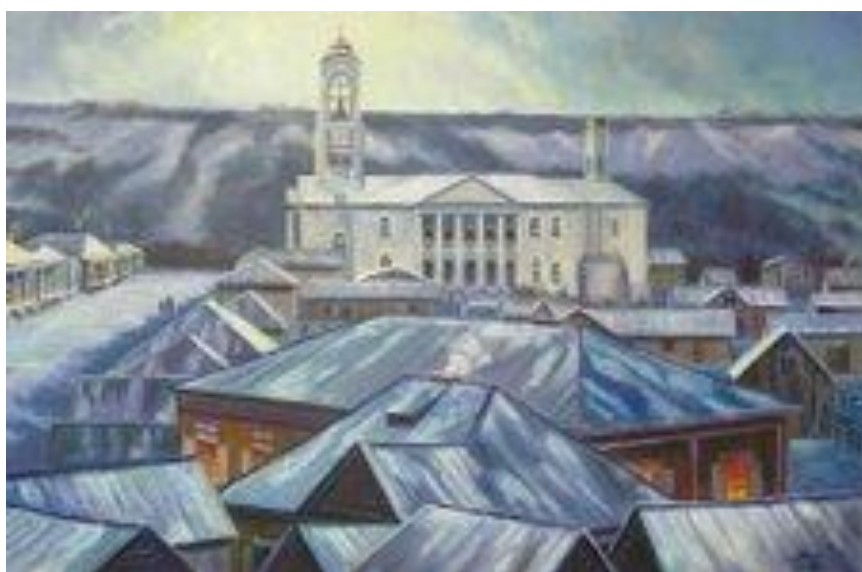


MARIENTAL CHASSELOIS LOUIS DAYS OF YORE

DEC. 2009

ISSUE TWENTY-FIVE



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

Topics:

Editor's Comments:

Feature Stories:

- **So We Will Know Them**
- **Mariental letters**
- **The Search for VG Origins**
- **A Little Bit of Christmas**
- **Whisper**

GR Proverb:

**Kindness can be felt
by both the deaf
and the blind**

Letters to the Editor:

Dear Thelma,

Thank you for the September, 2009 Bulletin. It was heart-warming for me to renew my enduring relationship with August and Elizabeth (Leiker) Exner by rereading their story in the September, 2009 Bulletin. I identified this feeling with a quote from a book I read recently: "Tuesdays with Morrie" by Mitch Albom. The author quotes Morrie saying: "Death ends a life, not a relationship. My relationship with the Exners is an eternal relationship."

I can understand Adolph Exner's desire and search for the birth places of his fraternal grandfather Stanislaus' children. This is a difficult search and I have no clue as to how he may find the answer to his search. I wish him the best of luck. Prayer and placing his desire in the heart of Jesus may open some avenues for him to investigate.

Placing the pictures of Adolph and August beside each other in the Bulletin was a good idea. Reviewing the family line of Konrad Exner in the Bulletin, I found that the August Exner I knew and whose story is related in the Bulletin is a first cousin once removed of Adolph Exner pictured next to him. I am wondering if any of August and Elizabeth's children have moved to Germany or remain in Korkino, Siberia where their parents lived.

Thelma, this letter is quite lengthy, but I needed to write what was in my heart. Thank you for your attention.

Autumn blessings,
Sister Mary Elise

SO WE WILL KNOW THEM

Hugh has kindly submitted his bio and photo of he and his wife, Joni. My thanks to him for this.



Chief Warrant Officer Hugh Lichtenwald, US Army retired, was born and grew up in Saginaw, Michigan. He is a second generation American with one set of grandparents from Doenhof and the other from Beideck and Bangert, Russia. At the age of 17, he escaped from Saginaw and entered college where he was soon expelled for anti-social behavior. At 18, he joined the US Marine Corps, played football for the Marines and served a tour in

Japan. In 1964, he enlisted in the US Army, from which he retired in 1981, after serving at Fort Devens, MA, Fort Bragg, NC, Okinawa, Thailand, Germany and 2 tours in Vietnam. As an enlisted man, he reached the rank of Sergeant First Class and in 1976, he received his appointment as a Warrant Officer. He says his career service was as an

"Intel weenie."

Since retirement, he has worked as an Instructional Systems Developer, Technical Instructor, Substitute Teacher and Golf Course Marshal and Starter.

In 2002, he gave up Golf and married his 2nd wife, Joan (Fisher), and moved to the outback of South Carolina. He began genealogy as a hobby, working 1st on his wife's family and then on his own Lichtenwald family. He is currently working on his Ostermiller ancestry.

Shortly after he began researching he joined AHSGR. He worked indexing obituaries for the SOAR Project, is the Village Coordinator for Wiesenmueller, and translates Die Welt-Post letters and whatever else comes to his attention...

He and his wife live in solitude on 65 acres of land, some 15 miles outside of the nearest town. "I enjoy the isolation," he says, "the Jehovah's Witness folks drop by every few months, and aside from occasional visits from my sons, we're alone in our own little world out here."

He spends most of his time on the computer, interrupted only by the weekly mowing of grass and bush hogging the acreage and paths he's cleared into the surrounding woods. "I've cleared about 8 acres and don't plan on clearing any more," he says, "because it's just too much work trying to keep the wilderness from coming back and taking over again. We have our little patch and the wildlife has the rest of the property. It's not unusual for us to see deer, turkey, foxes and lotsa birds and rabbits from our windows."

"What I do, I do because I think it needs to be done and I will continue until someone more competent comes along to take my place. My translations have numerous errors. I recognize this but I do the best I can because if a job's worth doing, it's worth doing poorly."

The following was translated and published by Hugh Lichtenwald. These are letters from Mariental and the brutal ordeals our ancestors were forced to endure during their lives. Our thanks to Mr. Lichtenwald.

Hallo List:

The following article is translated to the best of my ability.

Page 5, Die Welt-Post, Thursday, August 4, 1921

News From Russia

The following letters were sent to us for publication which give a frightening account of events on the Volga.

Mariental, March 31 (old style), 1921

Dear, dear brother:

The saddest day we have ever seen was on March 23, 1921: Our father is dead, he was shot. It happened in Mariental. Our Papa still worked in the Cooperative. On March 21,

the enemy ---the Reds --- came in. Many fell in the battle, the count is still unknown. Many were tried and then shot. On Tuesday, March 23 at 3 o'clock, our Papa was taken on the street and locked up and at 8 o'clock in the evening he was shot. His body lies over by the dam, you know, the place where we always used to take our muck. With him in the grave lie 32 men: Peter Kraft, Jakob Kessler (Simon's Jakob), Wiegel's Klaus and his son Alexander, Herrmann's little Hans, my two teachers Peter Hunger and Nikolaus Schamne (Schamne's Hanjoerg's Niklas), also his Papa and many others. In another grave beside them lay 20 men and in a third, 6 men. Those who fell in battle were buried in graves of muck. Dear brother, what are we to do? Ten fatherless children and without bread! When the time settles down a little, we ask that you come to our aid! Pity your little brothers and sisters! All remaining are alive but not well --- without bread one is never healthy! --- Adolf and Alwis are still at home. Oh I could write you of all our heart rending problems! None are as cruel as the previous facts. Your loved ones cordially greet you. Pray, dear brother, for the poor soul of our father!

Mariental, April 6, 1921

I could not immediately send this letter because of the rebellion. Six days later: We still have some livestock, 3 Horses, 2 Cows, 2 Sheep and a Pig. Just now Adolf went to drive out to our parcel of land. When he came to the village, no man was allowed in and none out. This morning we ate some milk, at noon some wheat soup (without bread). There is nothing more. Grief, misery, hunger and murder. Life, indeed!

Mariental, May 10, 1921

Most valued son and brother:

I have already reported in two letters that our father is dead. I will again say more of it. In Mariental there was a growing rebellion. It cost many men their lives in battle. Afterward a tribunal, you can imagine the kind, was convened. Whoever had an enemy needed only to go to the court. If I could write of all the cruel acts which were perpetrated during the rebellion I would have to send you a booklet. The enemy came in Sunday morning. Many sought to save themselves by swimming across the wide water and hiding. Brother Alwis and Pat's Hannes came here Tuesday afternoon at 2 o'clock after hiding in a hut in the fields for 2 days without anything to eat. We were happy he was still alive and immediately called Papa home. He thought we were the luckiest family in the village. After a half hour he happily left the house, was arrested on the road and never returned again. In the evening at 8 o'clock he was driven out into the darkness and shot. He may have looked back towards us fearfully in the agony of his impending death as they went around the corner at Hermann's Phillipp and we know nothing of it. He went to his death with a healthy heart. That morning we went to the grave and saw the rivers of blood, teeth and pieces of skulls and brain lying there. 35 rivers of blood, as if one had

slaughtered cattle.

Our dear father had a hard death, but still harder yet is it for us children. Without father, without bread, without anything. He always looked forward to the time his sons would go out into the world as educated men. Now this joy will not come about. We would have been poor, but no! Now we are poor, beggar poor.

We received your letter of 20 March yesterday with great joy. We had already made a garden in the fall of 1919, but it isn't very big, as Papa always said a "Maultasche Gaertchen" (a small feed bag of a garden----translator). We have been pulled down, we live here alone with our memories. We remember the wonderful days when we were all together and wish for the past to return again and we shudder at the future. Half of the children are out on the land parcel and the other half are here. We still have 2 Cows and we must ration the milk. One cannot live in the village any longer. The day before yesterday, Alwis was locked up because we were supposed to have given potatoes, even though we had none anymore. Thus it goes also with the milk. Dear brother, thus it is: the children come and say: smoke has been coming from the fireplace for a long time, you must be cooking something good. Dear brother: are you not able to help us at all? We have no wheat seed,

we have 5 Desjatin of grain that is only a hand tall and is turning black. The weather is dry and hot. A crop failure is at the door and starvation stands before us. And starvation hurts, hurts terribly. The people's hands and feet swell up from hunger.

Mama's request:

Dear Konstantin, if it is possible, help save us!

If it is not possible to stop (the hunger) then we must patiently wait until we are stopped by hunger. Most always the adults starve first and then the little ones. The misfortune that we children face is extremely large. There is nothing to be done for us by the people who certainly murdered our father, but we must submit ourselves to the will of God. In our corner it cost Klemens Schamberger and his son Peter, Frieze Hans, Wolfe Hans (Schaffhans), and Bekker's Leo. These however carried with them some guilt. It was very different --- --- --- (nothing more. The statement ends with 3 dashes...translator).

Adolf's son Viktor was 4 years old on 8 May. Before him they had a daughter Natalie. She died at 10 days of age.

I must end, I have a bad headache and I must yet take this letter to the village.

Greet for me my teachers, Otto Hoffmann and David Gruenewald.

Your dear Mother, brothers and sisters heartily greet you.

Die Riester (I am unable to translate that word--it could even be a surname--I'm not sure--Translator) go/goes to the Kindergarten to receive a midday meal.

Hugh Lichtenwald, from the farm in Monetta, SC
VC, Wiesenmueller

(I find this next article very interesting and informative. Thanks to Darrell Brungardt , who resides in Hawaii)

THE SEARCH FOR VOLGA GERMAN ORIGINS

A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE ON THE SEARCH FOR THOSE ORIGINS

My first search efforts began about ten years ago utilizing the Internet and reviewing various Genealogy Books. I was primarily interested in my personal family names. At that time there seemed to be a number of individuals involved in the search for their Volga German Ancestors. I am assuming their interest had to do with the recent availability of information from the Russian Archives. My main concern was in finding information to complete my ancestral lines.

About 2002 I obtained copies of First Settler List Information for the Villages of Herzog, Rohleder, Graf, Louis, and Mariental. At that time I developed an interest in searching for my ancestors Origins prior to Russia. I began the search in 2003 by ordering films from the Mormon Family History Center. After a couple of surprising discoveries I became aware of a couple of critical points. One was that the First Settlers Lists I had obtained were not correct in regards to the place names indicated on the lists. The origin place names were scattered over the entire area of Europe for these villages which did not seem reasonable. When I investigated the Founders of the Villages of Herzog, Graf, Rohleder, Louis, Mariental, Chasselois, (All Catholic) and Schafer and Reinhard (Lutheran) I found that LeRoy & Pictet were listed as the founders of all eight Villages. The Villages were all within a couple of miles of each other. They were all founded between June 10, 1766 and August 1, 1766. My conclusion was that many of the families had to have traveled together and most likely the families came from many of the same areas. I thought it unreasonable that they would have come from so many different areas of Europe. Second because the families appeared to come from the same areas it was likely that they were interrelated. One of the facts that seems to be lost on most people is that, for the most part, there are a group of women in the Original Settlers lists who we will never know the identity of unless we find the origins of the family group. Maybe you will discover, as I did, three original families where the wives were sisters.

At the present time I still monitor many of the Internet sites utilized by many individuals in search of their Volga German ancestors, not for information, but to review information and prevent miss information. I have come to realize that a good deal of the information previously presented as fact about our ancestor's origins was just incorrect. Much of the information that has been passed down by Families and taken as gospel truth was not factual. For example there is one individual Keeper of the Family tree, when offered truth of the origins refused to acknowledge it, the facts did not agree with the accounts written by his ancestor who only wrote from information passed down to him over years and years. It seems that much of this information on the Internet is still being carried forward by other individuals. One of the common stories,

that everyone uses, is that the reason for the Immigration to Russia was the war of 1756-1763. They all forget that Europe was in one War or another since 1618-1648 (the thirty years war). There was ongoing immigration throughout Europe in the 1700's. If you surveyed some of those Family Book researchers, working today in Germany, you would find that the movement to Russia was so minor that it was not mentioned. Whenever they discovered that a family had immigrated East they reported that they went to the BANAT (Hungary). From about 1717 to 1786 there was a constant Catholic immigration to the area known as the BANAT. In fact some of the relatives of our ancestors settled in the BANAT at the same time our own ancestors settled in Russia. The information I have collected is taken from Church records in the search for Catholic families. I perceive this to be a bit different than the experience of those searching for the Lutheran or Reformed families. The reason for this was the exclusion, of the Catholics, from many areas in central Germany during the Reformation period and then throughout the Thirty Years War. Only in about the year 1685 did the Catholics receive invitations to relocate and repopulate many of these areas which had been devastated by the 30 years war and other Wars. At that time many Lutheran Church's were turned over to the Catholics. This meant that many of our Catholic ancestor's families immigrated about 1685-1700 to areas which they then left again in 1764-1767. In 1685-1700 many settlers came from Catholic areas, which at the time, were considered to be over populated such as Tyrol, Switzerland, and Luxembourg. In the 1700's Luxembourg encompassed a good part of Belgium. They populated areas that were controlled by the Catholic Church and the Archbishops from Metz and Trier. In 1875 they started, for the third time, a migration to new lands. My research experience shows many of the families (from the six Catholic villages I mentioned) to be constantly on the move. This constant movement makes it extremely difficult to track Families over a long period.

Some of the aspects of the lives of these Families that I have discovered in my research so far are as follows: Don't get hung up with the spelling of names. Always keep in mind the phonetic spelling of the individual you are looking for. Whether you are searching in the German, French, and or Russian records you are at the mercy of the individual who is recording the event. That individual might be familiar with the name or unfamiliar with it. As our ancestors moved around they arrived in areas where their names were unfamiliar and so we saw a different spelling. Many times as the Pastor of the Church changed so did the spelling of the names. If you are utilizing the translation by someone else who is looking at the records expect mistakes as well as different interpretations. This is especially true for what you receive in the Russian translations because of the different alphabets in use. Russian has no H or W. When working with names in the German records you have to deal with the umlauts being used for the letters A and U and the interchangeable V and W and D and T. Reading German and French Catholic records is relatively easy because the Church records are written in Latin and , other than sloppy handwriting, are fairly consistent. If you use the Mormon Family Search site remember that most of transcriptions of Church records you see on that site have been completed by volunteers who really have no connection to the names they are transcribing.

Many of the First settlers listed their occupation as Farmers but many of them were much less well to do than that. Many really were just Day Laborers or Shepherds. **(Understanding this economic standing of our Ancestors I believe it is unwise to spend money on so called Family Crest and Code of Arms for your family name)**

Because of these occupations the Church records are scattered and not found in what are today common Villages, but usually in Obscure Villages or Chapels. It is not unusual to find a family of seven or eight individuals with their records in five or six different Church Books. Some were even listed as Vagabonds which makes tracking them extremely difficult because Church records do not list a home Village just the term Vagabond and you are left with no clue as to where to go next. A critical factor in tracking Families would be the documenting of the complete Family such as recording Baptismal Sponsors, witnesses at weddings, and their place of residence. I have found that because of the interrelationship of the First Settlers I cannot research just one particular name in the Church Records. After a number of years I find it prudent to look at each and every entry in the record I am viewing for clues of other possible First Settler names. You never know what individual might be just passing through that Village.

The eight Villages I am looking at are somewhat unique among the First Settled Villages. The Settlers were not documented in Kuhlberg lists because they arrived prior to the lists being started. When Dr. Plevé documented the First Settlers for the Villages he included a telling fact for each family. He showed the amount of loans given each family in St. Petersburg. Because these Villages were some of the first settled, the head of the Family received substantial loans based on the number of family members, at the time, and their ages. From these numbers we can surmise the size of each family at that time. Some of the First Settler individuals on the lists had no loans in St. Petersburg which means that they were part of another family in St. Petersburg, and other First settlers show double loans which means families merged, probably because of the deaths of their spouses, after arriving in their particular Village. When you compare these loan amounts you realize that there must have been many deaths between St. Petersburg and the Villages. This in no way reflects, most probably, a much greater loss of life on the way out of Germany to St. Petersburg.

I have found that given names are a very important fact in tracking families. You must always remember that almost every Catholic male child with a given name such as Peter probably was baptized with the Catholic name Johannes Peter and so when you search always search with the name Johannes Peter. For females usually the Catholic name was Maria or Anna and then the given name. I have come to believe that the parents chose the children's names and then selected an individual with that name to be the sponsor. Brothers and sisters of the parents were most often the Sponsors because they retained common family names. In the records prior to Russia, because the Godparents were responsible for the baptism of the child. many times you find that the Church Baptism records failed to get the mothers name but always got the sponsor names. Also, for the

most part, a child was baptized the day they were born. I believe that the first male born in the family usually was named after the Mother's family's male ancestor.

If you have problems with determining a person's age from the records you can follow individuals as they are listed as Sponsors in various Church Records. Sometimes I get the idea that being a Baptism Sponsor was sort of a coming out party for those male and females who were of marriageable age. Many times they were selected to be sponsors within a year prior to getting married. Normally a individual was required to be at least 16 years of age to become a Sponsor. I believe in early years (1600-1700) that a male could be 14 years of age. The rich data that is available from the Church records by looking at Baptism sponsors is not as evident for those of our ancestors who were Sheppard's. The parents were not likely to be Sponsors probably because they were living off the land and on the move constantly so not available to be Sponsors. If you look at the Russian families and their marriages you will find many of the women are married before the age of 20. Also the males were quite young. This was not normally the case prior to Russia. The average marriage age probably was about 25-29. I don't know if this was the result of the need to have every child contribute to the survival of the family or if they needed the permission of the Land Owner to get married. Many times you will notice through the records that the children started getting married only upon the death of the mother or remarriage of a parent. I get the feeling that these remarriages created the situation that propelled the younger individuals to immigrate. Prior to Russia the women had children about every two to three years. Most women bore children until the age of 40-42. If you are recording births for the family and you notice two births just a year apart then you need to check the deaths because the first child probably died within a month of its birth. You can almost predict the next birth because it is usually two to two and a half years later and if it doesn't occur you need to look elsewhere because it might have occurred in another village.

A little bit of Christmas



Moscow celebrates Christmas according to the Russian Orthodox calendar on Jan. 7. For weeks beforehand, the city is alive with festivities in anticipation of Father Frost's arrival on his magical troika with the Snow Maiden. He and his helper deliver gifts under the New Year tree, or yolka, which is traditionally a fir.



'Oh Christmas tree, oh Christmas tree': Even in its humblest attire, aglow beside a tiny chapel in Germany's Karwendel mountains, a Christmas tree is a wondrous sight.

WHISPER: (Meaning a small article)

Here is a picture of a windmill located in Stienfurt, Germany, and submitted by Nikolai Pfannenstiel. He stated that the windmill is 200 years old and works every Saturday for visitors!



The name Pfannenstiel has the meaning of a “Panhandler” - a person who went from village to village repairing metal items. (Have been told this same information from several Volga German people).