

◆ The Hoffnungstal Odessa Newsletter ◆

Volume 8 Issue 3

February 2001.



INCLUDES;

Chutor Irenovka
 Chutor Ishitskoye
 Chutor Mardarovka
 Chutor Metzker
 Chutor Nehof
 Chutor Olrada
 Chutro Rath
 Eigenfeld
 Freiberg
 Grekovo
 Gross-Fontal
 Hoffnungsfield
 Hoffnungstal
 Irenenfeld
 Klein Hoffnungstal
 Mararovka
 Malikhonovo
 Nesselrode
 Neu Beresina
 Neu Berlin
 Neu Glückstal
 Schaefer
 Schonfeld
 Seebach
 Sherebrovo
 Shirovevo
 (Many of these identified chutors and villages need much research. If you have any background information on them, please share with us.)

Thanks)

2001 newsletter DUES

First, this is the last issue for the 8th year. So if you want to keep receiving this newsletter you need to have your next years dues paid by about the middle of May.

Please see subscription information on page 2, and Dale's address.

You will note that the basic newsletter contains only a few items this issue, BUT you will also note that there is a bundle of very meaningful data included loosely in the envelope.

These items as a whole are those that the readers of this newsletter have been donating money to bring back.

In general, all that you see will be held by Ardella Bennet and specific pages can be obtained at cost by contacting her directly. Her address is;

Ardella Bennett
 175 Spring Valley Drive
 Bloomington MN 55420-5537
 or
 Ardella Bennett
 <ajbennett@worldnet.att.net>

net>

We have great hope to be having specific examples of translations of some of the pages from these documents for you to enjoy in future issues. So if you do obtain copies of some of your data and get the material converted to English, please think of sharing the translation back with the folks of the newsletter here.

We have arrived at a different stage of our newsletter evolution with the event of these records we have been obtaining.

We will continue to do much as we have this year - we will have 3 basic issues of 12 pages each, and then place all of the extra stuff in with the 3rd issue at the end of the year.

Soon we will have some serious good

In this issue;

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 Wall Dale Lee Wahl
 Zwegardt* Dale Lee Wahl

(Should your name be here some place?)

Common Shorthand and Abbreviations

Genealogy Shorthand:

* - born/birth
 b - born/birth
 + - death or died
 d - death or died
 ♂ - marriage
 m - marriage

Abbreviations:

Wü - Württemberg, Germany
 geb. - geboren (born/birth)

Leonhard Jakob & Christina Barbara (geb. LENZNER) HARSCH

Offspring In

America, Germany and Russia

If you are a descendant of this couple, please write to Marilyn Barnett, Box 83, Trenton NE. Marilyn would like to ensure your part of the family is well represented in the book she is putting together on these families.

FIECHTNER, Walter (Age 88)

passed away September 10, 2000 in Spokane. Walter, son of Matthaus and Katherina Fiechtner, was born November 29, 1911 in Hoffnungstahl, South Russia. In May of 1912, he came to America with his family. Walter attended school near Lehr, North Dakota, and Alamo County school near Java, South Dakota. On June 23, 1936, Walter married Viola **Zweigardt** and spent the next 62 years with Viola, until her death on November 13, 1998.

Walter was employed by the City of Spokane as a heavy equipment operator. He and Viola also owned Melrose Corner Grocery Store until 1961. They had four children: son, Ronald, died in 1982; Walter is survived by daughters, Marilyn Fiechtner and Marianne Angelo, son, Larry Fiechtner, all of Spokane, WA; grandsons, Larry Fiechtner Jr., Ronald Fiechtner Jr., and Jason Danner; brother Harold Fiechtner of South Dakota; sisters, Lundena Frost, Spokane, WA, Rosina Bauman of South Dakota, and Amelia Flaig of California. A viewing will be held prior to the service from 10 AM to 11 AM at the church. Funeral Services Wednesday., September 13, 2000 at 11 AM at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 314 S. Spruce, Spokane, Pastor John Finstuen officiating. Interment at Fairmont Memorial Park. Memorial contributions may be made to Alzheimer's Foundation, 720 W. Boone, Suite 101, Spokane, WA 99201

HAZEN & JAEGER FUNERAL HOME, 1306 N. Monroe, in charge of arrangements.

Address:

Dale Wahl

7370 Grevena Ave NE
 Bremerton WA 98311
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German Russian Research Internet Addresses

<http://pixel.cs.vt.edu/library/odessa.html>
*(This digital library is the most important site
for GR research on the Internet!)*

<http://www.bessarabia.com>
<http://www.ahsgr.org/>
<http://www.grhs.com/>
<http://www.beresan.com>
<http://www.state.nd.us/hist/inform.htm>
<http://www.usgenweb.org/>

*(we will slowly add addresses
to this list as time goes on!)*

This newsletter is being published and shared with those with an interest in the old Village and Parish of Hoffnungstal Odessa South Russia.

Your current editor of this newsletter is Dale Wahl (see address to the left). If any other person with an interest in the parish of Hoffnungstal would care to participate in the editorship of this newsletter, there is plenty of room - just make yourself known to Dale.

We will attempt to keep the copyright of the items carried in this newsletter as reusable as possible. That means you have the freedom to use this data in your family work, unless we have noted other wise. However, please examine the cited sources carefully and attempt to make sure you don't use anything in a manner that it was not intended to be used. You must stay responsible for clearing your own copyright use. Using any of this data for anyone to gain a profit is not the intent of this newsletter and should be avoided.

Current subscription rates are;

USA	\$3.00
Canada	\$4.00
Europe	\$6.00

Please don't forget dues for 2001!

Back to the Land of their Forefathers

Translation of two newspaper clippings
concerning the hundredth birthday of Emma Leibbrandt.
(Translated 9 September 2000 -- by Tony Kienzle)

(article written by Katja Feiler and appeared in the newspaper
Heilbronner Stimme, 17 August 2000, page 17)

"My mother has had a very difficult life," states daughter Elenore Leibbrandt, who has summarized the biographical sketch of Emma Leibbrandt. Today (17 August 2000) the ethnic German from Russia is celebrating her hundredth birthday.

"Hopefully the weather won't be too hot," says her daughter Elenore Leibbrandt, on the day before her mother's hundredth birthday. With many of her 4 children, 9 grandchildren and 8 great-grandchildren she is going to celebrate today in Bad Rappenau in the circle of her family. Mentally she is fit, but it's the heat that is a problem for her. When it's warm, it is difficult for her to get up. In her easy chair she sometimes falls asleep. However when she speaks she is able to formulate her thoughts clearly and tells of the many localities (areas) that she has lived in.

Mrs. Leibbrandt was expelled (deported) from her home village Hoffnungsfeld (a daughter colony of Hoffnungstal) in the Ukraine and lived as a single mother of 4 children in exile in Kazakhstan. There she and her family were treated as slaves (serfs). Emma Leibbrandt served 8 years in imprisonment. She would illegally visit her daughter in a work camp.

Reflecting back on her past life is difficult for her. She always had to be strong, always had to make all the decisions herself. For that reason she struggles with her helplessness. In Kazakhstan she sewed everything from shoes to caps. She planted a small garden plot - everything that was necessary to survive. Work, poverty and worry (troubles) were the constant ingredients of her (Emma Leibbrandt's) life, states her daughter Elenore concerning her mother. Since 1992 both have been living in an apartment near the castle park. "We didn't risk earlier than we did in taking the initial steps to emigrate from Russia," says her daughter, who herself is 80 years old already. Mother and daughter are very happy here in this health-spa community. Everything is so beautifully cultivated and landscaped. Thus the Leibbrandt family is almost complete back again in Baden-Württemberg, from whence her forefathers left at the beginning of the 19th century headed for the East (Russia). The language tied remained intact for the Leibbrandts. Even in the Ukraine and in Kazakhstan it was clear, that within in the family, Swabian (the local German dialect) was spoken.

From the **Rhein-Neckar Zeitung**
dated 25 August 2000, page 7

Bad Rappenau -- It is the lot of only a very few people in this world to be able to reflect back on a century that has passed them by. One such person is Emma Leibbrandt from Bad Rappenau who experienced this unique event. She celebrated her hundredth birthday in the circle of her family recently. The celebrant never had it easy in her life. She was deported from her home village of Hoffnungsfeld (a daughter colony of Hoffnungstal) in the Ukraine. As a daughter of a German peasant family, she was later exiled to Kazakhstan. Her life was determined by historical events, as she experienced first hand World War I, the Communist Revolution and its consequences plus also World War II. In 1919 she married Wilhelm Leibbrandt. To this union 4 children were born. She lost her husband in 1937. It wasn't until 1992 that the Leibbrandt family took the initial steps to immigrate to Germany. They landed in Bad Rappenau. Here she resides with her daughter Elenore. Today Mrs. Leibbrandt is happy, grateful to spend peaceful years in Bad Rappenau. She celebrated her special day with 9 grandchildren and 8 great-grandchildren.

The Availability of German-Russian Genealogical Data of the Black Sea Region - Particularly Hoffnungstal and The Berlin Document Center

by Dr. Otto G. Siegle

This address was translated by Tony Kienzle of Silverdale, Washington and edited by Paul Reeb of St. Francis, Kansas.

GRHS Heritage Review Vol. 10, No.3 pages 5-11 - August 1980

(Used with permission of GRHS)

(From Dale - while reviewing this wonderful article that follows, keep in mind that this is an article that is 20 years old. While many things remain the same, there have been many good things that have happened since Dr. Siegle delivered this address to the members of GRHS that were present. However, those of us who consider ourselves family historians, we should take special notes and re-read this article many times - as there are surely some serious hints involved here that we will only discover later if we do not take benefit of what we were told 20 years ago -long before many of us got involved with our family research - read and enjoy and take good notes!)

(Address to the 10th annual convention of the Germans from Russia Heritage Society) 1980

Honored Madam President!

Honored members and guests of your 10th annual Germans From Russia Heritage Society convention!

It is a great honor for me today to address you about the possibilities of acquiring family information of the ethnic group, the Germans from Russia. I am extremely pleased that you are searching for your "roots" in the old country. The difficulty in getting information or data about one's own ethnic Germanic forefathers is surely real and thus it may be of great interest to you to learn of possible new ways to acquire such information.

To what extent my address today will meet your expectations, I am not able to assess but I hope, nevertheless, to give you a few points which might be useful for your own research endeavors.

I would like to express my gratitude to a few of your members who were instrumental in bringing the genealogy of Hoffnungstal/Odessa to fruition and reality. First, I would like to acknowledge Mr. Paul Reeb of St. Francis, Kansas, who encouraged me and is responsible for my being here with you today. Mrs. Blessing nee' Bamesberger of Nebraska and Mr. Kienzle of Silverdale, Washington, also deserve acknowledging. All three have been able to trace their lineage back to the founding of Hoffnungstal and to an earlier ancestral homeland. All three have rendered valuable services, always being ready to assist with advice plus proofreading, correcting and suggesting improvements. I had the pleasure of personally meeting Mr. Reeb yesterday, while Mr. Kienzle I met for the first time a year ago. He was my interpreter at our Siegle clan gathering in West Germany. Mr. Kienzle is not able to be here because he is at this moment again in Tuttlingen, Germany.

Whenever I talk about the genealogy of Germans from Russia in the broader context, I am always forced to come back to the genealogy of Hoffnungstal, a topic of research about which I am best informed, having researched it for years, yes even decades. Studying the various Black Sea colonies has taught me, in the course of time, the many peculiarities of this ethnic group.

My remarks today will primarily be directed to the entries in the genealogical section of the recently published book, namely, **Hoffnungstal und seine Schwaben** (Hoffnungstal And Its Swabians). Using primary source materials, the history of this village and its people has been extensively covered. If you desire to have information about original homelands for your own families, generally speaking, most of

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you will take Stumpp's volume in hand and look for the index" of names for the Black Sea area and you will probably find listed an original home. By Stumpp's volume, I am referring to his **The Emigration of Germans to Russia in the Years 1763-1862**. Based on decades of research work in the **Deutsch en Auslandsinstitut**, a German government agency, Dr. Stumpp organized in minute detail all documents of emigrants that were available to him. To be sure, as evidence here and there has since shown, most documents of the former original home areas, be they in Wuerttemberg, Baden, Alsace-Lorraine or even in the Palatinate, have yet to be researched. A systematic search of these areas of emigration of the 19th century could likely reveal many new results hitherto unknown. If you are interested in acquiring documented records from the points of emigration from Germany, or even further back as much as church records may reveal, you could seek information from the **Verein für Familien-und Wappenkunde in Württemberg und Baden** (headquarters in Stuttgart, Mr. Paul Treiber, executive director). The address is:

Verein für Familien und Wappenkunde
Metzinger Strasse 45
7000 Stuttgart 70
Fed. Rep. Germany

I too am a member of this organization. Mr. Treiber would be happy to provide such information for a charge. Church offices often will not respond at all to direct personal inquiries or, at best, will furnish only incomplete information. The work of a professional accredited genealogist is invaluable to say the least. Unfortunately, such genealogists are in very short supply and most unfortunate is the fact that they are becoming scarcer so that it is getting increasingly difficult to achieve good results.

In the central archive for the state of Wuerttemberg in Ludwigsburg, one can also find documents of emigrants. In the case of Hoffnungstal, I have only found a small amount of information here. Dr. Stumpp has already thoroughly researched these sources in his work. Unfortunately, many of the entries in Stumpp's book are incorrect with respect to given names, family names and place of emigration. The latter do not, in part, correspond to the actual point of emigration. Frequently, the original documents from Hoffnungstal succeeded in correcting such errors.

I recall having tried in vain to locate a Josefshof near Schlotthof in Baden. It was listed thus by Roemer as the birthplace of an emigrant. Even the inquiry at the church consistory in Karlsruhe proved to be futile. A document of a native of Hoffnungstal cleared the matter in that it revealed this Josefshof near Schlotthof was not in Baden but rather in Podolien (Poland). In another document the country of Poland was mentioned. Perhaps this Josefshof is identical with Josefow in the Polish district, or county, of Grojec, or Stawiszyn, which Stumpp lists on page 111, while there is no Schlotthof or any other similar village listed. If Josefow, Poland, is indeed correct, then both villages are located near Kalisch (Calisch), a county seat, in whose environs descendants of these emigrants had been temporarily settled in 1944. In addition to this Hoffnungstal family, there were two other instances where the original home in Germany could not be determined. A family whose home was listed as Silesia could not be documented in the public records, nor that of another family listed from Alsace-Lorraine in France. In the latter case, church records were destroyed as the town was located in an area of military combat. For the remaining families, however, the original home localities could be verified.

Families who later became a part of Hoffnungstal as a result of marriage in Hoffnungstal were not noted, not even by Dr. Roemer. Such families appear with increasing frequency as we get closer to 1945. They belong to Hoffnungstal, too, of course. The actual founding families of Hoffnungstal are known as the "**Assekurationsliste**"; that is, the certified list of 1818. Many of these did not stay in Hoffnungstal having migrated to other areas. The list of the founding families in the Hoffnungstal book, as compiled by Dr. Roemer, is not altogether valid. A case in point is the Siegle family. They are listed among the founders, but documents point out that they did not arrive in Hoffnungstal until 1831.

Each emigrant usually joined one of many different contingents or groups. I recall the Oetlinger and Esslinger groups. In the latter group there were families from Unterweissach. Among these groups there was apparently a great deal of shifting back and forth in the interior of Wuerttemberg. *(Continued on page 30)*

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part to avoid being left behind or defamation. On the other hand, perhaps there was the need to make new ties or contacts as a promotion scheme for getting new members for the various groups. Even Dr. Stumpp, the honorary president of your heritage society, is unfortunately no longer able to determine the specific sources he used in organizing his work. Checking out the family indexes for his listed places of emigration have often proved fruitless so that in many instances the actual places of birth continue to remain a mystery. Where sources have been missing for a long time, on occasion they reappear in another archive. A further help for your search of forefathers would be the **Revisionsliste** (census counts) and index of passport holders that Stumpp published in his second edition. Dr. Georg Leibbrandt was the official person who had Stumpp collect these records during World War II. This Stumpp book is available, I am sure, to many of you. You can trace the growth and development of your families through the census counts of 1816 and 1858, especially for those of the Black Sea area. By reconciling the two census lists, one gets closer to the correct information, even though the age given often varied. Basically these census counts still represent our most reliable source for family data on the German ethnic colonies. Since these census lists overlapped in period of time with the Roemer material, the listed relationships: wife, son, daughter, nephew, uncle, all clearly helped in the vague areas to keep the families with the same names straight.

Let me interject at this point, concerning further information about Professor Roemer and Dr. Stumpp. Roemer was active in the **Deutschen Auslandsinstitut** (Institute for Germans Abroad) and Stumpp also did his research there. Both of these gentlemen were commissioned by Dr. Leibbrandt who was at that time the political department head in the Reich Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories such as Ukraine and Bessarabia. Stumpp was born in the colony of Alexanderhilf near Odessa. He was assigned by Leibbrandt to collect data on the Germans in Russia, particularly the census counts. Stumpp also authored other related material in what is known as the "Georg Leibbrandt Collection."

The aforementioned Hoffnungstal material is a special, unique representation that is exclusively true only for Hoffnungstal and its daughter colony Hoffnungsfeld. Again, keep in mind that this Hoffnungstal is near Odessa in the Cherson district and must not be confused with Hoffnungstal in Bessarabia. Dr. Leibbrandt was born in this colony. Professor Roemer, who worked with Stumpp through Dr. Leibbrandt's assignment task copied down all the birth and death records in Hoffnungstal in 1943. To our good fortune, most families kept a running record of birth and death information from the period of original emigration to 1880. Using genealogical data already collected, as in the case of Dr. Leibbrandt's own family, Professor Roemer was able to bring the information up to the present time. Other families who compiled detailed genealogical data and made it available were names, Harsch, Rüb (Rueb), Kienzle, Bamesberger, Troester and my own Siegle family, John Peter Siegle, my great-grand father's brother, kept a complete record of the family including all branches without any gaps. Due to his work, one can trace all family members up to the present time.

The elder John Peter Siegle did not emigrate to Hoffnungstal until 1831, which was considerably later than most of the colonists who had migrated in 1817 and founded the colony soon thereafter. He also belonged to the group known as Separatists, who due to their strong convictions, separated from the Wuerttemberg state (Lutheran) church. They chose pastors (or lectors) from their midst. Siegle's wife and some of their children died enroute to Russia via the Danube River. His 16-year-old daughter Katherine was forced to take over the mother's traditional responsibility until her father remarried. Katherine later married a Bamesberger boy in Hoffnungstal. Determining the origin of the elder Siegle's second wife was a major accomplishment rendered by a Mr. Pfaender, a professional genealogist in Stuttgart. The second wife of John Peter came from Grafenberg near Nuertingen. She was Agnes Schwoerer, an illegitimate child, but bore her father's name. The local pastor at Nuertingen had refused to share the parish record with Pfaender. Somehow he succeeded in determining her true origin.

There is an apparent discrepancy, but not surprising, between most emigrant family's vital statistics as recorded in their homeland church registers with lists established by Professor Roemer in Russia. Partly this can be accounted for by the difference between the Julian and Gregorian calendars, if not taken into consideration (11 days in the 18th century and up to 13 days by the 20th century). The Julian (old) calendar was used in Russia until 1922. (see note 1) Births before this date have a second month day

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listed in their personal identity papers such as a passport. Even the original colonists emigrating to Russia had to readjust their birth dates. Those born in Hoffnungstal up to 1922 had to have their personal identity papers changed, something which becomes very confusing for genealogists. In addition to this former time difference between Russia and Western Europe, there are often additional age differences by one, two or more years. These will always remain a problem. In some cases there is an explanation, namely, instances where both parents died as victims of the plague while in quarantine camps in Izmail, Turkey. Under-age children did not know when or where their parents were born and thus these dates had to be reconstructed, that is, an intelligent guess was made by relatives or friends of the deceased parents for the church records in Hoffnungstal.

With Hoffnungstal we have the most fortunate circumstances in having a complete history of the village and its inhabitants of namely 70 families. Some names have already been mentioned above, and the rest are enumerated in the book on Hoffnungstal which we certainly hope will be available soon in English translation. Professor Roemer had to leave Hoffnungstal soon after Christmas of 1943 because of a serious illness. In any event, he had only a limited time period at his disposal for his research job. It is remarkable that he was able to do the job at all. A factor which made the task for Professor Roemer somewhat difficult was the fact that the Soviets had apparently lifted the register for marriage records of Hoffnungstal shortly before the invasion of German troops in the summer of 1941. This explains why so few wedding dates are listed in the Roemer family records. Since there were a number of marriages by people with the same given and surnames, also children born to them about the same time with the same name, one can readily appreciate the overwhelming problem of keeping them straight. This situation gave rise for a good number of errors.

You might well be interested to know whether Professor Roemer was able to secure any other genealogical data from neighboring colonies. I can only point out that none were done to my knowledge. The conditions in Bessarabia on the other hand were much more favorable. In 1940 (via agreement with Germany and the Soviet Union) there was a planned resettlement project of the Bessarabian Germans to areas of the greater German Empire as it existed then. These people involved in 1940 were allowed to take along their village chronicle records. These chronicles and church records are housed presently in the museum of the Bessarabian Germans in Stuttgart and are available for anybody doing research. This was how Friedrich Rüb (Rueb) was able to work out the genealogical charts for the second half of his book on Gnadental, Bessarabia. Adam Hornung expanded the book based on Rueb's work. A Hugo Haefner of Schlaitdorf indicates other publications of colonies in Bessarabia have been or are being completed. Mr. Erwin Heer published an 80-page booklet in 1920 about the Heer, Koch, Stuhlmutter (*ed: Stuhlmüller?*) and Brenner families. But Haefner does point out that generally the genealogical literature about Bessarabia and the rest of the Black Sea German colonies is rather limited.

Haefner's own contribution is a 1968 published book on the colony of Eichendorf in Bessarabia, the second half of which contains genealogical data on the colony's inhabitants available to him at the time. In 1976 he published a second truly fine book of 300 pages, "Die Sippe des Reutlinger Auswanderers Urban Hohloch," which treats extensively the genealogy of Urban Hohloch, an emigrant from Reutlingen, Wuerttemberg. In this work he traces the line from its origin to the present day. He is also working on tracing the genealogy of Haefner, Gerber, Klotz and Stephan families. For these he is using the emigrant to Russia as the progenitor and then traces a male pedigree line back as far as can be documented on these families. These people were settlers in Teplitz, Bessarabia. The Klotz family had first settled in Hoffnungstal near Odessa, but later a branch of the family resettled in Teplitz. Other Klotz members plus others of the Haefners and Gerbers had settled in other colonies of South Russia. There were Klotz's in the Caucasus that are unrelated to the Klotz clan in Teplitz, according to Haefner. He mentions in his letter that it is of primary importance for any member of a family in question, namely of Haefners, Gerbers or Klotz's, to correctly determine the home colony of their particular forefathers. Only then might Haefner be able to give any meaningful assistance. Mr. Haefner's address is: Hofstatt Strasse 5, 7441 Schlaitdorf, Federal Republic of Germany. He kindly requests an enclosure of international reply coupons to cover the postage expenses for the inquiries.

How can one get at genealogical information for Black Sea colonies other than Hoffnungstal and *(Continued on page 32)*

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German colonies in Bessarabia, you may ask? Purely by chance I happened to come in contact with the nearly inexhaustible supply of genealogical data contained in the Berlin Document Center. In my research for the whereabouts of some missing family members, I wrote to the information office of the former German **Wehrmacht** (military) in Berlin. This information office had data about soldiers killed and missing in action. I was sent a Xeroxed copy from the Berlin Document Center which contained not only the personal data of the person in question, but also that of the siblings and parents with their personal data. In some cases, even information about the grandparents was in the records. The information about the latter, as was later confirmed in documenting, was rather scanty and cursory. Where records showed approximate information with obvious gaps, it attested that the data had been supplied by personal consultation of the resettler or evacuee in question. (Translator's note: The author here is pointing out that one does not always get reliable information by sitting down with a person and asking about his mother/father regarding their place or date of birth.)

The records at the Berlin Document Center encompass the total German-Russian population of the Black Sea area that had been annexed to Romania as a part of Transnistria. Many of these people had been resettled in 1944 to an area known as the Warthegau, the former province of Posnan in present-day Poland. This province had become a part of the created German Empire of 1871 but lost after World War I. To be included as a part of these documents meant that the person was an ethnic German from Russia made a citizen of Germany. These records can thus also be utilized to prove German citizenship by naturalization. But in later correspondence with my relatives in the Soviet Union, it was readily confirmed to me that not all of these resettlers or evacuees had been processed for naturalization in the Warthegau. The rapid occurrence of the events of the war, the advance of the Russian war machine and eventual displacement of persons by force to such areas in Asiatic Russia as Karaganda, Novosibirsk, Alma-Ata, Tadzhikistan, Komi ASSR and other forced resettlement areas prevented complete processing of these people. In spite of these incompletions, the information that is housed in the Berlin Document Center can be considered immense and more than ample. I had the opportunity to personally view the collection which is stored there. There is truly much information at one's disposal in this archive, all indexed by family names so that I am sure many of you could trace your family line back to the census counts of 1858 with little or no gap in the line. The information as given by the older resettlers (evacuees) or temporarily displaced persons at the time, regarding their parents and grandparents often takes one back immediately to 1858 and, in some cases, back to earlier years marking the year of emigration to Russia from Wuerttemberg. These archival records at the Berlin Document Center are a real opportunity for many of you to easily construct family trees or pedigree charts with your relatives.

But how does one gain access to these documents stored in West Berlin? For citizens of the Federal Republic it's a real task. The permit must be authorized by an empowered delegate of the Federal Republic of Germany in West Berlin. It is possible to gain access, even though the records are confidential. The U.S. State Department is still in control of the center. Upon my personal consultation with the director, Mr. Bauer, the latter ultimately agreed to supply me with photocopied documents provided I could produce a signed authorization by a family member for each person researched, with the stipulation that the requested information was for genealogical purposes only. As a result of such authorizations, I succeeded in locating information on about eight or nine families. I have a few sample forms on display here. With the Xerox copies I obtained, I could make comparisons with documents I already had in my possession. Unfortunately, I was only able through a second attempt to gain such valuable family information for altogether about 16 family sheets in this manner. A third attempt to get at information was regretfully not again granted because the research request was for "private" purposes, but I rather feel it was a pretext because the search plus copies, even though paid for accordingly, might have taken too much time and effort. Even the later visits by Dr. Leibbrandt and Mr. Kienzle and their prevailing upon the director did nothing to change this state of affairs. This archival collection is, I understand, to be eventually turned over to German authorities and transferred to the German Federal Archives in Koblenz, but for easier accessibility is doubtful. I suspect that should you make requests, especially if large, they would also be denied for similar reasons as stated above. The people of the Berlin Document Center informed me on 31 March 1980 that the same stipulations for entry apply to U.S. citizens of BRD (Federal Republic of Germany). U.S. citizens, regardless of their residence status, would

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have to submit the same permit application with signed authorization for each person researched in order to gain access to the records.

This procedural code protects the person's rights and confidentiality. Information regarding individuals or families presently living in countries of the Eastern bloc (Communist Satellite countries), I was told by the deputy of the authorized agent in Berlin for the Federal Republic, that for reasons which did not require an explanation, that all such information would have to be confiscated. My suggestion to Dr. Leibbrandt was that a research institute be established in West Berlin for a Ph.D. candidate, preferable an ethnic German-Russian, for the express purpose of getting at the material. This would surely open doors for completing any family history and the history of individual colonies. I was informed by the Berlin Document Center that any scientific or other research departments of universities, or any individual citizens desiring to research the record collection, should apply directly to the deputy or other authorized agent of the Federal Republic for the purpose of obtaining a recommendation from them to do research on these primary source materials.

I doubt very much whether any of you, even though intensely interested, could be able to achieve any greater success at the Berlin Document Center than we have so far. In other words, I am saying that personally discussing the issue with them will not bring magic results.

Regarding your organization's interest and concern, the Berlin Document Center informed me that any GRHS inquiry, or inquiries by other organizations such as yours, should be directed to the State Department which at that level would deal with the question and decide on the various inquiries. Not until we gain access to the primary source material at the Berlin Document Center, that is, access to all the individual names of people and all the individual villages (colonies) available there, can one get a clear comprehensive picture of the total dimension of this processing. Should all our efforts prove fruitless, we still have the isolated cases where ethnic German-Russians have brought along their documents of family tree data which they compiled while still in various villages in Russia. These would be helpful for expanding the Hoffnungstal genealogical data about certain relatives not clearly or fully documented.

A case of unusual good luck surfaced when I received data about a Hoffnungstal evacuee whose ancestral origin is from the province of Thuringia in the DDR (sometimes called East Germany) and not from Wuerttemberg like most. This data was a very extensive and useful extract concerning the first emigrant to Russia and the conditions of life. This information was used in the Hoffnungstal book to add flesh to the bare statistical bones of birth, marriage, death and date of emigration.

I had written to the parish office at Schweina a number of times before without getting a response. Even my inquiry at the state directed genealogical office in the DDR (German Democratic Republic) had remained unanswered. Not until I sent the pastor at Schweina a registered letter enclosing a self addressed envelope with international reply coupons and carefully explaining my desires plus making a reward offer, did I finally get a response and the requested information. The pastor wanted two special record albums which I understand arrived without problems. Both parties in the exchange were made happy.

Only recently I again had the good fortune of making contact with a late homelands returnee of our Hoffnungstal people. Fritz was a former **Dorfschreiber** (village chronicler) in Hoffnungstal and he sent me his own Xeroxed genealogical chart for examination. The start of all this was a death notice in the periodical **Volk auf dem Weg** published by the **Landmannschaft**, the Germans-from-Russia organization in Stuttgart. This returnee wanted to announce the passing of his brother in the Soviet Union. The obituary, incidentally, included the names of all living siblings plus their place of residence. In a similar manner, I had previously explored such notices, often finding help through people now living in the Federal Republic, but also through those still living in the Soviet Union, thereby expanding my information about other Hoffnungstal families.

One might easily speculate, that in a similar way, German ethnic returnees from other Black Sea colonies, in unique cases, might be able to offer Xerox copies of their home colony to someone's disposal. Many of these returnees would be able to give information from memory concerning their parents.

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grandparents or, in rarer instances, about great grandparents. The names of such relatives would be readily available from the **Landsmannschaft der Deutschen aus Russland** in Stuttgart or from the church record index of returnees from the East. The latter is also located in Stuttgart, but, unfortunately, their list of addresses is often repetitious and not always reliable. Also there is the possibility of placing an ad of inquiry with the periodical **Volk auf dem Weg** regarding your family members. Respondents are generally very willing to pass on their recollections.

At the first general Siegle clan gathering, in October 1978, held at their original ancestral locality of Schlechtbach near Rudersberg, not far from Schorndorf east of Stuttgart, I enjoyed seeing two instances of uniting male and female cousins who had never met each other before. In this case of long-lost cousins, three Siegle brothers, all born in Hoffnungstal, had settled in three different parts of the world: the one brother stayed in Hoffnungstal, the other moved to Kustanai in Asiatic Russia and the third had emigrated to North Dakota. Three children of these brothers, namely, two male cousins now living in Germany (BRD) and a female cousin from North Dakota were able to be united in a face-to-face contact for the first time in their lives.

I need not tell any genealogists how inaccurate the information given by family members about siblings, parents or grandparents can be. All of you, I am sure, in your circle of friends know persons who cannot remember the year of their own marriage.

One might nearly despair in determining the correct birth date of a parent by asking two or three brothers and sisters. In many cases one gets two or three completely different answers. In such a case, I would rely on the oldest member of the siblings provided there are no infirmities brought on by aging. In other instances, one might accept the rule that if the same date was given by two different siblings, such is correct and valid, a maxim dating back to Old Testament times. There is, unfortunately, no other option available, it being pointless to request or expect any genealogical information through Soviet officials.

One hears rumors that the church records of Hoffnungstal had been taken along on the trek to Warthegau during the resettlement process. I wrote to the leader, a Mr. Lerche, who directed the resettlement of the people from Hoffnungstal to Calisch, Poland. He replied that he had given the records to Julius Peterreins, a Reich German husband of a Hoffnungstal girl. When I pursued this lead, actually a relative to me, finding the definitive answer remained as elusive as ever. One will surely not be in error to assume that these records were destroyed in the confusion either before or shortly after the final days of armed conflict in 1945. According to other eyewitnesses, these records were supposedly taken to Berlin. All searching at the Berlin Document Center have proven fruitless.

You might wonder why does Hoffnungstal near Odessa command such a unique position from a genealogical point of view. This uniqueness must be credited to Dr. Georg Leibbrandt, the author of the new book, **Hoffnungstal und seine Schwaben.** His contribution with the help of other colleagues has explicitly portrayed the history of the settlement's origin in 1817 to its demise in 1945. The list of the founding families whose offspring emigrated to the U.S. may interest you. This list is based on work first begun by Paul Reeb. Biannual reunions of Hoffnungstal people continue to be held somewhere in the Federal Republic of Germany. At the last reunion in September 1979 in Unterweissach, a copy of the Hoffnungstal book was presented to Mrs. Griesinger in a festive atmosphere. She was formerly in the Baden-Wuerttemberg state legislature in Stuttgart and is now a federal representative in Bonn. Her father was the aforementioned Professor Roemer through whom is preserved the genealogical data from Hoffnungstal for posterity by his securing all available data in 1943. This special work has always been in the personal possession of Dr. Leibbrandt. Since my awareness of the material, I have repeatedly reminded him (Leibbrandt) about the special significance of this genealogical information and the need to publish it. For at least a decade Dr. Leibbrandt, himself, has been planning to publish the material in its present form. He was promoting the publication of his book during his U.S. visit six years ago. Leibbrandt made specific contacts in Nebraska, Kansas, Colorado and California giving talks on the founding of Hoffnungstal and his own grandfather's pioneer spirit. His grandfather was the sole family survivor of the fateful Danube journey in 1817, who in 1874 decided to emigrate to the U.S. when well advanced in

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years.

Since I have never been in Hoffnungstal nor to Russia, my information is second-hand based on accounts given by relatives who experienced life in the prospering village, its waving grain fields, its lush maturing vineyards, well-organized schools, its church activities and relationship to other colonies. Exploring its genealogy attests to a peaceful development of the colony over many decades. The cultural achievements of the colonists, who, in a distant country, transformed a virgin prairie land into a prosperous farming community cannot be adequately praised. Today you are the blessed heirs to this legacy brought to your shores by your own fathers and grandfathers. The valiant pioneering spirit of these forefathers contributed greatly to the well being and wealth of your country (USA) and significantly helped in the building of an economically and militarily strong nation.

Ties with family members still living in Russia are often kept alive by correspondence. Letters reveal that many of these relatives are living between permanent hope to join their kin who have returned to the country of their forefathers and the deep disappointment of emigration denial repeated again and again. Tracing one's family history often contributes to a renewal of ties with relatives between the U.S. and Canada as well as the two Germanys and the Soviet Union. By giving exact birth dates it has been possible to obtain exit visas for those relatives desiring to leave the Soviet Union. I can point out three cases whereby continued contacts by correspondence led to being allowed to return to the Federal Republic. Many other relatives have been waiting for years, yes, even decades for their exit requests to be granted. Many of these people have tried a number of times at six month intervals, only to be refused for the slightest reason. Often the exit application is not accepted with the malicious comment that a cousin is too distantly related. Lately the tense world political scene has aggravated the situation to where applications are no longer accepted. General hopelessness and utter discouragement among our relatives over there is more prevalent than ever.



Do you know who these folks are? —Erlenbusch?

