very sandy. The spring waters, which rush down from the surrounding heights, easily erode large sections of the fields and form a relatively wide bed down toward the valley. Certainly one could, through the construction of dams in a more careful and a more frequent way deal with this situation in a successful manner. This could be the case except for the fact that no one considers himself responsible to protect something that does not directly affect his personal well-being or personal woes. This is where at this point one of the bad sides of the system of common community land acts as a hindrance<sup>46</sup>. It is only in parts, usually singular isolated cases, where one finds wickerwork which has been set into the ground in deep places and which acts as an effective dam against the melted water.

The community land surrounds the village on three sides; on the fourth side the Volga forms a natural border and on this side we also find the Island of Galkin, which belongs to the community. It has a lot of forests, thickets, good pasture land and hay lands. The entire area of the community land consists of 11,096.8 desyatins [21,961.4 acres] of which 5,923.8 desyatins [15,994.3 acres] is good, "useful" land and the rest, 5,173 desyatins [13,967 acres], is considered to be "bad" land. According to a statistical survey of the "canton" from the year 1886<sup>47</sup>, the amount of arable land in Galka is 3,127.7 desyatins [8445 acres] which is 53 % of the "useful" land; together with the hay land and the pasture, the size of which is about 250 and 1,737.7 desyatins respectively, this figure then includes 86 % of the useful land. According to an old general map of the communal land in Galka, which goes back to about the year 1834, the size of the arable land at that time was about 2,185 desyatins. This means that the land that is now cultivated in Galka has increased by about 942 desyatins during the last 75 years. This equals about 43 % of the arable land that was cultivated at that time.

The arable land of the community of Galka is not contiguous but is located in seven different places. North of the village lies No. 1 of the 7, the field called the "Schwaber Seit" (Suabian Side). This field is divided into three sections, which are all of a different kind of soil fertility. Further north lays No. 2 of the 7, the so-called "Altfeld" (Old Field). This field, which has been cultivated since the beginnings of the settlement of Galka, is considered to be the best land in the community. In earlier times it is supposed to have produced up to 150 pud [6000 lbs.] of wheat per desyatin of land. The land here is divided into eight "Aecker" {literally: acres or sections}. West of the "Old Field" lays No. 3. the field called "die Dreispitz" {the Three Points}, with three sections. Towards the south, there is No. 4, the so-called "Brachfeld ueber dem Dreispitzer Weg" {Fallow Field above the Way to Dreispitz} with 4 sections; then the No. 5, called "Brachfeld unter dem Dreispitzer Weg" {Fallow Land below the Way to Dreispitz}; this is divided into 3 sections. West of this are No. 6 the field called: "die Wueste" {the Desert or the Wilderness} and No. 7 the field which is divided up into six sections called: "ueber der Drugalka" {Above the Drugalka}.

When one enumerates the various fields, it is noted that they are divided up into sections



according to their fertility. This differentiation was noted for the first time during the last re-division of land<sup>48</sup>, which took place twelve years ago, in the year 1898. At present, this differentiation has become completely useless in some places. Using this, there are eleven "sections" in "Old Field", even though, as I found out, the soil is good everywhere. At present all that this signifies is that there is an unnecessary difficulty during the re-division of land. Also, another very disadvantageous factor is the cultivation of parcels of land, which has just been introduced since the last re-division of land in Galka. So, for instance, there are parcels of land that are 2 faden [14 ft.] in width and 80 faden [560 ft.] in length in the field called "Suabian Side". There is nothing left for the "lucky" owner of this strip to do but to either lease it out or himself lease additional land. The largest parcels of land here are 50 X 100 faden [350X700ft] in area. With this division of parcels of land, where in addition, each farmer receives land in up to thirty different places, it becomes a very difficult and expensive thing to cultivate the land. A lot of time and work, of the workers as well as the draft animals is unprofitable. Bringing about a change in this would be the biggest service which could be accomplished following the recent decision to effect the transition of the community over to private property according to which every single farmer is allotted his portion of land in one single location and in one single piece of land.

The re-division of land in Galka is proceeding in such a manner that during the re-division years all farmers must "draw lots" for their piece of land. The way that this is done is that every single man who is entitled to land receives a strip of land in each of the seven fields and here again receives a strip of land in each of the "sections".

A full share of land is called a "dush"<sup>49</sup>. In the year 1898, at the time of the last re-division of land, the community property was, according to the then present numbers of male souls in Galka, divided into 1,560 "dush". At that time, the size of a "dush" was about 7.1 desyatins [19 acres] of land in total, of which 3.8 desyatins were "useful" and 3.3 desyatins were "bad" land. Because of various circumstances such as the death of male members of the family as well as divisions in the family, the size of the land share that each settler in Galka is entitled to is no longer identical with the normal size of a "dush" for the year 1898<sup>50</sup>. Some farmers here own 6-7 dush, others only ½ of a dush. It was not possible for me to find more specific data in regard to property.

As far as the system of agriculture is concerned, it was not too long ago that everything was done in a very unsystematic way. The farmers solely followed the customs of their forefathers. It was only about 9 years ago that the people changed over all the village fields to the three-field system. Thus in the three fields called "Fallow Field under the Way to Dreispitz", "Wilderness" and "Over the Drugalka", the following rotation has been introduced: summer fallow, rye, wheat; each year a whole field lies fallow, while the others are seeded to rye and wheat respectively. In the four other fields, the planting of Arbusen (watermelons) takes the place of wheat. The rotation here is as follows:

1<sup>st</sup> year: "Suabian Side" and ½ of "Old Field": watermelons.

½ "Old Field", "Three Points" and "Fallow Field above the Way to Dreispitz": wheat

2<sup>nd</sup> year: "Dreispitz" (Three Points) and ½ "Old Field": watermelons.

½ "Old Field", "Suabian Side" and "Fallow Field above the Way to Dreispitz": wheat.

3<sup>rd</sup> year: "Fallow Field above the Way to Dreispitz": watermelons, "Old Field", "Dreispitz"



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(Three Points) and "Suabian Side": wheat.

The rotation of watermelons and wheat was introduced because a lot of weeds grow on the fields; the so-called "Hundsmilch" {literally: dog milk}, which can be pulled out easily after every watermelon harvest.

As is easily seen from the data above, it is wheat that is mostly planted in Galka. Thus, according to some data provided by Minch<sup>51</sup>, the comparison of the seeding of wheat, rye and oats for the 1890's can be expressed in the ratios of 15 : 3 : 1. Millet is also planted here in small quantities as well as sunflowers, melons and pumpkins and in addition, during recent years, corn, which is an appropriate fodder for cattle. Potatoes, which grow here, are of a very favorable quality. They are only planted for home needs. The land that is used for this is the so-called "alluvial land" which is close to the shore of the Volga as well as the Galka. The potato gardens go up the slope as far as the water has risen during the spring flood. The potato gardens of Galka comprise an area of 32.5 desyatins [88 acres] of land.

The field work begins at the end of March to the middle of April. As soon as the last snow has melted and the earth has been warmed by the warm rays of the spring sun and has thawed, the true time of awakening actually begins for Galka. A morning is designated in which all the farmers dressed in their finest clothing meet about 6:00 a.m. for the so-called "Hour of Prayer for the Land", a devotion that is held by the pastor. This has hardly come to an end when everyone races home and soon all the gates to the houses open and make way for the working wagons which are loaded down high and pulled by horses or by oxen. The wagons are loaded with different kinds of farm machinery, tools, warm felt blankets to protect against the cold night temperatures out on the fields, and enough food for the days which follow. The entire family, both large and small, follows behind the wagons with happy faces.

Only the elderly and the ill, who are not able to come along, stay at home<sup>53</sup>. After this jolly crowd of people has left the village, it seems as if it is abandoned and has died out. The people only return again when the hardest work has been done or when one has gotten to the point where the strips of apportioned land that are closer to the village are being cultivated.

Out in the fields, vigorous work is taking place. First the land is seeded. The seeding here generally takes place by hand – and is actually done on top of the still uncultivated land. About 4 pud [1 pud = 40 lb, 4 pud = 160 lb.] of seed are used per desyatin. The people are very adept at spreading the seed over the land in a well-distributed fashion. When the seeding has finished, the land is plowed and the clumps of earth are thrown over the seeds. The seeds often fall too deep when the farmers use the iron ploughs which have 2 - 3 shares and the seed does not germinate and grow. For this reason, one is often forced to plough furrows that are 1.5 - 2 vershok deep [2 ½ to 3 ½ in.] instead of being 3-4 vershok deep. In doing so, the soil is often only cultivated superficially. It would be most favorable for a good harvest if one would first plough the land, then rent the drilling machine which is provided by the "canton" for the price of 50 kopecks per diem, then put seed on the land and then to finally harrow it<sup>53</sup>. Unfortunately there is once again a dearth of the necessary numbers of working draft animals which have the energy to do so. These animals are usually too exhausted after the plowing for any other further work. The main mistake



which the farmers commit here during their field work seems to lie in the fact that they want to cultivate too much land all at once – more than that which is possible with the few means of aid which they have.

After the plowing, and the harrowing which follows, the land is dragged {rolled}. The wooden rolling tree has a diameter of about 10 vershok and a length of about 3.5 arschin. [17 ½ X 8.4 in.] Sometimes the land is first dragged when the first sprouts of the wheat shoots have already come up from the earth.

Unfortunately, it often happens that a crusty layer, which is too hard, is formed on the top of the field. Then the grains of seed often dry out. A way of remedying this can be recommended. One can pull a simple harrow behind the bolt with ½ - 1 vershok long nails which will again loosen up the parts of the field that have been packed down too hard.<sup>54</sup> This is the last field work that is done in Galka during the spring. The fertilizing of fields is completely unknown here. It is considered much more advantageous to make the cattle manure into the so-called "manure-wood" which then finds its use as fuel. The reason for this fact probably lies in the fact that firewood in Galka is very expensive and very hard to come by. This is a result of the great lack of wooden areas in that strip of land.

The field work begins again at the middle of July when the harvest begins. The ripe grain is cut down with scythes, tied into sheaves and every person transports the produce from his field to the "Gumnen", the threshing-floor. Here the sheaves are laid in a circle on the ground and the process of "riding over" begins. A threshing stone, hewn for the process and pulled by two horses, is rolled over the grain. This stone has a length of 1 arschin and 2 vershok and its cross-section has about the shape of a six-cornered star. The diameter of the end of the stone, which sticks out from the circle during the "riding over" has a length of 12 vershok. Towards the center it is not as worn again until it reaches a diameter length at the other end of 11.5 vershok.<sup>55</sup> These stones, the use of which is generally quite widespread in the Volga region, are primarily hewn in the German colony of Nishnaya-Dobrinka, which lies ten [6.6 miles] south of Galka, and cost 3-4 rubles a piece there.<sup>56</sup> The colonists are always very pleased with the results of the threshing ("riding over"). During the process, it rarely happens that the grain is crushed. The horses, which drag the stone behind them, are prodded on by little boys or girls. In order to do this, they are placed on the backs of one of the old horses and equipped with a whip. The threshed grain is piled up in the middle of the circle. From there it is taken to the "cleaning machine". Such a machine, which is manufactured so that it can be used by hand, is in the possession of every farmer with grain land in Galka. They are manufactured in large quantities in two of the German colonies on the "Hilly Side" at a cost of about 20 rubles each<sup>57</sup>. The names of these villages are Grimm and Franzosen. The grain, which has been thoroughly cleaned of all dust, is then put into sacks and brought to the granary, where it waits until the right moment in order to be sold or to be milled.

The average harvest yield in Galka is very low – it varies on the average between 18-20 pud per desyatin. In certain places, as for instance in the "Old Field", this average yield increases up to 70-80 pud per desyatin. This is the normal yield in the villages that lie further inland {further from the river}. Last year, 1909, which was a very productive harvest year for all of Russia, each desyatin in Galka produced an average of 45-50 pud of grain. The following table (IX), which I have put together from several notes, which I received from the colony office, may shed a clearer light on the rate of harvest production



## Galka – a German Settlement on the Volga

in Galka.

**Table IX**

	seed grain in pud [1 pud=40lb.]		harvest in pud [1 pud=40lb]	
years	1908	1909	1908	1909
wheat	9,360	9,360	28,080	93,600
rye	2,204	2,204	6,612	17,632
oats	200	200	520	1,600
millet	52	52	52	520
potatoes	2,400	2,400	7,200	9,600

Most of the grain in Galka is bought up by the owner of a mill in the City of Tsaritsyn on the lower reaches of the Volga. As Galka itself does not have a dock for steamboats, the grain must first be transported by wagon to the colony of Nishnaya-Dobrinka, which lies ten verst [6.6 miles] southwest of Galka. Here it is first loaded on to steamships that go to Tsaritsyn. The freight cost from Nishnaya-Dobrinka to Tsaritsyn is 3 kopecks per pud. Earlier, in the years from 1896-1907, the people of Galka had a more convenient market area, in that they sold the grain to a large steam-powered mill in Saratov. They had their own granary in the middle of the village. The grain cargo ships of the trading firm docked as close as possible to the village and the shipping could proceed without complications. Since the year 1907, the mentioned granary has stood empty and the milling firm in Saratov gets its grain from other communities.

The average price of wheat in the normal years of harvest in Galka is about 80 kopecks per pud and that of rye about 60 kopecks. Potatoes (when there is a very rich harvest) are also sold and, to be sure, for an average price of 25-30 kopecks per pud. From Galka, watermelons, one of the cheapest of foodstuffs on the Volga, are only brought to the market in very small quantities. The cost is 2-3 kopecks each, all according to the size of the fruit. They are mostly used for the home. A thick, strong, sweet juice that is produced from the watermelons is sold a lot. This is the so-called "electuary" {a pharmaceutical term} - which is popular as a substitute for sugar on the Volga. Whatever grain is meant for their own use is ground by the windmills that are found in the village as well as some that is ground by the recently constructed gas-motorized mill.

Now a few words will be added in regard to those damaging elements in the fields that are especially serious here. Thus, we note above all the ground squirrels. The so-called haze is less feared. Finally I would like to mention another plague for the fields, which now has as good as disappeared, the migratory locusts. The ground squirrel has always been one of the greatest plagues for the fields in Galka. Accordingly, the settlers have constantly carried out an embittered battle against them. This gray rodent, in size and body shape similar to the common rat, reproduces itself extremely rapidly and damages the fields by chewing on the grain stalks and consuming the grain in a wide circumference. The ground squirrel {gopher?} prefers soft and juicy grass to grain; only where very little such grass is available as is the case in Galka, does it go into the grain fields. A single mouse {here used in reference to the ground squirrel} is supposed to be able to eat into about 5 square faden [49 sq ft.] of stems<sup>58</sup>.



One has had to utilize various means in Galka and in other places on the Volga in order to fight this destruction. Deep ditches have often been dug around the fields with precipitous edges over which the mice could not easily cross. If they arrived in great numbers and had already nibbled away everything else around them, then this method did not help anymore. The rodents would throw themselves into the ditches so that the last would soon be crossing on the bodies of the first, as if they were on a bridge. Many also dug a tunnel under the ditch and in this manner got across to the field. These methods helped very little and therefore other attempts were initiated to systematically exterminate the animals. Thus in Galka, in 1891, the decision was made by the community that on an annual basis 10 rodent tails per "dush" were to be delivered at the colony office. In total, this quota required 15,600 tails. Whoever was not able to fill his quota had to pay 3 kopecks for each tail which was missing. The rodents - mostly called "pfiffer" (pipers) in Galka and the surrounding area because of their peculiar way of whistling - are most easily destroyed in the spring when a certain lethargy is still present in their bodies from the winter. Besides this, about this time there is still a lot of water melted from snow on the fields. This is then poured into their tunnels in order to get the rodents to exit. The "piper" has hardly come out when he gets a solid blow with a stick, which usually kills him on the spot. The young boys and girls of the colony go rodent hunting every year from the end of March to the middle of May. This hunt has almost developed into a type of sport. Everything possible is done in order to outdo one another and each one is proud when he/she brings home a few more tails than the next person. Thanks to the zealous extermination of the rodents, this plague has, at least, not gotten any worse during the last period of time. It is to be expected that this ground squirrel, after the transition over to private property in Galka, will be completely exterminated. This is because every farmer will then protect and care for his field more than was previously the case. In Galka, one should only spare the little beasts of prey such as the polecat and the weasel more, as they are the greatest enemies of the ground squirrels.

It is less clear as to how the "haze" came to be. There is no effective barrier that can be used against it. The "haze" is a type of very fine dust that comes from the east through the air. It has a devastating effect upon the fields and the gardens. In Galka, it appears mostly only in the months of May, June, and during the first part of July so that it effects the greatest of damage to the fruit trees, which are blooming at this time. The grain stems have achieved a certain solidity and immunity by this time and consequently suffer less from it. The "haze" is usually only visible to the naked eye in the early morning when it appears in the form of a gray fog and sometimes covers the whole of the countryside to such a wide circumference that the rising sun shines through it like a blood-red ball.

In regard to the appearance of the wandering locust in Galka, I found the following notice from the year 1857 in the "Church Chronicle" of the church parish of Ust-Kulalinka which I have often cited previously: "Countless locusts - came from the Hilly Side on July 28<sup>th</sup>. They remained until August 15<sup>th</sup> and came like a cloud with a loud noise. They covered the fields up to a depth of  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an arschin. The crops had, however, already been cut. Here and there they destroyed the hay lands, watermelon fields and orchards. They are 4 inches long." After that time, no further locusts are supposed to have appeared in Galka.

Worse than all of these things which damage the crops is the continuous presence of hot weather and drought in Galka during the summer. Because of a lack of moisture, the soil often does not have the strength to allow the seed that rests in its bosom to germinate. Attempts are made to somewhat prevent the dangerous effects of the drought by diverting



a part of the spring runoff to the fields so that it can be allowed to be absorbed there. There is seldom rain in Galka. If rain does come, then it is usually mixed with hail and of such force that its damages are often greater than its benefits. [See galoshes ]

All of these damaging effects together have been the cause of the fact that there are often many failed harvests recorded in Galka. Thirteen of these have been recorded in the Church Chronicle during the last 60 years. These took place in the years 1850, 1852, 1853, 1855, 1864, 1873, 1875, 1879-81, 1885, 1891 and in 1898. During the same period of time there were only nine really good harvests, namely in the years 1851, 1854, 1867, 1868, 1870, 1871, 1874, 1877 and 1896. The rest of the harvests are recorded in the Chronicle as being "average".

Despite these many poor years, Galka has never experienced a real famine because the community has a strong emergency anchor, which has always been there to rescue them in the worst of times – the Island of Galkin. If someone would offer to buy this island, the people of Galka would be offended. Every year hay and wood worth about 15-20,000 rubles is produced on the island! According to production, hay is in first place, which alone produces about 1,500 wagonloads of hay annually. If one estimates that one wagonload of hay is worth about 10 rubles, which is the customary price, then we already have an amount of 15,000 rubles. Besides this, innumerable wagons full of brushwood are also brought to the colony and a tree called the "Pelle", a kind of aspen, provides good boards which can be utilized in the construction of simple work wagons, cattle stalls and fences. There is a paid watchman on the island who is to guard that no wood is stolen from here. The latter still often takes place – especially by the Ukrainians who live on the Meadow Side. The farmers of Galka also often take more wood than they actually are entitled to according to the size of their land apportionment. Because the supply of wood on the island is very great, people in Galka gladly close a blind eye. It even happened last year that the forest watchman, who by the way was a Russian, had given the names of the thieves from Galka to the colony office, and was let go by the next community assembly because of his unwelcome honesty! The community has decided that during the time of transition to private property that the Island of Galkin should not be divided up but, as it has been up to now, to leave it as the common property of the community.

There is little that can be stated in regard to the wage situation of the rural workers in Galka, as almost every single farmer here works his fields alone with his sons and daughters. For this reason, no specific class of rural workers could develop. There are, however, poorer people here who do not have enough to do and would gladly use their energy for work in the service of richer farmers. The following Table (X), which I have compiled from the data in the colony office, describe how high the wages were in Galka during the years 1908 and 1909:



**Table X**

1908	daily wages		monthly wages	
	workers (male)	workers (female)	workers (male)	workers (female)
	rubles kopecks	rubles kopecks	rubles kopecks	rubles kopecks
during seedtime	50	20	15	8 80
during hay harvest				
during grain harvest	80	35	18	11
<hr/>				
for the summer	50	17		
for the year	75	40		
1909	daily wages		monthly wages	
	workers (male)	workers (female)	workers (male)	workers (female)
	rubles kopecks	rubles kopecks	rubles kopecks	rubles kopecks
during seedtime		30	12	7
during hay harvest	1	60	27	15
during grain harvest	1	60	20	12
for the summer	60	35		
for the year	90	55		

It is evident from Table X that the wages of the previous year have risen substantially in comparison to those of the year before. This situation can be explained on the one hand by the fact that during the previous year many of the poorer colonists from Galka immigrated to America because they now had the possibility of selling their land apportionment. Because of this, there was a decline in the number of workers in Galka. On the other hand, the rise in the wages was also affected by the good harvest of the year before that. During that harvest significantly more workers than before were able to find employment.

During the last 20 years, animal husbandry has declined significantly in Galka. According to Minch<sup>59</sup> in 1886, the number of horses was 826, oxen 643, cows and calves 1,260, sheep 1,683, pigs 790 and goats 128. New data from the colony office from the years 1906, 1908, and 1909 forms the basis for the following table.

**Table XI**

	Numbers of animals/year		
	1906	1908	1909
horses	508	516	528
oxen and cows	1,583	1,334	1,345
calves	317	298	248
sheep	1,045	1,013	1,126
pigs	560	380	430
goats	253	224	246

It is evident from Table XI that during these years, the numbers of animals compared to



the year 1886 has significantly declined in almost all kinds with the exception of the goats. The numbers of horses, sheep and pigs especially declined during this period of time and, to be sure, by a drop of 35 %, 33 % and 45.6 % respectively. Of course one must consider, as the colony office assured me, that the number of animals for the years 1906, 1908 and 1909 was, in general, reported to be too low because by reporting fewer animals, the people were able to defraud a part of the so-called "steppe money" which needed to be paid on a per head basis as well as the shepherd's wage. Annually, this "steppe money" is 30 kopecks per horse, ox or cow no matter if one has the animal driven to the steppe or not. One exception to this is the blind horses. Also, no steppe money needs to be paid for calves or foals. The community owns a sheepfold in which all the sheep of the members of the community are kept from spring to fall. They are watched by a village shepherd who, during the day, takes them out to pasture on the steppe. Every farmer who keeps sheep in the sheepfold is obligated to deliver a certain amount of straw to the fold. He is also required to deliver a "Gefach" that is a part of the fence which is made out of intertwined willow branches. The steppe money is an annual amount of 12 kopecks per sheep.

The sheep are shorn in May and at the beginning of August. The wool is manufactured in part into felt boots and felt blankets and is also at times used for spinning at home. Certainly the strong decrease in the numbers of sheep is partially due to the fact that clothing homemade in Galka is now less commonly worn than previously. The finished, cheap cloth is bought directly in the village general store or in the city. For the colonists, mutton is the main food for nourishment during the summer months. In opposition to that, during the winter one eats mostly pork. During the last few years the amount of pork consumed has had to be reduced. The pigs have been dying in large numbers as a result of the croup (angina?) and another still unknown sickness, a kind of stomach fever. The colonists in Galka have suffered a yearly loss of about 2,000 rubles during the last ten years because of these two infections. These facts explain the significant decrease in the numbers of pigs that began in 1886.

A lot of pig bristle brushes are utilized here. They are sold to the Russians who pass through. This is the reason why up until now, the farmers in Galka have resisted the introduction of better breeds of pigs, which however produce fewer bristles. Calves are seldom butchered and mostly reared. The cows, a small brown variety, the so-called "steppe cattle", are milked twice daily and provide only a small quantity of milk. They produce only about 3-4 "pots"<sup>60</sup> daily during a period of 6 months. In recent times, a very large quantity of butter has been sold by the colonists in Kamyshin and in Tsaritsyn. In Galka, horses and oxen generally are used in fieldwork. Both are of a middle-sized breed and because of poor nourishment are easily tired. Because the soil is very heavy in Galka, many animals are needed for ploughing. Where one can make do with 2-3 horses doing field work near Saratov, one needs 4 pair of oxen for the same work in Galka. For this reason, the whole area has become known as "the land of the oxen". There are four head of breeding cattle (bulls), the so-called "Hummeln" in the "Upper Village" as well as in the "Lower Village". They are purchased by the community and given to one of the farmers in order to be taken care of in the winter. The cost of keeping them through the winter is paid for by the individual owners of the cows. Last year the charge was 50 kopecks per cow.

There is much poultry in Galka, especially chickens, geese and ducks. They are of poor stock. The eggs are often sold to Russian buyers who travel through the village and the



birds' feathers are used to stuff the bed pillows, of which every house had a very large number.

The feeding of the animals is generally very poor as the steppe in Galka only has a very poor plant and grass growth. Tame grasses have never been planted here. During the winter, the animals are fed with chaff, bran and straw. The horses and oxen also receive hay before the springtime work. The watering of the animals is especially problematic in Galka. As there are no wells in the fields, the herd must be driven to the shore of the Volga two times a day. The animals must often go for several verst through sand and under the hot sun in order to get to the water. It is self-evident that they are often just as tired on the return trip as they were prior to going. The question of having a watering place for the animals has already been the cause of a lot of discussion amongst the colonists. This is especially true in light of the transition to private property that has been decided upon by the community. Whoever receives his piece of land far away from the river and who naturally wants to keep his animals in the field, needs to fear that they will come to a miserable end because of a lack of water. It is a very difficult and expensive thing to dig a well on the steppe. The "canton" has come to help out here. It has advanced one ruble per desyatin to the communities that are in the process of changing over to private property and this money is designated for the digging of wells. This is the sum of about 11,000 rubles for Galka. As a whole and according to the views of the colonists, this sum will not be sufficient. However, at least this sum allows the possibility of beginning with this difficult task. All in all, throughout the last years, the "Estates" of Kamyshin has shown great interest in the welfare of the rural population of the area. Thus, trained agricultural officials from the "Estates", so-called agronomists were to have been sent to the farmers before the time of seeding in order to explain the use of the drills (for seeding) and machines (for ploughing). Unfortunately, they arrived in Galka much too late. They were there after the seeding had already taken place. The reason for this was that the Estates had a staff of too few people who could carry out these demonstrations. Furthermore, the Estates in the county of Kamyshin own a number of depots where agricultural machines and tools are kept. They are offered for the use of the rural population at a reasonable cost. This is also where the earlier-mentioned seeding machines are located which are rented out for the price of 50 kopecks per day. Unfortunately up until now, almost no use was made in Galka of all these advantageous pieces of equipment. Everyone waits here until there is someone who starts to use something for the first time and who is successful at it. The person of merit who initiated this start in Galka is a colonist by the name of Alexander Schick who is a teacher. This individual, who is a capable and entrepreneurial farmer, purchased a seeding machine that will sow 11 rows at a time. He has attained great results with this wide seeding. He is also, in matters of agriculture, the teacher of the farmers of Galka, who take great note of his advice and willingly allow themselves to be introduced by him to the advantages of improved agricultural practices. It is to be hoped and to be expected that the endeavors of this single man will soon find many imitators in Galka.

There are only three orchards in Galka. Varieties of apples, plums, cherries, and gooseberries, which are not particularly good, grow here. The fruit is sold very seldom. Vegetables are planted very seldom and in small quantities in Galka. Usually a few beans and peas are planted in the potato patch, but then that is all.

The forest, of which according to Minch<sup>61</sup> there were still 555.1 desyatins in Galka in the



year 1886, had been considerably reduced in size by the year 1891 because up until that time every colonist could cut as much wood as he wanted. It was not until 1891 that the Land Captain made laws for its use in Galka. The entire forested area of the community was thereby divided into 40 sections and the community was only given the right to chop down one section annually. The deforested section must then be re-planted. In order to mutually better supervise the situation, the whole community goes out once during the fall in order to cut down the trees. On the basis of a community decision, no one else is allowed to go out to the community forest at any other time in order to cut down trees. The forest is mainly located along the ravines and along the borders of the community property. In sections covering up to 7 desyatins, it is also found from place to place on the actual cultivated property. The community of Galka still possesses forest, which is 186 desyatins in size. The varieties of trees which one finds here are: linden trees, birches and elms as well as a few scrub oak.

#### Addendum: Viticulture

A slope from the village stretches in a northwesterly direction toward the community property of Galka. It is a gentle slope that incline toward the south. The soil here consists of practically only sand and loam and is mixed with a lot of gravel and is completely useless as a planted agricultural field. This situation as well as the fact that Galka lies at the same latitude geographically as northern France and has high summer temperatures<sup>62</sup> caused the then parish minister, Pastor L. Behning, to think about getting the population of farmers interested in introducing wine-growing.

After a long period of time, this idea found an interested party in the Galka colonist Brunner who in the year 1900 planted a vineyard on one of the above-described slopes. Because he lacked practical experience, his vines only sparingly produced grapes, so that the results did not seem to compensate for the work that had been done. Because of this situation, the Germans of Galka soon had the view that the climate and the soil were simply not favorable for vineyards. Also, there was only this one attempt, which caused the colonists to ridicule the idea. The previously mentioned teacher in Galka, Alexander Schick, had other views regarding this dilemma. Still only 18 years old at the time, in 1892, he realized the implications of the thought that Pastor Behning had raised. At first he educated himself in viticulture by reading various books. Then he completed his knowledge in this area by taking short trips to Sarepta, to the northern Caucasus and to South Russia. There he was able to see the vineyards first-hand and was instructed by the winegrowers in regard to various questions on wine growing. His efforts were met with little understanding in his home village and especially in the home of his parents. When finally, in the year 1904, he leased a small piece of land for wine growing with his own meager savings, everyone prophesied failure. Without giving an ear to that, he immediately began to plant his land, which had a size of  $40 \times 40 = 1,600$  square faden [1.8 acres], with grape vines. He spent his free time dedicated to taking care of and working in this garden. Naturally, because the vines had to grow for a while before the first grapes appeared, there was no harvest in Schick's vineyard in the years 1905 and 1906. In 1907, the grape harvest already consisted of 90 pud [360 lb.]. This increased in the year 1908 to 250-280 pud and finally to produce a grape harvest of about 450 pud in the year 1909. A harvest of about 1,000 pud [40,000 lbs] is expected for the year 1910. The biggest harvest from a vineyard about the size of the one belonging to Schick is supposed to be about 1,500 pud. The teacher Schick has, up to now, cultivated over 30 different types of grapes on his



vineyard land. This year he wants to remove some of them, which did not produce very well.

At the same time, in order to get the individually ripening wine grapes to be similar in fullness and with thin skins such as the ones that ripen near Astrakhan, in this year he wants to loosen the soil below the vine twice weekly and just as often also spray the vine with water using a spray gun. This is a recommended procedure especially because the summer in Galka is of a shorter duration than the one in Astrakhan. It is therefore very imperative that the grapes be made to ripen sooner. During the winter the vines are laid along on the ground and covered over with a layer of dirt about 1 vershok [1 ¾ in.] high. It is especially important that the vines always have a fresh supply of air, also during the winter. Accordingly, great attention needs to be paid to the fact that no ice forms on the ground. In general, viticulture in Galka does not require much labor, but in its stead much understanding and practical knowledge. The Schick Vineyard employs two workers but does not require all of their energy. The grapes, which are eagerly purchased in the neighboring villages and in Galka itself, are sold for the price of 2 rubles per pud [40 lb.]. Up to now, there have been no damaging pests or parasites noted on the vines.

Thanks to the exceedingly outstanding results, during the last two years several new vinedressers have appeared who are establishing vineyards under the personal leadership of the afore mentioned teacher. Now, to be sure, every bias toward viticulture in Galka has disappeared and every farmer hopes that next year, when the community makes the transition to private property, he will receive a piece of land on that fruitful slope. The fact that a vineyard in Galka which faces a slope inclining northward also gets the grapes to ripen, points out that not only the first-mentioned slope is capable of satisfying the wishes of the settlers who would like to own a vineyard. All signs point to the fact that the Galka Valley will be covered in the future with vineyards. Perhaps the future of the community of Galka lies here and at the same time this may also be the justification for the introduction of private property in this colony<sup>63</sup>.

## 2. The Trades and Industry

As is evident by the last statistical report of the Galka colony office to the administration of the volosty, the following tradesmen were employed in Galka in the year 1909: 2 butchers, 6 tailors, 6 shoemakers, 8 carpenters, 7 cabinet-makers, 3 blacksmiths, 3 felt fullers and 2 tanners. Besides these, there are also 5 weavers, which are not mentioned in the report above.

The two butchers only carry out their occupation as a second job and are basically farmers. Each one of them has a helper – in both cases it is the son. The butchers are responsible for the slaughtering of oxen and cows. For the most part their time is taken up by butchering at homes. This they do for an amount of money on the individual properties in the village. Besides this, the butchers are also occupied with the purchase of animals, which they then pay for and butcher themselves and then sell the meat to the settlers. The latter only takes place on rare occasions.

The tailors all work without partners (journeymen) and none of the tailors are farmers. They go and work in the various customers' houses and work there for meals and for a



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daily wage. The working material (fabric) is provided by the person who ordered the clothing. Two of the tailors are not natives of the community of Galka but originate in other colonies.

Only two of the shoemakers are not farmers; the other four have agriculture as their main occupation.

There are five persons among the carpenters and cabinet-makers who have nothing to do with cultivating land. One of the cabinet-makers is also a bookbinder as well – an occupation that will not exactly make you a lot of money in Galka. One of the cabinet-makers has two apprentices working for him; another one also has one apprentice. The apprentices receive food and clothing from the master cabinet-makers. The rest of the cabinet-makers work without apprentices. Just like the tailors, so also the shoemakers, carpenters, and cabinet-makers work for wages and work at the customers' homes in Galka.

Two of the blacksmiths each work with an assistant and one of them has two assistants. The assistants are all members of the master blacksmith's family. Only one of the blacksmiths is also a farmer; the other two are entirely occupied with their trade. The blacksmiths in Galka have had a lot to do ever since the iron ploughs came into general usage. Shortly before the first work in the field, the smithy is surrounded by several rows of plows that are in need of repairs.

The felt fullers, of whom there are three in Galka, altogether employ eight workers. All of these eleven people are Russians from the province of Simbirsk. They only arrive in the village in August, rent a house here and remain until January. They do the work of fulling the wool into felt boots and felt blankets, the so-called "bantschuki".

The two tanners each work with an assistant. Their main work consists of the tanning of hides from which they then make straps for horse harnesses. As with the above-mentioned felt fullers, both of them work at home. Their main occupation is that of farmer.

The village weavers only carry out their trade during the winter. They make the so-called "willnen" {woolen} skirts for the ladies out of the wool that has been spun at home. This trade is declining more and more, as it seems that the people of Galka, as mentioned earlier, find it more advantageous to buy the finished material for the clothing in the village shop or in the city. All of the weavers own land besides and are employed in agriculture. They also work at their trade at home.

Whatever needs to be done, the farmer does it. He does these things himself in his free time, of which he has a lot.<sup>64</sup> This is especially true of the winter. For example, he makes his own agricultural equipment such as wooden plows, hay wagons etc. He generally also knows how to build a simple sleigh. Besides this he interweaves the fences for the threshing floor {"gumne"} out of willow shoots. In the same manner he makes the fish baskets. The farmer also saws his own boards.

Bakers would not find employment in Galka for a baking oven is a part of every house. The necessary supplies of bread are prepared by the housewives. The spinning of wool is also an activity in which the ladies of Galka are very diligent. From the beginning of October



until before Christmas work is carried out on one or two spindles in every farmer's home. The spinning is the work of the older ladies in Galka; the young ones generally consider taking time to work with an activity such as this to be below their station.

The largest businesses in Galka are the gas motor mill, an oil mill, 8 windmills and 4 watermills. The first mill, the so-called "fire mill", is run by a petroleum motor, which has sixteen horsepower. This motor also runs the oil mill that is located in the same building. The mill was built by a colonist from Galka in the year 1902, but soon thereafter was sold to someone from outside the village who bought the mill and the land upon which it stood. The flour mill runs almost the whole year through with the exception of the month of July in which there is less work to do here. In this way it is in successful competition with the other mills that are dependent on wind and water. The grain for home use in Galka and in the villages in the near surroundings is processed here. The owner of the mill works with 3 assistants who, as he does, come from outside of Galka. The harvested sunflower seeds are processed in the oil mill. Firstly, these have the shells removed; the cleaned seeds then are put into the press. The oil, which is the main product, is returned to the farmer's property where it is used in the preparation of meals. A byproduct, called the "oil cake" is left behind when the press has squeezed the oil out of the seeds. This is readily added to animal feed. In earlier times, when one had not yet recognized the qualities as feed for the animals, the "oil cake" was often used as heating material for the ovens. The oil mill only keeps one worker occupied.

The eight windmills in Galka are from a much earlier time than the "fire mill". They are built according to the Dutch design and all are erected in a semi-circle around the village. Unfortunately their sails stand still for most of the year, for in Galka the wind is only a little more powerful during the spring. People in the village are going to the motorized mill more and more when they have grain to be milled for meals. In opposition to the windmill it offers the advantage of a certain regularity in the delivery of its processed grain. Every windmill produces two different varieties of flour, one of which is fine and one of which is rougher. The mills provide work for one worker each and in most cases the miller is also the owner of the mill and a farmer as well. The motorized mill, as also with the windmill, always only works for a certain number of customers and never with reserves of flour. During years of average harvests, the millers receive 1/12 of the processed flour from the mill, in good years they receive 1/16 of the same as compensation for their work and for the use of the mill. They never receive money for their work.

Finally, the four watermills remain to be commented upon. These are owned by the community of Galka and are leased out on a yearly basis for the price of 55 rubles each. For two years now, the mills have had to cease functioning because of a complete lack of water. This is because the Galka spring, which is situated in the village of Holstein, which lies above Galka, is being completely neglected by the people in Holstein. The watermills are slowly deteriorating because no one is taking care of them.

## **E) Intellectual Life**

### **1. The Church**

What follows is an attempt to describe what kind of an influence the church has had on the life of the Volga German colonists and specifically upon the inhabitants of Galka. This has



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always been a factor that should not be underestimated in the history of the spiritual development of the local settlers.

There are Lutherans and Baptists in Galka. As the number of the latter, compared to the large multitude of Lutherans, is a small disappearing group, – at present Galka only has thirty adherents of this confession, – I will, as a consequence, not describe the church life of this congregation in much detail. It is to be noted that the Baptists in Galka have their own wooden prayer house and that they receive strong support in all church matters from the main Baptist congregation in the empire {from Berlin, Germany? Or within Russia?}. In general, there is no difference that can be detected between Lutherans and Baptists in regard to spiritual matters.

The representative of church authority in Galka accordingly is the Lutheran minister. He is elected by the representatives of the five German colonies which make up the church parish: Galka, Dobrinka, Dreispitz, Holstein and Schwab. His residence is in the parish village of this church, which is Galka. The election of the minister takes place in the following manner. Firstly, the representatives of the congregations send a call to that minister who has applied for this congregation. The latter then holds a test sermon (This is however, not always necessary) and then, if he is liked by the congregation, he is elected. Since the German colonies are under the Ministry of the Interior in regard to church matters, every new election of a pastor must be ratified by that office. However, there is hardly a single situation where the ratification is denied. When the installation service for the preacher has been carried out in an orderly manner, then he can no longer be removed from the office at the discretion of the congregation, but remains in it until he retires.

In terms of material benefits, Galka, in comparison to the other colonies, is considered to be a "good" parish. The annual pastor's wage is 2,200 rubles; besides this the parish congregation also provides a free house as well as a garden, a property and stalls for his animals as well as fuel for the winter. The income which the pastor has from certain church ministrations are modest and consist of the following sums: baptism 15 kopecks, marriage 60 kopecks, funeral for a child which has not been confirmed 15 kopecks, funeral for an adult, in spring 30 kopecks, in the fall 60 kopecks, confirmation 60 kopecks. It occasionally happens that more is paid. The repairs to the parsonage are paid by the church parish congregation.

The pastor, usually a graduate of the Theological Faculty of the University of Dorpat, has, because of his high level of education, a special place in the village. If he knows how to properly deal with the farmers, he has, accordingly, a very strong influence on them in spiritual as well as in economic matters. In earlier times, when the village school here was still purely a church school, the school was under the supervision and leadership of the local pastor. Even now, he has supervision over the religious instruction, which is given by the village schoolmaster. One very good institution that has been introduced in Galka is the "pre-examination" of the engaged couples. Before banns are announced in church for a bride and bridegroom, the couple must go to the pastor and via a short examination must prove their knowledge of the most elementary teachings of the faith. This is followed by an examination in reading and in writing German. If a complete lack of knowledge becomes evident on the part of both bride and bridegroom or with one of them, then the couple has to postpone the marriage in order to be examined at a later time. As I learned from the local pastor, this rule is of great value in Galka. One is able to see to it that the couples,



before they get married, refresh their weak knowledge that they have obtained in the village school. Once in a while cases do come up in which the marriage is postponed.

Once a year, confirmation instruction brings all the youth of the parish who have graduated from school to Galka. This takes place before Pentecost. In Galka the boys and girls are prepared for confirmation during the course of several weeks. Recently the pastor in Galka, at the request of the congregations, has come to the arrangement that the confirmation be held annually in a different church parish village. In earlier times, there was a custom of the children "buying themselves free" from the obligatory school attendance. This took place in this way. The children were, for a certain sum of money that went to the consistory and to the schoolmaster, confirmed by the pastor at an earlier date than was customary here. One wanted the children to be confirmed earlier because they then, according to the views of the colonists, represented a full working person whom one could then make good use of. Naturally the acceptance of the money in order to "buy free" depended solely and entirely upon the pastor. In most recent times, this deleterious custom has completely waned.

Funerals are only held by the pastor himself if the deceased had already been confirmed. In the other cases, the funeral is the responsibility of the schoolmaster, who in Galka also holds the position of sexton. The pastor has an influence on the general moral behavior of the village inhabitants that is not to be underestimated. This is either by personal admonition or by the authority of his office, by influencing the mayor or the schoolmaster. It is to be generally recognized that the inhabitants of Galka have eagerly and without objection submitted to the well-meant advice and admonishment of the pastor. According to the notes in the "Church Chronicle of the Parish of Ust-Kulalinka", many innovations having to do with intellectual life have been introduced by the respective pastors who served there. Among other things, the pastor introduced the four-part harmony singing of hymns by both sexes in the year 1889. The singers who are recruited from amongst the youth who have already graduated from school are glad to be a part of the choir. Considering the circumstances, they are very capable. I was personally convinced of their ability during the time of my last stay in this colony.

The Chronicle also notes that in the year 1895 a library with 200 volumes for the use of the colonists was set up in the parsonage in Galka. The books, all with easily understood contents, were not used very much by the settlers so the library was closed. In the same year, thanks to the efforts of the pastor, the first large song festival was held. People from all five parish congregation villages as well as others from various neighboring villages came and there were close to 5,000 who attended. The festival, which was a great success, caused the settlers to want to have it repeated often. This wish was gratified many times over.

The pastor also has a great deal of influence among the members of his congregation when it comes to economic issues. The farmers turn to him, the only representative of a higher intelligence in the village, with queries great and small. He has the possibility of decisively influencing that which the farmers do in one way or another. This, of course, takes place only if he has the necessary interest regarding whatever should come up. In this way, decisions of the entire community may be made on the basis of the indirect influence of the pastor or the decisions will not find the number of necessary signatories.<sup>66</sup> In this manner, the church and its representatives in the German colonies on the Volga are given



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a scope and a field of labor that gives them the possibility of not only significantly influencing the population on issues regarding their confession of faith but also in regard to culture. At present, Galka has a minister who is fully aware of this great duty and the responsibilities attendant to the same. He is also working zealously in this regard. However, until now he has not as yet been successful in being able to work with the farmers and understand their particular way of dealing with someone. He needs to become more acquainted with the farmers through personal contacts and thereby influence the farmers toward doing things for themselves through their full confidence in him. This is the point where even the most diligent efforts are frustrated.

As far as the relationship of the congregation to the pastor and especially toward church life is concerned, we must, above all, emphasize that the people of Galka are very diligent church attendees and, at the same time are well versed in various Bible passages. The Bible is almost the only book which they have and which they read. On Sundays and on Festival Days, especially days when the pastor preaches<sup>67</sup>, the church is filled completely.

The elderly sit in the front rows, then those with white hair and so forth right up to the young lads. The male and female sexes are strictly separated; – the women sit in the pews to the right of the altar and the men sit to the left side. It often happens, especially on Sundays that follow a week of hard field work, that one person or another here and there will suddenly start to fall asleep in the cool church building. He then is equally suddenly made to come alive by a well-meaning jab in the ribs given by his neighbor in order to wake him up again. In order to be safe, the elderly ladies of Galka, when they go to church, take along a few leaves of a strong-smelling houseplant tucked inside a handkerchief. They often hold the latter in front of their noses during the sermon in order to stop themselves from falling asleep.

In general, one expects the pastor to present himself in a congenial and friendly manner. He must speak freely, without notes, when he preaches; otherwise it is stated that: "The schoolmaster can do that too!"<sup>68</sup> With great zeal and with the greatest of interest, the whole congregation keeps watch to verify that their pastor's way of life is blameless. Unfortunately, here one understands "blameless conduct" as an almost complete renunciation of all worldly and intellectual pleasures including even those of the most harmless kind. The pastor is not allowed to go to the theater, not allowed to go riding and not allowed to dance. Thus a pastor, while always being treated with esteem and respect, lives a life, despite everything, which is difficult and which requires him to give up a lot of pleasures.

If he is not satisfied solely with the carrying out of his duties as a minister but aspires to make the life of his congregation ever richer in cultural things, then he has, as it has often happened in Galka, the most difficult battles to fight with the views of the farmers. These views have become static because of tradition. Certainly, once he is successful in winning the trust of the farmers, then he has won the game and the congregation is always ready to give a willing ear to his advice.

Now a few words must be said in regard to the growing "brethren movement" which has been increasing during the last decades. The "Brethren" differ from the Lutherans only in that they interpret certain teachings of the faith and certain parts of the Bible in a significantly more rigid and more literal way than the others. Besides this, the sole weekly



worship service is not enough for them. For this reason they hold their own worship service several times during the week when one of their elders preaches. In Galka there are two kinds of these "brethren", the so-called "churchly" and the "non-churchly brethren". The first kind do not differentiate themselves much from the large multitude of Lutherans in the village as they attend worship services just like they do and always recognize the binding power of the pastor's ministrations. On the other hand, the "non-churchly brethren", in very small numbers however, do not even attend the worship services in the church. They give in only begrudgingly and must be forced to obey the authority of the pastor. Outwardly very strict in terms of their faith, they are stubbornly arrogant and have great spiritual pride. This stubborn arrogance and spiritual pride is used against those who do not belong to their group.

One of the most thankless duties of the minister is to play the role of the mediator and to gently intervene when the faith groups are wrangling with each other. All these questions are of great concern to the congregation.

If one considers the monotony of the life of the farmers which is broken only by a few festivals during the year and the nearly impossible chance to find intellectual stimulation anywhere else, then it is easy to understand what kind of a deep impression the following makes on the minds and feelings of the farmers. This includes that which is proclaimed from the pulpit and that which concerns the private life of the minister. Then one realizes how great the role of church life in Galka is. Most of the facts that have been presented in this section are not only valid for Galka alone, but also cover the situation in all of the other Lutheran colonies in the Volga region where things are very similar.

## 2. School

Next to the church, the school also has a great influence on the intellectual life of the colonists in Galka. To have a school in which the children are given the possibility of learning the basics of knowledge has always been one of the first tasks which the Germans who immigrated to the Volga at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century carried out.<sup>69</sup> Thus Galka already had its own schoolhouse in the year 1770<sup>70</sup>. At first this school was a community school. Soon, however, it was placed under the supervision of the local minister and thus converted into a so-called "church school"<sup>71</sup>. It continued as such until the year 1897 and was then merged with the Estates school with which it had existed side by side since the year 1884<sup>72</sup>. With this merger, the German language, which had been the language of instruction, was replaced by Russian and the school was placed under the supervision of the Ministry of Education {literally: the ministry of enlightenment for the people}. The school is inspected annually by the inspector of elementary schools who resides in Kamyshin.

The old school house in Galka was replaced by a new one in the year 1859. This building is 12 faden long and 6 faden wide [~84 X 42 ft.]. The cost of the building was 3,363 silver rubles and 20 kopecks<sup>73</sup>. The one-story wooden building, which is located next to the churchyard, gives one a very modest impression today and it is clearly apparent that it is no longer adequate for the steadily growing needs required of it by the community. Besides its normal usage as a schoolhouse, the building also serves as a meeting place for



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the community and is used for the holding of worship services during the winter because the church itself cannot be heated.

Twenty large windows provide the necessary amount of light and give the large room that is the schoolhouse, a very friendly atmosphere. The necessary ventilation with fresh air is not as good. In Galka no one knows anything about ventilators attached to windows. The furniture in the building is very sparse and, apart from the pulpit which is located on the wall across from the single entrance door, consists of a few cabinets for teaching material as well as blackboards and of sixty rows of wooden school benches which are quite worn through use over a long period of time. During the winter, two low stoves made of stone with two tin pipes, which go through the entire room and serve as chimneys, provide for enough heat. The stoves are heated with "manure wood".

The teaching staff consists of the sexton-schoolmaster and two Russian teachers. One of the latter has the supervision of the school and takes care of all the correspondence that takes place with the appointed school board. The schoolmaster receives an annual salary of 450 rubles as well as free accommodation and free fuel directly from the community itself; the first Russian teacher receives 60 rubles from the community and 300 rubles from the canton {Landschaft}. On the other hand, the second Russian teacher is hired by the ministry of education for an annual salary of 360 rubles. It is difficult to obtain capable trained elementary school teachers in Galka. This generally is the case with all the German colonies of the Volga. This is because, until now, there is no seminary for elementary school teachers in this area and because of necessity one has to be satisfied with teachers of quite an inferior quality. Luckily, this latter situation is not the case in Galka. The schoolmaster and the teachers have made up for the lack of theoretical knowledge by their own personal proficiency, practical experience and great dedication to their occupation. Their schoolmaster is a graduate of the four-year program at the Teacher's College {literally the Central School} in the colony of Grimm. This is a type of higher elementary school with a six-year course designed to train sexton-schoolmasters and teachers for the church schools and for the private schools. It was founded in the year 1867. Compare that with the article written by Pastor Johannes Erbes "Deutsche Volksschule in unseren Wolgakolonien" {German Elementary Schools in our Volga Colonies} which appeared as Insert Nr. 1 in the "Deutsche Volkszeitung" {German People's Newspaper} in Saratov in 1906.

Both of the Russian teachers have graduated from the four-year program at the modern secondary school in Kamyshin and thereby have attained the necessary credentials to teach in elementary schools.

School attendance is compulsory for all village children between the ages of seven and fifteen. There are no fees for attending the school. The school year is from October 1<sup>st</sup> until the end of March; at Christmas the children have a two-week vacation. It needs to be noted that in general, the school year which I have indicated is only approximate as the beginning and the end of school instruction coincide with the end of the work in the fields during the fall and with the beginning of work in the spring respectively. The school is divided into four classes. These are: a preparatory class, a class for the younger children, a middle section and an older section. The following subjects are taught: religion, Russian writing and reading, German writing and reading and arithmetic. Finally the schoolmaster also gives instruction in the singing of church chorales. In total, there are six hours of



instruction per diem. These are held in the morning between 8:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. and in the afternoon between 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m., except for Wednesdays and Saturdays when the afternoon classes are not held. The individual classes have the following number of hours of instruction:

preparatory section: 12 hours  
 younger: 20 hours  
 middle: 32 hours  
 older: 32 hours

The following numbers of hours per week are spent on the individual subjects:

Russian writing and reading: 14 hours  
 Religion and Singing: 8 hours  
 Arithmetic: 6 hours  
 German writing and reading: 4 hours

There is no lack of good teaching material such as pictures for illustrative class instruction. These include pictures, which can be hung up, illustrating house and farm property, farm machinery, pets etc. Most of the illustrations were ordered directly from Germany by the first Russian teacher, as the Russian materials for teaching by illustration seem less applicable.

The only means of discipline in the school is the use of "seating down" of the pupils on the bench behind their normal seat. Corporal punishment is completely forbidden. A few years ago, the pastor in Galka introduced certificates of commendation and certificates of reprimand, but this form of discipline had to be dropped soon after because the parents of the children were not at all happy with it.

I now go on to the children themselves and must note right away that in doing so, I am examining the most unfortunate aspect of the elementary school in Galka. This has to do with the extremely large number of children who attend the school – during the year 1909 there was a sum total of 342 children! [ $342/60 = 57$  children per bench] As a matter of course, this makes it impossible that care will be taken for a thorough and regular instruction and education of the individual child attending school. At the same time as the numbers of people increase in total, so also the number of schoolchildren - boys and girls (both of whom receive instruction together here) - has grown considerably during the last few years. According to the local pastor and the figures tabulated by the colony office, the numbers of schoolchildren have been:

<u>Year</u>	<u>boys</u>	<u>girls</u>	<u>together</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>boys</u>	<u>girls</u>	<u>together</u>
1903	126	105	231	1907	187	196	383
1905	162	133	295	1908	163	145	308
1906	152	134	295	1909	168	174	342

It is noted that the large numbers of children who need to be taught on a regular basis have only one single schoolroom in which they can receive instruction. Half-way down the



room, there are two wires which are stretched crosswise through the room in such a way that dark, light-weight curtains can be pulled over the wires to divide the room into four sections. Naturally this cannot change the fact that the pupils and the teachers bother each other during instruction. This means that the teachers cannot ask questions of the children in a loud voice and because of this the children have to respond by replying to the questions in unison. There is no unnecessary noise in this school, for the schoolmaster sees to it that there is good order and strict discipline. Still it is almost impossible for someone who is not accustomed to conditions such as these, to sit in on even just one class with complete attention.

Teachers and students seem to have gotten used to this noise as something that cannot be changed. One thing that they cannot get used to is the very large number of children - each teacher has an average of 110 pupils - which makes it impossible for them, by means of their teaching, to get the children to even progress to an acceptable level of attainment. Taking these difficult circumstances into account, one must simply be satisfied with teaching the children a few sentences or sayings, which can be recited in unison. One is glad in the end when they, after seven years of instruction, are able to more or less read and write in the two compulsory languages and are able to add and to subtract. Without a doubt there are schoolchildren in Galka who are, because of their abilities, way above average. It is even more painful for the teachers to see how these children, when they have learned everything that can be offered to them here and have learned it in a short period of time, become more and more disinterested and come to instruction with indifference and soon do not know what they are doing going to school. The amelioration for this situation is above all a government and cantonal matter and then also of the community of Galka itself. Galka could very well allow more to be spent for the instruction of its children. Of course the community itself is very unhappy with the noted situation but seems no easy answers and the situation remains the way it is. To be sure, a few progressive and richer colonists send their sons to the secondary school in Kamyshin, but the larger part of the village inhabitants are not helped by this. In earlier times, there was a so-called "Association {or Society} School" which was supported financially by individual colonists with the support of the canton. In total there were about 50 children who were taught by one teacher. The children in this school made good progress and at the same time the church school received some relief because of this undertaking. Unfortunately, the canton, after only a few years, refused to pay the substantial subsidy, which had been granted the school on an annual basis, and, because of this, the school had to be dissolved.

The children receive little help at home from their parents and older siblings when they prepare their homework. Every day a lot of children skip school because the parents are rarely concerned whether the child attends school or not. The child is simply supposed to learn something and if the latter does not take place, the teachers get all the blame.

It is made evident by all of this that the schooling system presents one of the darkest sides in the life of the community of Galka. If a change could be effected in this regard it would be of the greatest benefit for the entire colony in every way, shape and form. What is reported here on the school conditions in Galka is, with very few exceptions, repeated in all the other German colonies on the Volga. The same sad picture is found everywhere - a large number of pupils, too few teachers and a schoolhouse that is unsatisfactory. Nowhere has one found a proper solution or a way to ameliorate the situation.



## F) Social Conditions and the State of Culture

As the mayor is the head of the community, so the father of the house is the head of the family. The latter consists of the close family; the mother of the house and children as well as married sons who have not as yet received their apportionment during a land re-division and their wives and children. Finally, wherever this is the case, there are the servants. Everyone must give in to the will of the father of the household and this even to the smallest of matters. A short time ago the general custom was in practice in Galka that an adult son, when he himself had already become a wage-earner such as a teacher or a clerk, had to hand over his entire wage to his father and this right to the last kopeck. It depended on the latter's good will if he wanted to give his son, who had actually earned the money, an allowance or did not want to do so. However, during more recent years, one has become more moderate in views regarding these things and become more lenient. Usually the housefather gives up his right to his son's income and he does this of his own free will. A sign of the still strong dependent relationship in which the son spends his life is the name by which the fathers called their sons in Galka. This is: "my servant". Sons who live in the same house as their parents have to work alongside diligently in the fields and do everything according to the will of the father. If a son showed any sign of disobedience, then it can happen, as recently was often the case, that the father would complain to the mayor about him. The mayor ordered the son to come to his office and without even giving him an extensive hearing in regard to the matter, administered corporal punishment in the colony office. Given a strict admonition that he conduct himself in a better manner the next time, he was then sent on his way. Naturally, at present, such cases do not happen in Galka anymore but several older men replied to my queries that they could still remember being witnesses to such incidents during their youth.

In opposition to this, the unmarried daughters in the family have a much easier life. They have just recently finished school and been confirmed and then, outside of field work during the summer, they have as good as nothing to do. They sit knitting stockings on the bench in front of the gate or they go "spille" (playing); that is to visit girlfriends and on the way there zealously look for suitors. To be sure, when there is no daughter-in-law in the house and the mother cannot handle all of the work in the home, then the daughters also have enough to do. However if there is a daughter-in-law in the home, a so-called "Schnerrch", then she is usually burdened with most of the work as well as the most difficult work. In these things the head of the family follows the axiom that should there appear to be a lack of workers in the home, he simply orders his bachelor son to get married. In so far as marrying is concerned, the parents here still have a very decisive and strong influence in regard to the choice which their children make and the children themselves are used to implicitly obeying the command or the counsel of their parents.

The energy of the children, that is of the boys and girls who are still required to attend school, is put to full advantage on the farm. Even the small children are often useful in the fieldwork; this being the case when the plough animals are driven. This usually takes place in the following manner. The children run beside the team and spur on the tired animals by yelling and hitting them. Besides this, they have to drive the horses to pasture on the steppe and afterwards drive them home again. The watering of the animals is also "work for children" here. If, on the other hand, the children are already confirmed, that is they have already attained the age of 15, then their capability of working is already considered to be of much higher value. For this reason, as was mentioned previously, the parents in



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earlier times liked to "redeem" (ransom) their children or, in other words, by having them go through the rite of confirmation, place them in a situation where they could, with a good conscience, burden them with required work performance which was not in accord with their physical strength.

The servants, whose presence, as stated previously, is rare in Galka are treated almost the same as the children of the family. The domestic servants eat at the same table and after work everyone rests together. Among the domestic servants there are so-called "little" farmhands and maidservants; these are children who must still attend school and often serve for room and board and for clothing. During the time when school is in they are free of housework. The "single" man and maidservants are given other things besides their wages for their work. The menservants receive a pair of felt boots and the maidservants a pair of felt boots, winter gloves, stockings, cloth for the patching of clothing and wool for a skirt. The hiring of new servants takes place only one time annually, on the second day of Christmas, and the maidservants who have been hired for new positions are driven through the streets of the village in sleighs by young lads whom they know.

There is little visiting among the farmers in Galka. When it does happen it is usually such that the neighbors visit each other in the evening for a short time of conversation before they go to bed. The colony office serves as the meeting place for the exchange of village news. This often happens at the smithy as well. Here one often sees them sitting crowded together in the low-ceilinged room. They are very seriously involved in conversation; sometimes the conversation is not without its humorous side. They discuss the matters of daily life and the happenings in the scenario of the world that has reached this hidden corner of the earth. During the summer, the colonists usually sit around on the bench in front of the gate and this is where visiting also often happens. A certain pride and an inborn reserve of the farmers keep them from trusting strangers too much. This manner of behavior, which seems to give the impression of mistrust at first, is only slowly relaxed after more association with the party concerned. The various blessings of a refined culture have however not come to be accepted in Galka as yet. In this regard everything here is very simple and is on a primitive level of development.

The sumptuously equipped Volga steamboats provide the means of contact with the outside world. However, Galka itself has no dock for the same and the colonists must first, in order to be able to get to a ship, travel to the German colony of Nishnaya-Dobrinka, which is located ten verst southwest of Galka. Here several passenger steamships dock every day. During the winter commerce with the closest cities is significantly more difficult – because it is much more expensive and takes much longer in terms of time – and is restricted to sleighs, which bring their passengers to their destinations either via the bare ice of the river or via a long land route during the time when the ice is breaking up. As a result, only a small number of the local settlers have seen one or another of the cities of the Volga with their own eyes; most have perhaps only visited the three or four closest neighboring villages. This is all that they have seen of the wide world. Mail also takes a long time to reach Galka. As the village does not as yet have its own post office, letters have to be sent through the volosty village of Holstein and be picked up from there as well. Twice a week a deliveryman who is paid by the community takes care of transporting the mail.

Considering the circumstances, all of the homes of the farmers are well furnished and well



appointed and are witnesses to a certain good standard of living among the inhabitants. The large rooms flash and shine with cleanliness, especially during the times of the high church festivals, which are always preceded by a general cleaning. – There is also a certain standard of prosperity that is evident in the eating habits of the colonists, especially of the "older people". It is seldom that there is not a piece of mutton or pork, homemade sausage or homemade cheese on the farmer's table at lunch. The so-called "sweetwood tea" which is prepared from the roots of an herb (quendel), and drunk in large quantities is also a part of the midday meal. The only kind of bread eaten in Galka is white bread, the so-called "Kuchen" (cake). If the family is rich, then milk is also drunk at most meals. The use of alcoholic beverages is only in its initial stages of development in Galka. This is exemplified by the fact that the colonists very rarely consume spirits (hard liquor). The state liquor store annually only sells 200 pails<sup>74</sup> of hard liquor in the entire volosty. Of this amount, 100 pails alone go to the Russian village of Schtscherbakovka [This is indeed a Russian village, not the German colony known as Shcherbakovka aka Tscherbakowka]. The beer store located in the village also does not have much business.

Less favorable things can be stated in regard to the diets of the younger members of the household. The married sons and their daughters, despite the fact that they have to work very hard, are only provided with that which is absolutely necessary. For this reason it is not surprising that the children in Galka are usually very weak. However, as the children usually are already born weak, this situation can also be mainly blamed on the poor dietary habits of their parents.

The farmers in Galka are better clothed than their neighbors the Russians. The suits, which are made of strong, long-lasting material, are always in good condition and are neat. The main piece of clothing that the men wear is the sheepskin coat, which is light brown in color and is made of coarsely tanned leather. The farmers, especially during the festival days, wear shiny, smooth, high boots. The headgear consists of a high black fur cap (hat). The women's clothing, which in earlier times was made from self-woven and self-spun woolen material, is now purchased in the county seat of Kamyshin. It has recently occurred that these as well as other items that are hard to obtain in Galka are now procured in Kamyshin in springtime. Then the purchased goods must be paid for immediately. Just a few years ago, the main suppliers to the farmers were the two shops located in Galka. The owners of the shops would sell the goods on credit. Later on however, after the harvest, they would require an additional charge in the form of a percentage of the price for which the item had been sold. With the coming of fabrics from the city, urban styles of clothing also made their way into the village and nowadays the married men often complain how often their wives and children expect to have new clothing. A curious result of fashion can be seen in the fact that for a while now, almost all the ladies in Galka have taken to wearing galoshes (see rain pg 36). This very practical piece of wear loses its original purpose because here they are only worn as adornments and in order to look fine in church. The rubber overshoes are anxiously protected from every bit of dust and from every muddy spot. A colorful scarf with a flower pattern on it completes the outfit worn by the ladies.

A lady physician who is employed by the canton is responsible for health care in Galka. Her place of residence is in the volosty village of Holstein located seven verst from here. Since 1906, a hospital with thirteen beds has been in existence there. Upon the initiative of the community of Galka itself, two village midwives have been trained by the county midwife.



They have been carrying out their duties to the greatest of satisfaction among the village settlers for the last twenty years. They have also disseminated much knowledge in the village in regard to the care of infants. Very much in peculiar contrast to the previously lauded cleanliness of the homes, the fact is that the colonists are only sparingly clean themselves<sup>75</sup>. It is more than likely that this is the reason for the fact that the dangerous eye infection called trachoma, which often appears in the Volga colonies and in Galka as well, is a result of poor hygiene.

Newspapers are hardly read in Galka. The "Deutsche Volkszeitung" {German Peoples Newspaper}, which has been published in Saratov since 1906, has a relatively high number of subscribers – sixteen copies are distributed. This newspaper is printed twice a week and provides some useful articles written by people who have themselves experienced village life personally. Besides this there are several stories, which are of a half-serious and half-humorous character. Smaller and/or larger groups of men then gather in order to read and have the paper read to them. The one in their midst who can read best has to summarize the content of the newspapers as well as he is able. Afterward everything that has been read is passionately "discussed". Only a single colonist, the teacher Schick, who has been mentioned several times before, receives several agricultural periodicals of a scientific nature. He receives the Russian-language St. Petersburg Newspaper as well as an illustrated periodical called "The Book Meant for All".

Some of the old customs have been quite vigorously retained here as they originally were. This is especially true of several customs that are practiced when marriages are held. The so-called "Schaffer" (workers), the best men, walk through the village with a pole upon which colorful ribbons are attached and then invite the guests to the wedding feast. When they do this, the best men recite a long poem, in which the splendid things that await the guest are lauded.

Here I am able to quote the above-mentioned "Wedding Poem", as it is recited by the best men in most of the Volga German colonies. I am able to do this because of the kindness of Pastor Johannes Erbes of Volskaya.

### Wedding Poem

"Today I have a duty to ask you a question,

I will announce a lot of things to you,

I have a nice greeting from the bride and from the groom,

And from both sides from the wedding parents,

They want to ask all of you,

You are to be wedding guests as well, –

To go with them to church,

And to witness the joy with them.

And when the wedding is then over,

Then the music will make an outcry.

Then it is off to the wedding house;

That is where a big feast is located.

There you will be seated behind the table,

And you will be served fried fish,



And with it also a jug of wine or spirits,  
With that you can or must be satisfied.  
If you promise us a beautiful ribbon,  
Then we will let you know when the wedding day is."

(He receives a colored ribbon placed on his staff)

"Now you have to ask my comrade,

He will be able to tell you this better."

(The second man says:)

"My comrade is a crazy man,

He doesn't like to go into the kitchen;

There one must ask the lady cooks first,

They will be able to tell you this better.

Last night a cook told me,

That there was kvas like beer stored in the cellar,

It is so strong – it makes me shudder thinking about it!

One also bakes tender cakes there,

The meat is small and chopped up into pieces.

There is supposed be salad as well, –

But now it is wintertime,

Red beets have been prepared.

Potatoes, noodles and millet gruel,

We have to do with a variety of superabundance.

There is also a lot of poultry,

Which flew in early in the morning.

Good gracious! — what can I remember more!

I am completely still because the spirits which I have drunk!

For all the barrels are full,

The Zalvalnik (Russian: "Tselovalynik" = the seller of spirits) knows that already.

There are also musicians there,

They play hopsa, fallerallera,

With fiddles, pipes and bagpipes,

One can dance according to the rhythm.

I have announced what I had to tell you, –

I would like to have a ribbon on my staff."

Finally, allow me to refer to a book by Johannes Erbes, which has as its subject the "German folk song in the Volga colonies", and which is supposed to be printed in Saratov soon. The author proves here how tenaciously the old homeland folk songs of the Volga Germans have been transmitted from generation to generation. The complete isolation from the motherland has resulted in the fact that the old melodies have, in some cases, been retained more purely in terms of the words and of the notes than in Germany itself.



Few social games are known here. However, croquet, which was introduced by the previous pastor in Galka, is now enthusiastically played by several married men in the village. This is also true of dominos and of "Damm" {?}. Unfortunately, just recently, card playing has started to come into use, even if it is only in its moderate beginning stages. It has been introduced by several wealthy sons of colonists who learned and adopted it from Ukrainians (Little Russians) who live on the Meadow Side.

The lights are put out early in Galka. By nightfall only a few houses still have a light shining from them. This is the light shining in the bedrooms of those who are ill. When the evening bells are tolled in the bell tower and give last reveille to the disappearing sun, the peace of nighttime quietly descends upon the village and the colonists, German farmers of the old kind rest from their labors.

### **Conclusion**

Every measure which a government institutes, in so far as it has to do with an upheaval of the economic foundations of life for an entire class of people should always be initiated with utmost care and weighed carefully. A change in these foundations, if it is applied completely can generally not claim that it will effect a thorough improvement in the economy and the life of everyone involved.

Here it is being implemented in a very large territory where there are influences of the most varied kind, great climatic differences, various kinds of soil conditions and various possibilities for the transport and sale of the goods. It will cause natural borders to be established among the individual regions of the country. The change cannot bring a thorough improvement in economic life even if it is instituted with the best of intentions nor even if it is preceded by diligent research carried out in regard to the most advantageous organization for the production of crops. There is just no such thing as a "most advantageous organization" in so far as one could, in terms of all details and in the most varied of economic conditions state that it could attain validity for all concerned. What is good for one person is not good for all. For this reason a government will hardly ponder the thought of wanting to concentrate the entire productivity of its subjects in factory-like large-scale operations. In this day and age, all elements including factories, cottage industries, the pricing system and the systems of remuneration, in all their most varied forms, are entirely valid in the economic sector. The same holds true for the laws pertaining to agriculture in a country. Natural and social differences necessarily restrict each other by one or another of the situations pertaining to real estate in individual regions. Natural and social differences of necessity affect or restrict each other by one or another of the situations pertaining to real estate in individual regions.

The Russian government has already given eloquent expression regarding its desire to thoroughly abolish the farmers' collective property and introduce private property. This was done in the royal mandate of the 9<sup>th</sup>/22<sup>nd</sup> of November 1906, which I mentioned previously (P. 13) and which was given to the governing Senate. How much this measure will result in advancing or arresting the agricultural production in the empire – this question naturally goes well beyond the perimeters of the research that is presented here.

However, the German colonies that were founded in the sixties of the 18<sup>th</sup> century along the Volga allow some doubts to appear regarding the suitability of the aforementioned decree. The decree will be applied to the German colonies to the same extent as to the national (ethnically) Russian rural communities. As was mentioned previously (P. 8), the so-called



"Law regarding the Colonists" from the year 1764 granted the German colonists, who, in the great majority, originated in regions where there was private property, their allotments of land in the form of communal property. The "community" is, in the first instance, the landlord of the property.

It seems as if that which the government did in regard to that situation and with consideration for the conditions back then was a successful move. The observations of Haxthausen, according to which the German colonies, of the own free will, went one step further in the practical application of communal property and introduced the same periodic and equal division amongst themselves as was done in the Russian villages. Even if they [Volga Germans] did not progress in the same measure as the German colonists who were settled in South Russia, there was still continuous progress in regard to the economic life of the Volga colonists. A wealthy and entrepreneurial middle class with roots in the colonies developed in the large cities of the middle Volga; in many localities industrial enterprises have been founded and managed with success. A trip through the villages of the colonists clearly shows that one is not dealing with an impoverished nor degenerate population but with a very well nourished and generally satisfied population. [Previously Praetorius described them a poorly nourished.] The privileges, which the colonists were initially granted, have long since ended. The reason for their sufficient economic situation does not stem from those privileges. Would not communal property have been a factor here that cannot be underestimated in the economic progress that was made?

How are things in Galka in regard to this? Even if this research paper does not, by far, exhaust all factors which are a part of the entire picture, I still do not want to refuse to deal with several conditions which seem appropriate in order to shed light on the connection between the economic and the social life in Galka which are based on the fact that communal property existed.

One of the factors which is favorable for the introduction of private property seems to me to be that the settlers seem to have been made aware of a wide field of endeavor in the area of wine-growing which holds economic promise. However, this factor must not be overestimated. Those slopes that are favorable for wine growing hardly offer enough land area to satisfy the demands of all of the settlers. Besides this, there is the danger that the vineyards will not remain for long in the hands of the first colonists who were a part of the scenario when private property was introduced but slowly and surely become the property of a few people. At present a number of colonists have already begun to sell the parcel of land that will belong to them in the future in order to immigrate to America with the proceeds.

One disadvantage, which the introduction of private property would allow to become more of a problem, would be in regard to the watering places for animals because of the unfavorable water situation in Galka. Even with all the aid that the canton would provide for the colonists in order to deal with it, perhaps just this factor would, in the long term, act as an impediment in regard to the economic progress of Galka. The cultivation of the land as a large contiguous area according to the principles of a large-scale operation, the lack of hedges and ditches, which indicate the borders of the fields which touch each other but are a part of private property – all these advantages of communal property also change into the disadvantages of private property for Galka.



## Galka – a German Settlement on the Volga

It remains to be seen, if the general advantages of private property such as a greater love for one's own land and soil and therefore also a more careful cultivation of the plot will be proven to be the case in the future here in Galka. A lot depends upon how the community gets through the first years after the upheaval of the property laws. If the people can get through this initial stage, then they will have accomplished a lot. In my opinion, there is a strong positive guarantee for a good result in Galka in the fact that the Island of Galkin will remain, as it was before, the common property of the community. Those who are the weaker ones among the colonists when it comes to the management of their affairs will find support here during the difficult times after the transition.

The social life of the people will also be affected by the change that will shortly take place. The present relations of neighborly friendship of the colonists to each other will most likely suffer in the long term. Also, it is natural that more so than in the past, the difference between work and capital will effect the community of Galka. Nice old customs such as the gathering together of all the settlers for a community "Hour of Prayer for the Fields" will probably come to an end out of necessity.

Therefore, all in all, the prospects for Galka for the future are somewhat gloomy. However, in this village one is conscious of the fact that the new system does not only have dark but also bright sides to it. There are more things, which could be brought up, which will be negative but also a few which will be positive as a result of the decision of the community to make the transition to private property. One of these positive ones refers to the following. The old land laws aided and abetted a certain work and intellectual lethargy among the colonists. Everything here always went along on its own and no one needed to make an effort above the average in order to be able to enjoy his daily bread in peace. The new land laws will make every farmer in Galka into a landlord but also into the custodian of his property – may this be a blessing in every way for the people of Galka by giving the people an aroused sense of responsibility. May it be a blessing for them and for their work and may they faithfully maintain that which they have preserved.

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The following pages have the yard and house plans supplied by Max Praetorius. Based on the figures he gave starting on page 14 the following figures are given the English readers.

The entire yard is about one-half acre in area.

The small (simple) house is between 835 and 1029 square feet in area.

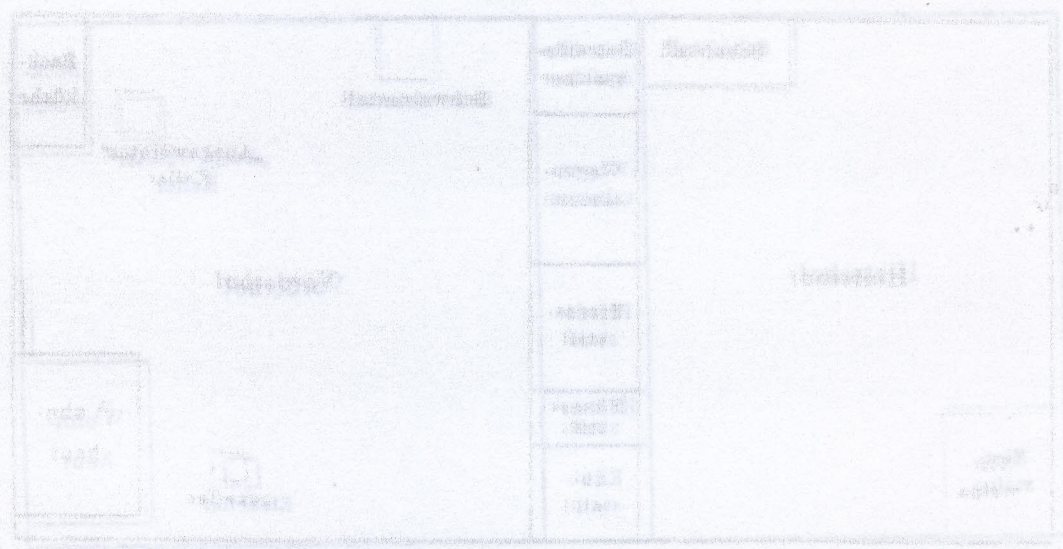
The large (double) house is between 856 and 1200 square feet in area.

The standard Habitat for Humanity house built in the US is 1056 square feet in area but only one family is expected to live there.

The Volga Germans wasted no space on hallways, bathrooms, closets, laundry room, etc. In the smaller house there were 3 rooms - 7X22 feet (Kitchen), 7X22 feet (small bedroom) and 21X22 feet (large bedroom).

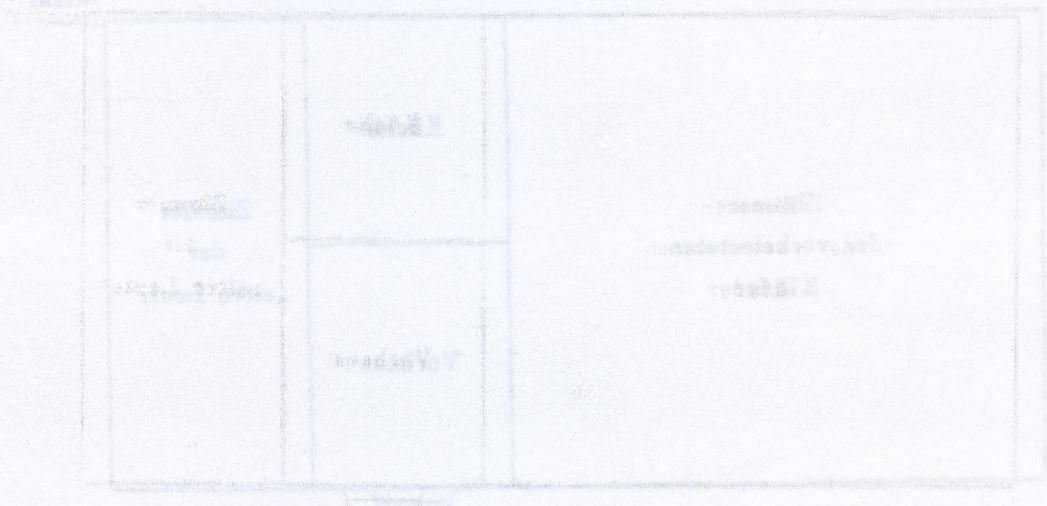


Kapitel mit "Volksleben" Haus



1. Etage

2. Etage

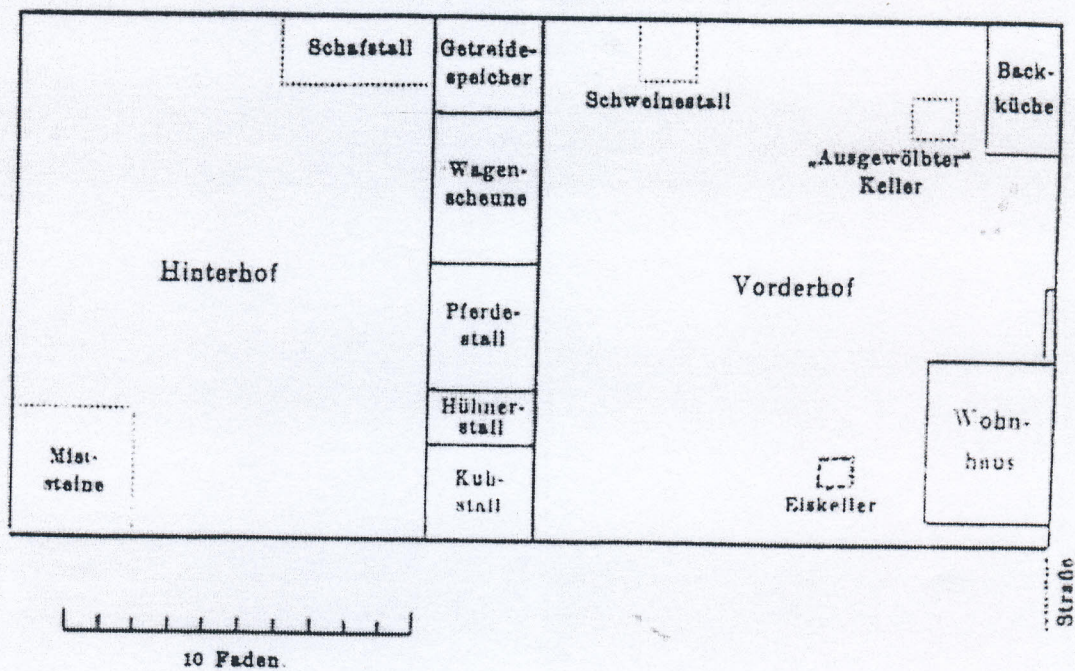


2. Etage

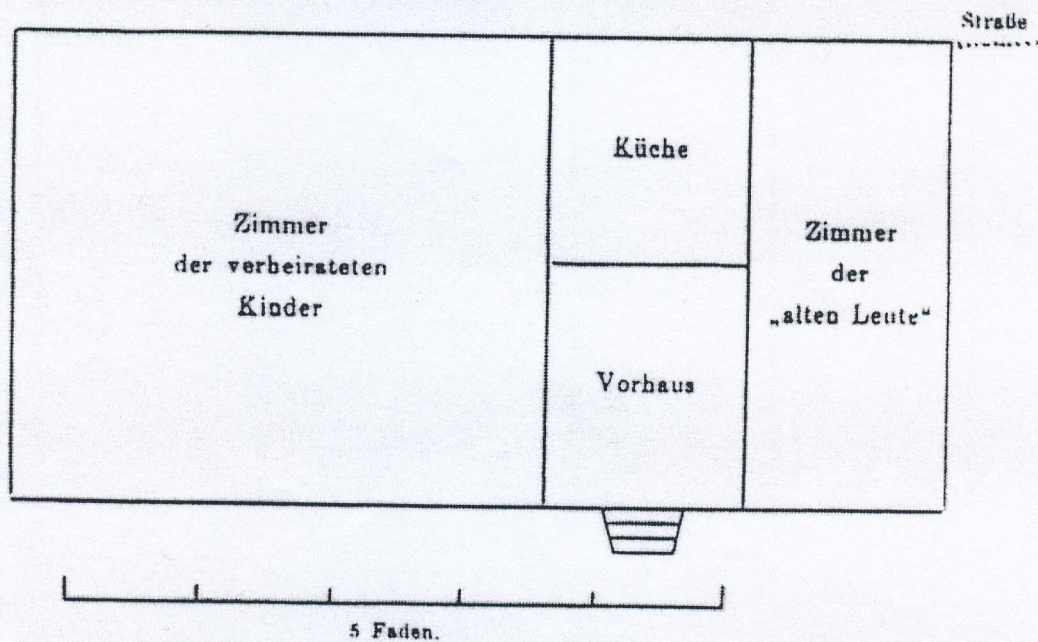
The house is a typical German house with a garden and a garage.



**Hofplatz mit „einfachem“ Haus.**



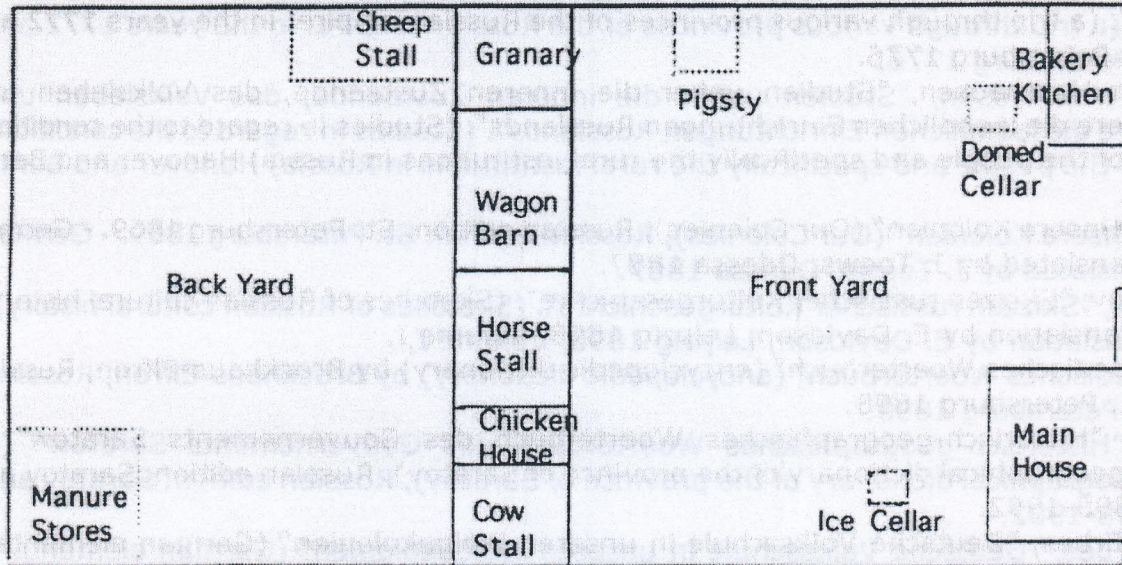
**„Doppeltes“ Haus.**



The Main House, in the yard plan lower right corner, has been rotated 90° and enlarged.

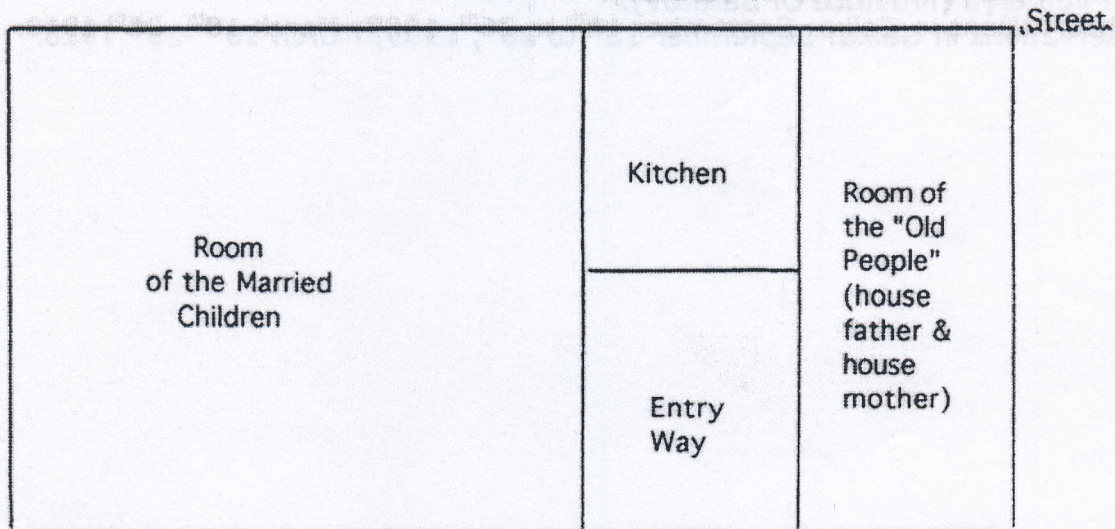


# Yard Plan of a simple House



70 Feet

## Double House



35 Feet



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## Manifesto of Catherine the Great II

issued on 22 July 1763

We, Catherine the second, by the Grace of God, Empress and Autocrat of all the Russians at Moscow, Kiev, Vladimir, Novgorod, Czarina of Kasan, Czarina of Astrachan, Czarina of Siberia, Lady of Pleskow and Grand Duchess of Smolensko, Duchess of Esthonia and Livland, Carelia, Twer, Yugoria, Permia, Viatka and Bulgaria and others; Lady and Grand Duchess of Novgorod in the Netherland of Chernigov, Resan, Rostov, Yaroslav, Beloosrial, Udoria, Obdoria, Condinia, and Ruler of the entire North region and Lady of the Yurish, of the Cartalinian and Grusinian czars and the Cabardinian land, of the Cherkessian and Gorsian princes and the lady of the manor and sovereign of many others. As We are sufficiently aware of the vast extent of the lands within Our Empire, We perceive, among other things, that a considerable number of regions are still uncultivated which could easily and advantageously be made available for productive use of population and settlement. Most of the lands hold hidden in their depth an inexhaustible wealth of all kinds of precious ores and metals, and because they are well provided with forests, rivers and lakes, and located close to the sea for purpose of trade, they are also most convenient for the development and growth of many kinds of manufacturing, plants, and various installations. This induced Us to issue this manifesto, which was published last Dec. 4, 1762, for the benefit of all Our loyal subjects. However, inasmuch as We made only a summary announcement of Our pleasure to the foreigners who would like to settle in Our Empire, we now issue for a better understanding of Our intention the following decree, which We hereby solemnly establish and order to be carried out to the full.

**I.** . We permit all foreigners to come into Our Empire, in order to settle in all the gouvernements, just as each one may desire.

**II.** . After arrival, such foreigners can report for this purpose not only to the Guardianship Chancellery established for foreigners in Our residence, but also, if more convenient, to the governor or commanding officer in one of the border-towns of the Empire.

**III.** . Since those foreigners who would like to settle in Russia will also include some who do not have sufficient means to pay the required travel costs, they can report to our ministers in foreign courts, who will not only transport them to Russia at Our expense, but also provide them with travel money.

**IV.** . As soon as these foreigners arrive in Our residence and report at the Guardianship Chancellery or in a border-town, they shall be required to state their true decision whether their real desire is to be enrolled in the guild of merchants or artisans, and become citizens, and in what city; or if they wish to settle on free, productive land in colonies and rural areas, to take up agriculture or some other useful occupation. Without delay, these people will be assigned to their destination, according to their own wishes and desires. From the following register\* it can be seen in which regions of Our Empire free and suitable lands are still available. However, besides those listed, there are many more regions and all kinds of land where We will likewise permit people to settle, just as each one chooses for his best advantage. \*The register lists the areas where the immigrants can be settled.

**V.** . Upon arrival in Our Empire, each foreigner who intends to become a settler and has reported to the Guardianship Chancellery or in other border-towns of Our Empire and, as already prescribed in part **IV**, has declared his decision, must take the oath of allegiance in accordance with his religious rite.

**VI.** . In order that the foreigners who desire to settle in Our Empire may realize the extent of Our benevolence to their benefit and advantage, this is Our will—

1. We grant to all foreigners coming into Our Empire the free and unrestricted practice of their religion according to the precepts and usage of their Church. To those, however, who intend to settle not in cities but in colonies and villages on uninhabited lands we grant the freedom



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to build churches and bell towers, and to maintain the necessary number of priests and church servants, but not the construction of monasteries. On the other hand, everyone is hereby warned not to persuade or induce any of the Christian co-religionists living in Russia to accept or even assent to his faith or join his religious community, under pain of incurring the severest punishment of Our law. This prohibition does not apply to the various nationalities on the borders of Our Empire who are attached to the Mahometan faith. We permit and allow everyone to win them over and make them subject to the Christian religion in a decent way.

2. None of the foreigners who have come to settle in Russia shall be required to pay the slightest taxes to Our treasury, nor be forced to render regular or extraordinary services, nor to billet troops. Indeed, everybody shall be exempt from all taxes and tribute in the following manner: those who have been settled as colonists with their families in hitherto uninhabited regions will enjoy 30 years of exemption; those who have established themselves, at their own expense, in cities as merchants and tradesmen in Our Residence St. Petersburg or in the neighboring cities of Livland, Esthonia, Ingermanland, Carelia and Finland, as well as in the Residential city of Moscow, shall enjoy 5 years of tax-exemption. Moreover, each one who comes to Russia, not just for a short while but to establish permanent domicile, shall be granted free living quarters for half a year.
3. All foreigners who settle in Russia either to engage in agriculture and some trade, or to undertake to build factories and plants will be offered a helping hand and the necessary loans required for the construction of factories useful for the future, especially of such as have not yet been built in Russia.
4. For the building of dwellings, the purchase of livestock needed for the farmstead, the necessary equipment, materials, and tools for agriculture and industry, each settler will receive the necessary money from Our treasury in the form of an advance loan without any interest. The capital sum has to be repaid only after ten years, in equal annual installments in the following three years.
5. We leave to the discretion of the established colonies and villages the internal constitution and jurisdiction, in such a way that the persons placed in authority by Us will not interfere with the internal affairs and institutions. In other respects the colonists will be liable to Our civil laws. However, in the event that the people would wish to have a special guardian or even an officer with a detachment of disciplined soldiers for the sake of security and defense, this wish would also be granted.
6. To every foreigner who wants to settle in Russia We grant complete duty-free import of his property, no matter what it is, provided, however, that such property is for personal use and need, and not intended for sale. However, any family that also brings in unneeded goods for sale will be granted free import on goods valued up to 300 rubles, provided that the family remains in Russia for at least 10 years. Failing to remain for the required 10 years, the family will be required, upon its departure, to pay the duty both on their incoming and outgoing goods.
7. The foreigners who have settled in Russia shall not be drafted against their will into the military or the civil service during their entire stay here. Only after the lapse of the years of tax-exemption can they be required to provide labor service for the country. Whoever wishes to enter military service will receive, besides his regular pay, a gratuity of 30 rubles at the time he enrolls in the regiment.
8. As soon as the foreigners have reported to the Guardianship Chancellery or to our border towns and declared their decision to travel to the interior of the Empire and establish



domicile there, they will forthwith receive food rations and free transportation to their destination.

9. Those among the foreigners in Russia who establish factories, plants, or firms, and produce goods never before manufactured in Russia, will be permitted to sell and export freely for ten years, without paying export duty or excise tax.

10. Foreign capitalists who build factories, plants, and concerns in Russia at their own expense are permitted to purchase serfs and peasants needed for the operation of the factories.

11. We also permit all foreigners who have settled in colonies or villages to establish market days and annual market fairs as they see fit, without having to pay any dues or taxes to Our treasury.

**VII.** . All the afore-mentioned privileges shall be enjoyed not only by those who have come into our country to settle there, but also their children and descendants, even though these are born in Russia, with the provision that their years of exemption will be reckoned from the day their forebears arrived in Russia.

**VIII.** . After the lapse of the stipulated years of exemption, all the foreigners who have settled in Russia are required to pay the ordinary moderate contributions and, like our other subjects, provide labor- service for their country. Finally, in the event that any foreigner who has settled in Our Empire and has become subject to Our authority should desire to leave the country, We shall grant him the liberty to do so, provided, however, that he is obligated to remit to Our treasury a portion of the assets he has gained in this country; that is, those who have been here from one to five years will pay one-fifth, whole those who have been here for five or more years will pay one-tenth. Thereafter each one will be permitted to depart unhindered anywhere he pleases to go.

**IX.** . If any foreigner desiring to settle in Russia wishes for certain reasons to secure other privileges or conditions besides those already stated, he can apply in writing or in person to our Guardianship Chancellery, which will report the petition to Us. After examining the circumstances, We shall not hesitate to resolve the matter in such a way that the petitioner's confidence in Our love of justice will not be disappointed.

Given at the Court of Peter, July 22, 1763 in the Second Year of Our Reign.

The original was signed by Her Imperial Supreme Majesty's own hand.

Printed by the Senate, July 25, 1763

[Found on-line in similar, nearly identical forms several places. I have used a variation on the one posted by Bob L. Berschauer and Brent Mai at this website.

<http://www.berschauer.com/Genealogy/Accounts/manifesto.html> ]



### **Biography**

**I**, Max Praetorius, of the Evangelical Lutheran confession, was born on March 25, 1885 as the son the merchant Theodor Praetorius in Riga (Russia). From the fall of 1894 to the spring of 1901, I attended the Eltzsche private high school/college in Riga, then I entered the business school of N. N. Mironoff, also located in Riga, and left this school in June 1903 with a certificate of graduation/university entrance. In May 1908, I passed the examination of the 1<sup>st</sup> high school/college in Saratov. I did this as a student who had another place of residence.

From the spring of 1906 to the spring of 1907, I studied national economy at the University of Goettingen and during summer semester of 1907 I also studied in the same faculty at the University of Freiburg in the Breisgau {in Baden, now southwest Germany}. From the fall of 1908 until the spring of 1912, I studied at the University of Leipzig. During my time of studies, I attended lectures given by the following Professors and Lecturers: Biermann, Brandenburg, Brendel, Buecher, Cohn, Doren, Eulenberg, Freiberg, Fuchs, Kallius, Lamprecht, Lexis, Merker, Partsch, Plenge, Rickert, von Rohland, Salomon, Schmid, von Schulze-Gaevernitz, Sohm, Stein, Stieda, Tietze, Verworn, Wittkowski, Woltereck and Wundt.

### **Genealogy of Maximilian Julius Praetorius**

He gives the name of his father as Theodore Praetorius. Max was born on March 25, 1885 in Riga, wrote his thesis in 1910, had it published in 1912, and died as a Russian officer in 1915. He married Violet Mary Francesca Parker and at some point they were divorced. Violet delivered their son in Tonbridge (now Tunbridge Wells) England on July 19, 1914. The son was named Robin Praetorius at birth. Later his mother changed both her surname and his to Desborough by deed-poll. Later Robin, then known as Vincent Robin d'Abra Desborough became a world-renowned archeologist and author. He married Mary Appach and they had a son and a daughter. In 1975 the son was noted as deceased and the daughter as living. I [jwd] do not know their names nor whether they had descendents



## End notes

0. Galka (Ust-Kulalinka) was founded in the province of Astrakhan; Olonetz has become the Republic of Karelia.
1. "Enzyklopaedisches Woerterbuch" (Encyclopedia) by Brockhaus-Efron. Russian edition, St. Petersburg 1898. The article: "Ansiedlungen der Auslaender in Russland" (settlements of foreigners in Russia).
2. "Skizzen russischer Kulturgeschichte" (sketches of the history of Russian culture) by Paul Milukov, translated by E. Davidson. Leipzig 1898, Volume I, Pp. 38/39 and 45
3. The manifesto is in the appendix.
4. A. Klaus, "Unsere Kolonien", Russische Ausgabe, (Our Colonies, Russian edition), St. Petersburg 1869, P.9.
5. "Enzyklopaedisches Woerterbuch" (Encyclopedia) ibid
6. A. Klaus, ibid, P. 11 and following
7. jwd 100 verst = 66.3 miles, 1 verst = 2/3 of a mile = .66 miles]
8. 1 desyatin = 30 X 80 Faden = 1.09254 hectares Faden = 2.13 Meters = 7 ft. [=2.7 acres – the state desyatin. In Old Russian there were two measurements called desyatin. Thirty (30) desyatin (state) was 81 US Acres. Thirty desyatin (farmery) would be 108 US acres. Apparently Praetorius used the state desyatin based on the conversion found at <http://www.convert-me.com/en/>
9. Baron von Haxthausen: "Studien ueber die inneren Zustaende, das Volksleben und insbesondere die laendlichen Einrichtungen Russlands" (Studies in regard to the condition of the people's life and especially in regard to the rural institutions in Russia), Hanover and Berlin 1847-1852, Volume I, P. 134, Note that he states: "I found the German colonies in the province of Saratov....." These had brought the German customs and laws regarding land rights and inheritance with them to Russia and they were not only allowed by the provincial government, but prescribed by statutes. Because the system seemed so overwhelmingly positive for the way of life, they pleaded for a long period of time that they might be able to introduce the Russian system of equal land distribution within their communities!"
10. A. Minch: "Historisch-geographisches Woerterbuch des Gouvernements Saratow". (An Historical-Geographical Dictionary of the Province of Saratov). Russian edition, Saratov and Atkarsk 1898-1902, P. 417
11. The right side of the shore of the Volga River [west] is called the "Hilly Side" [Bergsiete] because of its definitive elevation; in comparison to the left [east] side, which is almost perfectly flat, which is called the "Meadow Side" [Weisenseite]. In general, these terms are used in that region and, in this study, will be referred to as such.
12. Essay by Joh. Erbes in the copy of the "Deutsche Volkszeitung" (German People's Newspaper), Saratov 1906.
13. The so-called "censuses", of which there were 10 in Russia between the years 1718-1857, were statistical censuses of the taxable population in the empire. Those who were taxable were the males who belonged to the class of farmers, the so-called "census individuals". The division of the land area according to taxable individuals, instead of the taxation according to families, meant that there was consideration according to the number of male members of the families, without consideration for the age of each family member.
14. Compare all of this data with A. Minch, ibid, P. 417.



15. "Volksfreund-Kalender" (People's Friend calendar) for the year 1910. Saratov.
16. This figure includes the German Catholics found in two villages with a majority of Evangelical {Lutheran and Reformed} people: Katharinenstadt {now Marx} and Borgard.
17. Saratov, Samara, Volsk, Kamyshin, Tsaritsyn, Astrakhan
18. Here we compare this section with the "Enzyklopaedisches Woerterbuch" *ibid*; A. Minch, *ibid*, P. 418, and A. Klaus, *ibid*, Pp. 15.
19. The State Colleges are the same as the present-day Ministries.
20. 1 ruble = about 2.16 marks
21. A. Klaus, *ibid*, P. 16
22. The "Guidelines" which had been imparted to the "Bureau" (Kontor) when it was re-opened, are located in the archive (document number 19) of the administrative office of the province of Saratov. I am grateful for the free use of this material during the summer of the year 1910.
23. Until 1768, this colony was called "Meierhofer", in accord with the name of its first village mayor. Compare with the essay by Joh. Erbes *ibid*; - Galka is situated at 50 degrees 22 minutes latitude north of the equator and 15 degrees 29 minutes longitude east of Pulkova.
24. A. Klaus, *ibid*, addendum page 11
25. A. Minch, *ibid*, page 1073
26. I now take this opportunity to heartily thank this gentleman for the help which he provided. In every way possible, he helped me in collecting the material for the completion of this dissertation.
27. I was kindly given access to the "Historical Material in the Parsonage of the German Colony.
28. This transpired after the movement of new settlers here had come to an end.
29. 1 chetvert = 8 chetverik = 2.1 hectares [210 acres]
30. [the 9<sup>th</sup> on the Julian calendar = (+13 days) the 22<sup>nd</sup> on the Gregorian calendar. Thus: November 9/22, March 6/19 expresses the date both ways. Russia did not adopt the Gregorian Calendar, in use in Europe since 1572, until 1918. See fuller explanation in the Addendum entitled: "The Gregorian Calendar Reform"]
31. As I later found out, this tradition has become customary because of the fact that the light, wooden church steeple cannot bear the weight of the heavy bells without being damaged.
32. 1 faden = 3 arschin = 48 vershok = 6.9 ft. 1 arschin = 2 ft. 4 inches.
33. The number of souls which is configured here - 194 persons - is almost completely in agreement with the number of 195 persons ascertained from the documents of the "Historical Materials in the Parsonage in Volkskaya"
34. A. Klaus, "Unsere Kolonien", Russische Ausgabe, (Our Colonies, Russian edition), St. Petersburg 1869,
35. "Messenger of Peace Calendar", edited by P.H. Guenther. Talovka near Saratov. The editor has the statistical data in regard to the population figures for the German colonies sent to him on an annual basis from the individual pastors of the parishes.
36. A. Klaus, *ibid.*, addendum II, p. 43
37. The information for the year 1861 is missing.
38. The information for the year 1863 is missing; in its stead I am using the number of souls for the year 1864.
39. Table VII is set up according to the information from the colonist office in Galka. Unfortunately it has not been possible for me to find information on the number of male



- inhabitants in Galka who are employed. In this number, the number of tradesmen would have had to be listed in order to come to a clearer picture of the situation.
40. Table VII is set up according to the information from the colonist office in Galka. Unfortunately it has not been possible for me to find information on the number of male inhabitants in Galka who are employed. In this number, the number of tradesmen would have had to be listed in order to come to a clearer picture of the situation.
42. I obtained all data in regard to expenses and income for the community of Galka from the colony office bureau which is located there.
43. 1 pud = 40 pounds = 16.38 kg.
44. It only seldom occurs that a "community decision" is made according to which the entire community marches out to the countryside in order to build dams. When they do this, only the worst and most evident difficulties are repaired.
45. I am grateful to the teacher in Galka, Alexander Schick, for his kind co-operation in giving me most of the information which is actually shown in this section in regard to the present-day situation in Galka. He placed his extensive knowledge in this area completely at my disposal. To thank him here for all the help which he gave me gives me a great deal of satisfaction.
46. A. Minch, *ibid.*, P. 1074
47. A. Minch, *ibid.*
48. Before the year 1898 the land was newly re-divided every three years.
49. "dush" or more correctly "dusha" is a Russian word and means "soul".
50. Lately some colonists in Galka are beginning to sell off their land apportionments which they do not deem to have the necessary size for a farming operation for a cheap price in order to use the proceeds for emigration to America. As many examples from the surrounding German villages indicate, these people often return after a few years and then try in vain to declare the transaction null and void.
51. A. Minch, *ibid.*, P. 1074
52. The long stay in the open fields is dangerous for them. The fields also lie quite far away from the village. According to Minch, *ibid.*, P. 1074, the farthest distance to any field is 9 verst.
53. Experience has proven that this method works. Last year, one of the colonists in Galka, the teacher Schick, carried out an experiment by wide-sowing a field as is described above and had excellent results.
54. This method is also used by the teacher Schick who is mentioned in the previous footnote.
55. A. Minch, *ibid.*, P. 15
56. The stones, which are found on the shore of the Volga, are manufactured out of a very hard type of sandstone which is filled with fossilized shells.
57. This machine, named "the female colonist", is delivered to as far away as Volhynia, Tauria and Semipalatinsk. It is also often sold to private individuals.
58. A. Minch, *ibid.*, P. 986 and the following
59. A. Minch, *ibid.*, P. 1073
60. 2 "pot" = about 2 liters
61. A. Minch, *ibid.*, P. 1073
62. According to A. Minch, *ibid.*, P. 402, the average summer temperature in the county of Kamyshin is + 22 degrees R. (HWG - Russian degrees?) which is + 27.5 degrees Celsius
63. It may be that it was a strange chance occurrence that of all the regions of the middle Volga (with the exception of Sarepta) this very valley of the Galka was chosen in order to cultivate wine-growing on a large scale and thereby lead the way for all of the other



## Galka – a German Settlement on the Volga

colonies on the Volga. Almost one hundred and forty years ago, the first German settlers planted the first vines at the same place and harvested the first grapes. On August 20, 1774, Pallas reports regarding the latter: "From the colony of Vodaenoi Buyerak, which I reached just after noon, I traveled via Tscherbanovka to Verchnaya-Kulalinka or Galka, which is called the colony of Holstein even though the people came from the Rhineland. It was the quality of the vineyards which convinced me to make the detour."

64. In this sense all of the farmers of Galka are, at the same time, business people; namely home workers.

65 I am grateful for the friendly support which I received from Pastor Liborius Behning. My knowledge in regard to the spiritual life in Galka comes mostly from him. He was the previous parish minister in Galka. At this point, I would like to heartily thank the noted gentleman for all the help which he gave me.

66. As an especially appropriate example of this, I refer to my statements on P.39 and following. This is where thanks to a pastor, a entirely new branch of garden cultivation was initiated, namely wine-growing and began to flourish here. Even earlier, another pastor, albeit with less success, wanted to introduce the silk worm industry. To be sure, the farmers did show some interest for this; even more so when the mulberry bushes which the pastor planted grew very well. However, it did not go further than that and until now the plan has not come to be realized.

67. When the pastor is absent, the sexton-schoolmaster leads the worship service by reading a sermon.

68. The view of the colonists here is that the study of theology is nothing more than a memorization of the sermons.

69. At that time the school was viewed by most of the colonists as being an institution which had as its only purpose that of imparting to the children the necessary knowledge for confirmation.

70. A. Minch, *ibid.*, P. 1075

71. This change from community schools into church schools took place in all of the German colonies on the Volga as a result of the imperial decree of October 25, 1819. Compare A. Klaus, *ibid.*, P. 409

72. A. Minch, *ibid.*, P. 1075

73. These notations have been extracted from the "Church Chronicle of the Parish of Ust-Kulalinka".

74. 1 pail (vedro) = 12.299 liters

75. The very widespread "bathing room", which is common in the Russian villages, is rarely found in the German villages.

Conversions of measurements and quantities.

<http://www.convert-me.com/en/> - the major source used.

1 faden = 3 arschin = 2.13 meters = about 7 feet.

1 arschin = 28 inches.

1 square faden = an area of approximately 49 square feet]

1 desyatin = 2.7 acres (state definition as used by Praetorius.) 1 verst = 2/3 of a mile = .66 mile. 100 verst = 66.3 miles, 1 chetvert = 8 chetverik = 2.1 hectares [210 acres.]

Praetorius gave dates in the then current Russian Julian Calendar and sometimes he also gave the equivalent date in use in much of Europe – The Gregorian calendar. In 1910 it



was necessary added 13 days to the Julian date for the equivalent Gregorian date. When both are given it has been printed as "9/22 Nov." or 30 July/12 August 1904 [My father's birthday in Russia – he did not convert his birthday but continued to celebrate the July date.] This complicates some ship landing dates given in oral family histories.

A fuller description of the changes from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar, which occurred gradually from 1572 to 1923, is given at the end of the book.

Tiny Section of the Volga Map #27 of the American Historical Society of Russia.

The entire map of all the Volga Villages in beautiful color, suitable for framing, can be purchased for about \$8 - \$10 from the Society.

See their web page at <http://www.ahsgr.org> Click on [STORE] - click on [maps]



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**TSCHERBAKOVKA** – a German Settlement on the Volga

Published with the permission of Maria Schick Kilbert; born in Galka and currently living in Empire, California. Her parents were David George Schick and his wife Eva Margaret Weinbender

Swimming Hole	Farm Land South	Watermelon Sunflower Seeds	ca. 1855 Conrad Bauer m. Eva Elisabeth Riffel.	Winter	Jacob Bauer m. Eva Elisabeth Stricker.
Ab Ehrlich Elisabeth Ehrlich  s mother married Geo. Kam- lia Ehrlich Ehrlich d.	George Jacob Reisiq m. Mary Magdalene Weismiller	Henry Miller 1870 m. Anna Elisabeth ? from another village ca. 1900 Heinrich David Anna Elisabeth Jacob	Daniel Steiner ca. 1845 m. Anna Elisabeth Weismiller sister to Mary Magdalena Weismiller	Conrad Ehrlich	Brother Sr. Frederick Jacob Reisiq ca. 1850 or John Frederick m. Amelia Meyer

Volga River  
5 Miles East - no homes east. - Main Street

Ehrlich herine eth Stricker e - 1895 eth A. e children	George W Reisiq m Eva Elinabeth Reisiq Nov. 20-1874	Leonhard Winter m Pauline Weismiller ca 1860 Katherine Gottfried	Carl Lauthman m #1 ? 1865 #2 Maria Mayer or Meier Carl - 1888 Alex 1890 George Fredrick Boy - Girl Gottfried - 1892 m. Katherine USA Ehrlich	Gottfried Reisiq m 1868 #1 Elinabeth Stricker #2 Mary Katherine	Daniel Reisiq 1880-30 ? m #1 Katherine Reisiq #2 Mary Katherine Haffner Katherine der John Geo. Reisiq brother John Frederick Reisiq George Jacob, Katherine
			Becker	John Conrad Reisiq m Margaret Sophia Winter	Jacob <sup>(Cob)</sup> Weismiller m Betty Pumpkin



# TSCHERBAKOVKA

Kisner	Bauer John Frederic m Eva Hanshu	Bauer John Ludwig m Margaret Kraft	Weismiller	John Frederick m Eva Katherine Oblander Weinbender Conrad m Eva M. Winter 2 Katherine Meyer sisters Frederick m M.K. Winter George m Haufer 2 Reisch	
Daniel Reisch m ca 1845 Eva Kraut	Conrad Ehrlich m ca 1870 Eva Margaret Steinhert daughter of Daniel & Eligabeth Steinhert	George Lange m. ca 1840 Katherine Margaret Maqel. Alvina Victor	George Steinert m 1872 Katherine Eligabeth Reisch Dau Daniel Reisch + Amelia Meyer 1 dau - Mary	David Haffner m 1860 Maria Schick Katherine Schick Sisters	Frederick Meisner m Katherine Schick
continued					
Main Street					
ca. 1830	ca. 1830	ca. 1870	ca. 1868	ca. USA	East
Daniel Riffel m - Mary Katherine Reisch winter Gr. Uncle / Katherine Peter Gottfried Mary Margaret John Frederick Conrad 1881	John Riffel m Mary Katherine Weinbender. Margaret Mary Katherine Katherine Eligabeth	Conrad Ehrlich d. 1918 Minsk Russ. #1. Anna Eligabeth Nieders. 1ch. John Conrad Jr. #2. Susannah Stigart #3. Eva Margaret Domler 7ch.	Jacob Ehrlich m Eva Margaret Reisch (dau. of John Geo. Reisch) son - Jacob 1895	George Blehm m Eligabeth oblander Henry / Amelia George / Amelia Weismiller Parents - David - Amelia	Bauer
John Frederick Becker m. Eva Eligabeth Shaffer	John George Reisch m. Mary Katherine Weismiller	Peter Winter III m #1. Mary Katherine Meyer m #2. Katherine Eligabeth Reisch	Frederick - Fred Oblander m 1870 Mary Katherine Becker (son of John Frederick)	Daniel Riffel m. wife of other village cousin to K. Winter	



## Galka – a German Settlement on the Volga

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### **From the Days of Suffering by the German Volga Colonies**

*by Friedrich Bier and Alexander Schick; translated by Herman G. Rempel*

### **The Return of the Great-Grandchild**

*by Alexander Schick*

Forward by the Publisher (Dr. Stir, and Phil Karl Esselborn)

The author of the following description is Alexander Schick of Galka, who was born 13 April 1875 and who arrived in Germany from his homeland on the Volga in August 1921. He crossed all of European Russia on eight flat wagons. He was the first one who was able to report on what occurred in the Volga colonies in the summer of 1921 from his own observations and experiences. Before this time only short newspaper reports were available. These colonies are passing through their most difficult time in their 150-year existence, indicated by the emigration of the people due to lack of food supplies. Schick is attempting to organize the flight from the famine region into an orderly emigration, and regardless of the terrible fate, which the colonies are now suffering, he has more hope for the future, than is expressed in most of the letters coming from that region.

Schick, a capable and proficient man, has played a leading role in the colonies and enjoys the complete trust of the Volga colonists. He sees not only the past, but also the future. He is a progressive farmer and belongs to the leading minds in Galka. The writings of Max Praetorius about this colony describe the economic conditions in Galka at the time this report was put together.

The following essay, which is more than a travel report, is based on Schick's description of his experiences and stenographic notes that he made during his stay in Darmstadt between September 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>. While the editor is in touch with the publisher, Schick should really be considered to be the author, because the editing activity is confined completely to the original form, and an attempt was made to use the wording and descriptions in the way they were told.

Whoever has not experienced it would not believe it, how firmly the Volga colonists held to their German heritage and above all to the German language. Their native dialect has been preserved unaltered. Whoever hears them speak would not have the faintest idea that their cradle stood far to the East on the Volga.

This is the first time Schick has been in Germany. He made the trip to South Germany in order to acquaint himself with the place from which his great-grandfather had emigrated more than 150 years ago. He even found relatives of his family and was able to establish a family resemblance between them. The colonists stem almost entirely from South Germany, and a high percentage - approximately one half - have their origin in the area of the present Hesse.



## The Return of the Great Great Grandchild

Between Saratov in the North and Kamyshin in the South the Volga River flows rapidly through a region settled by Germans. On both sides of the river lie 204 large German villages. A traveler is transported back into Germany: the villages have a completely German appearance, and the inhabitants speak an unadulterated South German dialect. These are the so-called Volga Germans, about whom generally nothing or little is known in Germany. Their ancestors, who originated mostly from the present-day states of Hesse and Baden, immigrated to this area in 1763 and 1764 in response to the promises of the Russian Empress Catherine the Second. The east bank of the river (Government Samara) was called the meadow side because the almost level land extends eastward almost to the Ural Mountain region. The soil is good on both sides; in some places on the meadow side the black soil is two meters deep. The soil is so rich that it does not need to be fertilized.

When they first arrived in this region the colonists were left to their fate. Surrounded by steppes inhabited by nomadic tribes of Kirghiz and Kalmueks, they were frequently subjected to attacks by plundering gangs: In the beginning they suffered greatly under these conditions because they were often robbed. Some of them were taken into captivity and sold as slaves in Central Asia. They had to stand together in their battle against these wild hordes. Through heavy work the colonists built houses, tilled the soil, and obtained the necessary livestock. But soon the colonists mastered all these difficulties because they brought perseverance and diligence with them from Germany. They also brought with them the love for their native land and preserved this love; even though one and one half centuries have passed, they remain pure Germans in their customs, their usage, their folk songs, and their religious faith. The majority are Lutherans and the minority Catholics. The total number of colonists at the outbreak of the war was 800,000. The land they cultivated covered an area of three million dessiatines'.

The economic prosperity of the colonies provided an income for German agriculturists, who were permitted to go to the colonies in an official capacity. When the war broke out they were hauled to Siberia as civilian prisoners. The farmers in the colonies obtained all their necessary agricultural equipment, such as plows, harrows, sowing and harvesting machines, and horse-drawn rakes almost exclusively from the engineering works of Eckert and Sack in Berlin, and the threshing machines from the Heinrich Lanz factory in Mannheim. Diesel motors were also imported from Germany.

On the mountain side, the colonists, in addition to agriculture, are engaged in weaving during the winter. There are thousands of handweaver's looms in operation. They produce the material called *Sarpinka* from cotton. This is obtained by the manufacturer. The largest weaving mills are Schmidt Brothers in Messer and Bord in Balzer. Both places are located in the vicinity of Saratov. The manufacturers obtain the cotton directly from Turkestan and have it prepared for weaving in a special factory in Saratov. The textile industry grew rapidly and became of great importance during the war, because materials were not available anywhere else. After the war the textile industry returned to the modest scope it had occupied before.

Perhaps the most important element contributing to the preservation of the German heritage was the religion, and particularly the German sermon. In the beginning the Lutheran majority obtained their clergy, which they called pastors, from the Baltic



## Galka – a German Settlement on the Volga

provinces, but for the last twenty-five years their pastors were Volga Germans, who had received their theological education at Dorpat.

My forefathers originated from Bischofsheim in Kraissgau, the present Neckarbischofsheim. My great-grandfather Georg Phil. Schick was born there on 30 September 1757; as a son of the farmer Ludwig Schick he and his older brother Nikolaus immigrated to Russia. He died at the age of ninety-four and his stories contributed to the memories of the early times in the Volga colonies preserved in my family. The colony Galka, which is located forty verst northeast of Kamyshin on the west side of the river and which before the war had approximately 3,500 inhabitants, was founded by Swedish prisoners during the reign of Peter the Great. The Swedes mixed with their German newcomers and disappeared in this manner. Their longing for their German homeland extended through the second generation. Max Praetorius, who originated from Riga, made the colony Galka an object of a special study, which was printed in 1912 in the Leipzig Dissertation under the title: *Galka, A German Settlement on the Volga*. This promising young author was born on 25 March 1885 and studied national economy between 1906 and 1912 in Gottingen, Freiburg, and Leipzig. In 1914 he fell in Kovno.

Once a group of colonists from this village started to return to Germany, however, they had the misfortune to be attacked and murdered on an island in the Volga near Kamyshin. For this reason this island to the present day is called the "Murder Island." As time went on the connection with the native land weakened because travel conditions were difficult and uncertain.

Since I was eighteen years old I have been teaching Russian in the Galka community school. In the year 1888 a law was passed that all schools in Russia had to teach the Russian language, and in 1892 all schools that did not teach the Russian language were threatened with closure. So the Volga Germans were obligated to let their children learn the Russian language in their public schools. It was difficult to find qualified teachers because few knew the Russian language well enough to teach it in school. My father, who himself did not understand Russian, realized early this knowledge was necessary for progress, and sent me and my brother to a private school for this language, which he had established. When we attended the *Realschule* (secondary school) in Kamyshin all instruction was conducted in the Russian Language. And for that reason I was requested to teach the Russian language in the community school. I accepted the position and taught the Russian language for twenty-one years.

In addition to my teaching activity I was also engaged in viniculture. In a book on this subject by Winberg, I read that grapes could be grown anywhere and where watermelons could be successfully grown. The community provided me with three morgen of land (1 morgen = 0.6 to 0.9 acre) on which I planted grapes that I had obtained from the Caucasus and Sarepta. The results were completely favorable. With the proceeds I continually acquired more land for vineyards, and eventually had a total of 750 morgen of land. This finally made it necessary to give up the teaching profession and devote all my time to agriculture.

After the beginning of the First World War there was a mad agitation against everything German in Russia. Even German pictures, such as the widely distributed portraits of Bismark, Moltke, and the old Kaiser Wilhelm had to be removed. Many of our farmers were



sent to Siberia or were put into jail because they spoke German. The sons of the colonists, to whom the Empress Catherine had promised freedom from military service, were placed into the army and sent to the most difficult places on the Turkish front in the Caucasus, where they almost starved to death. This persecution and abuse suffered on account of their German heritage awakened the longing for their mother country and brought them closer together. One wished the victory of Germany because of the desire to return to it. And this actually happened when the government of the Kaiser defeated Russia; German officials in Saratov formed a commission for returning emigrants, but did not function long. A revolution sprung up in Germany and all hopes of the Volga Germans were shattered.

The Russian communists welcomed the revolution with joy. Since this bulwark had fallen, there was nothing to prevent them from robbing the industrious and well-to-do colonists. Communist troops entered the villages allegedly to collect grain. But this was only a pretext because in reality they robbed the colonists of all their money, their clothes, raped their girls and women, shot their men to death, as brutal hordes are accustomed to do. The colonists could not tolerate these atrocities. They revolted and defended themselves. But the communists received help, defeated the colonists, and many of the best German people were shot to death. Tremendously heavy taxes were imposed on the remaining people. So, for example, the county Ust-Kulalinka with 20,000 inhabitants had to pay six million rubles in 1918 and nine million rubles in 1919. This left no cash money. Fortunately during this misfortune the harvests in both of these years were good.

In the summer of 1919 Denikin's army drove the communists through the German villages. They took all the horses and wagons and hurriedly left. Behind them came Denikin's army, which also consisted of robbers. By the time both hordes went through the villages their fortune was lost.

Among the Russians there persisted the hate for the Germans, which was artificially started and incited during the war. Many farmers, who refused to give up their horses and other possessions, were shot without much ado. After the passage of both hordes, an epidemic broke loose among the livestock and thousands of cows and oxen died. The farmer stood helpless because he could not cultivate the land and still was expected to give and give. The communist troops were still stationed in the villages and took whatever was left of grain, livestock, and poultry. The farmer lost his will to work; he received nothing for it and did not want to work only for the communists. His clothes had worn out. The farming equipment also was worn out — since 1914 it had not been possible to buy new equipment.

Due to the lack of seed, the planted area in the spring of 1920 was small. Consequently the harvest also was small. The difference between supply and demand was aggravated even more when those in power in Moscow demanded the previous old "norm" from the Volga colonists, which was six million pud of grain. When the local communist officials explained it would be impossible to deliver this amount, troops were sent from Moscow in January of 1921 to collect the levy imposed on them.

In order to intimidate the farmers they gathered thirty to fifty of the most respected citizens in each village and locked them into a barn for six to twelve hours wearing only scant underclothes at a temperature of 20 degrees Reaumur. I personally have experienced this. Many of the tortured became sick and died due to the exposure; those who offered only the slightest resistance were nearly beaten to death or even shot. In each village



everything was taken away from fifty of the most well-to-do residents.

This happened in January 1921. The next month the famine started. There were no food supplies left in the villages that could be bought with money. The people soon had swollen legs and hands, became weak, and died in great numbers.

With much difficulty a request was made to the government in Moscow to provide us with seed grain. Instead of help they gave us the following answer: "You can sow what you have hidden." This kind of treatment led to a revolt. With weapons in their hands the farmers demanded seed grain; the supply that the communists had collected was still being stored in the villages and some in the process of being taken to the cities. Many communists were killed in these encounters, some of them drowned and some hanged. When their enemies received help from Moscow, the farmers were put down. They were weak and had no ammunition.

The revenge that the communists inflicted on the farmers was terrible. Thousands were shot to death particularly ministers, teachers and doctors; they were accused of not foreseeing the revolt and warning them in time.

After the bloody suppression of the revolt, the Extraordinary Commission, commonly called *Tscheka*, a hated word in Russia as well as Germany, went from village to village and shot thirty to three hundred men depending on the size of the village; this was one tenth of the male inhabitants. The bodies of these unfortunate victims of a raging revenge were not buried, but thrown into the Volga, sometimes three to five men tied together by their hands with wire. They wanted to set an example by sending this as a warning to the farmers as to what it meant to resist the Soviet power. When the water in the Volga receded in the summer, the bodies were washed ashore. I personally have seen more than sixty bodies in a stretch of about thirty-five kilometers, lying in the process of decomposition without anyone making an attempt to do anything about them — the government had absolutely forbidden to bury them.

Under these conditions it is conceivable that when Kazak Officer Wagulin and his soldiers rose up against the Bolshevik government in January 1921, he was hailed by the population as a liberator. In February 1921 he with two other Kazak officers, Popov and Wolkov, came to the Volga region and disposed of all the Bolsheviks that fell into his hands. His army, which in the beginning consisted of 300 Kazaks, grew rapidly with volunteers of all kinds, mostly farmers, to reach a force of 20.000 men, who were armed with ten cannons and forty machine guns. His army advanced rapidly covering up to fifty kilometers per day. Wherever he met up with Bolshevik troops, he disarmed them. No Bolshevik, who came under his power, could count on mercy, but had to die without fail. In Kamyshin, where the communists had an army of 2,000 men, he captured many prisoners; 115 of them were shot to death. He also obtained from them several carloads of ammunition and a few cannons. Often Red guards gave up with resistance, named the communists in their midst, who then would immediately be shot to death. Even the help sent from Moscow could not stop the victorious Wagulin, because he moved so fast from place to place. Everywhere he went, he was supported by the population, who respected him, because his troops did not rob and plunder, and because he himself spoke against the communists at their meetings. The German farmers voluntarily provided teams of horses and transportation into the hundreds of kilometers. He confiscated the food supplies, which



the communists had collected for Moscow, in order to sustain his troops. He moved first through the mountain side villages, then through the meadow side villages, and from there to Novo-Usensk and to the Ural Cossacks. He divided his army into several smaller sections. One of these, which had advanced to the Don region, we met on our way to Germany.

In addition to the horrors of the civil war there also was the famine. The scanty sowing of grain in the spring of 1921 dried up due to the incessant East winds and the scorching heat. The condition on the mountain side was a little better than on the meadow side. The reason for this was the soil in some places was of a lighter type mixed with sand. These areas were planted to rye, which did not burn-up completely and yielded eight to ten pud per dessiatine, which is about one fourth of the normal yield of thirty to thirty-five pud per dessiatine. In addition, the mountain side is suitable for growing vegetables.

Since January 1921 all business transactions in the villages were conducted in exchange trade. The villages exchanged food supplies, livestock, pieces of clothing and material for clothing. The speed with which the Soviet paper money dropped in value can be illustrated by the price of a pud of flour, which in the beginning of January cost 15,000 rubles, in February 40,000 rubles, in March 50,000 rubles, in the beginning of May 120,000 rubles, and by the end of May 400,000 rubles.

The only food product still available in abundant supply was the herring, which was coming up the Volga from the Caspian Sea because fisheries in Astrakhan were closed due to the unavailability of yarn and nets caused by mismanagement by the Bolsheviks. Large amounts of fish could be obtained in the villages by dipping yam nets from the shore. A single man could in this manner dip twenty pud of fish from the river in one day.

In the Volga colonies one could count on two crop failures every ten years. For that reason there was a custom always to keep a one-year supply on hand. But now the Bolsheviks had confiscated all the stored seed supply with the assertion there would be no crop failures under their administration; if no rain should fall, they would bombard the clouds to make it rain. This absence of reserve grain was particularly noticeable because there was only enough seed grain to sow one quarter of the customary acreage. It was a foregone conclusion that the crop would not be sufficient for the population even if the yield were to be good. Even at that time plans were made to prevent a famine. It was decided a portion of the colonists would have to leave until sufficient grain would be available again.

On the strength of this decision a large number of the colonists turned to the Kuban region, where in May 1921 the prospects for a good harvest were favorable. Thousands of families moved to this area with their horses, oxen, cows, and camels. The last pigs were butchered and the meat preserved. Many of them did not have enough provisions for the journey and were advised to catch gophers<sup>2</sup>, which were numerous in the steppes, and use them for food. Many, who had been weakened by hunger, could not make the journey, and some of them died on the way.

It did not take long until doubts arose that the Kuban region would not be able to feed such a large number of emigrants. On this basis some of the emigrants moved to Volhynia after receiving information they would be well received there. Some of them cherished the hope of going to America; others hoped to be able to go to Germany through the negotiations of the Association of the Volga Germans in Moscow.



## Galka – a German Settlement on the Volga

The situation in the Volga colonies was often described as more desperate than it really was in letters received from those remaining there. This was due to the fact that they saw many empty houses and did not know whether the occupants had died from hunger or whether they had moved away. Due to poor hygiene, typhus spread in the German colonies in 1921, which the Russians had experienced somewhat earlier. The epidemic was less severe during the summer. It was more prevalent in the Catholic villages than in the Lutheran, because they associated more with the Russians. With the exception of a few single cases, cholera did not spread in the colonies. Deaths attributed to hunger were not so much due to the lack of food, as to taking in too much food after long starvation. When the population of the villages was reduced by half, the reduction was due mostly to emigration rather than deaths; they always had some meat, milk, and eggs, even if bread was scarce or not available. Many false reports about the situation of the Volga colonies have appeared in the newspapers, namely, that German parents sold their children to Persia. This report is so absurd it does not require any further refutation.

Since I had recommended the emigration of about half of the colonists, I thought that it was my duty to make a good example by leaving myself, since I had been accused at a congregational meeting of wanting to drive the less fortunate from their land. Our pastor and I first tried to leave Saratov by train as Polish refugees with false passports we had obtained. When we applied for our departure, we were told we could not leave before September or October; it would take that long to obtain the travel permits. For this reason we decided to travel by horse and wagon.

For my trip I obtained some salt, which until spring 1921 had been nationalized and then declared to be free by the government. I thought I could use it for trading. I hauled seventy pud from the Eldon Sea (Astrakhan Government), which was covered with a forty-centimeter layer of salt. There I also traded six oxen, which I had brought along, for eight steppe horses from the Kirghiz — I could not use any other horses because feed for them was not available. The steppe horses, however, could survive on the meager steppe grass along the way. [jwd. One of the world's largest salt lakes, Baskunchak, is located in the Astrakhan Region. With a total area of about 100 square kilometers, this lake supplies 25%, one quarter, of all the salt in Russia. <http://www.bisnis.doc.gov/bisnis/country/010717astr.htm>]

Further I obtained two pud of flour in Saratov — there was no flour available in the villages — for 800,000 rubles. Three pigs were butchered and processed into sausages. Additionally we took all necessary kitchenware, a kneading trough, all clothing, fur coats, and bedding. I covered my four wagons with tarpaulins to protect us from the sun, the dust, and the rain. In addition to my family consisting of my wife and six children ranging from three to nineteen years old, our traveling party consisted of our pastor and seven persons — four men, one woman, and two children — from Galka, who did not have any horses and only about twenty pud of dried fish for provisions. There were four persons on each wagon. My house and yard were left locked and empty as well as my brick kiln. I entrusted everything to my brother-in-law including all my remaining livestock, consisting of three cows and four calves.

I had marked the route on a map I obtained during the war. It led through the Don Region, Urubinsk, Byetgorod (Gv.Kursk), Kharkov, Poltava, and Kiev. We left Galka on June 8<sup>th</sup>.



Many members of our congregation accompanied us for quite a long distance. When we said goodbye they begged us to write to them when we found a place where bread was available.

Our road took us first westward. Since the highways start at Kiev, we had to use dirt roads, which were dusty in dry weather, but usable, while on rainy days we could travel not more than four hours because the wheels would sink into the mud up to the axles. For this reason we were fortunate to have only little rain during our trip. It was difficult to obtain dependable travel directions from the local residents, because they always said: "straight ahead" (*prjamo*). These good people did not understand how anyone in the area would not be familiar with the roads. It was often necessary to make long explanations until we were able to obtain the required information.

The first four weeks we covered sixty to seventy kilometers every day. The horses were alert and pressed forward courageously. When we arrived at a point about 100 kilometers west of the Volga, we became aware of the great need for salt by the Russian population. This proved useful for us. When the people found out we had some salt, they offered us milk, which was in abundance, because the cows that roamed over the unsowed fields gave much milk. They practically scrambled for the salt.

In the area of Saratov, the Don Basin, and the Voronezh region the population was completely out of bread because the government had taken away all seed grain. They lived on milk, grass, and oak bark. The inhabitants of the Don Basin were friendly when they found out that we were German. Since they still had some potatoes, we were able to obtain potatoes in exchange for the salt. Up to this point in our journey we were well supplied with milk, eggs, butter, and potatoes in exchange for our salt. But in the more densely populated region of Voronezh the situation became worse and more difficult.

In this area we came to a single German village located between Russian villages. It had been founded by emigrants from Wurttemberg in 1864, but its existence was completely unknown to us. It consisted of approximately 250 farm households. We searched out the local pastor and stopped in his yard with his permission. This man was being sought by the Bolsheviks, and had fled to this village with his three daughters. Since the manse was empty, the congregation let them live in it. They were able to provide him with food, but not with clothing, which was not available anywhere. He did not have a clergyman's robe and had to preach without one. His three daughters needed clothes even more; they had only one pair of shoes between them. His two sons were serving in Denikin's White Army, and the father was aware that the Bolsheviks would take a bloody revenge on him if they were to find out.

In the cities around Kursk we were able to buy flour from the Ukraine. A pud of flour cost 180,000 rubles, which appeared cheap in comparison with the prices we paid in Saratov. In the Kursk area we met thousands of refugees from the Volga region. Many of these had no food supplies, making it necessary for them to beg and to steal potatoes, wheat ears, and green corn from the fields, so the inhabitants had to guard their fields. For this reason they were not friendly with us.

After we had been on the road for a month, the travelers and the horses were tired. The constant heat and insects made it impossible to rest during the day, and at night it was necessary to post some guards to prevent the horses from being stolen. This forced us to



meant, the local residents told us that Machno, a Russian officer who had been fighting the communists for a whole year, had attacked the sugar factory in Poltava and had taken all the sugar for his own band. He was now stationed in the Poltava forest with a large number of his followers. The peasants were on his side and hoped he would deliver them from the communists, whom they hated. Near the town of Godjatch (Govt. Poltava) we heard intense machine gun fire in the forest, while 500 to 600 wagons loaded with sugar were passing on the road. We were told this involved an encounter between the communists and Machno. We were not bothered with any attack by robbers during our whole journey. The Browning revolver I carried with me was sufficient for our protection, and I used it only once when I fired a shot after we heard a shot and voices approaching from a distance. They were gypsies, who had observed us during the previous day and had aroused our attention. After I fired the shot everything was quiet.

We could not follow our directly planned route between Kharkov and Kiev because practically all the bridges had been destroyed, burned, and blown up. We had to take long detours to cross some of the remaining bridges across the Don River and its tributaries. The large bridge across the Dnieper at Kiev, which had been built by Nicholas the First, had been blown up by the Bolsheviks when they were being pursued by the Poles. For this reason the crossing of this river was difficult. We finally crossed over a highly dangerous, rickety floating bridge near Kiev. A Red soldier, who was assigned to guard the bridge, would see that no wagon would follow another sooner than at least five minutes, so there never would be more than one wagon on the bridge. This precaution was taken so if one wagon would fall into the river, it would not pull others with it. The horses were led across the bridge by the bridle, and the passengers of the wagons walked across the bridge.

There was no want among the population of the Ukraine. They had plenty of everything they needed and the fields were well cultivated. There was a good crop in the Government Poltava. When we traveled through the Ukraine at the end of June, we and all of our traveling companions were in good health. But when we came to the Kursk area we had many heavy rains, and then it turned cold, so we had to wear our fur coats and our felt boots. The three men from Galka, who traveled with us, were running a high fever; my wife also became ill and was sick for three weeks. But we had to forge ahead because there was rumor going around in Russia that the West Europeans were sending large armies against the Bolsheviks. There was always the danger these armies would stop us, or even send us back. For this reason we kept on going, even though a longer rest was necessary. In Kiev we contacted several physicians, but how could they help us without medicine? Therefore, according to the wishes of my wife, wild growing wormwood was collected in the fields and boiled up. The sick ones had to drink the extract and slowly the fever disappeared. This was the most difficult time of our trip. The pastor, my servant, and I were the only men who did not get sick. We had to travel by day and keep watch during the night. My oldest daughter was driving the fourth wagon.

We were fortunate our traveling party was small. The local inhabitants were much more willing to give assistance to a smaller group than they would for a larger number of people because the requirements of a larger group, even if humble, would be more difficult to satisfy.

After we arrived in Kiev, which required six weeks of traveling, we hoped to continue the trip by train. We searched for and found the German representative and begged him for



transportation to Germany. He explained to us that many German civilians and war prisoners were waiting for transportation; their route would probably be through Kharkov, Odessa, and Constantinople; and it probably would take three months before they arrived in Germany. Under these circumstances we continued our trip to Novograd-Volinsk on the Polish border by wagon. There we met several thousand wagons of refugees of various nationalities: Russians from Siberia, Samara, Kazan; Poles, who formerly had fled from the Germans; and the Volga Germans and the Volhynian Germans, who had been sent to the Volga at the beginning of the war.

In order to continue our journey we needed identification papers as Polish refugees. These were available from the Bolshevik commissars by paying a bribe. For a few additional rubles we did not have to wait long. The crossing of the Polish border went along smoothly. They were causing us no difficulties and the inspection was not severe.

In Poland our circumstances became much worse. Since about 700 wagons crossed the border at one time, we were pressed together like sardines. In the town of Garitz we were detained for a three-day quarantine on account of our horses. Police drove us onto an open field surrounded by an empty trench and set up a police guard. The terrible heat and the prevailing need for water made this stay painful. Since it was forbidden to sell the horses, we had to continue our trip to the next town Rowena after the completion of the quarantine. Everybody was vaccinated against cholera, smallpox, and typhus. We had to stay in a camp for twelve days closely packed together. The provision for the refugees here was good. We were able to obtain permits from the German-Austrian representative to go as far as Warsaw. After I sold my horses — at 100,000 Polish marks per pair — and my wagons, we took the train to Warsaw.

In Warsaw we were well received by the consulate and immediately obtained our passes to Berlin. The only difficulty was it was forbidden to export Polish and American money, which all had to be exchanged into German currency. I was reluctant to part with my American dollars, besides that the Polish bank took advantage of me. Otherwise we reached Germany unmolested entering it at Stensch on 21 August 1921.

In Germany we were pleased when we went to bed in the evening that we did not have to be afraid — there would not be a break-in during the night — a feeling of fear that had never left us during the last three years in Russia.

Of our travel party only my family and my servant, for whom I found a job in Berlin, reached Germany. At my advice the others remained in Volhynia, where there was plenty of food, where they would find a good reception by the numerous colonists, and where they would not be removed too far from the Volga after the conditions there improve.

For me, however, the goal of my trip was Germany. First of all I wanted to provide my children with the possibility of attending good schools. Further, I wanted to provide help from Germany for the hungry Volga Germans, who were left in Russia, through the Society of the Volga Germans in Berlin, and above all to tighten and strengthen the bond uniting the Volga Germans with their mother country. In fact both countries are dependent on each other. The Volga Germans, practically all of whom are farmers, need not only agricultural equipment of all kinds from Germany, but also agronomists, who are scientifically-educated farmers, technicians of all kinds, physicians, and veterinarians. We need and hope for a



flourishing Germany, which will need our surplus of raw materials, foodstuffs and luxury items, such as grain, livestock, bristles, hides, and tobacco. In order to prevent the bond with Germany ever to be loosened again, we plan to establish a permanent settlement in Germany where the colonists will always find an open home. We want our ambitious young people to obtain professional training in Germany, and establish regular trade relations with German factories and business firms. These business relations between the mother country and the colonists would be helpful to Germany, would help to distribute German products to all parts of Russia, and German industrial firms could have branch operations in the colonies.

The hope for the restoration of the Volga colonies does not lie in a fog-shrouded distance. As soon as normal conditions are reestablished in Russia the prosperity of the colonists will return. Two good crops could balance the losses to a certain degree, and good crops in the future can be counted on because the fertile soil has had a rest imposed on it due to the scanty cultivation during the last few years, and due to this rest the production capability has doubled. Therefore we have this request of our German brothers: "Help us to carry out all our plans!"

#### Notes

1 dessiatine - 1.0925 hectares (2.7 acres).

2 According to a letter from the Volga colonies two gophers cost 6,000 rubles in the summer of 1921. Vgl. Johannes Schleuning. *Der drohende Untergang der deutschen Wolgasiedlungen*. (The Menacing Destruction of the German Volga Settlements.) Volk und Heimat: Jahrg. 2, Leipzig, 1921, Page 146.



Every person in this picture was living in Galka Village when Max Praetorius was there in 1909-1910. This Wunsch Family immigrated on the SS Barcelona to Quebec in 1913 and to the US in 1915. They farmed Sugar Beets in Colorado.



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