

Chronicle Unserer Leute



Oregon Chapter of the American Historical
Society of Germans from Russia

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2018



Catherine II, the Great

Empress of Russia

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From the Editor

Welcome to this edition of *Chronicle Unserer Leute*.

So many people in my family have the entrepreneurial mindset, working hard to create and develop their own business ventures. My maternal grandfather, Glenn Peterson was always our inspiration in this respect. A successful salesman with great business nous throughout his career, he always encouraged his children and grandchildren to work hard and think outside the box.

I guess it's safe to say that it came as little surprise when, upon researching his German Russian heritage, I discovered that his own maternal grandfather, George Wacker had started one of the many garbage hauling businesses in Portland. This business was eventually passed down to his eldest son, Henry Walker.

I never cease to be awed and inspired by how industrious our German Russian ancestors were. Think about it for a moment: These people came to America with virtually no English language skills, and yet so many of them were able to settle in Portland and start businesses so successful that many still exist today. It is truly a testament to their strength and determination.

As always, please feel free to contact me on devon.lasalle@gmail.com if you would like to contribute a story, photograph, recipe or any other part of your German-Russian heritage with our readers.

I hope you enjoy this issue.

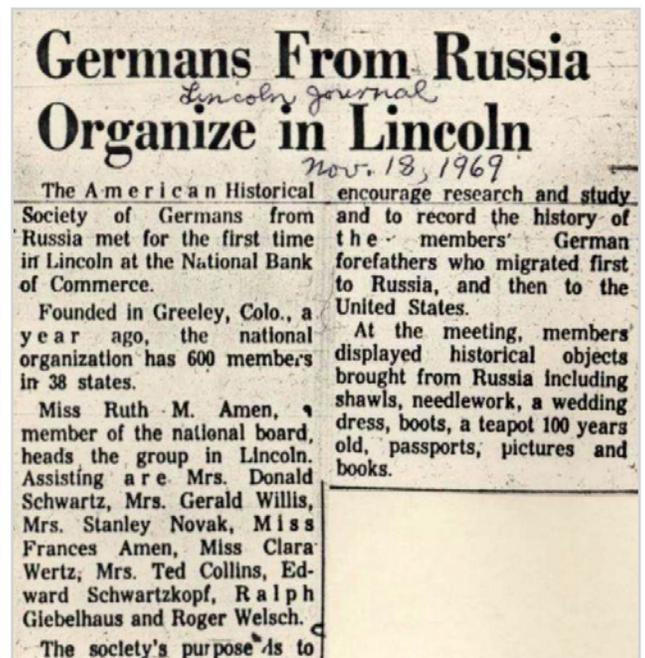


Happy Anniversary, AHSGR!

On September 8, 1968 at a meeting in Windsor Gardens in Denver, the Germans from Russia living in North America decided they needed a history, a collective memory, to define themselves as a group.

To do this they formed the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia (AHSGR) in Greeley, Colorado on October 6, 1968.

The first meeting was held in Lincoln, Nebraska on November 16, 1969.



A Family Affair

Many of our ancestors supported their families by starting their own businesses, most of which would be passed down to the next generation.

Some of the most common pursuits included bakeries, garbage haulers (or scavengers) and grocers.

Bakeries provided a taste of the Russian homeland to local residents. Most of the businesses were located in the heart of the Volga German settlement (now Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard), with another group of retail shops located along NE Fremont Street.

Possibly the last remaining German Russian bakery in Portland – Beaverton Bakery (formerly Yeager’s Bakery) – sadly closed its doors on September 29th, 2018 after 93 years of operation.

Almost all of the garbage hauling businesses run in Portland in the late 1800s and early 1900s were operated by Volga German families. This was an unregulated business in Portland until the early 1900s, which meant that competition was intense and they worked long hours to keep up. Collection in the early years was conducted using horses, wooden wagons and plenty of manual labor. This was replaced with motorized trucks from the late 1910s.

Many of these businesses still exist in some form today.

Local German Russian businesses and residents relied on grocers and meat markets to source the supplies they needed to maintain their traditions.

Unfortunately, most of these businesses gave way to large businesses such as Safeway and Fred Meyer over time.



Yeager Bakery founded in 1915 in Beaverton, Oregon.
Photograph courtesy of Steve Schreiber.

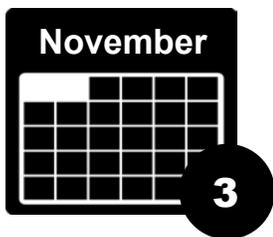


Jacob Aschenbrenner with his horses and wagon in 1918.
Photograph courtesy of Marie Krieger.



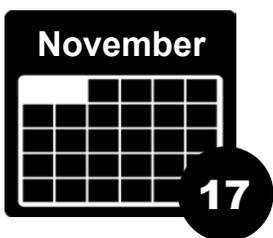
Danewolf's Grocery and Meat Market on NE 13th and Failing.
Photo courtesy of Steve Schreiber.

Upcoming Events



**Saturday, November 3rd, 9:00am to 4:00pm – CVGS Workshop:
“Resource for Learning About Your Heritage”**
Concordia University Portland Library – 2811 NE Holman Street, Portland

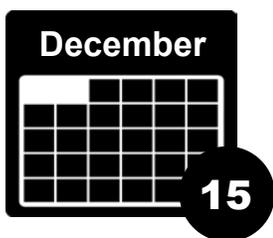
Concordia University Libraries and The Friends of the Center for Volga German Studies invite your participation in their workshop, “Resources for Learning about your Heritage”. Conference registration is \$70, which includes continental breakfast, lunch and snacks. To register for this workshop, visit: cvgs.cu-portland.edu/exhibits_events.cfm See Page 7 to find out more.



**Saturday, November 17th, 10:00am to 2:00pm – Oregon AHSGR
Chapter Program: German-Russian Book Review**
Concordia University Portland Library, Room 301 – 2811 NE Holman Street, Portland

Much has been written about the history of the Germans from Russia, from their invitation from Catherine the Great to colonize along the Volga, to the growth of their villages, and to the Deportation of 1941. But, who tires of hearing the story of our heroic ancestors? For our November meeting we will hear from several of our local chapter members as they discuss some of the books in their personal libraries about our inspiring and sometimes tragic heritage. During the presentation you will also have an opportunity to suggest favorite books that you have read.

PLEASE NOTE: This month’s chapter meeting will be held on the Saturday and not on the usual Sunday.



**Saturday, December 15th, 2:00pm to 4:00pm – Oregon AHSGR
Christmas Potluck**
St Michael’s Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall – 6700 NE 29th Avenue, Portland



Rich Heritage: Building thriving communities

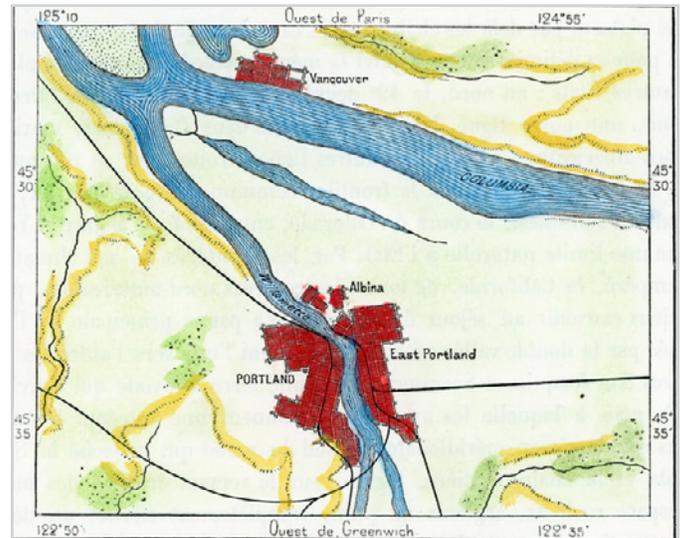
This five-part series will examine the rich history of our German Russian ancestors, from the brave decision to leave war-torn Europe to building a legacy in a country 'whose streets are paved in gold'.

Reports of the opportunities waiting in America after the first German Russian scouts visited in 1874 would inspire hundreds of families to leave the Steppe behind and travel to America.

After a long journey via multiple modes of transport, most of the early immigrants settled in Kansas and Nebraska. They were able to acquire farmland thanks to the Homestead Act, which allowed them claim for up to 160 free acres of federal land for a small fee in exchange for living on the land for at least five years. Unfortunately, they could not have foreseen the troubles they would face in these early years.

The German Russian settlers soon discovered that the Great Plains yielded more challenges than they had bargained for. Several years of drought coupled with severe storms and tornadoes causes crops to fail and livestock to starve. Plagues of locusts obliterated what few crops remained. To add insult to injury, the settlers soon discovered that many of their homesteads were near the Great Western Cattle Trail and their land would be inundated with cattle being run up from Texas to northeastern markets.

While many of the German Russian settlers would stay on the plains, by the early 1880s many would turn their sights elsewhere. Word had spread about new railroad projects in the Pacific Northwest. A group of settlers in Culbertson, Nebraska, wrote to the Oregon Railway and Navigation Company expressing an interest in moving 160 families to the region. This letter was received by the owner of the company, Henry Villard.



1892 map of Portland, East Portland and Albina. Source: La Nouvelle Géographie universelle, la terre et les hommes, 19 vol. (1875-94). Cartographie by Charles Perron. Photo courtesy of Steven Schreiber.

Villard saw an opportunity for his company to prosper with the immigration of German Russians to Oregon and Washington through cheap labor for its rail projects and set out to pave the way for immigration. Hoping to profit further from passenger services, the company published several advertisements in German language newspapers in Kansas and Nebraska enticing families to come settle in the beautiful, fertile lands of the Pacific Northwest and offered reduced rates for those wishing to travel westward during the winter months.

The first group of German Russian settlers arrived in Oregon in 1881, settling in the Albina area. Albina was the 'company town' of the Oregon Railway and Navigation Company, and most of the immigrants first settled in this area. Many had come to Oregon for the fertile farming land. Unfortunately, many would quickly discover that what little farming land



The Ludwig Miller family portrait in front of the L. Miller Dry Goods & Notions store circa 1908. Photograph courtesy of Shanna Minarik.

available had already been claimed and the remaining land in the area was covered in dense forests. Several of the families were directed by the Oregon Immigration Office to settle on lands in Palouse County, Washington, which were owned by the company. Those that wanted to remain in the Albina area had little choice but to look for work in the city. Many worked on the railroads or the steamship docks, while others worked in local lumber and flour mills or found other work in the city.

In the years that followed, Albina would become known as 'Little Russia' to outsiders and its residents considered to be at the bottom of the social and economic ladder. Other German-Americans considered the German Russian settlers' dialect archaic, with its centuries old terminology and the addition of Russian words. As such, the settlers often experienced prejudice and were forced to take jobs that no one else wanted.

Discrimination against the German Russians increased considerably during the two world wars, inspiring many of the settlers to 'blend in' by any means necessary. The Anglicization of surnames such as Wacker to Walker and Burbach to Burbank became commonplace in German Russian communities, and many young men enlisted to serve in the military.

Despite these challenges, the German Russian settlers were industrious and saw opportunities to make a better life. They were no strangers to hard work, and were happy to spend their time building businesses servicing their local areas. Soon, several bakers, garbage haulers, grocers, retailers, restaurants and other services popped up throughout settlements in north and northeast Portland. Most of these businesses were family affairs, with fathers and sons working side by side passing down their knowledge to future generations.

The German Russians' determination to make a better life in America ultimately paid off. While many of their descendants may have little knowledge of the sacrifices their ancestors made, the legacy of these strong and determined people lives on in the prosperity of our own lives.



Charlie Bauer is seated in the center of the front row of this group of U.S. soldiers who served in World War I. Photo courtesy of Kris Dillman.

Discovering Colonists in the Duchy of Schleswig

by Jim Holstein

Several years ago, many of us discovered some of our Volga-German colonist ancestors had initially participated in another colonization effort – that of the heathlands of Schleswig, then a part of Denmark. The “Eichhorn Book”, published in 2012, lists the colonists and provides a brief look at our ancestors time in Schleswig before they answered Catherine the Great’s call to the Volga.

At around this time, I was working with another researcher also interested in my Holstein ancestors. Since this was prior to the book being published, we didn’t have anything to go on other than finding Jacob Holstein on Gerhard Lang’s website which lists Volga German colonists who were also part of the Schleswig effort. If you don’t have the Eichhorn book (a copy is in the Center for Volga German Studies), it’s a great resource to start with. You can look for your original settler ancestors at: www.russia-colonists.eu/namen-Dateien/WEB-Liste-e.htm

For example, here is what is posted for Jacob Holstein:

19 HOLSTEIN Jakob * 1740 oo N.N. Elisabeth Barbara * 1745
19 Schützingen - Christiansheide, Friedrichsheide - Galka

This tells me that Jakob Holstein and wife Elisabeth Barbara were originally from Schützingen, lived in the Schleswig colonies of Christiansheide and Friedrichsheide, then ended up in the Volga colony of Galka.

When I first found the website, it said they were from Setzingen which is what is reported in the Plevé “First Settler” books. It should be noted that I spent a lot of time in the Family History Center going over and over the Setzingen church records fruitlessly searching for a Holstein family.



My fellow researcher was a little better at sleuthing than I was and found a historical society in Germany similar to the AHSGR that was collecting records on the Schleswig colonists. The group is called Plaggenhacke and they have a German-language website at <http://www.plaggenhacke.de>

We contacted the group through their website (in German) to inquire about what records they could provide on Jacob Holstein. I also found four more of my ancestors on Gerhard Lang's site that I wanted information on. For a small fee per family, they provided me full records on each family – much more than what was put in the Eichhorn book.

The Danish government checked up on the settlers regularly, keeping records of each visit. Some records include names and ages of all family members and note any births and deaths that occurred. I had a particular stroke of luck with the records they found for Jacob Holstein. In addition to the government records, they also found a marriage record for Jacob and Elisabeth in the local church book. This marriage record not only gave me Elisabeth's maiden name, but also listed where both of them were from! I now had Jacob's origin of Schützingen and Elisabeth's hometown of Mühlhausen. A quick search of records and I found the birth records for both of them.

Out of the five sets of records I obtained, I found such nuggets like:

- What assistance was given (food, money, livestock)
- Which colonies and specifically which farms in the colonies they were assigned along with maps showing their locations.
- Intrigue through a series of notes like, "Several colonists from Friedrichsholm plan to flee to Russia. And Ludwig Heinrich Ziegler is accused. He is acquitted." Followed a year later with, "Message that he and his family have escaped."
- Bad evaluations, "Dismissed because of inadequate performance."
- Good evaluations, "Many settlers have left the country because they are considered unfit. Krug gets a good review, and may remain."

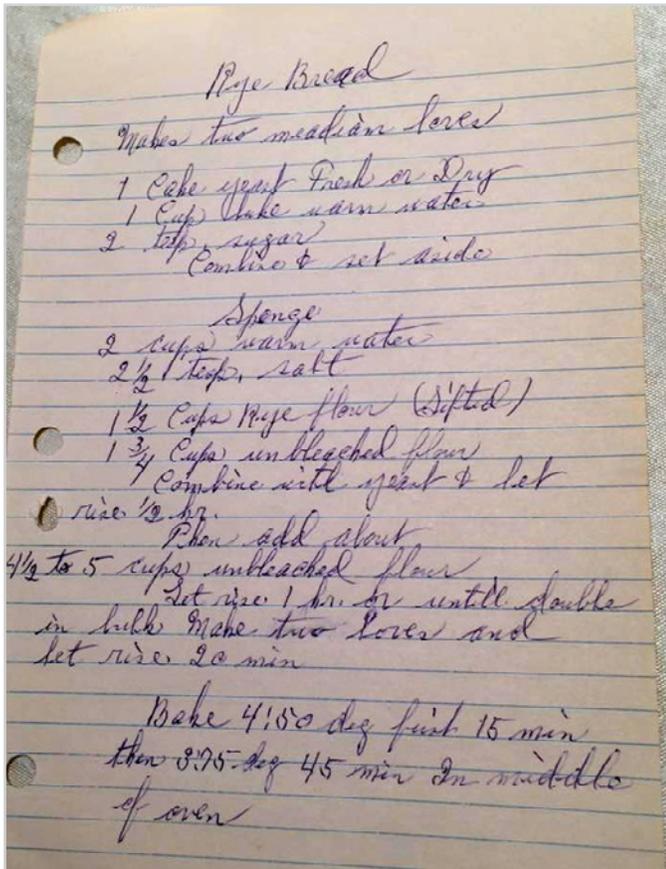
So now I want to share with everyone how you can contact this group if you are interested in getting more records about your Schleswig ancestors. While I originally communicated in German (using Google Translate), Plaggenhacke does have an English speaking member who you can contact directly and in English.

Uwe Seier (uwe-seier@t-online.de). Uwe told me that records will be provided in German. They will not translate. But you can use Google Translate pretty easily to get a rough English translation of the text in the document which is what I did when I received my records.

If you obtain any records on your family members, please forward them to our chapter at oregonahsgr@gmail.com. Uwe has given me permission to keep a collection of all records received in the Center for Volga German Studies (CVGS) so money is not wasted by several people requesting records for the same settlers.

So be sure to check in with us or at the CVGS prior to paying for records to make sure we don't already have them.

Recipe Corner: Roggen Brot (Rye Bread)



This rye bread recipe was contributed by Ruth Schultz uses this recipe by her Grandma Blum as written down by her daughter, Esther.

Combine 1 cake yeast (fresh or dry), 1 cup lukewarm water and 2 teaspoons sugar in a small bowl. Set aside.

In a large bowl, mix 2 cups warm water and 2 1/2 teaspoons salt to 1 1/2 cups rye flour (sifted) and 1 3/4 cups unbleached flour. Combine with the yeast mixture and let rise for 30 minutes.

Add between 4 1/2 and 5 cups of unbleached flour and let rise for another hour or until the dough has doubled in size. Make two loaves out of the dough and place them in lightly greased bread pans. Let rise for 20 minutes.

Bake at 450 F for 15 minutes, then reduce the heat to 375 F and bake for another 45 minutes in the middle of the oven.

From the Web

The River Boys Polka Band performed as part of the Homegrown Concert Series sponsored by the American Folklife Center. Robert Schmer (accordion), Dave Beitz (hammered dulcimer), Jerry Hergenreder (trombone, vocals) and Steve Deines (bass, vocals) make up the River Boys Polka Band. They have played traditional Dutch Hop dance music together for 10 years. All four have performed at traditional weddings, anniversaries and other German Russian celebrations for 35 years or more in various groups.



You can watch their performance on the Library of Congress website at: www.loc.gov/today/cyberlc/feature_wdesc.php?rec=4353

Our Ancestors: Johannes Heinrich Hopp

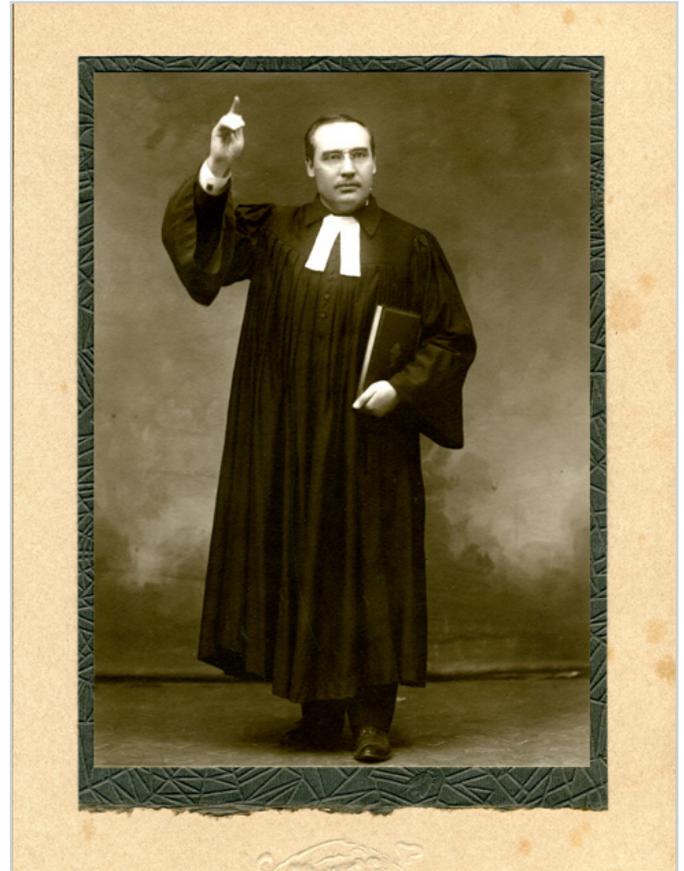
courtesy of Volga Germans in Portland

Rev. Johannes Heinrich Hopp was born in the Volga German colony of Frank, Russia on December 14, 1869, the son of Heinrich and Barbara Hopp. Johannes was consecrated as a child of God in holy baptism and confirmed in 1884 after nine years of schooling by Pastor Karl Rudolph Roos. It was said that in his youth Johannes displayed a passion in his heart to step into the service of God.

Johannes married Charlotte Miller on February 2, 1889 and they became parents of six children: Anna, Johannes, Lydia, Marie, Karl and Charlotte. In June 1893, the Hopp family came to the United States and initially settled in Lincoln, Nebraska where he worked for a number of years in business.

Following his desire to serve God, Johannes was advised by Pastor Grove to visit the Wilton German English College in Wilton, Iowa. Johannes made a decision to enroll in 1898 and he graduated from Wilton in May 1901. In September of the same year, Johannes entered the Chicago Theological Seminary. During his time at seminary he served at one of the German churches in Chicago. After graduation from the seminary, Johannes was appointed minister of a small congregation at Park Ridge, Illinois. In June of 1903, he received a call from the Ebenezer German Congregational Church of Portland, Oregon, where he was ordained on July 27, 1903. The Ebenezer church had been founded by Rev. Johannes Koch in April 1892 and had grown to 70 members by 1903. The new assignment for Rev. Hopp was supported as a mission church by the general board of the German Congregational denomination.

As more Volga Germans continued to migrate to Portland from other parts of the United



Photograph of Rev. Johannes Hopp courtesy of The Center for Volga German Studies at Concordia University. The handwritten inscription on the back of this photograph reads, "To Katie Schlitt from Pastor John H. Hopp, Portland, Ore., April 3, 1912."

States, Canada and directly from Russia, the Ebenezer congregation grew. A decision was made in 1903 to build a new church on the existing site and Rev. Hopp led this effort. The new building was dedicated in December 1904.

According to the Minutes of the Congregational Conference of Oregon published in 1913, the Ebenezer congregation had grown to 285 members (150 males and 135 females) in 1912.

After serving for eleven years (1903-1914)

at the Ebenezer Church, a dispute over the extension of Rev. Hopp's pastorate caused a group of members to leave the congregation. This group met on April 13, 1914 at the home of Conrad Helzer and organized the Zion German Congregational Church. The founding elected officers asked Rev. Hopp to lead the Zion Church and he accepted their call. Like the Ebenezer Church, Zion was organized as part of the German Congregational denomination and was commonly known in the community as "Hopp's Church."

Rev. Hopp was active in supporting the Volga Relief Society that was founded at the Zion church on August 11, 1921. The society was formed to provide assistance to friends and family living in Russia who were victims of a severe famine during the early 1920s.

In 1922, Rev. Hopp was influential in bringing the former Free Evangelical Brethren Church under the German Congregational

denomination. The church was renamed the German Congregational Evangelical Brethren Church at that time. This congregation had formerly been served by elders who were not ordained ministers. Rev. Hopp was instrumental in persuading Rev. Wagner (also a graduate of the Chicago Theological Seminary) to serve this church.

In August 5, 1928, the Zion congregation celebrated the 25th anniversary of Rev. Hopp's pastorate with three services held in his honor. Speakers during the day included Rev. George Hein of Seattle, Rev. John Hoelzer, General Missionary of the Congregational Church from Denver, Rev. C. H. Harrison, the Oregon State Superintendent of the Congregational Church and Judge Jacob Kanzler.

Pastor Hopp served the Zion church for 22 years and was a very influential force in the Volga German community. On August 31, 1936, Rev. Hopp withdrew himself from public



Rev. Hopp and family.

service in the community and lived partially in retirement, although he was always willing to help out where necessary.

Rev. Hopp was a handsome man who met people easily and had a suavity of manner that helps to explain why he was able to keep the loyalty of his parishioners. Because of his long residence in Portland, Rev. Hopp was of great help to the members of the church who wished to take out citizenship paper or needed legal service.

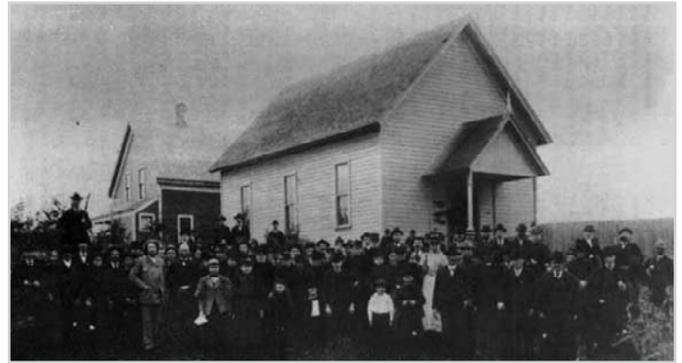
Rev. Hopp also served his community for many years as a member at the prisoner association where he made it his duty to help many unfortunate people find a new beginning.

On March 18, 1942, Charlotte Hopp was taken from his side by death, after they had carried joy and sorrow with one another over 53 years.

In September 1943 Rev. Hopp married the widow Lena Behm, who became his faithful companion and aide.

On Wednesday May 12, 1948, when Rev. Hopp was in the process of preparing for a state conference in Ritzville, Washington, when he suddenly became ill. That evening he was taken to Emanuel Hospital in Portland. The physicians did all that was humanly possible, but the next morning at 6:30 a.m. he passed away.

A very well attended funeral service was held for Rev. Hopp on May 17, 1948 at the Zion Church. Pastor Theo. C. Strobel was the leader of the service and contributions to the concluding sermon were made by Pastor W. Essig, Pastor J. C. Schwabenland, Pastor H. Beder, Pastor H. Hagelanz, Pastor Geo. Hein, Pastor D. J. Tiede, Pastor R. Walter and Dr. Paul A. Davies, Superintendent of the Oregon Conference of Congregational Churches. Following the service, Rev. Hopp was taken to his final resting place.



The first Ebenezer church building and parsonage in 1895 located at NE 7th and Stanton. Source: "Ebenezer Congregational Church Seventy-Five Years 1892-1967".

CORNERSTONE TO BE LAID

**German Congregational Zion Church
Ceremonies Are Today.**

The cornerstone of the German Congregational Zion Church will be laid at 3 o'clock today. Addresses will be made by Rev. Luther R. Dyott, pastor of the First Congregational Church; Rev. W. C. Kantner, pastor of the University Park Congregational Church; Rev. James R. Knowdell and others.

The new church is at the corner of East Ninth and Fremont streets. It has a frontage of 55 feet and a depth of 64 feet. The seating capacity will be about 700.

Rev. John H. Hopp will be pastor of the new church. He came here from Chicago in 1903 to be pastor of the German Congregational Ebenezer Church at Seventh and Stanton streets.

This article was published in the "Sunday Oregonian" on July 19, 1914 (page 15).

Do You Know These Men?

This photograph was submitted by Ruth Ann Plue. She believes that these men may come from the Jorge (George) family.

This is just one of several old family photographs posted on the Volga Germans in Portland website that have yet to be identified. Too many old family photographs end up lost like this.

Help us reconnect these treasured memories to their families. Visit the Volga Germans in Portland website to see the full list of photographs waiting to be identified.



THE VOLGA GERMANS IN PORTLAND

HOME HISTORY BELIEFS PEOPLE COMMUNITY TRADITIONS ENGAGE



www.volgagermansportland.info/help-identify-these-people.html

AHSGR Oregon Chapter Membership Renewal Form

Membership fees are for a calendar year that **renews each January 1st**. Annual dues for the **AHSGR Oregon Chapter** membership are \$25.

Membership Year 20 _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Telephone _____ E-mail _____

I want my Oregon Chapter newsletter delivered electronically. Yes _____ No _____

I want to receive my Oregon Chapter newsletter in the mail (paper copy). Yes _____ No _____

In order for us to serve our membership more effectively, please list all of your German-Russian family surnames and all of the villages that you believe your ancestors are from:

Villages

Surnames

Annual Dues: \$25.00

Annual Donation: \$

Total Enclosed: \$

Please make all checks payable to **AHSGR OREGON CHAPTER** and send your membership dues and application to:

**AHSGR OREGON CHAPTER
P.O. Box 55218
Portland, Oregon 97238-5218**

You can also send dues and donations electronically via PayPal to our chapter email address:

oregonahsgr@gmail.com

The Oregon Chapter of AHSGR is a tax-exempt nonprofit organization organized under the Internal Revenue Code 501(c)(3). As such, your dues are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. (Federal Tax ID # 93-1313164)

PLEASE NOTE: Additional dues are required for membership in the AHSGR International Organization. (See www.ahsgr.org/membership.htm for current International membership levels and dues.) Please remit International dues directly to AHSGR Headquarters at: 631 D Street, Lincoln, Nebraska 68502-1199.

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The American Historical Society of Germans from Russia is an international organization dedicated to the discovery, collection, preservation, and the dissemination of information related to the history, cultural heritage and genealogy of Germanic settlers in the Russian Empire and their descendants.

The *Chronicle Unserer Leute* (Chronicle of Our People) is published bimonthly by the Oregon Chapter of AHSGR.

Keep up to date with the latest news and events from the Oregon Chapter of AHSGR:

www.oregonahsgr.org

facebook.com/groups/AHSGR.Oregon