

Dokumente Über Die Schwarzmeerdeutschen In Den Archiven Von Odessa

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Documents Concerning the Black Sea Germans in the Odessa Archives

The State Archives of Odessa Oblast was founded in 1921. The majority of the documents in the archive come from the 19th and 20th centuries; some are even older. Overall the archive possesses over 2 million files. According to official records, the archive contains about 200,000 records concerning the history of the Black sea Germans, the majority of which have not yet been fully investigated.

The earliest and most interesting documents belong to the Archive of the Guardian Committee for Foreign Colonists (Fond 6, years 1800 – 1871, 15,227 records) and its branch office in Odessa (Fond 252, years 1800 – 1833, 917 records). They contain documents concerning the infrastructure of the living-environment and daily life of the foreign colonists, particularly those with German heritage.

For some mother colonies there exist separate inventories with documents of the district- and village- administrations. The colonies are Groß-Liebenthal (Fond 53), Kandel (54 and 67), Baden (55 and 68), Mannheim (56), Selz (58), Alexanderhilf (61), Klein-Liebental (63), Josephsthal (64 and 71), Marienthal (65), Petersthal (66), Elsass (70), Hoffnungsthal (74) and others.

A useful source of information regarding the Evangelical-Lutheran community in Odessa can be found in the corresponding archive materials (see: Nr. 630, from 1811 to 1925 - 365 files). Unfortunately, many documents of the Catholic parish are almost completely missing.

Church registers of Lutheran and (Free) Reformed villages of the districts of South Ukraine, from Bessarabia to the Sea of Azov, are summarized in one Archive Inventory and contain birth, marriage and death records of over 110,000 Germans. One detailed register of this inventory with a breakdown of individual documents, communities and settlements was published on pages 59-68 and pp.193-273 in a collection catalog; see pages 59-68 and pp 193-273.

<http://archive.odessa.gov.ua/publikacii/monografii/2011-zvedenij-katalog-metricnih-knig/>

Germans made up a considerable part of the population of Cherson Province. At the beginning of the 20th century, they possessed about 35% of the land in Odessa Region. The diverse “transactions” of acquisitions and sales of real estates are visible in the documents of the Notary of the Regional Court of Odessa (see Fond 35, years 1865 to 1920 - 30,701 documents). Even though only 30% of the documents were preserved, they still contain valuable lists of over 100,000 properties with surnames and references to a particular colony. Information about the Germans exists also in many other archives of former State and private institutions. A list of all the inventories from the pre-Soviet-period is available on the website of the archive:

http://archive.odessa.gov.ua/el_arh/doradjanski/f_101-200/

From the Soviet period of the 1920s and 1930s, tens of thousands of documents can be found in the hundreds of Archive inventories of the respective German administrative and economic institutions. They are yet not fully indexed, but an abstract of all inventories can be found on the website of the archive:

http://archive.odessa.gov.ua/el_arh/radjanski-nezalejnist/

The archives belonging to the Registry Office of the city of Odessa, as well as to the rural districts belonging to the Registry Office of Odessa, and which have been transferred to the State Archives of Odessa Oblast, deserve special attention. They contain hundreds of records with civil registration concerning births, marriages and deaths and they nearly all include a notation regarding the nationality, which is relevant for the genealogical research of family documents. Not all the documents concerning all German villages have been preserved, nor do they cover all years, because the scope is large and the topic requires a separate investigation.

In the records of various administrative and government economic institutions there is a great deal of information about the dispossessions of (large) farmers. The relevant register index contains more than 14,000 German families, this number being by no means complete because to date there has been no comprehensive research.

The archive records of the repressive organs from the Stalin-era should be investigated separately. Some of the documents of the repressed political prisoners were sent to the State Archives of Odessa Region. Overall 13,400 records were sent, among them 3500 belonging to Germans. A considerable number of the records are still in the archive of Odessa’s SBU administration (state security department of Ukraine), included among them more than 2500 Germans. Records about deported criminal settlers are being stored in the archive of the head office of administration of MDW (Ministry of the Interior) of Odessa. In total there are 26,200 records, with 22,000 of those belonging to Germans.

The Institute for Ethnic Research e.V. is working to identify and digitize all of these records. The listing of repressed political prisoners (6006 names) and deportees (28,471 names) can be found under the heading Martyrology Book of the Germans from Odessa:

<http://forum.wolgadeutsche.net/viewtopic.php?f=268&t=2494&sid=627f068dfe79ca98c356b52441e8e2ee>

Another group are the repatriated. From the archives of the former KGB (Komitee für Staatssicherheit or State Security Police) about 90,000 file-cards and more than 27,000 records about those repatriated have been transferred to the State Archive of Odessa, providing documentation of those who underwent a Filtration-camp assessment in the course of being repatriated from Germany to the USSR in the years 1945 and 1946. Forty-five percent of the records in this collection belong to individuals of German nationality, the lists of which are currently being edited and published.

As a result of the adoption of the law regarding Access to the Documents of the Repressive Organs of the Soviet Period in Ukraine in 2015, the previously unknown records in the archives of the SBU and MWD became public. These are leading to thousands of new records and thousands of new names, all of which require more and more research.

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