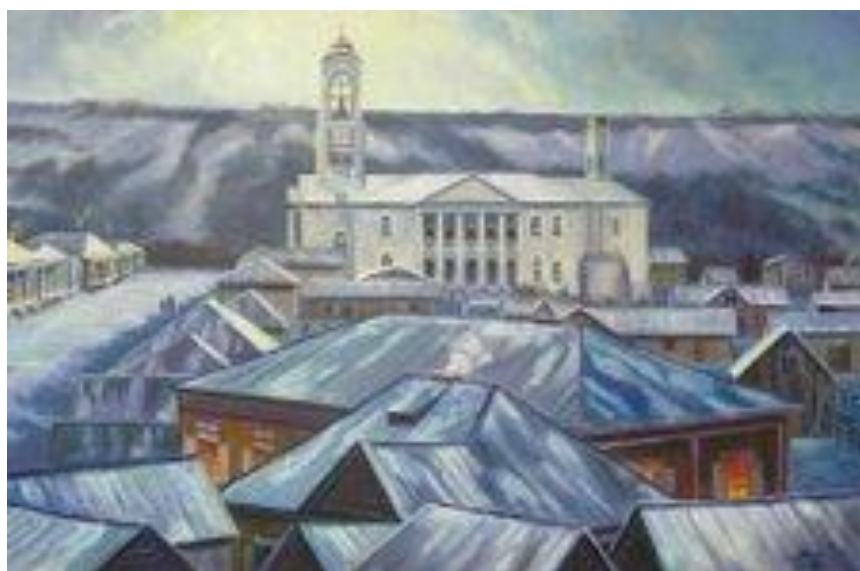


MARIENTAL CHASSELOIS LOUIS



**Mariental, Russia by Michael Boss
Oil on Linen – 20" x 30"
From the Collection of Signature Associates**

Topics:

Editor's Comments

Feature Stories :

My Book – "Anton & Ottilia"

The Village of Chasselouis

Raids

Whisper:

Easter Pictures from Germany

GR Proverb:

Little and often fills the purse

“Anton & Ottilia”

Just a note to inform many of you who expressed interest in my book about my parents, “Anton & Ottilia” It has been published in two volumes due to the length of the book.

These Volumes are not primarily genealogy, but are mostly pictures and stories. Volume One contains my parents and family (Anton Kinderknecht and Ottilia Weigel Kinderknecht and their children). Volume Two contains the Kinderknechts’ ancestors and siblings, plus the Weigel ancestors and siblings – there are many, many other surnames who married into these families.

The books each have their own URL. and are published either in black and white or colored and have a special introductory offer available until May 9th.

Volume One and Two - Black and White - \$29.95 each (introductory offer only)

Volume One and Two - color - \$129.95 each (introductory offer only)

thelma.mills@gmail.com phone - 916-716-3134

Here are the URL’s to click on (March/1/2013)

<http://www.lulu.com/content/paperback-book/anton-ottilia-volume-one/12474485>

This book is volume one (in black and white) featuring the family stories and legacy of Anton and Ottilia Kinderknecht; their ancestors and descendants.

<http://www.lulu.com/content/paperback-book/anton-ottilia-volume-one-%28color%29/12474486>

This book is volume one (in color) featuring the family stories and legacy of Anton and Ottilia Kinderknecht; their ancestors and descendants.

<http://www.lulu.com/content/paperback-book/anton-ottilia-volume-two/12474513>

This book is volume two (in black and white) featuring the family stories and legacy of Anton and Ottilia Kinderknecht; their ancestors and descendants.

<http://www.lulu.com/content/paperback-book/anton-ottilia-volume-two-%28color%29/12474514>

This book is volume two (in color) featuring the family stories and legacy of Anton and Ottilia Kinderknecht; their ancestors and descendants.

Letter to the Editor:

Hi Thelma,

Do you remember when I asked about Saratov vs. Samara?... Well, I ran into a very interesting section in Die Liebenthaler Und Ihre Kirch... Here is what it says...

The section west of the Volga or the right bank of the River Volga, about 66 miles long, was steep and hilly and covered with forests and came to be known as the mountain side (Die Bergseite). That on the east side of the river, about 133 miles long, was lowland, a level prairie land, and came to be known as the meadow side (Die Wiesenseite). The colonies on the Bergseite were in the province of Saratov; those on the Wiesenseite were in the province of Samara.

Also, I ran into a website www.webbift.com/volga/volga-vil-names.txt that lists all the River Volga villages and their side of the Volga and Provinces and Religion, etc., very very good information, but I don't feel free to send that info to you so consider looking at it in the website... Blessings, Jeanette Hoffman

Thelma, thank you for the "richly-laden" December Newsletter. I read with great interest all the feature articles. What really drew my attention was the information presented about The Volga-German people who settled in Brazil and Argentina. While reading through the names of the people who went to Argentina I came across my surname, Leikers who came from Russia and settled in a place called San Jose and Asuncion. It spoke about people living on their own properties. Unfortunately, I couldn't relocate the page in the Bulletin where I read the information. I wanted to reread the information. What would be the easiest way for me to find it again?

Best wishes for a Happy New Year. Sister Mary Elise

Hello Thelma, The Newsletter I'm referring to is the one you sent most recently. I believe that it was dated December. It was the section of the Newsletter that listed the names of Volga Germans who sailed to South America and settled there. There were only about six Leiker names and all with the exception of one were very young in age. All of them came together around the year 1876 or 1878. It is of interest to me to find that page in the Newsletter and take a better look at it and share it with my brother. Thank you for getting back to me.

Have a good day,
Sister Mary Elise

Hi Thelma:

In my presentation I mentioned that there are web sites where one can find the passenger lists of ships arriving at Canadian ports.

Some of the Quebec ports lists have been indexed by the Nanaimo Family History Project <http://members.shaw.ca/nanaimo.fhs/>. The Quebec port index of passengers arriving between 11 Jun 1904 to 13 Oct 1910 can be accessed at <http://members.shaw.ca/nanaimo.fhs/indexY.html>.

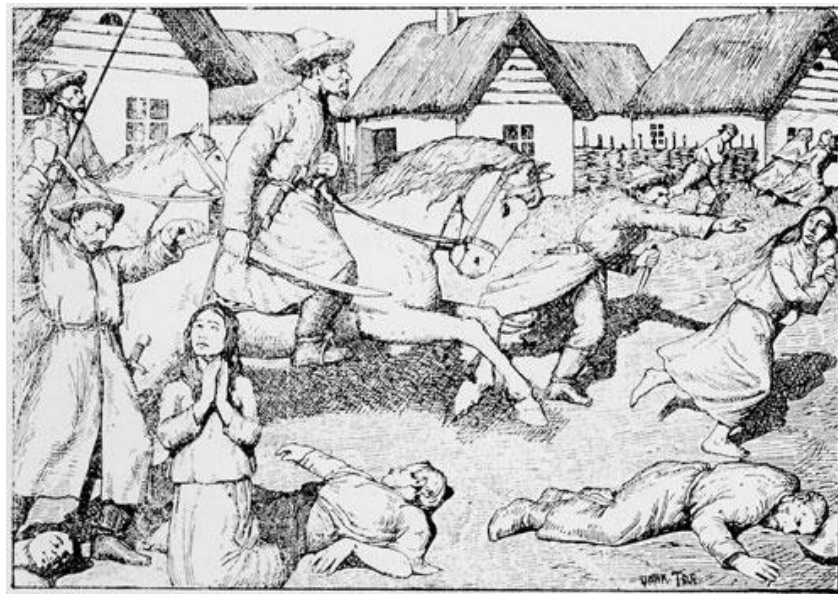
The microfilm of the pages of the passenger lists of ships arriving in Canada which are held in the Canadian Archives can be accessed at <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/passenger/001045-100.01-e.php?PHPSESSID=4ohjpmovnk4d1fdqjpret3u0i2>

Searchable passenger list are available at Ancestry.ca <http://search.ancestry.ca/search/db.aspx?dbid=1263> but you must subscribe to the service.

Ray Rohr

-

THE VILLAGE OF CHASSELOIS



Volga German colony under attack by Kirghiz tribesmen

http://cvgs.cu-portland.edu/settlements/mother_colonies/colony_chasselois.cfm

Names

Chaijsol, Chaisol, Chasselais, Cheisol, Choise le Roy, Khaisol

Location: 51°17' N 46°56' E

History: Chasselais was founded on 2 August 1766 by LeRoy and Pictet as a Roman Catholic colony. It was destroyed by the Kirghiz in 1785 and the surviving colonists distributed to other colonies.

Population Table:

Year	Households	Total
1767	40	144
1769		156
1772		177

Sources:

- Pleve, Igor. *Einwanderung in das Wolgagebiet, 1764-1767* Band 1 (Göttingen: Göttinger Arbeitskreis, 1999): 249.

External LinksL [Chasselais](#) (Thelma Mills) - Courtesy of CVGS The Center for Volga German Studies – Concordia University

Articles From My Web Page on The Village of Chasselais.

In the years, 1764 to 1767, there were founded on the Bergseite and Wiesenseite of the lower Volga, 1 French and 103 German colonies.

Four of these colonies, Chasselais, Casarsfeld, Keller, and Leitsinger were destroyed by the Kirghiz. The first two were abandoned, with many of the surviving souls from Chasselais moving to Louis. The latter two villages, banded together, founding the village of Neu-Kolonie on another site below Seelman.

It should be noted that the crown debts totalling 17,735 rubles, 62 kopecks*, owed by the settlers of the French colony, Rossoshi (whose settlers abandoned their village because they decided they were not suited to farm life); by the lost colonists formerly settled in the city of Saratov; by the people of the colonies of Casarsfeld and Chasselais destroyed by the Kirghiz; by the colonists carried away into captivity from the colonies of Tonkoshurovka (Mariental), Rovnoye(Seelman), and Kustarevo (Leitsinger), Krasnorynovka (Keller), and despite these events, the debts were to be collected from all the workers in the Saratov colonies in equal parts. * information from "**The German Colonies Of The Lower Volga by Gottlieb Beratz**".

Among the many hardships the colonists had to endure, were the climate, the forcing of unaccustomed occupations, the strict guardianship, and freedom imposed by the officials.

But, by far, the worst hardships the settlers endured during the first decades, was the incessant raiding by the Kirghiz, Kalmunds, the Russian robber bandits, and also the rebel Pugachev. The Russian robber bandits consisted of runaway serfs, vagabonds, deserting soldiers, boat servants, and banished criminals. Their cruel and barbarous raids caused unforgivable and unforgettable moments in time for our ancestors.

Many colonists were robbed and murdered when they had to make trips to the city or to other places, from which food supplies had to be obtained. This necessity was created by the many crop failures during the first decade of the

settlement. Many, many horses continued to be stolen even into the mid 1800's, when strong measures were finally taken by the commissar to catch any and all horse thieves.

THEIR WOES CONTINUE

The most frightful of these were the attacks by the Kirghiz, which, although they affected directly only 17 colonies on the wiesenseite, so filled the colonists with terror that it paralyzed economic development among them for more than a decade.

The Kirghiz attacks were so ferocious, terrifying, and overpowering due to their numbers as compared to the settlers - many times ravaging the villages while many colonists were away in the fields. They suffered to the point of agony, and yet struggled on and on. The Kirghiz were ferocious warlike mongal tribe nomads who were used to having the land to themselves and the Kalmucks (The Kalmucks were mostly into thievery). They raised mostly horses and cattle and resented the newcomers. The first attack occurred in August, 1771, striking the villages of Chasselouis and Louis on the upper Great Karamon - these two being the farthest out in the steppe. The colonists were out working in the fields when they heard the terrifying war whoops of the robber bands. The Kirghiz not only took anything they chose, but, also took the colonists in the villages, prisoners, so as to sell them into slavery, and others just simply killed without mercy. (This is according to schoolmaster Schneiders manuscript, Lebensbilder.)

THEIR DREAMS WERE SHATTERED

The village of Chasselouis was destroyed completely, thus the surviving colonists fled to Louis and Mariental. Eventually around 1774, military personnel were sent to the villages on the wiesenseite that were threatened by the Kirghiz. Schneider reported, "such bloody robbing incursions were prevented for the future by stationing military forces in the most exposed places, like Ostrogovka (Louis) and Tonkoshurovka (Mariental). These personnel remained in the colonies for several years until finally a line of fortifications was built along the Ural river, through which the German colonies received security and peace. In order for the military to have a better defence against hostile attacks, there were built around Mariental and Katharinenstadt (on orders from the government) earth work fortifications with bastions and barriers, which the colonists from various villages had to dig and construct.

Even so, about forty families from various colonies agreed among themselves to desert their colonies. They chose two men as their guides (one named Buge, the other named Geyer) who claimed to be knowledgeable about maps. After all had assembled, the guides soon quarreled, because one wanted to go East and the other West, so all of them went back to their homes, but for years kept themselves prepared for departure, greatly hindering the development of the settlements.

The colonists lived in fear almost half a century after the founding of the settlements. The four districts: Krasnoyar, Tonkoshurovka, Katharinestadt, and Paninskaye, were ordered to keep watch and to give prompt assistance in case of an attack. Every colony, from Ostrovoka (Louis) to Schaff-hausen, were to set up on high places a few signals or beacons of straw and other quickly inflammable material, which watchman would set on fire when robbers were sighted.

Eventually the hardships gradually disappeared and the population increased. Many of the colonists returned out of captivity by the Kirghiz, during the course of the next 25 years through various means of escape and ransom by the Catholic monk, Father Johannes.

Chasselouis Surnames Living in Louis During the 1798 Census (AHSGR)

SURNAME	AGE	FROM
Jakob Bach	25	Chaisol
Mariana Bach	27	Chaisol
Lambertus Becker	38	Chaisol
Matthias Behrens	35	Chaisol
Anna Katarina Berns	46	Chaisol
Johann Berns	47	Chaisol
Agata Bersch	36	Chaisol
Katarina Bersch	44	Chaisol
Maria Bersch	37	Chaisol
Barbara Bollig	38	Chaisol
Matthias Bollig	31	Chaisol
Nikolaus Bollig	61	Chaisol
Peter Falter (Walter?)	45	Chaisol
Peter Gale (Halle?)	45	Chaisol
Maria Hein	36	Chaisol
Katarina Kasper	30	Chaisol
Matthias Kasper	37	Chaisol
Johann Krefeldinger	67	Chaisol
Anna Katarina Kusch	39	Chaisol
Katarina Leidecker	29	Chaisol
Barbara Manrich	47	Chaisol
Anna Katarina Nikolai	26	Chaisol
Matthias Nikolai	47	Chaisol
Johann Orth	69	Chaisol
Johann Orth, Junior	28	Chaisol
Katarina Orth	20	Chaisol
Nikolaus Orth	39	Chaisol
Anna Katarina Peter	41	Chaisol
Heinrich Peter	29	Chaisol
Johann Peter	23	Chaisol
Markus Peter	39	Chaisol
Michael Schoenberger	39	Chaisol
Katarina Schwartz	51	Chaisol
Barbara Spiess	21	Chaisol
Jakob Spiess	24	Chaisol
Johann Spiess	48	Chaisol

Johann Spiess, Junior	28	Chaisol
Peter Spiess	41	Chaisol
Vincent Spies		Chaisol
Elisabeta Tire (There?)	30	Chaisol
Katarina Tire (There?)`	20	Chaisol
Matthias Tire (There?)	40	Chaisol
Michael Tire (There?)	28	Chaisol
Peter Wilger	39	Chaisol

Chasselois Surnames Living in Mariental During the 1798 Census (AHSGR)

SURNAME	AGE	FROM
Sebastian Bersch	44	Chaisol
Katherina Falder (Walder?)	22	Chaisol
Nikolaus Gross	35	Chaisol
William Gross	41	Chaisol
Katharina Haas	46	Chaisol
Matthias Hein	45	Chaisol
Adam Husch	36	Chaisol
Elisabeta Nuss	39	Chaisol
Anna Marie Sander	19	Chaisol
Georg Sander	40	Chaisol
Christoph Schiller		Chaisol
Jakob Schoenberger	44	Chaisol
Anna Klara Vilhauer	48	Chaisol

Chasselois Surnames living in Graf During the 1798 Census (AHSGR)

Peter Bollig	27	Chaisol
Jakob Haas	25	Chaisol
Michael Hein	37	Chaisol
Katherina Kohlner	22	Chaisol
Katherina Schonberg	41	Chaisol
Barbara Spies	30	Chaisol

Anna Maria Weirich	19	Chaisol
Christina Weirich	23	Chaisol
Margaret Welter	43	Chaisol

**Chasselois Surnames living in Herzog
During the 1798 Census (AHSGR)**

Nikolaus Fusch	62	Chaisol
Katarina Mers	36	Chaisol
Margareta Mers	29	Chaisol
Peter There	31	Chaisol

**Chasselois Surname living in Katherinenstadt
During the 1798 Census (AHSGR)**

Christina Shazlov	28	Chaisol
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**Chasselois Surname living in Rohleder
During the 1798 Census (AHSGR)**

Margaretha Fisch	40	Chaisol
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Chasselois Surnames Movement from Ober-Monjour to Chaisol

Katherina, daughter of Friederich Biehle, married Sebastian Haas in Chasselois (1779)
Widow Appolonia, married name Waldener, married Franz Bach in Chasselois (1781)
Katharina. Daughter of Joseph Obermann, married Johann Bertsch in Chasselois (1782)

Raids forced many of the survivors of Chasselois to flee to Mariental, Louis, Herzog, Graf, OberMoniour, and Katherinenstadt

(Year of Destruction of Chasselois seems to have a discrepancy in the different Resouce books I have purchased, if the year was 1771 or 1774 – the Movement tables list some surnames still moving there during a later year)

The border tribes, especially the Kirghiz, wrote the bloodiest chapter in the German colonies along the Volga, until the advent of the Communists. Pugachev's allies to the east of the Volga were the Buddhist Kalmucks and the Kirghiz. The Kalmucks were mostly horse thieves, an activity that took an alarming economic toll as late as the 1880's. The Kirghiz were the more barbarous of the two. One of the reasons for the establishment of foreign colonies was the need for a wall against the border tribes along the lower Volga. The agents derisively known as Menschenfaenger (people catchers) and Seelenverkaeufer (soul sellers) made no mention of this to prospective colonists, who only wanted peace. Yet, by 1771 the colonies came to serve in that capacity as the settlers inherited a continuous war waged by the Kirghiz against the Russian government. Four colonies were completely destroyed and others were severely damaged. Schasselwa was destroyed in 1771; Marienthal, Caeserfeld, and Keller were destroyed by 1774. Lichtsinger, though badly mauled, escaped annihilation.

The Kirghiz have been compared to the American Indians. Kirghiz, a Persian word, means forty daughters. According to legend, one of Noah's sons settled in Turkistan after the flood of Biblical times and sired forty

daughters. The Kirghiz believed themselves descendants of this son and were proud of their ancestor. They called their tribe Kirghiz as a tribute to his sexual powers.

They were short and round headed, had long, prominent noses, dark eyes and dark hair. They followed the prophet Mohammed and were enemies of all people and all things Christian. Their usual habitat was the area on the Russian steppes between the Caspian Sea and the Ural Mountains toward the east. The lower Volga was their plundering ground, especially after it was settled. For centuries, they raided on both sides of the mighty river. The treeless plains provided grazing for their horses and cattle, which in turn provided them with milk, butter, cheese, meat, wool, hair, skins, and hides. The skins and hides were made into clothing and bartered for other goods. They lived in felt tents that were quite portable. A whole camp could be moved in a day or two. Being nomadic horseman, they had breathtaking contempt for farmers. Their own lands were non-arable. In any case, they did not develop the art of agriculture.

The Volga region had seen its share of terror over the centuries, inflicted by Attila The Hun, Genghis Kahn and other conquerors. Potentially, the region could have been a sort of paradise on earth. The Volga River itself was crystal clear, and the steppes with their sweet-smelling hay and fertile soil were ideal for agrarian life.

Among the colonists were a number of men with military experience, but European wars were not the proper training ground for the hit-and-run tactics of the Kirghiz. In time, the settlers learned the rules of Kirghiz warfare and dealt successfully with their antagonists. However, the peaceful settlers had not envisioned the first horrible Kirghiz raid.

Schasselwa, located about seventeen miles southwest of Katharinenstadt, was the first German colony to be attacked. The day of the attack started off no different than many others. Only a few grey clouds occasionally blotted out the sun. The men were in the fields ten to fourteen miles from their village. While they gathered crops, the women were occupied with their own chores, such as household work, gardening, braiding onions, stringing up pepper pods, or shelling peas. There was almost complete silence broken from time to time by the creaking of a garden gate or the cackling of the hens. Conversation centered around the weather - when would it rain? The gardens were drying up. Yellow spots were appearing on the steppe grass. Life in the villages was uniform and monotonous. Except for the changes brought on by the seasons, a serious drought or a plague of grasshoppers, there was little variety one day to the next. Certainly there was no omen of impending doom.

Suddenly, as if out of the clear blue sky, came a rumbling sound. The noise resembled thunder, and people looked at the sky in hope of seeing some sign of rain. Soon the thunder turned into the clapping of hooves as billowing clouds of dust rose high in the streets. Kirghiz warriors with masked faces and glittering lances rode into the village and dismounted. At first, there were only a few, the vanguard. Soon many more warriors appeared. Soon they outnumbered the residents of Schasselwa.

After dismounting, the tribesman rushed those who had fled and struck them down. Then they forced themselves into the houses, went through the supply of food so carefully put up for the coming winter. They took what they wanted and threw the rest on the floor and trampled it.

Women screamed and begged for God's mercy as they were forced to watch the raiders snatch babies from their arms and cribs. The raiders speared the little ones, threw the lifeless bodies into the air and made a sport of seeing how many times they could spear the bloody corpses before they fell to the ground. The mangled pulps of bodies, which moments ago had been some women's child, were now a revolting sight. Next the warriors turned on the women. They did not discriminate between young and old, married or unmarried, the beautiful or the common. They raped and mutilated the women - "acted like devils on the loose," one survivor said - until their victims were overtaken by the mercy of death. Only a few escaped - those who had maintained enough presence of mind to take their children to bushes, cellars or clumps of trees, and hide. Frequently the atrocities occurred within a few feet of those hiding places. Others, who had neither the time nor the opportunity to hide, and were not killed outright, were taken prisoners. All the rest were put to the sword.

The Kirghiz raid on Schasselwa set a pattern for subsequent raids. Those who managed to hide during the crucial period, which lasted an hour to two, were able to save themselves. The problem was finding a safe hiding place within the short warning period allotted once the raiders arrived. The steppes did not afford many natural hiding places. After an hour or two of looting and killing, the Kirghiz chieftain sounded his horn, which was a signal for his men to assemble and come to attention. In a matter of minutes they were ready, having secured their loot and tied their captives - women and young girls they allowed to live - to their horses, and upon a second signal they mounted their horses and rode away shouting. Their shouting could still be heard as they rode over the distant hills to the Karaman River, east of the destroyed village.

After what must have seemed like an eternity, the survivors emerged from their hiding places to assess the damage. What they saw was enough to make the strongest sick. Horribly mutilated corpses were everywhere. Every home revealed new horrors. People ran from house to house looking for survivors. Many a man lost his mate that day, and many a woman lost her loved ones. Before they left, the raiders put many buildings to the torch. Property they could not take with them was sent up in flames. The raiders used clothing and bedding as tinder. As feathers from the debris became airborne, they were carried aloft by the wind like a fiery snowstorm.

Schasselwa was no more. Now it only remained for the living to bury the dead. This they did quickly in a common grave, and without coffins. Simple religious services were held - ending with the ancient prayer, "May the souls of the faithful departed in the mercy of God, rest in peace. May perpetual light shine upon them." There was time for no more, nor were they inclined to prolong the sorrow. But no one would ever forget the day Schasselwa died.

The survivors now had to face stark reality. They simply distributed what goods were left and divided the population among three neighboring villages, namely Loui, Herzog, and Marienthal. This solution seemed easier and more practical than living in a place - though once happy - remembered only as the scene of an unforgettable tragedy.

The immigrants had hoped to settle in the land of freedom. Now they realized they had gone from freedom to slavery. Moreover, they had inherited the role of "Kirghiz tamers."

The Kirghiz raiders were just as jubilant over their handiwork as the survivors of Schasselwa were depressed. Their chief, Nurali Khan, prepared a big welcome for the raiders. He was pleased with the report of their grisly work and even more impressed with the loot brought back. Tribal custom was followed. Booty was divided and then distributed among the families of the warriors. Captive women and young girls were sold into slavery. Only one of the captive women of the first raid eventually returned to her homeland and her people. All the other captives spent their lives in servitude, and eventually were married to tribesmen who paid for them with horses and goods. Reports of the gory details entertained Nurali Kahn. He shook with laughter as his lieutenants related the story of their bloody sport. However, the chief was still more interested in the booty and wasted no time before planning a new raid. The season wasn't right, however. He had to wait until the following spring. The next town to fall would be Loui, one of the colonies named after a French concessionaire.

The Kirghiz did not intend to attack Loui. They planned a return visit to Schasselwa. A member of the previous expedition was chosen to guide them, but he did not remember the way and led the warriors astray. Instead of heading in a northerly direction, the guide sent them off to the west, where the party reached the Karaman River area. Finally, after realizing their guide had misled them, the raiders proceeded northward until they arrived at a point where the Netschcet River meets the Karaman. There they spotted a village larger than Schasselwa, the German colony of Loui. This became a target of new opportunity.

Of course, some of the survivors of Schasselwa had gone to live in Loui. They told the story of their experience, how the Kirghiz behaved, and how the survivors saved themselves by going into hiding. They knew the difference between a thunderclap and the pounding of horses' hooves. The thunder of the Kirghiz horde was a signal to hide. Those who recognized it were saved and many escaped. The Kirghiz rode toward town. Upon hearing the first wild cry, many hid in bushes, caves, and nearby ditches. Otherwise, the story of Schasselwa repeated itself in Loui. Armed with steel-tipped lances, saber-like knives and whips, the horsemen murdered old and young indiscriminately, raped the women and took many prisoners. The raiding party was larger than the one that attacked

Schasselwa, but the loss in lives and property was less. Still, there was a toll in lives, most of the survivors being women and children. The people buried their dead and tried to carry on.

The latest raid alarmed all the colonies. Something had to be done quickly or the colonies would be picked off one by one. Their primitive organization was no match for the hit-and-run tactics of the Kirghiz. They needed military protection. Officials of the larger colonies petitioned the government in Saratov. Postal service was slow, and weeks passed without hearing from the government. In the meantime, the colonists took some defensive measures. They posted sentries at vantage points with instructions to give the alarm in case raiders approached.

Finally, an official looking envelope arrived with a message from the Ministry of Military Affairs and War. It expressed deepest sympathy to the affected people and promised to send a company of soldiers. The letter also stated that no immediate action could be taken since the Saratov command did not have the necessary troops to spare, and that such troops had to be ordered from Wolskstat, which in turn might have to call upon or backorder troops from some other fort.

The colonists, however, had nine months grace before the Kirghiz struck again. Kirghiz tribesman never raided during winter because it was too risky. Although they were good horseman, crossing the Urals after snow fell was all but impossible.

In April, when spring arrived, the villages were busy doing spring barn and shed cleaning and mending harnesses in preparation for spring plowing. The people were relaxed, too relaxed, considering what had happened the previous summer. Perhaps they did not think the Kirghiz could or would strike so early in the year since past raids took place only during the late summer months.

It was a cool spring day, during the second week of the month, and the air was a bit raw and biting. The Kirghiz apparently crossed the mountains through high snowdrifts to reach the plains below as they proceeded to the village of Marienthal for a surprise attack. This village also sheltered survivors from Schasselwa, and also had knowledge of Loui's fate. When the alarm was given, the people of Marienthal hid in nearby nooks, crevices, and under bushes. Some even tried to hide themselves under lofts of hay in barns and sheds. The raid followed the pattern set earlier. The Kirghiz looted, pillaged, and raped the women. The attack force was smaller than the previous ones, containing only eighty to one hundred men. But the number of captives taken was larger and included a number of small boys.

The German colonists were essentially pacifists. One and all they had renounced war, at least for themselves. Now they were faced with a situation that called for warlike measures, just to defend themselves. The folly of being pacifists under all circumstances became transparently obvious. They faced the choice between fighting, or losing their lives and property, or at least the prospect of becoming slaves. This meant the time had come to take up arms unless they preferred martyrdom to the cause of non-violence. They chose to fight and began to organize a militia. They also decided to give pursuit to the enemy. The government had not yet supplied protection in the form of troops, although three months had passed since the Marienthal raid. So a military unit was formed, and it promptly took to the field in pursuit of the Kirghiz. Apparently, it was not thought necessary to give the troops basic military training. It was felt that if the pursuit served no other purpose, at least it would carry the war to the enemy. But sending untrained troops to meet organized fighters could and did lead to disaster.

Recruiting a small company of volunteers took about four weeks. The settlers were still pacifists. Also, in the face of past massacres, bravery was a rare commodity. Capture by the Kirghiz meant a death both certain and horrible.

A company of one hundred fifty volunteers was formed. Pastor Wernborner from Katharinenstadt and Mayor Eufurt of Orłowski were placed in joint command. The militia was outfitted with the best the colonists had to offer - the best horses, the best wagons, and the best food. Weapons were improvised. On August 14, 1774, the small army took to the field. Friends and relatives watched as they marched off. Some accompanied them to the banks of the river at the periphery of the village. There they waited until the column disappeared over the horizon. Then they went home and asked Divine Providence for protection and success for their men at arms.

The column reached the Metsche River about six or seven miles east of Marienthal. There they planned to make camp for the night, but intuition told them to go on. Suddenly a whistling noise was heard. Pastor Wernborner instinctively raised his field glass to see what was ahead. Just as he suspected, he saw hundreds of the enemy in the distance. The good pastor showed signs of fright and muttered a prayer, "Jesus have mercy on us, or we will be lost." Then he ordered his men to advance. It is one thing to give such an order, and quite another to see it obeyed. Stark fear overtook the militia as the horde appeared in the distance. Instead of advancing as ordered, the colonists turned their backs to the enemy and fled, shouting loudly, filling the balmy night air with evidence of their fright. The Kirghiz quickly attacked and overtook them. Many of the men were brutally tortured and then killed. Others were taken captive, among them their commanders, Pastor Wernborner and Mayor Eufurt.

At daybreak the following morning, the prisoners were brought before the Kirghiz chief for interrogation. He wanted directions to the nearest village. Pastor Wernborner vaguely gestured in the direction opposite of Marienthal. The ruse might have worked had not the church bells of Marienthal rung the Angelus at that same time. The Pastor paid dearly for his attempt at saving Marienthal. The Kirghiz cut out his tongue and then dismembered him. Seven other militiamen were killed in the similar fashion. Mayor Eufurt was speared to death after his eyes were pierced and his body pricked and pierced until there was nothing but pieces of flesh hanging from his bones. Others were dispatched in the same manner. Only one man was spared. He was to serve as their guide. The tribesman tied him on a horse and tied the horse to that of a Kirghiz rider, and then ordered him to show the way to Marienthal. The Kirghiz happened to choose August 15, a holy day, for their attack, a time when Marienthal was set to celebrate the feast of the Assumption of Mary. The local custom included blessing the Gewurtze, nosegays of flowers, and spicy herbs. Sometimes the bouquets were made of flowers and ears of grain. The purpose was twofold; to honor the Blessed Virgin and to give thanks to God for his gifts of flowers and plants. As survivors described it, there must have been something ominous about the way father Johannes ascended the steps to the altar that day. He looked unusually grave. His hands trembled as he opened the missal and read the Gospel.

Father Johannes finished saying Mass and was in the sacristy changing vestments when he heard cries from the street. It meant only one thing; the terrible Kirghiz were back. People ran about in wild confusion, yelling in German: "They are here again, the damned Kirghiz." Father Johannes rushed to the side door to see for himself. One of the raiders spotted him, roped him and pulled him to one side, brutally beating him with a whip. Then he tied the priest to his horse and took the good father off as a prisoner.

With the exception of an innovation in torture, the raid followed the established pattern. The innovation consisted of tying hands and feet of the victims to horses and then whipping the horses, sending them in opposite directions, tearing the victim's limbs from their sockets.

After the raid, the captive guide was unbound but not released. Perhaps the Kirghiz thought he would not dare return to his people. The captive guide rode off with the Kirghiz, but when he saw some thick brush that offered a good hiding place as the column went down a hill at a bend in the Karaman, he managed to fall off his horse and hide in the bushes. The nearby riders saw what he was up to and went back for him, but soon gave up the search and rejoined the main body. A few days later, the lucky guide showed up in Katharinenstadt. It was his information that made the report on Pastor Wernborner and Mayor Eufurt possible.

The first raid on Marienthal took place in April 1774. It was reported to officials in Saratov and Krestadt Wolsk, where a Major Gogal of the Russian Army was stationed with twenty troopers while awaiting reinforcements. Upon hearing of the latest Kirghiz raid and realizing the danger, it implied for the other colonies, the Major decided to organize Russian farmers to defend the German settlers against further attacks. He succeeded in gathering a company of two hundred to two hundred fifty men. He secured a number of wagons and even procured some cannons. Major Gogal's column marched from Fort Wolsk (north of the colonies) into the land of the German colonists. After two or three days, he received a message that Marienthal had been raided a second time. He changed course immediately, marched towards Marienthal and reached the Metschet River by dusk. There he made camp for the night.

There was no sign of the Kirghiz that night. But when Major Gogal woke up the next morning, he saw something that looked like a pall of dark smoke in the distance. He went up to the high ground called the Kirghiz Berg, and with the aid of the field glasses, he saw hundreds of the enemy approaching. He was not prepared for an encounter

with such a large body. Intelligence reports had informed him that raiding parties generally attacked in strengths in a hundred or less. His troop was twice that size, and he was confident he could handle an ordinary raiding party, but what he saw was something else.

Major Gogal was an experienced soldier. He did not panic. True, the size of the enemy formation challenged his courage momentarily, but he quickly recovered and ordered his men to set up a barricade by circling his wagons with his men inside. (This practice was later used by the American pioneers in their battles with the Indians, and by the Afrikaners who battled thousands of Zulus with less than a hundred South African settlers.) Now Gogal awaited the attack. The Kirghiz instinctively knew they were up against a professional. Their mounts came closer and closer, only to halt as they saw the fortified position. They knew the force they faced was larger than the colonists' and more formidable. The Kirghiz chief decided on a ruse. He came forward under a flag of truce. But when he was close enough, he tried to spear the Major. The Major dodged the spear and before the chief could recover his balance, the Major split his head with an ax.

The sight of their fallen leader confused the Kirghiz. One of them cried out, "Osar!" Then most of them suddenly untied their captives, dropped some of the booty and fled. Major Gogal and his men went in hot pursuit, captured three of the Kirghiz, freed most of the prisoners and recovered some of the loot. By this prompt action, Major Gogal saved Marienthal from another attack. It was concluded that the raiders of August 15 had joined with a larger group to make a combined force of about a thousand men and were about to attack Marienthal again.

After the last of the Kirghiz took flight, the Major sent most of his company back to Fort Wolsk. He remained behind with a small detachment to return the freed prisoners. As they approached Marienthal, he fired a few shots to identify himself and his party. The villagers mistook his signal for another Kirghiz raid and scattered to their hiding places. Then the liberated prisoners started singing, "Holy God We Praise Thy Name." Now they were recognized as friendly men, not the feared Kirghiz, and the people ran to the bridge over the Karaman to meet them. At the sight of their loved ones returning from captivity, they gave in to emotional outbursts and fell into the arms of relatives and friends.

It was late in the evening when the affair ended. Both soldiers and townspeople retired for the night much relieved that the Kirghiz had finally met their match. The Major's party tied up the three Kirghiz prisoners, pitched their tents and retired for the night.

The next morning Major Gogal had the prisoners brought before him. He lectured them severely for their crimes. They showed no remorse nor did they speak. The major pushed one of them into the fire his troops had built. Up to that moment he seemed unable to communicate. The two other prisoners, seeing what might happen to them, howled and screamed, but the Major sent them to Fort Wolsk with his men. The Major himself stayed in the village, collected information and made a full report of the incident, covering damages and losses. He left the remainder of his ammunition with the villagers and returned to Fort Wolsk.

Shortly thereafter, Cossack soldiers were sent to Orenburg, and a fort was established near Kirghiz territory. From there, guards were sent to the various outposts of the Ural border. After August 1774, there were no more large-scale Kirghiz raids.

Besides the four colonies that were destroyed completely, many other villages on both sides of the Volga were raided by the tribesmen. The villages of Balzer, Moor, and Anton banded together, caught a band of robbers and killed nine of them. Caserfeld, Keller and Lichtsinger were destroyed in 1771; Herzog, Graf, Rohleder, Shafer, Urbach, Reinhardt, Reinwalt and Schulz were also attacked on August 15, 1774, but suffered only slight damages. It is estimated that over twelve hundred men, women and children were taken prisoners by the Kirghiz. Some were brought to the trading post at Cherburg and traded for merchandize. After a number of years in captivity, Father Johannes was redeemed in Orenburg. Anna Denning, who was stolen from Herzog in 1768, was later returned to her village.

Anton Schneider, one of the few historians of the Volga Germans, was the first to compile a history of the Kirghiz raids. He remembered the story of the Kirghizen that Michael and Schoen Ami read to him as a boy. The story was

later made into a play and presented at the Golden Jubilee of the arrival of the Germans from Russia in Kansas at Hays in 1926.

Another interesting account of the Kirghiz raids is contained in a story published by Helen Hall of Hutchinson, Kansas under the title, Grandfathers Story, a translated version of the German original.

The Kalmuks also raided the colonies, but they were mainly horse thieves, and did not inflict the terror Kirghiz raiders accounted for.

The motley confederation of rebels was finally defeated on all fronts. The Kirghiz were forced to retire to their domain beyond the Urals. Forces under the command of Count Peter Panin, drove Pugachev towards Chernoyarsk, where he was routed and captured. Pugachev managed to escape only by swimming the broad Volga. He went east to the desert region and tried to rebuild his forces. However, famine along the Volga had sapped the strength and zeal of the rebels, and Pugachev himself looked like a spent man. Facing the prospect of fighting the regular army, his followers deserted him in large numbers. He was finally betrayed by a group of his closest lieutenants, who were promised pardons for themselves. His captors bound him hand and foot and delivered him to an advance detachment of the Russian Army. Pugachev was sent in an iron cage to Moscow, where he was tried, found guilty of treason, and in January 1775, publicly executed by guillotine.

WHISPER:

EASTER PICTURES FROM GERMANY



One of Germany's oddest Easter traditions is the Easter Fire Wheel custom in the town of Lügde in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia. Bundled straw is attached to a wooden wheel that is then set alight on the evening of Easter Sunday and pushed down a hill. The whole rig can weigh up to 300 kilograms.



Here, Sorbian motives are displayed for sale at an Easter egg market on March 21 in Schleife, Germany.



Volker Kraft, a pensioner in Saalfeld, which is located in the eastern German state of Thuringia, spent two weeks decorating the tree with his wife. It's been a family tradition for the couple every year since 1965.



Meant to be the first dab of spring color, Easter eggs are often hung from trees all over German