



Die Huckere

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"HAUNTING IMAGES OF GENOCIDE"

Excerpts from an article which appeared in the Lincoln Journal/Star (11/4/96).

A memorial service was held on November 7, 1996 at 7:00 P.M. in the east chambers of the Nebraska State Capital Building to remember the genocide of more than one million German Russians who were forced to be deported by train to work and extermination camps. Mass starvation existed as well as systematic shootings of hundreds of German Russian people during this time. All of this happened in Russia, not Nazi Germany.

Samuel Sinner, a Lincoln chapter member, is researching the government sponsored genocide of German Russians that occurred between 1915-1955.

"The effects of the genocide were so far reaching that Sinner said he thinks every German Russian who fled to Lincoln and other United States Cities had at least one relative killed."

The date of the memorial is significant because Lenin and the Bolsheviks seized control of the Russian government on this date in 1917. Research shows that Lenin and Stalin ordered the executions of many German Russians.

According to Sinner, thousands died of starvation while others died from bullets to the head or ropes around their necks in order to escape execution quotas ordered by Lenin.

The starvation ended in 1924 when Lenin died, but there wasn't much time to recover before Stalin took over and instituted his first Five Year Plan which called for the elimination of all German Russian privately owned farms.

cont.

"Although they weren't the only ethnic group that suffered under Lenin and Stalin, German Russians were hit hard because they had the best and largest farms," Sinner Said.

"Sometimes it haunts you in the night," said Samuel Sinner. "Even the children were executed. The way they died--they deserve to have their story told," he added.

"PARTIAL LIST OF VICTIMS OF STARVATION AND STARVATION RELATED DISEASES" Huck, Volga

January to February 1922: 200+(1)
Fall 1921 - February 1922 (Partial list) (2)

Jacob Schuckmann
Oswald Hausch
Johann Wilhelm
Georg Michael
Johann Hixt Jr.
Philip Hein
Johann Hein (son of Philip)
Conrad Kindsvater, his wife and daughter-in-law
Barbara Kindsvater (wife of Georg Kindsvater)
Christina....
Jacob Brotzmann
Georg Brotzmann
Oswald Frick
Georg Luther
Elisabetha Eckerdt
Wife of Jacob....
Anna Margareta Hempel
Johannes Köhler
1: Die Welt Post (Omaha/Lincoln NE) May 25, 1922
2: Ibid and Die Welt Post, May 18, 1922

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Submitted to "Die Huckere" by Dennis Zitterkopf of Wichita, Kansas

Das Glück und der Wall: Tracing the Zitterkopf Family from
Germany to Russia and to the U.S.

As a child, I wondered why, when they lived in Lincoln, Nebraska, my grandparents and dad were called "those Rooshens". Yes, they were of German descent, but they were American citizens. No one in my family ever discussed a Russian connection; the emphasis was on assimilation into the American melting pot. Later, as a teenager in a small Kansas farm town, I still wondered about my origins, but I had other priorities: my car, work on the family farm and a college education. Time passed; I married and my grandparents died. But in 1974 my mother-in-law, knowing of my puzzlement over my "Rooshen ancestry," gave me a birthday present: a membership in the newly formed American Historical Society of Germans from Russia. After reading some of the first journals, I suddenly realized where my family had come from: Russia. But how and when and why?

I started with the usual approach. I pestered my parents, aunts and uncles with numerous letters and phone calls. I learned that two of my aunts had been born in Huck, Russia! Now why hadn't anyone ever talked about that before? After accumulating the names, birth and death dates of living family members and the deceased that could still be remembered by relatives in Kansas and Nebraska, I seemed to be up against a wall. How in the world was I to learn about an ancestral group that lived in Germany, emigrated to Russia in the late 1700's and then came to the United States, when my best data sources were dead or behind the Iron Curtain. Despite my education, I didn't know German, much less Russian, and despite my cleverness, I certainly wasn't equipped to penetrate the Communist block countries, James Bond style, even for the sake of family.

Using a combination of telephone books and the mail system, I learned that there were six Zitterkopf family groups in the US. Flint, Michigan, Moore, Oklahoma, Kansas (my own family) and western Nebraska suddenly became places that I would learn more about. A series of visits and personal interviews, telephone calls and innumerable letters revealed a common pattern. All families were originally from Huck (aka Splaunucha) Russia and except for oral history, there were no records about Russia or Germany. We all agreed we were no doubt related ('shirt tail relation' was the term usually used) but how was unknown.

Eventually, I gave up on my quest until a Maryland friend, Les Holtschlag, suggested that I place an ad in a German genealogical periodical. "Your name is unusual and someone might have seen it in some records." A Periodicals in Print booklet in the Montgomery County (MD) library listed the Hessische Familienkunde as an interesting possibility. Les composed the following letter: "Ich suche die vermutlich hessische Herkunft des etwa 1770 nach Russland (Wolgagebiet) ausgewanderten Zitterkopf-Geschlechts und möchte diesbezüglich in Ihre Zeitschrift inserieren. Im Voraus meinen besten Dank. Hochachtungsvol, Dennis Zitterkopf" (A very literal translation is something like 'I search for the presumed Hessisch origin in which case about 1765 to 1770 towards Russia (Volga region) emigrated Zitterkopf-families and wish an inquiry referring to this inserted into your periodical. Meanwhile, in advance my thanks, my good sir. Yours faithfully, Dennis Zitterkopf')

More time passed. About one year later I received a response that a reader of the periodical had seen references to the Zitterkopf name. I corresponded with him, via my German-American friend, Les. Another adventure was beginning and another crack in the wall opened. Herr Heinrich Goebel from Breitenborn, West Germany, had indeed noticed the Zitterkopf name while researching historical glass making sites and glass making families in the Breitenborn, Bishofsheim and Laubach areas, and was willing to conduct some research for me (for an agreed to fee, of course). The result of this work was published in the June 1978 issue of the Hessische Familienkund as "The Zitterkopf Glassmaker Families in Breitenborn". (A translation of this article has been submitted to the AHSGR library.) The article, based on church records in the private archives of the Prince of Büdingen, provides documentation for Zitterkopf families beginning in about 1600 and ending abruptly in 1762. Another wall. There were some death records, but several family groups simply disappeared from the records. They probably moved - but to where? Was one or more of these the Zitterkopf family (or families) that emigrated to Huck in 1767? I despaired and waited.

Then in 1995, the AHSGR announced the availability of the 1775 and 1798 colony census records for the village of Splavnuksa/Huck! You can only imagine the excitement when, on page five, I found Konrad Zitterkopf, wife Katarina Charlotte, and sons Johann Adam, Johann Peter, Johannes and daughter Eleonora. The names and ages fit exactly with one of the 'vanished' family groups from the German research done by Herr Goebel. I had made the transition from Germany to Russia, now could I bridge the gap to the US? Were these Zitterkopfs my Zitterkopf ancestors?

Using information from the 1775 and 1798 census records, I contacted the Russian-American Genealogical Archive Service (RAGAS) with a request for research of records available to them. (Again for a price.) Six months later, a fat envelope arrived from RAGAS. I learned with disappointment that the records available to RAGAS ended in 1845. My great-grandfather was born in 1850, but his sister Elizabeth was born on 3 March 1845. Another wall? I did a closer examination of the research done by RAGAS and used it to develop an extension of the descendant tree from the Goebel article. I noticed a family group of Johan Conrad, wife Anna Marie nee Hein, and daughter Elizabeth - born 3 March 1845. Those people were my great-great grandparents, and Elizabeth was the final missing puzzle piece! I could now complete a descendent tree for my Zitterkopf family from Germany to Russia and finally to the US.

My next goal is to find a way to link the history of the various Zitterkopf families in the US to the information I now have from Germany and Russia. Some of my journey has been sad. Because of my outreach search in Germany, I have been contacted by relatives who formerly lived in Kazakhstan. They haven't been able to aid my genealogical quest, but have given me great insight on the tragedy and suffering of family members who did not emigrate to the US. I still need the records in Huck from 1845 to about 1880. But that is just another wall that someday someone will conquer. I hope I get to do it. Given my luck this far, I think I can, but if I don't, I, at least, will have made the quest easier for those who follow me.

THE MISSING PIECE TO OUR PUZZLE

In my grandfather's family there was suppose to be a pair of twins, a boy and a girl, but nobody knew who they were. Through diligent work of compiling birthdates of the known family here in the United States, no birthdates matched, so we all assumed they had to be the ones left behind in Russia. There were 2 brothers, who we were told were half brothers, whom did not want to come to the America, so stayed behind.

My grandfather's one sister, Catherine Schaff, who lived in Wyoming, would tell her children, that the man in a family picture hanging on their wall was her twin brother, Michael Frick, (This information I got from her daughter Molly, who lives in San Diego, California), but then we thought who was the twin to him? Was she saying she was the other twin?

When my Grandfather's family decided to come over here, his family consisted of his mother, Christine Frick (nee Barth), her daughter from a first marriage, Anna Marie Cook, (nee Kock), 3 other daughters, Catherine Elizabeth (Frick) Schaff, Christine (Frick) Huck, (spelling later changed to Hook), Catherina (Frick) Huck and my grandfather, Peter Frick and their spouses and families. They came to join Christine's mother and brother, Catherine Barth, (nee Frank) and Jacob Barth, who were already here, (they were among the first to come to the United States, settling in Campbell, Nebr., later going on to Culbertson, Nebr.). The Frick family left behind the two brothers who did not wish to come with them, Michael and Frederick Frick.

In talking with other members of the extended family, it seemed they all thought their families were the owners of the flour mill in Huck, which was suppose to be the biggest one and most modern one in Russia. It had imported steam machines and was 3 stories high, it later grew to more buildings. How many big flour mills could the little village of Huck have?

We were always told that my Grandfather's mother had talked the family into selling their flour mill and use the money to go to America. This is what we believed all these years.

Then last March, I received my first letter from Elwira! Who sent me a lot of information and also told me a lot of information through interpreters, during her visit with me in January of 1996.

Yes the man in that picture, (Michael Frick's family picture, taken about 1903), was the twin brother to the sister in Wyoming, Catherine Elizabeth Schaff, and the other young man in the picture was Grandfather's other brother, Frederick Frick, that stayed behind. So these two were not half brothers after all, now we have found out who the twins were, and it also seems that my grandfather's family evidently sold their share of the

mill for their passage. It seems that a large extended Frick family was involved with that mill, as my Grandfather's family was, there was a cousin to Grandfather in Denver, his family talked of it, a couple of years ago I corresponded with a man, Adam Kindsvater, who is in Germany also, his mother was a cousin to Grandfather, he told of his family having the flour mill also. And so it seems the grandfather to all these cousins is probably the one who started the flour mill.

All, who did not migrate to America, were later deported to Siberia, their crime was that they were too wealthy. Their trip to Kasachtstan was very horrendous, they were allowed to take only enough food for 3 days and 1 extra set of clothes. The trip lasted 1 month, and the atrocities they endured there were unbelievable.

But let me get back to Elvira. The first letter she sent me, she told me to be sitting down, because she had great news for me!

She is now living in Geroldstien, Germany, arriving there in 1990. She had promised her mother and grandmother both before they died, that some day she would look up the Frick family in the United States and Canada and thank them for the "Care Packages", they had sent to the family while they were still in Huck, Russia.

This is what led her into a newspaper shop in Geroldstien. It was called, "Volk auf dem Wege", (Volga People on the Way). She put an ad in this paper, asking for information on the Frick family that went to America in 1905, (actually they came over in 1902). Adam Kindsvater, who I had been corresponding with saw the ad and sent her my address. This began a year of corresponding, and exchanging information, culminating in a visit of Elvira and her son, Paul coming to Denver, Colo on January 12, 1996. What a reunion of the families we had.

Therein begins the story of Elvira Wentnagel. This wonderful woman and her family endured such hardships, as a child, and in having her own family. In 1990, one year after they had finally managed to buy a farm in Kasackstan, they had a chance to leave Siberia and go to Germany. They grabbed the chance in a heart beat, even if it meant that they could not even sell the farm and things they could not take with them, they had to walk away from everything they had finally managed to acquire. They could only take their personal things.

Elwira has since helped many other people to get to Germany, who, when they heard she wanted to come to the United States so badly to see us, came with donations of money and gifts for her to bring to us. The only thing they wanted in return, was a souvenir from the United States.

What a humbling experience for us!

READ MORE ABOUT EEVIRA, THIS WONDERFUL LADY, IN THE NEXT "DIE HUCKERE".

The following letter and list was received by George Huck of Lincoln, Nebraska in 1922. It was given to "Die Huckere" by his daughter, Ruth V. Huck Mosby of Lincoln, Nebraska.

A Letter of Thanksgiving

The poor and suffering needy, who had to wait for the customs stamp of approval for the shipment of eight wrapped packages from Mr. George HUCK of Lincoln, Nebraska, wish to offer him their hearty thanks. How happy we poor are about it that you in America have aroused so many cheerful givers who have taken our great distress to heart and have taken pity on us.

Now, you people, through your cooperative gifts, which you so generously donated to us, we are so grateful for your help. We thank you that for your help we are still alive, for without it we would be finished. Your people would be victims of hunger. The extent of our hunger, which we mentioned in thanks messages written for us through the Uncle, had to be approved. Our thanks is much too inadequate compared to all the good which we received through you, you dear brother in America, provided for us. We can not repay you in this life, but we will very ardently pray to God the merciful, that He, the provider of everything good, will now richly bless you here and in eternity.

We acknowledge the precious gifts you sent us, that your Christianity is not only in words alone, like it is the case with so many, but also stands in deeds.

Hearty greetings and blessing from all of us needy people indicated in the enclosed list.

HUCK
26 Sep
1922

J. RUSCH, Schoolmaster

(Translated by David D. Frank)

LIST

This is a list of the poor and suffering people of the Village of HUCK who have received a gift of 8 packages from Mr. Georg Huck of Lincoln

Housenumber	First and last name of the Recipient	What & how many pounds of products received				Recipient Signature	The signature is witnessed in case recipient cannot write
		Flour	Grits	Sugar	Milk		
1	20 widow Elizabeth Schneider	18	4	2	4	Because all 40 people indicated on this list cannot write, Schoolmaster J. Rusch signed the list for them.	
2	15 widow Anna Maria Hausch	18	4	2	4		
3	30 widow Magdalena Sittner	18	4	2	4		
4	30 Eva Elizabeth Volker	18	4	2	4		
5	29 widow Christina Brotzmann	18	4	2	4		
6	34 Conrad Schaefer						
7	624 widow Kathar Margaretha Eckerdt	18	4	2	4		
8	91 widow Barbara Schneider	18	4	2	4		
9	111 Lehl orphans	18	4	2	4		
10	121 Schaefer orphans	18	4	2	4		
11	127 Jacob Schneider	18	4	2	4		
12	160 widow Katharina Kreick	18	4	2	4		
13	179 Peter Volker	18	4	2	4		
14	189 Johann Georg Eckerdt	18	4	2	4		
15	225 widow Katharina Lehl	18	4	2	4		
16	232 widow Margaretha Henzel	18	4	2	4		
17	244 widow Elizabeth Lehl	18	4	2	4		
18	256 widow Kathr Marg Henzel	18	4	2	4		
	Subtotal	324	72	36	72		

19	275	widow Katharina Schuckmann	18	4	2	4
20	314	widow Maria Elizabeth Leichner	18	4	2	4
21	315	widower Lorenz Sittner	18	4	2	4
22	323	Katharina Magaretha Sittner	18	4	2	4
23	330	widow Katharina Lamschmidt	18	4	2	4
24	355	widow Elizabeth Koch	18	4	2	4
25	371	widow Magdalena Henzel	18	4	2	4
26	372	widow Elizabeth Brotzmann	18	4	2	4
27	381	widow Elizabeth Zitterkopf	18	4	2	4
28	389	widow Kathr Elizabeth Sack	18	4	2	4
29	384	widow Katharina Sack	18	4	2	4
30	385	widow Anna Marg Schlotthauer	18	4	2	4
31	399	widow Katharina Merkel	18	4	2	4
32	408	Barbara Weber	18	4	2	4
33	425	widow Charlotta Michael	18	4	2	4
34	424	widow Eva Elizabeth Hein	18	4	2	4
35	428	widow Katharina Sack	18	4	2	4
36	428	widow Anna Maria Brotzmann	18	4	2	4
37	511	widow Anna Margaretha Henzel	18	4	2	4
38	593	Johann Georg Weber	18	4	2	4
39	568	Konrad Eckerdt	18	4	2	4
40	590	widow Amalie Kreizel	18	4	2	4
41		Charge for delivery	120	40	8	4
42		Adjustment/Weight	24	16	8	4
GRAND TOTAL			864	216	88	160

The members of the governing body of the church office of Splawnucha (Huck) confirm the accuracy of the preceding distribution list:

Jacob Rusch, Schoolmaster, Johannes Huck, Jacob Koch, Konrad Huck, Jacob Neu, Georg Huck, Jacob Sittner

NOTE: This "List" is attached to letter dated 26 September 1922, to my father George Huck, 1219 New Hampshire St., Lincoln, Nebraska.

The numbers on the List are receipt and delivery numbers, which are also written on the back of his letter.

Ruth V. Mosby