

# Stumpp Book Quirks Strike Again

By Carolyn Schott

You find the darndest things in the Stumpp book.<sup>1</sup> It's a classic and almost beloved reference work for those researching their German ancestors who settled in the Russian Empire. It's also infuriating for its gaps and sometimes just plain wrong information.

And then other times, it's...well...quirky.

## Lists of Odessa City Germans

When Glueckstal researcher Tom Stangl first suggested to me that the Stumpp book's Odessa City list of craftsmen, which is clearly dated 1814, morphed into an 1858 revision list (aka census) halfway through and without warning, I thought it was wishful thinking on his part, grasping for records that don't exist.<sup>2</sup> But then I looked into this more closely.

The description of the list says it includes German craftsmen who settled in Odessa in 1814, with the following details: 1) Name of the craftsman; 2) "Soul count" or number in the family, with number of males, females, and total; 3) Number of workers over the age of 12; 4) Number of houses; 5) Occupation. Here's a typical entry:

Original German:

5. Geisinger, Johann, Schneider, m. 1, w. 1, zus. 2, über 12 J. 2, Haus 1.<sup>3</sup>

Translation:

5. Geisinger, Johann, tailor, males 1, females 2, total 2, over 12 years old 2, houses 1.

The list in the book includes 311 family entries and the sequential numbering alone seemed to indicate that it's a consolidated list from one time period. But a funny thing happens at family #186—under new subheadings of Kaufleute and Kleinbürger [Merchants and Petty bourgeois], the format changes dramatically. Instead of sparse numerical data, we get a full family description consistent with the information typically included in revision lists. Here's an example:

Original German:

191. Christophor Christophor'S Wirich 55, seine Frau Katerina Friederike Nikolaus'T 49, seine Söhne Friedrich Franz 21, Bernhard-Heinrich 17, Wilhelm-Philipp 12, sein Bruder Peter 36.<sup>4</sup>

Translation:

191. Christophor Wirich, age 55, son of Christophor; his wife Katerina Friederika, age 49, daughter of Nikolaus; his sons Friedrich Franz age 21, Bernhard-Heinrich age 17, Wilhelm-Philipp age 12; his brother Peter, age 36.

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Stumpp, *The Emigration from Germany to Russia in the Years 1763-1862* (Lincoln, Nebraska, American Historical Society of Germans from Russia, reprinted 1997).

<sup>2</sup> Karl Stumpp, "Odessa" in *The Emigration from Germany to Russia in the Years 1763-1862* (Lincoln, Nebraska, American Historical Society of Germans from Russia, reprinted 1997), p. 958.

<sup>3</sup> Stumpp, "Odessa," p. 958, family 5, Johann Geisinger.

<sup>4</sup> Stumpp, "Odessa," p. 965, family 191, Christophor Wirich.

Entries 1 through 185 (let's call that Section 1 of the list) do look like one set of data, and entries 186 through 311 (Section 2) look like a completely different set of data. Section 1 also follows the common revision list practice of showing single people and orphans at the end of that section (entries 127 through 185). This is another signal that Section 2 really is something completely different that was tacked onto Section 1.<sup>5</sup>

## What Year Is It?

OK, but is Section 2 really from 1858? It doesn't say that anywhere. So I did a test.

Of the 128 families shown in Section 2, 30% of them (38 families) show up in the family registers of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Odessa.<sup>6</sup> I wasn't surprised that not all families were included in that one church as it was likely that some families in Section 2 could be Catholic.

For these 38 Lutheran families, I compared the names and ages in Section 2 of the Stumpp book list with their expected ages as of 1858 based on the information in the St. Paul's family register. I found that 58% of these families matched with reasonably explained differences. For the 42% that I counted as not matching, the problem was usually that there wasn't enough information or so many children were missing from the family list that I couldn't state with confidence that it was the same family.

Here's just one example of a matching family:

Name	Stumpp book <sup>7</sup>	Family register <sup>8</sup>	Calculated age in 1858
Josef Merk, son of Christophor <sup>9</sup>	50	Birth year not shown	
Wife Elisabeth		d. 1844	N/A
Children: Margaretha Josephine		b. 1832	26
Christian Georg	19	b. 1838	20
Marie Magdalene	17	b. 1840	18
Karoline Agathe	15	b. 1842	16
Anna Elisabeth		b. 1844	14
Josef's brother Christophor <sup>10</sup>	44	b. 1810	48
Children: Friederike Carolina		b. 1835	23
Christian Abroisius <sup>11</sup>	12	b. 1845	13
Jakob Friedrich	10	b. 1847	11
Magdalena Johanna	19	b. 1838	20
Friederike	17	b. 1840	18
Gottlieb <sup>12</sup>	14	b. 1843	15
Jakob	41		

The consistency of names and ages makes it clear that the Merk family listed in the Stumpp book and the

<sup>5</sup> Karl Stumpp, "Neudorf Revisionsliste 1816" in *The Emigration from Germany to Russia in the Years\* 1763-1862* (Lincoln, Nebraska, American Historical Society of Germans from Russia, reprinted 1997), p. 699-704. This is an example of a revision list showing single people at the end.

<sup>6</sup> "1833-1860 St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church Family Book" in *Odessa St Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church: Church Registers*, translated by Germans from Russia Heritage Society (Bismarck, North Dakota, 2001); citing file 630-1-355, State Archives of Odessa, Odessa, Ukraine.

<sup>7</sup> Stumpp, "Odessa," p. 965, family 204, Josef Merk.

<sup>8</sup> "1833-1860 Church Family Book," St Paul Lutheran Church, p. 47 Joseph Merkt family and p. 58 Christian Merkt family.

<sup>9</sup> The surname in the family register is Merkt.

<sup>10</sup> The name in the family register is Christian rather than Christophor.

<sup>11</sup> The name in the family register is spelled Christian Ambrosius rather than Christian Ambroisius.

<sup>12</sup> The name in the family register is Gottliebine.

Merkt families in the family register are the same. Comparing the age of each individual as listed in Section 2 with their expected age in 1858 as calculated from their birth information in the church family register, almost all are consistent with a date of 1857-1858 for Section 2.

Of course, there are some differences. Josef's daughter Margaretha Josephine and Christophor's daughter Friederike Carolina are missing from the Section 2 list but are of an age when they were likely married and included under their husbands' names.

The exclusion in the Section 2 list of Josef's daughter Anna Elisabeth, age 14 in 1858, is more of a mystery, unless she died and her death somehow didn't get recorded in the family register. The family register includes three children—Catharina, Catharine, and Eduard—who died before 1858, making it reasonable that they wouldn't appear in the Stumpp book Section 2. Section 2 also lists a Jakob Merk, age 41, as the son of Christophor, age 44. Clearly, that is impossible and Jakob is more likely to be a brother of Josef and Christophor. It's unknown why he wouldn't be listed in the St. Paul family register.

Still, these are minor discrepancies compared to the consistency of names and ages that exists. Based on the ages in this example, as well as the other 37 families that went to St. Paul's, the data in Section 2 of the Stumpp book list was probably recorded about 1857 or 1858.

## Conclusion

The significant change in type and format of data between Section 1 and Section 2 support the theory that the data was collected at different points in time. The correlation of families and their ages in Section 2 with data from the local church register makes it certain that the data in Section 2 is indeed from 1857-1858 rather than 1814 as the description of the list shows. Whether or not it is a transcription of the official Odessa City 1858 revision list is unknown (as that document has never surfaced), but the type of data included in Section 2 is consistent with data included in other revision lists of that time.

So yes, the list that is clearly marked 1814 *does* morph into an 1857/58 list. What can I say? The Stumpp book is quirky.

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All translations from German are by the author. Because this is about historical times when the city was controlled by the Russian Empire, the spelling Odessa will be used rather than the spelling of Odesa, which is correct in 2024.