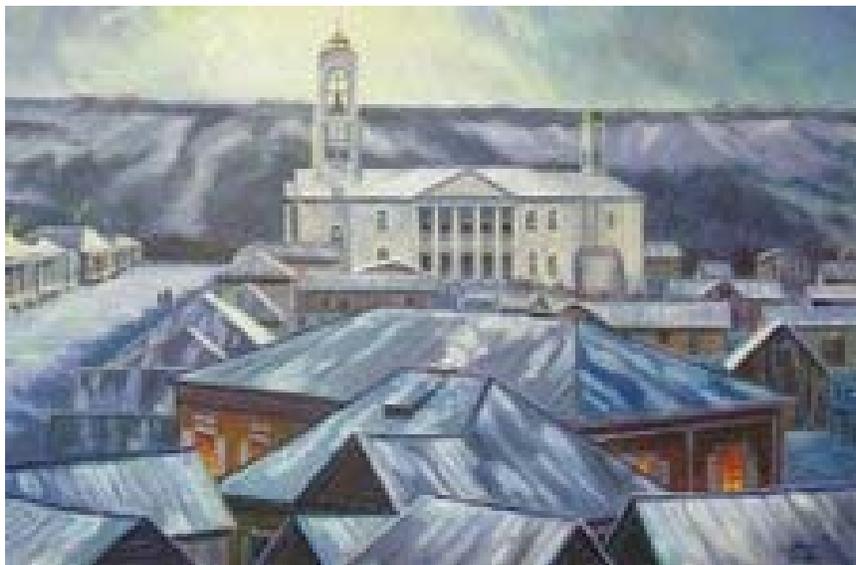


MARIENTAL CHASSELOIS LOUIS DAYS OF YORE

JUNE 2007

ISSUE FIFTEEN



Mariental, Russia by Michael Boss

Topics:

Editor's Comments

Feature Articles:

Beautiful Volga Churches

Theresa Sheaffer Intro

2007 AHSGR Convention

New members

Seeking Silver & Fine Gold

Letters from Russia

A few Convention Pictures

GR Proverb:

Make the eye blind in the
home of another

Welcome:

I *really* don't know how to thank the Convention Committee this year. I have thoroughly enjoyed the *skits, the music, the speakers, the meals, and the great bunch of people that attended this year*. I will for certain, re-read the speeches given by the wonderful speakers, when they appear in the Journal. Village night was awesome!! I met people I have wanted to meet for years. *Michael Boss should get an award for his beautiful paintings. Leona Pfeifer and crew, I could have watched your presentation again. Leonard, Kevin, Leona and Sister Alice Ann Pfeifer, were everywhere, helping everyone.* And the wonderful Volga German churches were a sight to see. What lovely, lovely churches. The singing was very entertaining, but most of all the *"swatchberra kuchen"* won my heart. Leonard, were you in on that? Our ancestors certainly dreamt up a wonderful dessert! So all of you "bakers" that contributed please try to come to the next Convention in Casper. I'll be waiting!!! Another big thank-you should go to the AHSGR crew, the Hays Chapter, and the Wichita Chapter, and of course, all of the volunteers – what would we do without them? If I left anyone out, it was because we were kept so busy – so much to do, hear, and see, that I couldn't keep up with all of you, and that was a *good thing*.

Thelma Mills

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I am excited to bring you these histories of Volga German Churches. They are lovely to behold and I am so proud of our ancestors for building these beautiful, historic churches. You'll just know immediately that they were so very proud of their religion when you study these magnificent monuments. Where do we see buildings like this today?

In 1994/1995 (?), I purchased a calendar at an AHSGR auction which features the following churches along with their histories. I needed to have the articles translated into English, and I approached Richard Rye to do the translations for me. They were written in the languages of German and Russian and I knew that he was an excellent translator of both languages. He agreed to do this for me. I had wanted to get permission to feature these churches for several years. Some of the calendar pages will be featured in this newsletter and some in the September 2007 newsletter.

Although Mariental was not featured in this Calendar, I want to present its history also, as it belongs with these historical churches. I am collecting all of the churches built by the Volga Germans – and may feature more at some time in the future. I find their histories quite interesting.

THE VOLGA GERMAN CHURCHES

The Catholic Church os Marental (Tonkoschurowka)

The lovely Catholic Church of Mariental is featured on the cover page of my newsletters. This photo of the church was taken in 2001 by Sandy Norris. She sent it to me with the following note: "As you can see the church is huge. It had been used for several different things, the last being a Disco. A fire in the Disco destroyed the church. Only the outside walls are standing."



The first need of the church for the fast growing village was that it was too small. People decided quickly to build a big church. So it was built in 1842 - 1846. It was 51 meters long (c. 155 feet), 20 meters wide (c. 60 ft), and with eaves 15 meters (c. 46ft.) high, and built with massive walls, which featured a fashionable vault. It was built in Kondor Style. The columned for-hall (foyer) on the front side is made of four free standing shaped columns. In the cemetery there is a little death house (House of the Dead)

The Catholic Church in Mariental was prominent on the village skyline. It stood on Mariental's main street and towered above the other buildings in the village. It was dedicated to Mary and was called the Church of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, or die Kirche der unbefleckten Empfaengnis Mariens. Unlike in many other villages, the communists did not completely destroy the church after the deportation of the Volga Germans in 1941. Instead, they converted it to a recreation center, and it served that purpose at least until 1993 when Elmer and Evelyn Dreher of Hays, Kansas visited a Mrs Ella Dinkel in Mariental. Mrs. Dinkel was the daughter of Peter Hermann, a co-author of "Mariental-Sowjetskoje: Pages from History," or Mariental-Sowjetskoje: Seiten aus der Geschichte (Kasachstan 1987). Seeing very few Volga German names in the cemetery, Mrs. Dinkel told Elmer and Evelyn the communists destroyed the Volga German section of the Mariental cemetery and Orthodox people were being buried in shallow graves above the Volga

German people. (The last paragraph above was provided by Jerry Schmidt - Lenexa, KS).

The church below is the Ev-Luth Kirche in Walter (Gretschichino)

Throughout time, in all countries, the church has always been the most important and beautiful building in every town and village.



Ev-luth. Kirche in Walter (Gretschichino) - Лютеранская церковь в Гречихино (Вальтер)

The Lutheran and Catholic churches of the Volga Region were built with the souls of their creators. These churches were special emblems (symbols) of the German colonies in Russia. The very traditional shape and style made the architecture style of the villages and towns a little bit more German.

The first churches appeared in the 1760's. They were non-permanent buildings

constructed of wood with very simple architectural structure. At the beginning of the 19th century and beginning 10 years 1820-1830, more than 25 new wooden churches and prayer houses were built. But the most, and largest of the buildings, were done at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century when new technology brought economic growth into the region and more professional engineers and architects were involved. In 1885 in the Volga River Region of Russia, there were 120 German churches - 83 were Lutheran - 37 were Catholic. The German churches were very nationalistic. Most of them were built in Saratov, Samara, Tsaritsin and Simbirsk. Only 20 or so exist now. But even with these few, one can feel different styles of German architecture - Rococo and Classic, and different effects of the use of materials - wooden and stone.

Today, if you are here in Kamenka, Ust-Solicha, Grechichino, Rovnoye, Jeruslan and other villages and towns which used to be the German settlements, these elements from German architecture can be seen and prove that the German culture was a very fundamental part of the Volga Region.

JANUARY - Catholic Church in the Zelman (Rovnoye) Village



Католическая капелла в Зельмане (Ровное) - Католическая капелла в вол. Ровное (Зельман)

In Rovnoye, Catholics lived from 1767. Rovnoye (Zelman) (Seelman) was one of the most important and largest German communities of the Volga Region. There were a lot of craftsmen and tradesmen and a little later, there were enterprises and factories. In this rich village, it was very popular to build all kinds of buildings of brick and stone. The streets were very good looking and comfortable for the people. The whole area looked like a small city due to the brick and stone buildings and straight streets. In 1767 there were 251 people but by the beginning of 1912 there were already 8,089

people who had belonged to this old wooden church and had built a new one of brick and stone in 1902. Besides the new church, they built a chapel and a new cemetery. The chapel is the only remaining "church" building. Until very recently this chapel was in terrible disrepair. But they have a story of an old German builder who returned to Rovnoye from Siberia, and he repaired it by himself, preserving it from complete destruction. He replaced the roof, the stone fence and the decorative wrought iron screens. Now the chapel is not only peace for the old German people but a gorgeous monument of the builders and the art and architectural style of the Volga Germans.



I want to introduce my daughter, Theresa Lynn Sheaffer, in this newsletter as she has agreed to become my Assistant Village Coordinator for Mariental, Louis, and Chasselois. The introduction was written by Theresa Sheaffer. teesheaf@yahoo.com

Guten Tag,

My name is Theresa Lynn (Mills) Sheaffer and I am very excited about working as an assistant village coordinator with my mom for Mariental, Louis, and Chasselois. My first experience in researching my family heritage came from listening to my mother as she talked about how



her parents' families had come over here from Russia. As she researched their stories she decided to join the AHSGR organization. I began to go with her to different Kansas Chapter functions. (Mom belongs to three different chapters in Kansas and one in Arizona.) I went to my first International AHSGR convention in Lincoln, Nebraska in 2000. It was very exciting to be around so many people from all over the United States, and the world, and to see how intent everyone was on preserving German history and traditions. I learned so many things and met so many wonderful people that I was convinced that I needed to get involved with this great organization.

I am a native of Loveland, Colorado but moved to Abilene, Kansas in 1978. I am co-owner with my husband in a greyhound dog boarding/training facility. We have been in operation for the last 26 years in Abilene, Kansas, also known as the Greyhound Capital of the World. I am a member of the National Greyhound Association (NGA), Kansas Greyhound Breeders and Kansas Greyhound Registry. (The NGA is an international organization made up of people from all over the world who are involved with the greyhound industry and the preservation of true bloodlines.) We care for all ages of greyhounds, from birth through retirement and are strong advocates of the Greyhound Adoption Program. Our facility also serves as a stopover place for greyhounds being moved around the county.

I hold an Associate of Science degree from Cloud County Community College and a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Sociology from Fort Hays State University.

My volunteer service in AHSGR involves working with the SOAR program, helping at the conventions and now assisting as a village coordinator. In my community I have volunteered as a teacher in a private Christian school, worked with the Girl Scouts and 4-H organizations, worked with DVACK (Domestic Violence Association of Central Kansas), taught children's Sunday School classes, worked in women's ministry in my church, and also, in the wake of 911, recently became a member of the first CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) team in Abilene, Kansas.

I have been married to my high school sweetheart for 35 years. We have two children, a son and a daughter. Our son lives in Wisconsin with his wife and our beautiful granddaughter. Our daughter lives in Arizona with her husband and our other beautiful granddaughter. (Oh, don't get me started on those breathtaking granddaughters! This article would become a book, complete with hundreds of cute as a button stories, Itsy Bitsy Spider songs and tons of pictures! :)

In my spare time, besides learning more about my German heritage, I love to read, quilt, sew, craft, read, tend gardens of flowers and vegetables, read,

travel and meet new people, read and write, go to garage sales, auctions, and flea markets, read, and of course, spend as much time as I can with family and friends. Did I mention I like to read?

That's about all there is to me in a nutshell. I look forward to meeting many of you at the convention in Hays. If not then, some other time in the future.

Looking, with wonder and awe, into the past -

Glancing, with excitement and anticipation, into the future.

OUR AHSGR CONVENTION NEWS 2007 HAYS, KANSAS

First of all, I want to list the new members that I have added to my newsletter list. Some are new to AHSGR, and others I have met during the Village Night at the Convention and found they were not on my list. Welcome to each of you. (A few are simply updates)

Carol & Randolph Brull
307 West 38th
Hays, KS 67601

Alexia Brungardt
2904 Hillcrest Dr.
Hays, KS 67601

Cleon & Anita Davis
3127 W. Rd.
Hill City, KS 67642

David Denning
164 S. Dartmouth
Manhattan, KS 66503
dgdenning@cox.net

Sylvia Gross
887 Main
Munjor, KS 67601
sylgross@eaglecom.net

Jeanie M. Gross
3204 Willow St.
Hays, KS 67601

Tom & Therese Haas
1509 Oakmont
Hays, KS 67601

Judy Hoffman
108 W 3rd PO Box 114
Liebenthal, KS 67553

Rita Issinghoff
2314 Lighthouse Cv
Wichita, KS 67205

William & Johanna Jensen
21129 SW 90th
Tualatin, OR 97062
BNJJANSEN@gmail.com

John Kreutzer
climberjk@hotmail.com

Betty Leiker
703 210 Ave.
Hays, KS 67601

Carol Ann Malecki
3615 SW Spring Creek Ct.
Topeka, KS 66614
CMALECKI@cox.net

Sr. Mary Louise Pfannenstiel
1713 Volga Dr. AptD
Hays, KS 67601
mlpfanne@ruraltel.net

Maurice & Jeanine Pfannenstiel
1926 Farmstead
Wichita, KS 67208
mpfannenstiel@cox.net

Robert Pfeifer
108 W 3rd
Liebenthal, KS 67553

Sr. Alice Ann Pfeifer CSA
1703 Henry Dr Apt B
Hays, KS 67601

Marilyn Rohr
5318 SW 28 th
Topeka, KS 66614

Robert Roth
RD9617@aol.com

Alfreda J. Schmidt
313 W. 16th Street
Hays, KS 67410

Katherine Stone
523 Curzon St., Apt 304
Howell, MI 48843

Mary A. Taubert
1908 Walnut St.
Ellis, KS 67637

Clem & Viola Unrein
1710 Douglas Drive
Hays, KS 67601

Wilmer & Donna Dreiling
1201 Spruce Apt D-4
Ellis, KS 67637-1751

Norma Steckline
Cottonwood Mobile
Park, Lot 151
700 E. 6th St.
Hays, KS 67601

Wayne & Sandra Brungardt
brungardt@media-net.net

Bernice Rupp
1314 E. 8th
Hays, KS 67601

SURNAMES AND VILLAGES OF THESE NEW MEMBERS:

- 1) Carol & Randolph Brull - Mariental, Obermonjou, Graf, Herzog, Wittman, Katharinenstadt.
- 2) Alexia (Herman/Herrman) Brungardt – Mariental, Herzog, Marienfeld
- 3) Clem & Anita Davis – Rohr, Greiber, Herman/Hermann - Mariental
- 4) David Denning – Louis
- 5) Sylvia Gross – Pfeifer, Liebental, Mariental - Herrmann, Weber
- 6) Jeanie M. Gross – Herzog, Mariental
- 7) Tom & Theresa Haas – Haas, Engel - Mariental, Ober-Monjou
- 8) Judy (Pfeifer) Hoffman – Pfeifer, Schaffer, Herrman, Legleiter, Weber - Leibental, Mariental, Herzog, Louis, Schoenchen
- 9) Rita Issinghoff – Obermonjou, Mariental
- 10) William & Johanna Jensen – Mariental, Herzog
- 11) Betty (Pfannenstiel) Leiker – Ober-Monjou, Zug, Mariental

- 12) Carol Ann Malecki – Rohr, Weigel, Wassinger, Dreiling - Mariental, Herzog, Graf
- 13) Sr Mary Louise Pfannenstiel – Mariental, Herzog, Wittman, Obermonjou, Neu-obermonjou, Zug - Pfannenstiel, Wittman, Kessler, Dreaher, Schumacher, Gross, Unrein, Brungardt, Depperschmidt, Folwerk
- 14) Maurice & Jeanine Pfannenstiel – Pfannenstiel – Mariental, Ober-Monjou
- 15) Robert Pfeifer – Liebental, Mariental, Herzog
- 16) Sr Alice Ann Pfeifer – Liebental, Mariental, Herzog
- 17) Marilyn Rohr - Mariental, Schoenchen, Graf
- 18) Robert Roth – Kreutzer, Braun, Graf, Linnenberger, Reese
- 19) Alfreda (Haas) Schmidt – Haas - Mariental, Wittman, Ober-Monjou
- 20) Katherine Stone – Mariental (?)
- 21) Mary Taubert – Mariental, Herzog
- 22) Clem & Viola Unrein – Enslinger – Mariental, Liebenthal



Seeking silver and fine gold -

By Theresa Sheaffer, a 3rd generation Volga German

It's Sunday morning and the 2007 AHSGR convention just finished up for another year. As I wait to go home I decided to get my daily scripture reading done. I am reading in the book of Proverbs chapter 2. The chapter tells us that we are to seek for wisdom and understanding as we would seek after silver or fine gold. I began to wonder just what I would do if I were really seeking such treasures as silver or fine gold and my mind wondered back to this past week and memories of the Germans from Russia people that attended the convention. I thought about the stories that were told regarding the lengths people go to in order to find what seemed to be one kind of "silver and fine gold", our ancestors.

During one presentation at the convention it was explained to us that in the Russian archives there are many, many, huge books with recorded information on the daily lives of our people. There were recordings of things such as court cases, legal transactions, even daily bartering. The recordings in these books were written down in the order that each event took place. Therefore, these records were not alphabetized or numbered in anyway consequently there are no indexes. There are just books upon books of information recorded in a haphazard form. It sounds like it would be a daunting job to have to go

through these records, book by book, line by line, doesn't it? But Germans from Russia would gladly pour over each huge volume looking for any morsel of information we could find on our families. We would spend hours, days, weeks, months, and maybe even years if we were able, seeking just one little fragment of information to light the way. However, most of us will never find our way to go to Russia in order to have a chance to look at any kind of information.

The ASHGR convention served as one way to acquire information about our ancestors from Russia, and other countries, without going to another country. We listened closely to every speaker and soaked up every bit of information they offered us on our ancestors. Not only names, but customs, habits, the everyday life experiences of our people. We got up early each morning, stayed up later than we normally did each night, ate more food than we should have and tried to talk to as many people as we could in order to gather information. It was a concentrated effort all day, every day. It was incredible.

And you know, this may sound to you like just one long, far too busy week of activities but at the end of it all we came away feeling joyful, happy, excited and motivated to continue our search even further. We felt loved and accepted by people we met. It encouraged us to want to do more and more to help others who are searching for their families. There is a certain joy when someone reads, and then rereads, a piece of information and suddenly their eyes light up, there is excitement in their voice as they say, "there's great. great grandpa!" or "that was my great aunt, we never knew what happened to her and here she is in this story". It was a wonderful feeling to share such experiences with others.

I don't really know at what lengths people will go to in order to actually search for silver and fine gold. However, having attended the ASHGR convention all week I do have an idea about what Germans from Russia are willing to go through in order to find their families. If you are searching for you ancestors I would strongly encourage you to attend the 2008 ASHGR convention in Casper Wyoming, it will be time and money well spent.

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The following letters were forwarded to me from Denise Grau. They were written in 1921, from John Peter Quint to his brother, John Quint. I want to thank and commend Denise for the privilege of publishing them. Their sadness is overwhelming - there are so many stories such as these and I have always felt a need to tell these stories, so I was particularly delighted to receive them.

Conditions in Russia
December 10, 1921
Mr. John Quint, Hays, Kansas

Dear Brother:

Best wishes from your brother and sister-in-law, John Peter and Anna Maria Quint, to you, our brother and sister-in-law, John and Pamela Quint. We are still well and hope that this letter will reach you also in the best of health.

In the beginning of my letter, I stated that we are still well, but conditions in Russia are very poor, especially here in Louis and the other colonies. Last year the government deprived us of nearly all provisions and live stock, and this year my harvest was not sufficient to provide a living. I had 40 acres of wheat and 20 acres of corn, but the total yield was only about 15 bushel. We do not know anymore how bread tastes, and we eat horse flesh if we can get it. It is impossible to get beef, mutton, or pork, or any kind of bread, since as stated before the government took all away from us.

Many people have died of hunger. Only about half of the people of Louis are left. Some families have died out altogether. Many have gone to other cities only to die of starvation there. Lue had a population of 7,000 of whom about 3,000 are left. The number of deaths is from ten to fifteen daily, and likewise the remaining livestock dies. We had five horses last summer of which we still have one. The others we either sold or ate. We had three cows, now we have one left. Our other belongings were traded to the Russians of Saratov who had a good harvest, but they have scarcely enough to live.

Dear brother, I cannot fully describe the conditions here. We hear that America wants to help us, but up to this time we have received nothing. If we do not get any outside help, we are doomed to perish from famine. The revolutionists have taken everything. Our present government is hardly able to help. Now they have provided some feed for the children, namely once daily. We hear that America intends to provide food for both old and young.

Let us know how you are getting along. Everything is very high here. Bread costs 9000 rubles a pound; corn 700,000 rubles a bushel; potatoes 2000 rubles a pound. Horses cost 2,000,000 rubles upward.

Awaiting your prompt reply, I am,

Your brother
John Peter Quint

THE NEED IN RUSSIA
Louis, Russia, March 20, 1922
Mr. John Quint, Hays, Kansas

Dear Brother:

Best wishes from us all to you and your entire family and we hope this letter will reach you in good health. We are all well.

My dear brother, this is the fourth letter I have written to you but still have received no reply. All others seem to hear from their friends in America, only you seem to have forgotten us. I do not know what to do. I have tried everything possible to obtain relief, but all to no avail. I would therefore again ask that you help us, for we are doomed to starvation. I can hardly sleep on account of worrying about what will follow. We often wished if we could get only one full meal.

In my previous letters I wrote you about what we eat. We have no bread, price being prohibitive, but are forced to eat the meat of dogs, cats, and horses, and we do not even get enough of that. Such is the famine here. Many people have died; we don't even know the number.

I again ask you to help us. Forty pounds of flour cost 4,000,000 rubles, which is more than our entire property is worth. All other people here who have friends in America or Germany seem to obtain relief. Go to our son-in-law, Clemens, and ask him to remember us in our old age that we may not starve.

The children of our brother, Jacob, have gone to the cities. Regarding the weather, wish to advise that we had no snow last winter, such as hardly ever before. You might wonder what we did with all of our property. On December 25, 1921, the Reds came and robbed us of practically everything. I was arrested and kept in prison for a month with the worst criminals. Michael also was arrested and kept in the same prison.

John Peter and Anna Maria Quint

NOTE: Mr. John Quint of this place by whom the above letter was received states that at two different times he sent money to his brother, and also several packages, but nothing has been received by his brother. All money was sent through the American Relief Society, but it seems that in spite of their efforts some things do not reach the destination for which they are intended.

Convention Pictures: Mostly the Arizonians from the Phoenix Sun Chapter attending the Banquet.



**Thelma Mills with daughters;
Theresa Sheaffer & Cindy Issitt**



**l-r Larry Haas, Eleanor Haas, Ashley
Bartkowski, Anna Bartkowski;
Judy Garies; Thelma Mills**



**Left to right: Anna Bartkowski (Phoenix Sun Chapter
President); Judy Garies, (2nd Vice-President), Thelma Mills**



**Back – Larry Haas, Bob Larson, Mike Larson, Ken Larsen, ??, Judy Garies
Front - Eleanor Haas, Ashley Bartkowski, Anna Bartowski, Thelma Mills, and Rosemary Larson.**

(I will find out who the unidentified couple are, and list them in the September newsletter, I must apologize for this omission today)

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