

**Discovering Your Black Sea German Ancestors
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Description:

This session will discuss the history of Germans who settled in the Black Sea area (now Ukraine, Moldova, Romania, Georgia), including the waves of migration to the region, as well as migration and deportation that resulted in their leaving. We'll review the resources available for Black Sea German genealogy research.

Presentation:

Who are the Black Sea Germans?

- Settlement areas by the Black Sea
- Reasons for immigrating to the region

Waves of migration

- 1780s to Taurida and Jekaterinoslaw from West Prussia
- 1804+ to Odessa and Crimea from Germany and Hungary
- 1813+ to Bessarabia from Poland and Germany
- 1820s to Bessarabia and Crimea from Odessa region
- 1840s/1850s to Dobrudscha from Bessarabia and Odessa

Hungary & Poland:

- About 1800, Donauschwaben (Germans living in the Austria-Hungarian Empire) migrated to the Black Sea region, probably either due to the "hard feudal service" (and presumably inability to own their own land) or fear that Catholic landlords would persecute Lutherans.
- About 1806-1814, Germans migrated to the Black Sea region from Poland/Prussia. Many of these people had just migrated into Poland between 1795-1800 (i.e., they weren't there that long). When South Prussia moved from Prussia German-speaking to control to become the Duchy of Warsaw under Polish control (due to Napoleon's defeat of Prussia), German colonists had issues. These included: being Protestant

but subject to Catholic landlords, need to start paying taxes/rent to landlords even though farms were not well established and prospering, offer of land and further exemptions from taxes and military service by Tsar Alexander I of Russia.

Hard times for German colonists

- 1870s – lost special colonist status, lost exemption from military service, lost privilege of having German-language schools
- 1870+ - Black Sea Germans started migrating to North & South America and Dobrudscha from Odessa, Bessarabia, Crimea, Taurida, and Jekaterinoslaw

Between WWI and WWII

- 1918 - Bessarabia ceded to Romania by Russia, so Bessarabian Germans never experienced the trauma of the Soviet Union
- 1920s and 30s - Repression in German villages in the Soviet Union

Forced resettlement/deportation

- 1940 Bessarabia and Dobrudscha Germans to Poland (via Germany); organized resettlement that allowed them to take records
- 1941 Crimea and Caucasus and Jekaterinoslaw (east of the Dnieper River) Germans deported to Kazakhstan and Siberia; forced deportation that occurred over just three days and resulted in records being lost
- 1943-1944 Odessa and Taurida and Jekaterinoslaw (west of the Dnieper River) Germans flee, ending up in Poland (via Germany); flight to escape the Russian army happened quickly and resulted in records being lost. In some cases, people were told they would only be leaving for a few days, so didn't feel the need to take all their valuables.
- 1945 Black Sea Germans in Poland flee to Germany ahead of the Russian army advance. Some make it back to Germany. Some are recaptured by the Russians.

Genealogy resources

- EWZ records (Einwanderungszentralstelle or Central Immigration Control Department) - applications for German citizenship by Black Sea Germans who fled or were resettled (includes Bessarabia, Dobrudscha, Odessa, Taurida, Jekaterinoslaw west of the Dnieper River). Info includes several generations of family data.
- Koblenz records – questionnaires from Germany's Bundesarchiv filled out by those being resettled from Bessarabia and Dobrudscha and Bukovina. Although similar to EWZ records, data often varies.
- Repression records – records of people who were arrested, executed, or deported in the areas controlled by Soviet Russia between WWI and WWII.
- Glueckstal Point of Origin file – a combination of original research and passport records from the Dnipro archive that shows German origins for families in the

Glueckstal enclave in the Odessa region. Many of these families later migrated to other parts of the Odessa region, Bessarabia, Crimea, etc.

- Census records – mostly Russian census records of Black Sea villages.
- Church records – Lutheran records, duplicates of Lutheran records held at the St. Petersburg archive, and Catholic records held at the Saratov archive
- Mennonite – church and census records compiled by Mennonite researchers.

Books, articles, and websites:

General

- Black Sea German Research www.blackseagr.org
- Black Sea German Research records matrix www.blackseagr.org/pdfs/records-matrix.pdf
- Odessa Online Library www.odessa3.org
- Germans from Russia Heritage Society www.grhs.org
- Glückstal Colonies Research Association www.glueckstal.net
- NDSU GR Heritage Collection <https://library.ndsu.edu/grhc/>
- Mennonite genealogy <http://www.mennonitegenealogy.com/russia/>
- Donauschwaben www.dvhh.org
- Germans from Poland and Prussia www.sggee.org
- *German-Russian Handbook* by Ulrich Mertens
- *From Catherine to Khrushchev* by Adam Giesinger
- *The Emigration from Germany to Russia in the Years 1763-1862* by Karl Stumpp

Repression records

- Convert your surname or village name to Cyrillic using Google Translate. Set language to Russian, have input tool (lower right corner) set to “Py,” type in the name, click on the Cyrillic spelling.
- Victims of Political Repression <https://ru.openlist.wiki/>
- International historical, educational, charitable and human rights society <https://base.memo.ru/>

Bessarabia

- *Homeland Book of the Bessarabian Germans* by Albert Kern
- *Bessarabia: German Colonists on the Black Sea* by Ute Schmidt
- Heimatbücher on individual Bessarabian villages (mostly in German, available from the Bessarabien Verein in Stuttgart)

Odessa region

- *Homesteaders on the Steppe and Paradise on the Steppe* by Joseph S. Height

- *The German Colonies in South Russia 1804-1904* (Vol. I and II) by Conrad Keller
- *Trauerbuch Odessa* and *Trauerbuch Odessa-2* by Anton Bosch
- *The Glückstalers in New Russia and North America: A Bicentennial Collection of History, Genealogy, and Folklore*, published by Glückstal Colonies Research Association
- *Entstehung, Entwicklung und Auflösung der deutschen Kolonien am Schwarzen Meer* by Anton Bosch & Josef Lingor
- *Die Auswanderung aus Schwaben nach Russland* by Dr. George Leibbrandt
- *Erinnerungen an die deutschen Kolonien des Großliebentaler Rayons bei Odessa* (in German) by Eduard Mack
- *The Germans by the Black Sea between the Bug and Dnjester Rivers* by John Philipps

Crimea/Taurida

- *Mennonite Settlements in Crimea* by H. Goerz
- *My Home on the Crimean Steppes: Memoirs of David Weigum* by David Weigum
- Familienforschungsverein Taurien e.V. <https://www.taurienv.de/index.php/de/>

Jekaterinoslaw

- *A Success Story: The German Colonists in New Russia and Bessarabia: 1787-1914* by Dr. Detlef Brandes

Dobrudscha

- *The Germans in Dobrudscha* (by Paul Traeger, translated by Allen Konrad) www.blackseagr.org/pdfs/konrad/Germans-Dobrudscha-Part%2001.pdf
- *Wegweiser für Forschungen nach Vorfahren aus den ostdeutschen und sudetendeutschen Gebieten sowie aus den deutschen Siedlungsräumen in Mittel-, Ost- und Südosteuropa* by Herbert Sylvester (Guide to Dobrudscha research, in German)
- *Heimatbuch der Dobrudscha-Deutschen 1840-1940* published by Landsmannschaft der Dobrudscha and Bulgariendeutschen e.V. (in German)
- *East German Fate by the Black Sea* (in German) by Dr. Johannes Florian Mueller
- *The Germany Minority in Romania in 1919-1931* by Johann Böhm http://www.swabiantrek.com/?page_id=146