

German Settlements in the Dnjepropetrowsk General Region

Source: DAI Microfilm T-81; Roll #607; Serial 825; Group 1035;
Item 1410; Frames 5397043-5397046
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[Translation Begins]

Comprehensive Report Concerning the 10 German Settlements in the Districts of Dnjepropetrowsk, Petrikowka and Werchnje-Dnjeprowsk, in the Dnjepropetrowsk General Region

by Dr. Karl Stumpp

At the same time as the first Mennonites (compare Chortitza District) left the Danzig area in 1789 and established themselves in the district near Saporoshje (formerly Alexandrowsk), 100 families of the evangelical faith also emigrated to Russia from Danzig. Originally, they wanted to settle near Nikopol. However, in 1789 they founded the **Josefstal** Colony, 13 km north northeast of Dnjepropetrowsk (formerly Jekaterinoslaw). On the journey, 10 families died and so another 22 families came from Wuerttemberg in 1801 who, in transition, had lived in Poland. In 1791, some of the immigrant colonists from Josefstal founded the **Fischersdorf** settlement (formerly Rybalsk: Rybe=fish) 12 km from Dnjepropetrowsk. It was here that 17 Wuerttemberg families settled down while 5 remained in Josefstal. Whereas pure Low-German (*plattdeutsch*) was spoken in Josefstal, in Fischersdorf there is no uniform dialect. Moreover, it is in Josefstal that Samuel Kontenius (Centsenius) was buried. He died 30 May, 1830 and a memorial was put up there for him which was damaged during the Bolshevik times and has now again been restored. S. Kontenius was renowned among the German colonists for his invaluable service to the area of agriculture and animal breeding development.

In that same year, 1789, the settlement of **Jamburg** was established 25 km south southeast of Dnjepropetrowsk. Even today, the inhabitants speak a Bavarian-Austrian dialect. Besides farming, many of the colonists are involved in the building of wagons.

In 1798, the community of Josefstal was partitioned and Mennonites established the settlement of **Kronsgarten**. The name refers to the good condition of the land for cultivating. Later, the colonists also purchased some more land from land-owners Kirylow and Bytkow. The Mennonites left the village in 1928/29 and immigrated to America. When collectivization was introduced, Kronsgarten was again populated predominantly by German farmers from Josefstal and other settlements in the surrounding area.

Billersfeld was founded in 1860 as a daughter colony of Josefstal and in part of Fischersdorf. The land was at first rented from landowner Biehler (thereby the name) and then purchased.

Hindenburg (in Russian, Kudaschewka; the present name of the village was given after the arrival of the German troops) was founded in 1884. The first settlers came from the Molotschna District. People, who had earlier worked for landowners, showed up in 1925, then folks from Chortitza, the Nikopol District and Germans scattered in Ukrainian villages.

Katharinowka (names after the daughter of the landowner, Katharina) was established in 1889. The Chortitza community purchased 1000 hectares of land from landowner Milorodow and this is where the landless were settled.

Miloradowka (names after landowner Miloradow) was founded in 1889 by Mennonites from the Nikopol District. The settlers were originally from Chortitza.

The first three settlers from **Hochberg** (1890) were Mennonites (until Bolshevik times, this village was called Einigkeit). After that, ethnic Germans came from surrounding Ukrainian villages and in 1926 from the German settlements of Josefsta, Billersfeld and Kronsgarten.

Neu-Jamburg was founded in 1925 as a daughter colony of Alt-Jamburg.

The German inhabitants in the 10 villages of these three districts stayed pretty much the same until 1918, considering the adjustment for loses through emigration, starvation and banishment, and the growth through births and at times new arrivals into the community. An especially serious emigration took place in Jamburg during the years of starvation. In particular, many manual laborers left for surrounding Ukrainian and German villages to earn a living.

The percent of mixed marriages in the district, compared to Kronau (2.2%), Chortitza (6.4%) and Pjatischatki (7.4%), was at its highest 11.2%. This is attributable especially to the strong mixture in the settlements of Fischersdorf, Billersfeld and above all the scattered Germans.

The casualties during the Bolshevik era present themselves like this:

I. **Those Murdered due to the Machno Bandits in 1919** (see Table A, Column 47-50):
 Men-19 Women-2 Youths-3 Total: 24

II. **Those who Starved to Death** (see Table A, Column 38-46 & Table F):
 1921/22 Men-60 Women-38 Youths-61 Total: 159
 1933/34 Men-41 Women-14 Youths-31 Total: 86
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 Total: 245

III. **Those who were Banished 1929-41** (Table A, Column 52-55 & Table D)
 Men-417 Women-87 Youths-164 Total: 668

IV. **Dragged Off [Deported] in this Present War**
 Men-311 Women-58 Youths-69 Total: 438

Total casualties from the 10 settlements in the above mentioned districts amount to this:

1. Murdered	24
2. Starved 1921-22 & 1933/34	245
3. Banished 1929-41	668
4. Deported in this war	438
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Total	1375

52.5% of the German families are without a head of the household. The percentage in Fischersdorf is even higher at 78%.

The segment in the list of inhabitants with percentages of age groups within the population (Table G) for the years 1921/22 and 1933/34, as also the revolutionary years, are especially terribly large in comparison to that of the other districts.

Compared to the former German landowners with 12,598 hectares of land in 1918, only 8,965 hectares were being worked during the collectivization of the Bolshevik era. Add to that another 721 hectares for farm yards.

Dnjepropetrowsk, in February, 1943

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