



# Die Huckere

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Hey, some of the HUCK gang was at Wichita in June. We look happy don't we? As you can tell, our village night was fun and successful!!

## INSIDE DIE HUCKERE

On Tuesday, September 15, 1998, the Lincoln Journal-Star had an article and picture of the Immigrant family statue being placed at the AHSGR headquarters. Read about this on page 2. Several times since then I have been at headquarters and the statue is just beautiful.

On pages 3,4, & 5 are four letters sent to me by Dennis Zitterkopf of Wichita, Kansas. Dennis received these letters from his cousin Patty Reed. The letters were originally received by Patty's grandparents, Oswald and Katherine (Kriek) Schafer. Katherine was a sister to Dennis Zitterkopf's grandmother. The letters range from 1922 to 1934.

Cont. on page 2

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STACIE E. MCKEE/Lincoln Journal Star

■ **Putting it in its place:** Kansas sculptor Pete Felken (center) helps John Hertel (left foreground) and Vernon Mermis place a 3,000-pound limestone statue of a German-Russian immigrant family near the entry of the Jake Sinner International Headquarters Building of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia.

## Statue honors Germans from Russia

BY JOHN BARRETTE  
Lincoln Journal Star

A statue depicting German-Russian immigrants to the United States now graces the entrance to the Lincoln headquarters of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia.

It was placed Monday at the entrance of the Jake Sinner International Headquarters of the nonprofit historical research organization. It will be dedicated Oct. 4, when the society will hold a Germanfest.

"Both pieces are up and in place," Kathy Schultz, executive director for the organization, said late Monday.

The seven-foot limestone statue features a man with children on one side of a cross and a woman with

children on the other side.

Schultz said getting both pieces of the large statue in place took a little more time and effort than originally planned, but the crossbar of the cross was the only part of the job left to be completed today. The statue replaces a fountain, which had fallen into disrepair.

Sculptor Pete Felton of Hays, Kan., was on hand to help move his work into position. The statue is a replica of one Felton previously did that stands in Victoria, Kans.

Randy Stramel of Architectural Alliance/Ltd., a member of the society, is donating his time and talents for completion of the project. U.S. Bank in Lincoln donated \$6,000 toward the cost of the statue, and other Lincoln businesses donated items

to be raffled to help defray additional costs.

Bricks with family names on them will be placed around the base of the statue in Lincoln as a memorial tribute.

Society members and chapters, as well as numerous organizations and businesses, have purchased bricks to leave a lasting legacy for relatives. The society said brick purchases are tax deductible and funds will help pay for landscaping and placement of the statue.

The Oct. 4 Germanfest event, setting for the statue dedication, will be from 1 to 4 p.m. Various activities are planned, including live music, a raffle and bake sale, and activities for children. Food vendors also will be on site at 631 D St.

"Memories of Huck" by Katherine Urbach was received by AHSGR on March 8, 1997. It was received as a result of the Aussiedler Project.

In 1993 Dennis Zitterkopf of Wichita, Kansas received a letter from Katherina. Katherina arrived in Germany in 1991 and was looking for her Zitterkopf and Bchl

families. Dennis sent a copy of the letter to JoAnn Kuhr of AHSGR. On pages 6,7,8,& 9 read about Katherine's life.

*(this letter contained many words and expressions that are colloquial expressions so the translation is sometimes questionable)*

1922 year, the 21st of March

March makes real pain *(in German, this rhymes)*

The grace of the Lord with us and you all of us, Amen.

Immediately at the beginning of the letter I make known to you that we have received your letter, the one you wrote the 5th of February. We received it with great joy. It was as though an angel from heaven had come to us and brought us a message. It was that kind of joy for us.

To begin with, I want to tell you how matters are going for this time. Dear Brother-in-law Oswald and Sister Kate with your children. It would be great joy to us if you were all in good health. We are still well and so are our children, that are alive. George and Kate namely your "Geht" (?) they have died in the year 1918 in November. The rest of us are, thanks to God, well. But dear Brother-in-law and Sister Kate we are now living on what we used to feed the sow that we eat during this time the bran-grit-coarse flour and ???? cakes, and the potato peeling they were for the sows but for now that is the best people have. If only we had enough. We only cook once a day. The thought of making bread and cake is not even possible. The last time we saw bread was in 'fall' (??), so you can imagine what kind of a life it is. It is poor. It can't be poorer. That is the way it is with clothing too -weak. One life is set upon/against another-so you can imagine what a life it is.

The Brother-in-law Jacob Eckert and Sister Kriecht are still well with their children and brother-in-law Peter and sister Erlisbeth with their children. In closing greetings from us brother-in-law and brother George and Sister-in-law and children. A cordial greeting and kiss of love. Amen

Dear Brother-in-law and Sister Kate, do write us the names of your children in order of birth. You also asked us what kind of a wife Jacob has. He has the daughter of Johannes Brotzman from the young Andrese (??) Johannes his daughter. They have two children. It is two girls. The oldest is two years and five months and the second one is eight days old.

Dear Brother-in-law Oswald and Sister Kate. I make known to you how many animals we have still - one horse, two cows, four oxen, four sheep, one pig, two calves - that is all we have. Dear Bro-in-law and Sister, if no help comes we will all have to starve.

On giving (??) there is no other advice. If you want to send something you will have to send it directly to us. If you send it for a general purpose then it is lost. We will get none of it. It goes to those who are in the kitchen (??). They feed themselves first, then the children. The only remaining thing is the broth (??). But if you send directly to us, then we will receive it and have something to eat.

Written in the year 1925, the second Easter Day (*Easter Monday*). In the name of God the Father and his Son and the Holy Spirit, I begin our letter, from us, your brother P. Phillip and Sister-in-law Annekrist, so also your brother Johannes and Sister-in-law Schalote, together with our four children, also the little Philipp with his wife and three children. We are thankful to God that we are well at this time, the same good health that we also with you from the bottom of our heart. Be you greeted Brother Oswald and Sister-in-law Katarina, together with your six children. It would be nice if this meager writing would find you in good health, even as we are. We want to make known that we have received your letter with great joy and see from it that you are in good health.

Now we make known to you that we have seed wheat. We have 30 pud (*Russian weight = 1 pud/36 (or maybe nearly 40) pounds*). We also have three pud 14 pounds of barley. We have received this from the government. How much stock do we have - we have six young oxen and one cow. Two steers and one horse, we traded in autumn for feed. If we had not traded the two horses(?) we would have had no feed, so we have no oxen and now cows now. The feed was very weak here.

You have asked about our neighbor people. Conrad had four oxen and two cows in fall, and one horse was left over and three oxen. The horse, two cows and one ox died. He had no feed for them.

It is so weak here in the wintertime. Why; because in the month of February 25 and 26 we had the biggest water(?, rain?) so no one has been able to work the land. In April we want to work the acres, but we have no horse. We have to farm with oxen.

Farewell till we see you again. Hope for an answer soon (immediately?).

Written the 17th of March 1930

The grace of the Lord be with us and you all, Amen. At first take a nice cordial greeting and kiss of love from us your Brother-in-law Eckert and Sister Kriedt together with our three children, namely George 28 years old with two children Emilie seven years and Phillip two years old and two unmarried boys, namely Philip 20 years and Jacob 17. Our family consists of eight souls.

We have actually received your letter and see from it you are really well, which is the best in life - health. But Brother-in-law and Sister-in-law (*should this be sister?*) Katge (Kate), I am dissatisfied because you have written so little. Nothing of Brother-in-law Zitterkopf and Sister Kreick (*these are the grandparents of Dennis Zitterkopf*), namely my sister Annam, but are they all died off? I have not received a letter from them in a long time. I would like to know the reason. You surely can get paper to write on. Here with us we no longer have paper to write on, but I still don't forget you to write you. You Sister-in-law (*sister?*) Katge (Kate) you were always too curious while you were unmarried and now you write us so little. You write you are busy with laundry and mending. We would be glad to mend, and can't buy anything around here, there is nothing available, no leather, no sugar. What one needs in a family just can't get it.

Dearly beloved Brother-in-law and Sister Katge (Kate), everything is poor here. The rich people have all been put out of their houses. Also the people that to us ---???--- also put out of their homes, cousin(?) Johannes and many more up to 60 families. Brother-in-law Oswald, the brothers are still in their house and are healthy.

Written in the year 1934, March

Written by me your half brother Johannes Schwabauer to you dear half-brother Oswald and George Schafer, as well as to you wives and children. We greet you all with the best greeting and sincere kiss of love. We wish you from the dear God the best and most beautiful health, even as we find for ourselves this day, at the time of writing this letter, I with my wife and children. Now we make known to you that we have received the letter you wrote to us and notice that all is well with you.

Hope you can forgive me for waiting so long with writing. I was waiting for a letter from young Phillip's wife. Since March 20 I have received a letter and I can make known to you, it is still very weak for her. You ask question, what happens to the property of affluent people who die and leave no heirs. There is a village doctor here, if he can't make use of them he sells them and the money is used for community purposes. The village Huck you must not imagine it the way it was when you left. Your property is still standing. On the whole there is much damage (*destruction? decay?*)

Matters are much better this year than last year and we are hoping next year will be even better. You write you would like to send me something but do not have the wherewithal. You are not supposed to send me anything. Still today, I tell you a thousand thanks for the help that you sent me last year, and as soon as I can, as I have the possibility I will send you back (repay you).

Your mother and sister Efkat this past year died on the same day. Your brothers Phillip and Johannes and their wives also died. Johannes did leave some children behind but I have no address of them.

Adieu! Adieu! for a joyous reunion!

## **MEMORIES OF HUCK**

Katharina Urbach

Translated by Jo Ann Kuhr

Dear Friends.

One cannot write down our history because we were displaced people from 1941 on. We had no home, were stamped as enemies of the people. We can only praise our Savior Jesus Christ that we are now supported in Germany with clothing and also daily needs. We are valued as brothers and sisters, no longer as enemies of the people. I thank you for your work, wish you health, God's blessing. United in the Lord. Russian Germans. With heartfelt greetings.  
Katharina Urbach.

### **My Home Town**

I was born in the village Huck, Kanton Balzer, Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic of the Volga Germans. My maiden name was Katharina Zitterkopf, daughter of Johann Georg Zitterkopf, born on 20 September 1917.

In the village were a church and a prayer house. They were served by the schoolteacher by the name of Heinrich Rusch. Baptisms, confirmations, communion, and weddings were performed for us and a few other villages by Pastor Wacker. He lived in Norka. In the winter, church services were held in the prayer house because of a shortage of heating materials. The church was closed in 1935, forbidden by the state. This edict came from Lenin. In 1937 the church was turned into a club. Movies were shown, theatrical performances, and dances for the young people. After work at the kolkhoz, the young people and married men and women gathered. They had games and singing. It was directed by the Young Communist Workers.

In the village there were a few businesses: general stores, yard good stores, shoe stores, weaving shop. Then a dairy was established with various milk products, mainly Holland cheeses. There was also an MTS (Machine Tractor Station). Belonging to it were Dönhof, the Russian villages Old and New Topovka.

In 1927 the prayer house was turned into a seven-year school. (Rural elementary school) I completed this school. Director of the school was Alexander Eckerdt until the deportation of 1941. This was by the decree from the Supreme Soviet, Stalin and Kalinin. It was published on 30 August. On 1 and 2 September 1941, the people were transported to the Volga by oxcart. The village was surrounded by soldiers and NKVD men with weapons. We were said to be traitors, spies, and diversionaries. The soldiers took our goods and gave us a receipt and with the panic which they spread. "You will get everything back, also the cattle." The first deportees were sent to the Krasnyy Yar district and later to the fisheries on the Jennesii River in the steppe and in the forest. They had to make shelter in earth huts. Many people died because of illness and the poor care. Two parties went to Komi Republic and Tomsk-Novosibirsk and Altai Districts, to the areas which had not yet been settled.

My husband and I and two children, and a third was born on the way. Then my old mother and two brothers with families. We arrived in North Kazakhstan, Kokchetai District, 180 kilometers away to a village. The men went to harvest the wheat, the women to dig and gather potatoes with spades. It was already cold, frost at night.

My husband was called in November to teach chemistry and biology to workers in a school because he was fluent in the Russian language and had completed the Russian college in Saratov. It lasted until 22 January, then the men from ages 15 to 50 were called. They were deceived. The young ones did not go to the Red Army at all. The Workers Army (*trudarmiya*) was founded. They were sent into the forest and to the mines.

They went to Vegebov, laying railroad tracks, in the forest Sverdlovsk, Chelyabinsk, Molotov District in the Ural Mountains. Then to mines in Karaganda, Kemerovo, Prokopevsk, Tula. They were housed in barracks surrounded by barbed wire, cold and without food. They were not permitted to leave the living quarters, for they were under supervision. A tower was built on which sat soldiers with rifles and German shepherd dogs. If someone left, he was shot. Because of the difficult work and poor nourishment, the older men died and then the younger ones also. Beginning in April 1942, the women between the ages of 15 and 50 were also mobilized. If the youngest child was 3 years old, the mothers were taken from their children. From 1948 on all were under special supervision. Whoever left the village without permission of the commandant faced 20 years imprisonment. So we were until April 1956. In that month we had to sign a paper that we would not disobey laws. From 1948 they allowed men in the *trudarmiya* to send invitations to their families to join them. My husband was working in the mine in Tula. In 1946 he had an accident. A coal car loaded with coal pinned him. He therefore had to endure much illness and could no longer work in the mines. He was given a job as translator with the prisoners from Germany until 1949. Then the camp was dissolved, the men who had been working in the mine went home. The German prisoners went back to Germany.

In the Tula district we again were without work. When my husband applied for a job as teacher, he received the answer "We cannot use Soviet enemies - Hitler supporters!" So we had invitations arranged to go to our deportation destination, Kazakhstan. Because of illness, my husband was freed from working in the mine. We moved to the Kokchetau District 10 March 1953, accompanied by two people with weapons from the supervisor's office. In the raion Ayrotai we had to register with the local commandant. Our companions turned us over [to him.] We arrived on 3 April 1 with three children. We were received in the village Vevolodovka with cold and storm. We were taken in by our sister. Her husband had died in the *trudarmiya* Chelyabinsk, and she was left behind with four children. She had made herself a clay hut. Now we had to fight for our lives. My husband worked from the month of May in the *leskhoz* (reforestation) as a construction worker with our fourteen-year-old son. In August he began to travel to the supervisory office to ask for permission to travel to the district educational department. There he received the same answer. "How can we trust a special resettler to work in the Soviet schools?" With certificates of poor health, entreaties and pleading, he was appointed to teach the foreign language German and to instruct students. So he worked until he was pensioned in 1966. He never received his diploma as teacher of chemistry and biology. He was ill

until 1984 when he went home to the Lord after severe illness and suffering. The care which might have helped a sick person was missing. There was also no medicine. This is a short overview over life from the years 1941-1966 and 1984.

### **My Autobiography**

I was born 20 September 1917. My first school year was 1924. I had finished four grades by 1927. Then I entered the seven-year school, agricultural middle school in the village Huck. In 1931 I became ill with typhoid, head typhus. I stayed out of school in 1934 because of illness. In 1934 I finished the seven-year school, took the exams and was accepted into the veterinary technical college in Krasnyy Kut. I finished as cattle breeder but never again worked in my specialty. I was in education in a children's home, then in a day care center.

In 1937 I married Alexander Urbach, born in 1906 in the village Stahl (am Tarlyk), Krasnoyar Kanton ASSRdWD. He worked from 1929-1941 as a teacher of chemistry and biology. In 1941 he was deported from the village Huck to North Kazakhstan, Kokchetav District, village Akan-Vurluk. From there the men were called into the Workers' Army on 22 January 1942.

I remained with the son born 1937, daughter 1939, and then a son born in 1942. Our daughter died of diphtheria in 1939 and the son born in 1942 in the year 1945. In 1948 because of the *visum* sent by my husband I moved to the Tula District. He was already working in the upper level of the mine because of his health. Then in 1953 we moved with three children to our place of deportation in Kazakhstan. Here my husband worked as a teacher and I at various jobs until we were on pension. We raised eight children, bore ten and two died. From 1964 we lived in the Alma Ata District, mountain settlement Rudnichny until 1991. My son born in 1953 and I moved to Germany in 1993 and the oldest son, born in 1937, came with his son, daughter, and wife in 1995. The youngest son, born 1955, came with his wife son and daughter in 1995. In 1996 the daughter born in 1950 and the daughter born in 1958 came with their families, twelve people. At the moment the oldest daughter has her immigration permission form November with her family, six people. But there are many difficulties in leaving Kazakhstan. She worked 27 years and had counted on the 28th year of work. However, there is no money, and what she earned, she can only leave behind.

In Germany I receive my pension (widow) and my children work. Those recently arrived have completed the language courses and are studying an occupation. They receive help from the state with dwelling and furniture from the Red Cross and the churches.

It is God's grace and blessing,. Therefore I thank and praise his wonderful goodness.

A few words about seeking of relatives. My uncles, Peter and Johannes Bohl, were born In the village Huck. But I cannot verify when they were born or immigrated to Canada. In the years 1927-1930 they sent us help In dollars to my mother Elizabeth Zitterkopf, born Bohl 1874. I



cannot write more. I thank you most sincerely for your work. The Lord should bless you, give you health, blessing and grace. Dear brothers and sisters united In the Lord.

With heartfelt greetings Katharina Urbach and families. Grünstadt, Germany.

Please excuse the grammatical errors.

Sincerely,

P.S. Life In the village Huck was also bound with many difficulties. My parents were farmers. They worked for their daily bread day and night. Then there were still vegetable gardens, melons and pumpkin patches. There was all sorts of hand work, mainly the women, because the men were busy with the field work. There was also a failed harvest In the year 1921. Hunger, illness, the people died. The greatest help was for my parents, grandmother, and twelve more souls. By help from America, from my uncles and aunts and from Lincoln, Nebraska and from Canada from the uncles. I cannot tell you about their fate. I was still a child. But there was porridge and "Kaukas" for my grandmother and me In the kitchen. I fetched it. In 1922 there was then a good harvest and things improved. But collectivization began In 1929. Farmers who had earned their livelihood were dispossessed and banished to the Far North. There they died In masses. Grandmother died In 1931. In 1932 the family became ill from typhoid. Father died In 1933. Then came the year of famine because the authorities had taken our reserve supplies, cattle, cows, and whatever there was. Then the majority died of starvation. We received 10 dollars from America and could save ourselves from dying of starvation. It was help from our relatives.