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**FOUR LETTERS TO SUSANNA FROM JOHANN BARTSCH,
A DANZIG MENNONITE LAND SCOUT, 1786-87**

No one to date has written much about the personal collection of correspondence and other materials written by Johann Bartsch from Nobel/Danzig, a free city neighboring West Prussia in the eighteenth century. He is believed to have been the secretary of a two-man German Mennonite delegation which investigated New Russian settlement possibilities in 1786-87. His companion for this venture was Jakob Hoepfner from Bohnsack/Danzig.¹

As it happens, some of Bartsch's writings have survived and can be given further attention. The first of these writings to be published may have been excerpts from, and references to, four letters which he wrote to his first wife, Susanna, while on the journey to New Russia and back. These letters are quoted by David H. Epp in his 1889 Mennonite centennial publication, *Die Chortitzer Mennoniten: Versuch einer Darstellung des Entwicklungsganges derselben*. [*The Chortitzer Mennonites: An Attempt to Sketch Their Development*].² A *Mennonite Encyclopedia* entry on Johann

¹ This author needs to acknowledge the valuable assistance of a colleague, Edwin D. Hoepfner of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, in locating related materials, checking their facts and proof-reading the manuscript for this article. In his study of Russian Mennonite historiography David G. Rempel has stated that the archives of Chortitza, (later called the Old Colony) had nothing in them for the period of the first dozen years or more of settlement in New Russia. Rempel has also mentioned documents held by Peter Hildebrand, author of an account of the 1788-89 Mennonite emigration from Danzig and West Prussia to New Russia in what he calls the *Hildebrand Nachlass* [Hildebrand Papers]. Items from this collection have surfaced from time to time, but, according to Rempel, are otherwise scattered, and thought to have been largely lost. David G. Rempel, "An Introduction to Russian Mennonite Historiography," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* (MQR) XVIII (October, 1974), 409-446. Very recently a large portion of what was believed to be this lost collection had been donated in photo copy format by a family holding the papers, to the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

² The Polish historical background for this discussion of Mennonite emigration activity is reviewed in John J. Friesen, "Mennonites in Poland: An Expanded Historical View," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 4 (1986), 94-108. A very early account of these events is in David H. Epp. *Die Chortitzer Mennoniten: Versuch*

Bartsch, provided by Dr. Cornelius Krahn, makes reference in its brief bibliography to “Johann Bartsch letters” of which copies may be found at the Mennonite Library and Archives (MLA) in North Newton, Kansas. This collection includes the four letters to Susanna under discussion here. They are among the Bartsch letters then microfilmed at the MLA, and sold in a duplicate copy to the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, a number of years later.³

The same letters are also included in a larger collection of letters and other documents once in the possession of Ältester (Bishop) David H. Epp (1861-1934) of Ekaterinoslav, South Russia (later Ukraine), and brought to Canada after World War II. It is said that they were deposited with his late younger brother, and founder of *Der Bote* [*The Messenger*] Dietrich H Epp (1875-1955), of Rosthern, Saskatchewan. Till recently this collection remained with the family, but even more recently copies of all the items in that collection have been photocopied and sent to the Mennonite Heritage Centre archives in Winnipeg. This articles was written on the basis

einer Darstellung des Entwicklungsganges derselben [*The Chortitzer Mennonites: An Attempt to Sketch Their Development*] (Odessa/Rosenthal bei Chortitz, A Schultze, 1889). This volume has been reprinted at least twice, most recently by *Mennonitische Post* [*Mennonite Post*] of Steinbach, Manitoba, in 1984. See its “Vorwort zum Nachdruck” [*Foreword to the Reprint*], 1. See also Rempel, “An Introduction”, 435, for a brief review of the original Epp volume, and James Urry, “David Heinrich Epp (1861-1934),” in Harry Loewen, ed., *Shepherds, Servants and Prophets: Leadership Among the Russian Mennonites (ca 1880 to 1960)* (Waterloo, Ont., Canada and Scottsdale, Penn, USA: Pandora Press with Herald Press, 2003), 85-102.

³ Christian Neff, “Bartsch, Johann,” *Mennonite Encyclopedia* (Scottsdale, Penn., Newton, Kans., Hillsboro, Kans.: Mennonite Publishing House, Mennonite Publication Office, Mennonite Brethren Publishing House, 1955), Vol. 1, 240. Translated from *Mennonitisches Lexikon, Band I* [*Mennonite Lexicon, Vol. I*] by Dr. Cornelius Krahn, who likely added the bibliographical reference to the Mennonite Library and Archives (MLA) holdings of the Bartsch letters. The current archivist, John Thiesen, cannot locate information about where Krahn may have obtained the Bartsch letters which were subsequently microfilmed. A copy of this material is on Microfilm 69 at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives (MHCA) in Winnipeg, Man., Canada. It is pertinent to note also that in a collection of letters received by the late Peter Hoepfner (1825-1907) of Waldheim on the former West Reserve in Manitoba, Canada, from Johann Hildebrand from the Insel Khortitza of the Khortitza colony, the latter wrote that at one point he copied numerous documents from the Johann Bartsch collection for distribution among interested people, for the purpose of showing that accusations made by the Khortitza ministers against Bartsch and Hoepfner were false. See letter dated 24 February 1890 in *The “Hoepfner” Letters. Folio 2 1877-1891*, trans. and ed. Edward Falk (Winkler, Man.: self-published, 2004), Letter 18, 3. The original is in MHCA, Volume 1419.

of a portion of the collection having been sent as photocopies to the author.

All the extant letters to Susanna are written in German long-hand Gothic script and available in quite legible handwritten copies of the original. It is not known for certain who copies the originals in Russia at some time or where the originals, if they still exist, are located now. The English translation attempts to remain faithful to the style of the original, but some changes in punctuation have been made to aid the reader.

WHO WERE THE JOHANN BARTSCHES OF DANZIG?

Johann Bartsch was born September 6, 1757, the second son of Jakob and Christina Philipsen Bartsch, possibly from Danzig. He married Susanna Lammert, also born in 1757, the daughter of Jakob and Susanna (von Niessen) Lammert of Tiegenhagen,. She was baptized in 1773 in the Orlofffelde Frisian Mennonite Church by Bishop Heinrich Donner. Johann and Susanna married on August 15, 1779. They had three children, Susanna, b. February 10, 1782, Maria, b. July 21, 1783, and Sara, b. January 10, 1785.⁴ Mother Susanna passed away on November 15, 1790, in Rosenthal,

⁴The first published account about the delegation involvements of Johann Bartsch is found in Peter Hildebrand, *Erste Auswanderung der Mennoniten aus dem Danziger Gebiet nach Russland* [*The First Emigration of Mennonites from the Danzig Region to Russia*] (Halbstadt: Typographie von P. Neufeld, 1888), reprinted in Victor Peters, ed., *Zwei Dokumente: Quellen zum Geschichtsstudium der Mennoniten in Russland* [*Two Documents : Sources for the Study of the History of the Mennonites in Russia*] (Winnipeg, Man.: Echo Verlag, 1965). This volume was translated into English, with some remaining inaccuracies, by Walter Toews and Adolf Ens, and published as *From Danzig to Russia. The First Emigration of Mennonites from the Danzig Region to Southern Russia* (Winnipeg, Man.: CMBC Publications and Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, 2000). Citations of Peter Hildebrand's work here will be from the Echo Verlag *Zwei Dokumente* reprint, 12ff. Notes on the family name and origins have been gathered by various related family members, and also the late Alexander Rempel of St. Catharines, Ontario. See Alexander Rempel Collection, MHCA, Volume 3947, File 9. According to this study, references to the family name Bartsch occurred in official Royal Prussian records as early as 1595. See also index references to the Bartsch name in Horst Penner, *Die ost- und westpreussische Mennoniten in ihrem religioesen und sozialen Leben in ihren kulturellen und wirtschaftlichen Leistungen Teil 1* [*The East and West Prussian Mennonites: Their Religious and Social Life in the Context of Their Cultural and Economic Contributions. Part I*] (Weierhof, Germany: Mennonitischer Geschichtsverein E.V., 1978), 485.

The basic genealogical facts of the Johann Bartsch family remain incomplete. Susanna's name appears as Lämmert or Lammerts in some accounts and her birth year as 1760. Some errors can be found in Lawrence Klippenstein, "Bartsch, Johann," *Modern Encyclopedia of Religion in Russia and the Soviet Union* (Gulf Breeze, Flor.: Academic International Press, 1991), 221-224, which

Chortitza settlement, possibly at childbirth, shortly after they had emigrated to New Russia in 1788-89.

For Johann and Susanna and their family this move would mean leaving their home village of Nobel located four kilometers or more south of the city center of Danzig. Johann's exact place of birth, is not known with certainty at this point.⁵ To make its living the family ran a small dairy, and at some point in his life Johann may have acquired some proficiency as a

retells the story of the delegation journey of 1786-1787. Due to an emendation made by the encyclopedia editors, this article erroneously notes the marriage of Johann and Susanna as taking place in 1783 (!). The questionable form of the surname Lämmert is found here also. The birth year of Sara is given as 1785 in the GRANDMA files at MHCA. See a report by researcher Kevin Stoesz of September 8, 2006, some loose anonymous handwritten Johann Bartsch records in the vertical files of MHCA, as well as materials in the author's files gathered by Peter Kroeger of Calgary and by Ernie Toews, also of Calgary. See also an email from Ernie Toews to Lawrence Klippenstein dated 9/18/2006, and one from Glenn Penner to Lawrence Klippenstein, dated 9/15/2006, containing corrections to the GRANDMA genealogical entry for the Bartsch family.

An earlier problem about dating the birth and death years of Johann Bartsch persists in such works as James Urry, *None but Saints: The Transformation of Mennonite Life in Russia 1789 – 1889* (Winnipeg, Man.: Hyperion Press, 1989), 312, where his years are given as (1748 - ?). The birth day and month of Susanna are still not available. See also Arthur Kroeger, *Biography of Johann Bartsch the deputy* (Winnipeg, Man.: by the author, 2002), 2, who uses the name form Lammert, and dates the birth year of Sara as 1786, as does Peter J Froese in a Bartsch genealogy prepared by his family. See Peter J Froese, "Familienforschung," *Der Bote* ["Family Research," *The Messenger*] October 10, 1967, 5, and Henry Schapansky, *The Old Colony Chortitza of Russia: Early History and First Settlers in the Context of the Mennonite Migrations* (Burnaby, Brit.Col.: privately published, 2001), 330-331, who uses the Lammerts form of the surname, and also the date 1786 for Sara's birth year. References to an unnamed fourth child in the family, not included in the extant genealogies, will be discussed below.

⁵ See Benjamin H. Unruh, *Die niederländisch-niederdeutschen Hintergründe der mennonitischen Ostwanderungen im 16., 18. und 19. Jahrhundert* [*The Dutch and Lower German Background of Mennonite Migrations Eastward in the 16th, 18th, and 19th Centuries*] (Karlsruhe, Germany: Selbstverlag, 1955), 262. See also maps No. 761 and No. 790 in the MHCA map collection. Bartsch's place of residence is erroneously referred to as "the village of Neugarten" in Lawrence Klippenstein, "The Mennonite Migration to Russia 1786-1806," in John J. Friesen, ed., *Mennonites in Russia 1788 – 1988: Essays in Honour of Gerhard Lohrenz* (Winnipeg, Man.: CMBC Publications, 1989), 18. Again through editorial emendation, the village is erroneously described as being in the area annexed by Prussia in 1772, in Klippenstein, "Bartsch, Johann", 221. At the time of Bartsch's work, Nobel still belonged to the territory of the free city of Danzig. It became part of the Prussian land annexation of 1793, however.

shoemaker. The family worshipped with his parents in the Neugarten Frisian Mennonite group led at the time by Bishop Isaac Stobbe.⁶ This congregation occupied the first building constructed by the Frisian congregation in Neugarten, a western suburb of Danzig just outside the city's west wall in 1638.⁷

THE LAND SCOUTING ASSIGNMENT

In 1786 the routine family and farm life of Johann Bartsch would be radically altered by the arrival in the area of Georg (von) Trappe from New Russia. As an agent of the Russian tsarina Catharine II and her Vice-Regent, Count Grigorii Alexandrovich Potemkin, now governing New Russia, Trappe had come as a "caller of colonists" to promote emigration among German Lutherans, Mennonites and others, inviting them to occupy unsettled lands of New Russian territories recently acquired from Turkey.⁸

⁶ Kroeger, *Biography of Johann Bartsch*, 2, Schapansky, *The Old Colony*, 330-331. But see Horst Penner, *Die ost-und westpreussische Mennoniten*, 28, where Bartsch is erroneously said to have been a member of the Flemish congregation. The Jakob Bartsches of Danzig/Nobel and the Jakob Lammerts of Tiegenhagen, the parents of Johann and Susanna, were both farming families of low middle class means. The Neugarten Frisian congregational members had mixed backgrounds, including some who were quite well-to-do. See Henry Schapansky, "Johann Bartsch, The Deputy," *Mennonite Historian* XVIII No. 3 (September, 1992), 1-3, 7, for a note on Johann's family connections in other churches. On the development of the Neugarten area inside and outside the west wall of the city of Danzig see Erich Keyser, *Die Baugeschichte der Stadt Danzig [The History of Construction in the City of Danzig]* (Koeln, Wien: Boelau Verlag, 1972), 273, 309, 313-314, 542, and in this volume the map titled "Grundriss der westpreussischen Seehandlungsstadt und Festung" [*A Sketch of the West Prussian Marine Trading City and Fortress*] (Danzig, 1822).

⁷ Schapansky, *The Old Colony*, 54.

⁸ The context for this Russian colonization initiative, and the emerging role of Georg Trappe in this expedition is quite well documented. Two excellent general sources are Roger Bartlett, *Human Capital: The settlement of foreigners in Russia 1762-1804* (Cambridge London New York New Rochelle Melbourne Sydney: Cambridge University Press, 1979), and David G. Rempel, "The Mennonite Emigration to New Russia 1787-1870," *Mennonite Quarterly Review (MQR)* IX (April, 1935), 71-91, and IX (July, 1935), 109-128, as well as his "The Mennonite Commonwealth in Russia: A Sketch of Its Founding and Endurance, 1789-1919," *MQR* XLVII (October, 1973), 259-308, and XLVIII (January, 1974), 5-54. and 1-99, a reprint edition cited below as *The Mennonite Commonwealth*. Further references to Rempel's study will be to this reprint edition. On Trappe's other professional involvements see Roger Bartlett, "Her Imperial Majesty's Director and Curator of the Mennonite Colonies in Russia: Three Letters of Georg Trappe," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* Volume 12, 1994, 46-64. Trappe signed his French-language letters Georg de (von) Trappe,

On July 27/ August 7, 1786 he presented specific emigration proposals to both Mennonite congregations in Danzig.⁹ There was almost immediate interest in Trappe's offer so that within a week or more an emigration movement began to get underway. Danzig city officials vigorously opposed this Russian initiative, hence church leaders were forbidden to have further

hence the "von" in the use of his name by some authors. See also a photo in "George Trappe (d. 1798, sic)," *Mennonite Historian* XXIV No. 4 (December, 1998), 1. Trappe's negotiations and discussions with Russian government officials in Danzig, Kremenchug, and St. Petersburg, while involved in this undertaking are traced in considerable detail in Grigorii Pisarevskii. *Iz istorii inostrannoi kolonizatsii v rossii v XVIII v.* [From the History of Foreign Colonization in Russia in the Eighteenth Century] (Moskva: Suegerev, 1909), 262-338.

⁹ Trappe began his emigration solicitation among non-Mennonite (mainly Lutheran) Germans in this area. His presentation of the tsarina's colonization invitation to the two congregations of Danzig, i.e. the Neugarten Frisian congregation led by Bishop Isaac Stobbe, and the Flemish congregation led by Bishop Peter Epp, is noted by H.G.Mannhardt in *Die Danziger Mennoniten: Ihre Entstehung und Ihre Geschichte von 1569-1919* [The Danzig Mennonites: Their Emergence and History from 1569-1919] (Danzig: Selbstverlag der Danziger Mennonitengemeinde, [Self-published by the Danzig Mennonite Congregation] 1919), 128. The volume has appeared recently in an English translation, by Victor Doerksen as *The Danzig Mennonite Church: Its Emergence and History from 1569-1919* edited by Mark Jantzen and John D. Thiesen (North Newton, Kans: Bethel College, 2007). The Trappe proclamation at that point will no doubt have carried the basic content of a pamphlet prepared in late December, 1787, to step up continuing emigration publicity. See Rempel, "From Danzig to Russia," 10.

The use of New Style {NS} and Old Style (OS) dating in the references has caused some confusion in setting out an accurate chronology of these events. Royal and West Prussia were using New Style dating at this time, but Russia was using the Old Style calendar which, in the eighteenth century, was eleven days behind the New Style dating. This corrects the erroneous assertion that it was twelve days behind, as stated in Lawrence Klippenstein, "The Russian Mennonite Bicentennial: Some Pertinent Dates," *Mennonite Historian* XIII (March, 1987), 3, and followed also by other authors writing on this topic, e.g. J. J. Hildebrand, *Hildebrand's Zeittafel: 1500 Daten historischer Ereignisse und Geschehnisse aus der Zeit der Geschichte der Mennoniten Westeuropas, Russlands und Amerikas* [Hildebrand's Chronology: 1500 Dates of Events and Happenings During the Period of the History of the Mennonites of Western Europe, Russia and America] (Winnipeg, Man. im Selbstverlag, 1945), 147. On Trappe's initial appearance in Danzig see P. Hildebrand, *Erste Auswanderung .lff.*, David H. Epp, *Die Chortitzer Mennoniten*, 1ff., and Klippenstein, "The Mennonite Migration," 16ff.

contacts with Trappe.¹⁰

Trappe did not yield to his opponents, however, and continued his promotion of New Russian colonization opportunities particularly among various German communities in Danzig. He believed that with the tacit support of the Flemish Mennonite bishop Peter Epp and possibly other church leaders, that almost immediate interest in such possibilities would quickly grow if a legal path could be cleared to leave. It was then suggested to Bishop Epp by several colleagues that it would be very helpful if the Mennonites were allowed to send reliable representatives to see for themselves the land being made available, and to be involved in tailoring the settlement offer to suit their specific wishes and needs. This idea was conveyed to the Russian Consul-General Sokolovski who agreed with this idea. The name Jakob Hoepfner was brought forward, it appears, by Trappe himself, as someone suited for becoming part of a New Russian land scouting delegation.¹¹

A group of sixty Mennonite family heads then signed a power-of-attorney document (*Vollmacht*) authorizing several selected persons to make the settlement investigation in New Russia. The three men chosen were Jakob Hoepfner, a member of the Flemish church living in Bohnsack somewhat to the east of Danzig near the Baltic Sea, Jakob van Kampen, and the young farmer from Nobel, Johann Bartsch. Van Kampen withdrew before the delegation got underway. That left Hoepfner and Bartsch to undertake the trip, with Trappe as guide and interpreter for the expedition.¹² The delegates would claim to be representing nearly 300 families (Trappe referred to more than 300 in his agreement with the deputies) who were

¹⁰ This would apply specifically to the bishops Peter Epp and Isaac Stobbe. See Hildebrand, *Zeittafel*, 146. By August 5, 1786, however, Trappe had already signed up 247 families, thirty five of them Mennonites and the rest Lutherans, who were prepared to leave when possible. Rempel, "From Danzig to Russia", 10.

¹¹ See Pisarevskii, *iz istorii*, 274ff on the problems of leaving, including opposition from local authorities, etc. The Pisarevskii materials relevant to this topic, i.e. chs. 9 and 10 on 262-338, are available in a rough English translation at MHCA, Volume 4047, File 5. See also David H. Epp, *Die Chortitzer Mennoniten*, 8ff, and Hildebrand, *I Erste Auswanderung*, 14.

¹² The reason for van Kampen's withdrawal is not clear, though it was reported to the Russian emigration authorities who needed to be notified of the change of plans, that Jakob's parents did not approve of his going because he was not married. Another reason may have been that they were unwilling to risk losing his family support in case the delegates would not return. See Rempel, *The Mennonite Commonwealth*, 15ff. The statement in Mannhardt, *Die Danziger Mennonitengemeinde*, 128, that the preparation of the traveling contract was made without knowledge of the church leaders is probably not accurate. Bishop Peter Epp at least would most likely have been kept well informed of what was going on.

interested in moving to New Russia.

In a contract document signed on September 22 / October 3, 1786, Trappe stated that all the expenses of the land scouting trip would be paid by the Russian government, with funds and other support to be provided regularly as needed. This document also said that the day of departure for the delegates had been set for October 19/30 of that year.¹³

A number of German Lutheran families were also assembled to travel at this time. The number of passengers, including Hoepfner and Bartsch, as well as Trappe, would total 141.¹⁴ Many people were present to see them off, not certain when, or if, they would see the Mennonite delegates or the other passengers, again. The ship's skipper, Kedtels, assured the group that God had given Him the promise that the ship would arrive safely in Riga shortly.¹⁵

THE FIRST LETTER TO SUSANNA

Susanna, Johann's wife, had remained at home to look after the small Bartsch farm, and, of course, their children Susanna, Maria and Sara. The first letter, written from Riga, is dated November 11, 1786.¹⁶ While

¹³ On the number of families represented by the land scouting delegates, see Hildebrand, *Erste Auswanderung*, 16-17. The Russian government's living expenses support for the deputies was to be four ducats or eleven rubles per month while on the way, including the anticipated temporary residence in Kherson. Ibid, 17. The text of the departure contract is found in Ibid, 17 and David H. Epp, *Die Chortitzer Mennoniten*, 10 -11. Epp seems to have equated October 19 Old Style, with October 31 New Style, though that assumed a twelve, not an eleven-day difference in the calendar dating.

¹⁴ Ibid. October 31 would have been the New Style date if calculated with the twelve-day difference in calendars as it was at the time Epp published his book. The October 31 date was also accepted in Lawrence Klippenstein, "The Mennonite Migration", 18 and "The Russian Mennonite Bicentennial", 3. See also George K Epp, *Geschichte der Mennoniten in Russland. Band I [History of the Mennonites in Russia. Volume I]* (Lage: Logos Verlag, 1997), 57, who dates the departure simply October 19 without any reference to calendar differences (thus implicitly supporting the October 30 date). See also David Rempel, "From Danzig to Russia", 10, and Kroeger, *Biography of Johann Bartsch*, 6.

¹⁵ David H. Epp, *Die Chortitzer Mennoniten*, 12.

¹⁶ It should be noted here that none of the copies available for this study are in the handwriting of Bartsch himself. They come from the hand of a copyist noted in each letter, named P. Priess, who likely had access to the originals in the possession of Johan (Joh.) Hildebrand (Hildeb.) from the Island of Chortitza village This first letter, dated in New Style, was quoted in part in David H. Epp, *Die Chortitzer Mennoniten*, 12. A preliminary translation of these four letters was originally submitted to the author by a late friend and colleague, Jacob K. Wiens, of Winnipeg, Manitoba, who passed away on September 3, 2006. Much

addressed specifically to Susanna and close relatives, the letter may well have had a circulation beyond the immediate family after it arrived at Nobel. The text reads as follows:

Riga d. 11. Novemb. 1786

Herzlich geliebte Frau und Kinder, Vettern, bruder und Schwestern, ihnen alle wünsche ich zuvor alles, was ihnen in Leib und Seele nützlich und selig sein kann und theue ihnen bekannt machen dass wir Gottlob gesund und glücklich in Riga angekommen sind. Absonderlich so schreibe ich an dir, meine liebe Frau, und es sollte mir sehr lieb sein, und ist dieses mein herzlicher Wunsch wenn ich dir in guter Gesundheit und in einem glückseligen Leben und mit diesen wenigen Worten antreffen möchte. Wir beide sind Gott Lob und Dank gesundt, und in einer Zeit von acht Tagen bei guten aber kümmerlichem Wetter Schwerem Wind und viel Gefahr in Riga angekommen. Und ist auch kein einziger Mensch verloren gangen, alle Menschen sind gesund heil angekommen. Es stehet denn um uns beiden also, wir sind in Riga, unsere ausgesetzten Gelder werden uns ganz willig gegeben zum Unterhalt, und werden mit Gottes Hilfe unsere Reise, und unsere Absichten in derselben, sobald wie es möglich ist fortsetzen. Wann wir aber werden zurück kommen das kann ich nicht schreiben du kannst dir aber vorstellen dass es gewiss spät im Frñjahr werden wird, ich weiss auch nicht, ob wir mehr Gelegenheit haben werden zu schreiben, Zum Beschluss, liebe Frau, so will ich dir herzlich gebeten haben, dass du dir doch nicht kränken und um mich bedauern möchtest wie es mir ins Künftige gehen wird, sondern lass dir dieses Trost erwecken dass der liebe Gott an allen Orten der Beschirmer der Seinigen ist und uns vor allem Unfall bewahren kann und will, übe du dich nur in der Gottseligkeit und hüte dich vor allen Dingen vor die Sünde, als welche die Ursache von allerlei Übel von Anfang gewesen ist und bleibet, und diese Vermahnung soll mir auch beständig im Herzen bleiben. Vergiss auch nicht das Gebet vor uns, so wie ich gleiches vor uns und dir nicht hinterlassen werden im Glauben vor Gott zu bringen und demütig damit anzuhalten so wird uns der liebe Gott auch allesämtlich beschirmen und Gutes wiederfahren

appreciated editorial and translation help has come also from Edwin D. Hoepfner, who has continued to translate into English other letters of this series.

lassen, laut seinen getreuen Verheissungen.

Übrigens, so nimm du deinen Beruf wahr so gut als es dir möglich ist und achte nicht die unnützen Reden welche unverständiger Weise über uns von allerlei unverständigen Leuten ergehen. Regiere doch unsere Kinder gut und führe sie zu Gottes Ehre an und vergiss doch nicht was ich dir von meinem einzigen kleinen Sohn kurz vor unserer Abreise erinnert habe. Endlich versuche dich in der Wirtschaft und in allen Dingen so zu verhalten, dass du dich allezeit getrösten kannst wenn wir wieder beisammen kommen, dass ich von allen Seiten Gelegenheit finde, dir in Liebe zu begegnen. Ich endige und empfehle dich liebe Frau und Kindern in den Schutz des gnädigen Gottes. Ich bleibe in aller Zuneigung und Liebe dein getreuer Ehemann

Johann Bartsch

Or. b. Joh. Hildebr. Ins. Chort. cop.v. p priess

[Riga, November 11, 1786

My dearly beloved wife and children, cousins, brother and sisters,

First of all, I extend my wish for all of you to enjoy everything that is needful and of benefit to body and soul, and want to inform you that, God be thanked, we all arrived in Riga safe and sound. I am writing this specially to you, my dear wife, to say that it would be my happiness, and my sincerest wish that this letter with its few lines may find you in good health and enjoying life's blessings.

Praise and thanks to God, both of us are in good health, and in eight days of good and miserable weather, strong winds and much danger, have reached Riga. No one on board was lost, and all arrived safely.

This is our situation. We are in Riga. Money advanced beforehand for our support, is being passed on to us without delay, so with God's help, we will be able to continue our journey with its intended purpose, as soon as possible. I cannot say when we will be returning, but you can assume that it will certainly be in late spring. I also do not know if we will have more opportunity to write.

In closing I would like to sincerely ask that you do not be anxious or worried about me, as to how things will go in the future. But let me assure you that God who is present everywhere, as protector of His own, wishes to, and

can keep us from harm and danger.

Practise godliness and above all beware of sin, which has been the root of all evil since the beginning, and still is that and I shall myself take heed of my warning and keep it in my heart. And do not forget to pray for us, and I will be mindful of the same for you and us, attempting to persevere before God in all humility, so that the love of God shall keep us all, so that we may experience good things as He has promised they will.

Furthermore be true to your profession, doing the best you possibly can, paying no attention to useless gossip about us, coming from the mouths of all kinds of ignorant people. Govern our children well and lead them to honor God. Do not forget what I mentioned to you regarding my only little son, shortly before our departure.¹⁷ And look after the affairs of our farm and everything else so that you can be assured that in every respect I will be able to meet you again in love when we are together again

I conclude with commending you, my dear wife and the children to the protection of our gracious God. I remain your ever devoted, loving and faithful husband

Johann Bartsch

Orig. w. Joh., Hildebr., Chort. Is. cop. by p. priess]

After a few days of rest in Riga, with time to take care of small business matters, including further traveling arrangements, the delegates continued by sleigh southward to their next stop at Dubrovno, a small town in White Russia (now Belarus, then the *gouvernement* of Mohilev), which belonged to a large estate owned in this region by Vice-Regent Potemkin. Here they were placed under the friendly hosting care of Lieutenant-Colonel Baron von Stahl, Adjutant General of Taurida.¹⁸ This place would become a

¹⁷ “Useless gossip” may be a reference to unfriendly, or even malicious, rumors which seemingly were being circulated by those who viewed the Bartsch and Hoepfner venture as a foolhardy and fruitless undertaking. The reference to a “small son” is puzzling. There seems to be no available document mentioning such a family member in the genealogies of the Bartsch family. The reference to a small son occurs twice (a later reference is ambiguous) in these Bartsch letters so a search for more data on this is definitely in order.

¹⁸ Pisarevskii renders Stahl’s title as *Oberstleutnant* (German translation). He notes that von Stahl was well-connected with Potemkin. See George K. Epp, *Geschichte der Mennonite., Band I*, 69, note 8., and Kroeger, *Biography of Johann Bartsch*, 6-7.

significant stopover for the emigrant families when they came through in 1788 on their way to a new settlement in New Russia.

From Dubrovno Bartsch wrote a second letter to Susanna dated December 1, 1786.¹⁹ It was in the possession of David H. Epp when he wrote *Die Chortitzer Mennoniten* [*The Chortitza Mennonites*] so he could quote from it in his book.²⁰ The original text reads as follows:

Meines Herzens Wunsch und Verlangen ist dieses ein wenig Schreiben von meiner Hand gesund und glücklich zu erlangen, ich kann dir herzensliebe Frau an jetzo mit nichts erfreuen, als nur mit meinem wenigen Schreiben von unsere Umstände. Wir hätten nicht gedacht, dass wir mehr schreiben würden. Da wir aber bei dem H. Baron von Stahl in Dubrovna angekommen sind und sehr freundl. von ihm angenommen worden, hat er selbst sich erbeten unser Schreiben mit seinem Briefe nach Danzig zu besorgen.

Ich schreibe dir weiter nichts mehr, als dieses Notwendige, dass wir von Riga abgereiset und in einer Zeit von 12 Tagen in Dubrowna angekommen sind. Wir haben diesen Weg gesund und glücklich überreiset und wissen Gott sei dank, weder von Krankheit noch Mangel. Wir sind den 29. November in Dubrowna gekommen und werden den 1. Dez. mit einem Courier weiter nach Kremenschug abgeschickt, um allda Ihre Durchlaucht den Reichsfürsten Potjemkin selbst zu sprechen und unser Vorhaben zu vollziehen. Unsere ausgemachten Monats-gelder haben wir bis dato richtig erhalten. Weil aber in Russland das Geld häufig xxx und das Essen teuer ist, so müssen wir wohl zusehen, dass wir auskommen, verüßern also gar nichts. So weit wir gekommen sind befinden wir es so dass ein Landmann wenn er nach deutscher Art Waaren machen kann, fast so viel Geld davor haben kann als er nur will,

¹⁹This was a New Style dating; the Old Style equivalent would have been November 20. George K. Epp erroneously referred to this letter as the first news (first letter) from their trip which Bartsch sent to his family, *Geschichte der Mennonite. Band I*, 57. Note the last letter of the name Dubrovno. Bartsch spelled the name of this estate Dubrovna, as have many others discussing this account. Some use the ending “o” as we will also in the main text here. That will follow the spelling of a relatively modern Russian atlas found at MHCA, *Atlas Mira* [World Atlas]. (Moskva, Ministrov postanovleniu soveta SSSR, 1954), Plate 28, and reference to it in an index to the atlas, *Ukazatel geograficheskikh nasvani* [Index to Geographical Place Names] (Moskva, 1954), 148.

²⁰David H. Epp, *Die Chortitzer Mennoniten*, 13.

denn der Russische Käse, Butter und Ackerbau ist mir ein lächerlich Ding, und wird doch alles teuer bezahlt, geschweige von solcher ausländischer deutscher Waare. Was nun mir von meinem Teil anbelangt, so bitte ich dir recht herzlich, dass du um meinet wegen dir ganz ruhig halten mögest und deinem Beruf mit allem Fleiss in aller Gottesfurcht magst wahrnehmen. Sorge nur vor unsere Kinder mit solcher Regierung die in Liebe und mit Verstand zugehet, ziehe nicht den Grösseren den Kleineren vor, sondern gedenke, dass sie alle die unsern sind, und stelle dir fest vor, was du auch den allerkleinsten Gutes thust, dass ist so hoch bei mir gehalten, als geschehe es mir selber - so viel von unsere Umstände.

Zum Beschluss wünsche ich, der gnädige und barmherzige Gott, der Schöpfer und Erhalter aller Kreaturen regiere und erhalte nach seiner grossen Güte dich, liebe Frau, und die Unsrigen und leite dich durch seinen guten Geist, das du mögest von ganzem Herzen Gott anhangen, ehren und dienen und alle Sünden fliehen! Ach ja, lieber Vater, gib uns doch in dieser letzten verkehrten bösen Zeit, welche in allen Landen herrschend ist, den Geist deines lieben Sohnes, auf dass wir durch ihn dir mögen bei unser Ende recht dienen und im wahren Glauben zum Schauen, die tröstliche Stimme deines lieben Sohnes mit folgenden Worten hören: Kommt her, ihr Gesegneten meines Vaters, erobert das Reich das euch bereitet ist von Anfang der Welt. Amen.

J. Bartsch

Dubrowna, d. 1 Dezember – anno 1786
Or. b. Joh. Hildebr. Ins. Chort, cop. v. p. priess

[My sincerest wish and heart's desire is that this brief letter from me will find you healthy and happy. My dear wife, I am sure there is nothing that will please you more than to receive what I have to say about our situation. We had not thought that we would write again. However after meeting our host, M. Baron von Stahl in Dubrovna and being received in such a friendly manner, he also offered to send our letter along with his to Danzig.

I will mention only the one thing that we left Riga and arrived in Dubrovna in twelve days. We traveled without any health problems or obstacles, and thanks be to God have not experienced sickness or any other need.

We arrived in Dubrovna on November 29 and will be traveling on to Kremenchug with a courier on December 1.²¹ There we expect to speak with His Serene Highness the Imperial Prince Potemkin himself to present our plans and complete what we came out to do.

We have received our promised monthly financial support promptly. However in Russia money is frequently /.../²² and bread is expensive so we have to be careful to make ends meet, with no overspending anywhere. Up to this point we have come to believe that a fellow-German making goods in the German way would be able to ask whatever prices he wished because the quality of Russian cheese, butter and farming is a laughable matter and very high-priced, not to mention the price of foreign German goods.

For my part, I would hope most sincerely that you would remain completely at peace regarding my well-being, and carry out your work with diligence under the

²¹The precise chronology of events is unclear here. The information available implies that the delegates left Riga on November 18 (New Style) meaning they had been there from November 9 (counting in an eight-day trip from Danzig to Riga beginning on November 1, as per the first letter by Bartsch)) till the 18th, or a total of 9 days. By the Old Style calendar the arrival in Dubrovno would be dated November 18. But we have also the statement in Pisarevskii that they arrived in Dubrovno on November 15 (presumably Old Style) which would be November 26 New Style, not November 29 as Bartsch stated. See Pisarevskii, *I z istorii*, 295. S.D. Bondar follows the Pisarevskii dating in *Sekta Mennonitov v rossii (v sviazi s istorii nemetzkoj kolonizatsii na iuge Rossii)* [*The Mennonite Sect in Russia [related to the History of German Colonization of south Russia]*] (Petrograd: V.D.Smirnova, 1916), 15. The statement by David G. Rempel that the journey took fifteen days from Danzig to Dubrovno is completely out of line with other references, and is likely erroneous. See "From Danzig to Russia", 11. The title used for Potemkin here is one granted to him by Joseph II of Austria in 1776. Simon Sebag Montefiore. *Potemkin: Catherine the Great's Imperial Prince* (New York: Vintage Books/Random House Inc., 2005), 154-155. From now on he would be called simply "The Prince", or also "Serenissimus" (i.e. "Most Serene"). See also Edwin D. Hoepfner, "A Letter from Hoepfner and Bartsch to Potemkin," *Mennonite Historian* XIV (December, 1988), 4, on the problems of translating the title and the form of address.

²²A word seems to be missing after "frequently" in Bartsch's letter - perhaps it was some equivalent of "devalued". One notes that David H.Epp in his quotation of this portion using... "haeufig?" also flagged the gap here. *Die Chortitzer Mennoniten*, 13. The copyist of the handwritten version used for this study simply marked the place with an X.

fear of God. Take good care of our children and look after them with love and common sense. Do not favor the older children over the younger ones and remember that we have them together. Keep in mind that the good you do to the smallest (one) I regard as something done to me personally. So much about our present circumstances.

In closing I would wish that our gracious and compassionate God, the creator and sustainer of all creation, would govern you and sustain you, dear wife and loved ones, with his great goodness, and that he would lead you through his good spirit, so that you may with your whole heart cling to, honor and serve God, and flee from all sin.

Ah, yes, dear Father, grant us in these last and perverse evil days, which prevail in every land, the spirit of your dear Son, so that through him we may serve you rightly till our dying days, and discern the comforting voice of your dear Son speaking these words: Come you blessed of the Father, inherit the Kingdom that has been prepared for you from the beginning of the world. Amen

J. Bartsch

Dubrovna December 1, 1786²³

Orig. w. Joh. Hildebr., Chort. Is. cop. by p. priess]

After a short rest stop in Dubrovno the delegates, accompanied by a courier, traveled via Kremenchug, where they first met Potemkin, to his temporary working headquarters at Kherson where they remained most of the winter.²⁴ Here they were introduced to a guide, Major Meier, a man

²³ What appears to be another reference to the little son at home with the family is found in this letter (third last paragraph). On considering this matter further (see Footnote 18) one could also suggest it may have been a foster child, perhaps an infant nephew of Johann and Susanna., Insel Chortitza village. Re the references to Johann Hildebrand possessing the letter see letter by Johann Hildebrand of February 24, 1890, in Ed Falk, transliterator., translator, and editor, *The "Hoepner" Letters 1877 – 1891. Folio 2* (Winkler, Man.: by the editor, 2004), L(etter) 18, 3.

²⁴ Hildebrand, *Erste Auswanderung*, 1, and Kroeger, *The Biography of Johann Bartsch*, 7. Kherson was a port lying thirty kilometers from the mouth of the Dnieper River at the Black Sea, and the first city constructed by Potemkin as part of his program of developing New Russia. Its beginnings are discussed in Montefiore, *Potemkin*, 267ff. It was said to have had about 40,000 inhabitants at the time of the delegates' visit, 30,000 of them military, and 10,000 civilians. *Ibid.*, 271. Potemkin had a mobile court, but in the course of his New Russian reign, located his capital at Kremenchug from July 4, 1784, to June 1, 1789. In

intimately familiar with the area, and in the winter of 1786-1787 the delegates set out on an extended exploration of possible sites for Mennonite settlement on the right bank of the Dnieper River north of Kherson, areas adjacent to the Ingul and Inguletz rivers as far north as St. Elizabeth, the region east of the Dnieper, possibly including the Molotschnaya Vody, and also the Crimean peninsula, a former Turkish possession which had become Russian territory only in 1783.²⁵

After weighing various settlement site options, Hoepfner and Bartsch chose what they regarded as a suitable tract of land, at the confluence of the Konskaia and Dnieper rivers opposite the city of Berislav, not far north of Kherson. It reminded them a good deal of the Danzig region's terrain. Their decision and a list of conditions which they decided would need to be met if Mennonites were to come in large numbers, were incorporated in a "Twenty-Point Petition" which they submitted to Potemkin's chancellery at Kremenchug on April 22, 1787.²⁶ The petitions included a request that Potemkin might intercede with the tsarina on their behalf.

The petition lay unattended by Potemkin for some time due to preparations he needed to make for the pending royal visit of Tsarina Catherine to inspect her southern realm.²⁷ The tour brought her as far as

the latter year the capital was moved to Ekaterinoslav on the Dnieper River.. Potemkin had large estates in the area as well. Ibid, 292, 311, 367, 382.

²⁵ Details on how the delegates assessed the various areas they saw are in Pisarevskii, *Iz istorii*, 296ff. Potemkin had given them free rein to decide which area would best suit their settlement needs. The references to visiting the Molotschnaya area need primary source documentation. See George K. Epp, *Geschichte der Mennoniten, Band I*, 58, Klippenstein, "The Mennonite Migration", 18, and Rempel, "From Danzig to Russia", 11.

²⁶ Locally Berislav was still known as Kisi-Kermen. A name change, made official in 1784, had come when the area became Russian with the Treaty of Kuchuk-Kainarji in 1774 ten years earlier. George K. Epp, *Geschichte der Mennoniten, Band I*, 69. The spelling "Berislavl" is also used in several sources. For these events see also Rempel, "From Danzig to Russia", 12, and *The Mennonite Commonwealth*, 23ff, as well as Pisarevskii, *Iz istorii*, 297-298. Being in the heart of the New Russian south, one assumes that the date April 22, used by Pisarevskii, *Iz istorii*, 297, for the handing over of the petition to Potemkin would have been Old Style, though the Hildebrand and David H.Epp accounts of these proceedings do not make reference to the date of the handover. If in fact Hoepfner and Bartsch dated their petition April 22 they might actually have used their own New Style dating. See the files of Edwin Hoepfner in Winnipeg, Manitoba, for a Russian map of the Konskaia River/Berislav area.

²⁷ Catherine's trip, which began in January, 1787, is described by Montefiore in *Potemkin*, 363ff. See also Louis Philippe de Segur. *Russia Observed: Memoirs and Recollections of Count Louis Philippe de Segur* (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1970), Volume 3, 1ff, and Theresia Adamczyk, "Die

Kremenchug on April 30 /May 11, and on May 2/13 Potemkin presented the two delegates to Catherine in the presence of several members of the diplomatic corps (the ambassadors of Austria, France and Great Britain who were with her on the trip). She received the delegates most graciously, told them that prospective Mennonites settling in New Russia would certainly receive her protection and benevolence, and invited the delegates to go with her and the entourage as they completed the trip southward to Crimea.²⁸

The delegates would have preferred to get their business over with and be on their way home. They realized however (perhaps were advised) that this was an invitation which they should not refuse. So they accompanied the imperial entourage, and did some more exploring in the Crimea region, hoping all the time that Potemkin would give a response to their petition soon. He took his time, however, and on June 4/15 they inquired again.²⁹ Potemkin was present in Kremenchug from June 16-18 /June 27-29, 1787 and now worked out his responses to the points of the Petition. On July 4/15 the Twenty-Point Petition, with Potemkin's replies to each request, was returned to the delegates.³⁰

Bartsch and Hoepfner now felt they must go to St. Petersburg to have the agreement of the Twenty-Point Petition ratified at the court. Though Potemkin resisted the idea at first, he finally did agree that this

Reise Katharinas II. Nach Südrussland im Jahre 1787," [*The Journey of Catharine II to Russia in the Year 1787*] *Jahrbücher für Kultur und Geschichte der Slaven* [*Yearbooks on the Culture and History of the Slavs*], 1930, 25-53. A grand reception for Potemkin and his court had taken place in Kiev on April 22, the exact day when Hoepfner and Bartsch handed in their petition to Potemkin's chancellery. Montefiore. *Potemkin*, 363. The cruise was intended, among other things, to make her presence felt more directly in New Russia, and served as well to carry on certain diplomatic discussions, especially with the Austrian Kaiser Joseph II who was one of the guests of the tour, and whose support was being wooed for the ongoing struggle against Turkey.

²⁸ Rempel, "From Danzig to Russia", 14, and Pisarevskii, *Iz istorii*, 298. See also Hildebrand, *Erste Auswanderung*, 5ff.

²⁹ The dating appears to be New Style, being on a document produced by the delegates, hence June 4/15. The delegates asked for a response on the basis of really needing to get back to their families, with no letters getting through to them for a long time. See Pisarevskii, *Iz istorii*, 298, for the wording of their note to Potemkin, and also the dating.

³⁰ The dating also appears to be New Style, hence July 4/15. Most of the Western literature has however accepted the date July 5 used in S.D. Bondar. *Sekta Mennonitov*, 15, who cited Pisarevskii, *Iz istorii*, 298, for his source. See Klippenstein, "The Mennonite Migration", 20, based on Rempel, *The Mennonite Commonwealth*, 28. The Russian text of the Twenty-Point Petition is in Pisarevskii, *Iz istorii*, 299ff, and David G. Rempel analyzes it in some detail in *The Mennonite Commonwealth*, 24ff. See also David H. Epp, *Die Chortitzer Mennoniten*, 16ff.

would be a useful procedure and made arrangements for them to be accommodated properly in traveling and during their stay in St. Petersburg. So, as Hildebrand put it, “Accompanied by many well wishes from various high officials, they set off by courier”.³¹ Available sources do not mention the length of the trip but two weeks or possibly a little longer, may have gotten them there.³²

The stay in St. Petersburg stretched somewhat beyond expectations in order, first of all, to let Hoepfner’s leg heal (he had injured it just before arriving in St. Petersburg), and secondly, to obtain the appointments with officials which the delegates sought during those days. A meeting at Gatchina with Grand Duke Paul and his wife, Maria Feodorovna, could be arranged by Trappe and an acquaintance of his. The delegates were warmly received, a pleasant portent, as they saw it, for the emigration that was being planned. At the conclusion of that meeting they handed a Mennonite Confession of Faith to the couple, and wished them well.³³

The most important moment was the drawing up of Catherine’s personal stamp of royal assent (*Immenoi Ukaz*) affirming the Potemkin/Bartsch/Hoepfner agreement, signed by Count Alexander A. Bezborodko, acting for the tsarina. In summary form, this statement drew up the items of the Twenty-Point Petition with Potemkin’s responses given in July some months before. The tsarina signed the document, with the count’s counter signature added. This document was dated August 12/23 though it was not officially published till September 7/18, 1787.³⁴ This was the **first**

³¹ Rempel, *The Mennonite Commonwealth*, 29, and Hildebrand, *Erste Auswanderung*, 19.

³² One author has dated the accident August 2, but the source of this information is not given. The date does not appear in other sources used here. See also Kroeger, *Biography of Johann Bartsch*, 10, and David H. Epp, *Die Chortitzer Mennoniten*, 15.

³³ Details of this meeting are in Rempel. *The Mennonite Commonwealth*, 29. This personal contact may have helped to get a positive response from Paul when he became tsar in 1796, and the Mennonites, David Epp and Gerhard Willms, set out in 1798 to have their Charter of Colonization, i.e. the *Privilegium*, confirmed by Paul I. The two men obtained that imperial endorsement in 1800. Scholars frequently refer to the document signed by Paul as the first *Privilegium*, but it was in fact basically a confirmation of the first one signed by Potemkin and Catherine, though including some terms not found in it earlier (in that sense, a “second” *Privilegium*)

³⁴ Rempel. *The Mennonite Commonwealth*, 30. Rempel found a copy of this document in an article by Alexander Churikov, entitled “O pereselenii mennonitov v rossii,” [“Concerning the Settlement of Mennonites in Russia”] published in *Russkaia Starina* [*Russian Antiquities*] CXXIV (1879), 146. Another chronology of events dates the Bezborodko document September 5, 1787. This document included a promise to provide a formal “Charter of Privileges” if the Mennonites would find the Potemkin-Catherine response

Charter of Settlement (sometimes called Privileges, or *Privilegium*) which the prospective Prussian Mennonite emigrants received from the Russian crown.

While in St. Petersburg, on August 28 Bartsch wrote another letter to Susanna, the longest of those extant and included in this study.³⁵ The text reads as follows:

Geliebte treugeschätzte Ehefrau

Dass es den Menschen in der Welt nicht allemal so gehet, wie sie es sich wünschen und begehren, hoff ich, wirst du mir gerne gestehen und ich glaube ich bin in meinen Vorstellungen dass dir die Zeit wegen mein langes Ausbleiben lang wird und beunruhigt, vielleicht auch betrübet, auch gewiss, wir hätten zur Zeit meiner Abreise wohl niemals denken sollen dass meine zurückkunft sich solange verziehen würde und das kam daher dass keiner von uns jemals mit grossen Monarchen und Monarchinen zu thun gehät habe denen aber die von diesem allen Erkenntnis haben, wundert es noch, dass unsere Geschäfte so geschwinde betrieben werden. Und woher das? Daher weil sie wissen und kennen die Grösse des Russischen Reiches die unaussprechliche Menge der wichtigen Geschäfte die den unseren noch vorgehen und darum bleibt der Obenerwähnte wahr, man kann mit seinen Geschäften und Verrichtungen nicht so fortfahren wie man will, sondern man muss sich in den Umständen schicken und mit viel Geduld und Mühe die gnädige und günstige Blicke der grossen Monarchin, wie auch derer die in ihrem Dienste sind erwarten. Die Zeit ist mir auch sehr lang geworden, ausserdem haben mir die vielen Gedanken und Bekümmernisse um dir und unsere Kinder auch nicht wenig Betrübnis beigebracht. Doch habe ich die grosse Gnade von Gott dass ich immer ziemlich gesund bin welches ich Gott verdanke und sehr hoch schätze und das deswegen noch mehr da wir die Örter Russlands so unterschiedlich antreffen. Bald sind wir in warmen, bald in mittelmässigen, bald in kalten Ländereien und Gott erhält uns doch gesund; ich bin an jetzo viel gesunder als im Herbst bei meiner Abreise. Im Winter hatte ich wohl eine kleine Verdriesslichkeit wie mir alle Zehe on meinen

satisfactory, and an emigration actually would take place. David H. Epp, *Die Chortitza Mennoniten*, 28. See also Pisarevskii, *Iz istorii*, 306.

³⁵The Mennonite delegates left soon after this. Their stay in St. Petersburg seems to have lasted from seven to eight weeks.

Füssen verfroren. waren und ich selber nicht weiss, wie ich dazu gekommen bin, denn ich ward sehr krank und wusste nicht so recht was mir geschah, es ist aber lange alles wieder besser, und ob mir zur Zeit der Abreise diese Sache wohl schwer machte, wollte ichs nicht glauben, man hat mir gesagt es würde mich schlecht gehen in solcher grossen Entfernung von den meinigen, ich habe aber bestanden, dass der grosse Gott allgegenwärtig ist und ist mir allenthalben eben nahe, er hat mich von allem Übel erlöst und erhält mich bis diese Stunde dass ich also mit ihm viel besser als mit vielen Menschen zufrieden bin. Auf unserer Frühlingsreise sind wir immer ziemlich glücklich unter der nie genügepriesenen Fürsorge von dem Herrn Hofrath v. Trappe gewesen, jetzo sind wir in einer schönen weltberühmten Stadt allewo es an nichts mangelt, und man kann wenn Geld vorrätig ist alles vollauf haben und darf nicht Not leiden, abersist alles ziemlich teuer, wir können aber Gott Lob noch alles bezahlen was wir brauchen, dabei werden wir aber niemals ohne Geld. Es ist zu bewundern wie Butter und Käse in Russland so sehr teuer ist. Das Pfund Butter kostet 2 Fünf. und ist ziemlich schlecht, das Pfund guten Käse 8 Sechs. Wollen wir es essen so müssen wir den Preiss bezahlen; doch dieses schadet uns nicht sonderlich viel, denn es kann noch eine Zeit kommen dass es von unserer Seite heissen wird, mit dem Masse da ihr mit messet, wird man euch wieder messen, wir bleiben an jetzo lange Zeit aus, aber wir lernen des Landes Verfassung dadurch desto besser kennen und einsehen was uns vorteilhaft sein kann, Es sieht aber in dem Teile Russland wo wir anjetzt sind schlecht aus, mein Wunsch, dass es künftiges Jahr besser sein möge, wie man wohl hofft, denn es geht fast nicht ein Tag ohne Regen ab, das Korn muss auf dem Felde verderben, wo es bei Danzig soviel regnet so wird besonders in dieser Herbstzeit an die späte Getreide und zweite Heuernte viel Schaden durch den Regen verursacht werden. Es ist fast unnötig viel mehr zu schreiben als notwendig ist; ich lasse dir liebe Frau wissen dass dieses wohl der letzte Brief sein wird, den ich dir im ganzen Leben schicke aus Russland, was ausserdem sich noch zutragen kann, wo ich noch was lebe ist mir dann unbewusst. Ich will dir aber als eine, ja als meine brave, ehrliche Frau, die du hoffentlich anjetzo noch sein wirst berichten, dass wir bald nach Hause kommen werden. Es kommt mir immer so vor als ob ich jetzt schon sehr nahe bei Hause bin. In der Wahrheit haben wir nur eine kleine

Reise zu Lande zu thun. Die ersten drittelhalb hundert Meilen werden uns bis Danzig bringen. Wir sind sozusagen abgefertigt, und dass wir schon soweit sind, davor haben wir wie auch vor alle andere Edelmütige und wohlmeinende Vorsorge vor uns, dem Herrn Hofrat unterthänigst zu danken, sonst wäre es wohl nichts neues wenn wir noch wo ein Halbjahr uns aufhielten, anjetzo gewinnt aber unsere Sache ihre Verfertigung. Die Zeit aber kann ich nicht bestimmen, da ich zu dir kommen werde, Ich wünsche aber von Herzen, dass du diese wenigen Zeilen bei guter Gesundheit empfangen mögest und dass dich der Allmächtige nebst alle Unsrigen, wenns ihm nach seiner Weisheit nützlich zu sein dünkt, gesund erhalten wolle, damit wir uns in Freuden wieder erblicken mögen . Lass dir die übrige kurze Zeit meiner Abwesenheit nur nicht lang werden; suche sie zu verkürzen durch das Mittel des Gebets vor uns, um eine glückliche Zurückreise, weil man aber nicht immer beten kann auch nicht darf, so verwende die übrige Zeit in guter und vorteilhafter Wirtschaft, du wirst mir dadurch auch keinen Verdruss erwecken, ich weiss dir keinen bessern Rat zu erteilen . Lebe wohl, liebe Frau, mit den Unsern, Gott erhalte und beschirme euch ferner, ich verbleibe unveränderlich

Dein getreuer Ehemann

Johann Bartsch

St. Peterburg, d. 28 August 1787

Or.b. Joh.. Hildebr., Ins. Chort. cop.v p. priess

[My beloved and faithful wife:

I hope you will readily agree that things in the world do not always happen the way people would want them to. I believe I am right in assuming that you are finding my long absence dragged out and disheartening, and you may be depressed about it by now. Certainly we did not imagine at the time of my departure that my return would be delayed this long, resulting no doubt from the fact that none of us had ever had anything to do with powerful monarchs and empresses,. And yet those who are familiar with such things wonder how we could complete our business as quickly as we did.

So how did this happen? It is because those who know about the immensity of the Russian empire and the

incredible amount of work that must take priority over our concerns can see how this might occur. One cannot always proceed with one's business and plans as one might wish to, but one has to adapt to one's circumstances, and with much patience and effort wait for the favor and graciousness of the great empress and those who serve her.

Time has dragged on very much for me also, and concern for you and our children has burdened my heart greatly as well. Yet I have been fortunate to have remained mostly in good health for which I thank God, and which I value greatly. This is all the more noteworthy since the different areas have such varied weather. Sometimes we were in warmer parts, then in more moderate ones, and then again in colder regions, and God gave us health throughout.

I am in fact now healthier than I was last fall when we left. In winter I did have a small setback when I froze all my toes, and I am not quite certain how that could happen. I was quite sick and did not know what was really happening to me. That is however all in the past, and I cannot really imagine that it was the departure which made things difficult. I was told that I would have a big problem being so far from my family. I did make it through however. God is always present, and remains so for us at all times. He has protected me against all evil, and kept me till this hour, so that I am closer to him than to many people.

During our travels in spring we were well cared for under the never-to-be-sufficiently-praised protection of Mr. Court Counselor von Trappe. Now we are in a world-renowned city where there is no shortage of anything. If we have enough money we can buy anything we wish, and thus lack nothing, although things are expensive. Thanks be to God, we are still able to pay for what we need, and have sufficient funds for that. It is amazing how expensive butter and cheese are here in Russia. A pound of butter costs two five, and is of poor quality. A pound of cheese costs eight six. If we want to have some we simply have to pay the price, but this cannot harm us much because a time may come when it will be said: The measure you have measured us with, we will use on you also.

We have indeed been gone a long time, but in so doing have learned to know this country better, and can understand more clearly what would be advantageous to us. Things are not so attractive in the part of the country where we are now. We hope it will be better next year. Hardly a

day goes by when it does not rain, which means the grains must rot on the fields. Where it would rain this much in Danzig, especially in fall, the late crops and the second hay harvest would suffer much damage from the rain.

It is almost unnecessary to write more, but I do need to tell you, dear wife, that this is probably the last letter I will ever in my life write to you from Russia. Whatever else may happen yet, I do not know. But I do want to tell you as my courageous faithful wife, which I trust you remain, that we expect to come home soon. It seems to me that in fact we are close to home already. We have only a short distance to go by land now. The first three hundred and fifty(?) miles will take us to Danzig.

We have basically finished everything we need to do and that we have come this far we humbly owe with deep thanks to the excellent and well- planned provisioning of our Court Counselor. It might otherwise have taken easily half a year more.

As things stand now, our affairs are being wound up, but I cannot say just when we will get there [i.e. to Danzig]. I hope very much that these lines will find you in good health, and that God may regard you and all our people useful according to His wisdom, and may keep you healthy, and that we may meet each other again in peace.

Do not let the remaining short time of our absence get too long for you. The time may go faster if you pray for our protection and safe return. Since one cannot always be praying, and really ought not to do so, it will be good to be busy with useful work on the farm which will certainly not displease me. I have no better advice to give to you. Farewell, my dear wife, and the same to our children. May God continue to sustain and shelter all of you.

I remain unfailingly your faithful husband .

Johann Bartsch

S. Petersburg August 28, 1787³⁶

³⁶ David H. Epp, *The Chortitzer Mennoniten*, 16, has a quote from this letter, but there erroneously dated it August 27, 1787. It is not clear where the discrepancy originated. The 1984 reprint of Epp's work by *Mennonitische Post* enlarges the error by giving the date as August 27, 1887. See p.17. The distance and coinage references in this letter are difficult to translate and need further research. Any references to miles in these letters would be to the Danziger *Meile* [mile] of 7.56

Orig.w. Joh. Hildebr. Chortit Is. cop by p. priess]

Bartsch, Hoepfner and Trappe now made plans to return to Danzig as soon as possible. Trappe suggested they go via Riga to Warsaw, then on to Danzig, and were able to engage a stagecoach to make the trip. In Warsaw they planned to inform the Polish government about the planned emigration to New Russia, with the hope that this government, being a client state of Russia, and not wishing to offend the latter, might be able to mitigate the Danzig city administration's obstructive tactics and strategies.³⁷

The trio was quite surprised in Riga to meet up with a small group of emigrating Danzig Mennonite families who were already in route to New Russia – actually, the very first departing group to leave for New Russia. They had received Danzig documents permitting departure, had also traveled to Riga by ship, and had arrived just a few days prior to this encounter. Exactly where they were headed is not quite clear — a report of the Berislav agreement presumably had not yet reached Danzig. They were in any case stranded in Riga. They had already exhausted their travel funds, and had begun to sell their personal possessions in order to purchase food and other provisions. Trappe quickly connected them with the appropriate authorities to obtain the needed support.³⁸

km. See Edwin D. Hoepfner, "Some Eighteenth Century Units of Measurement for Danzig, West Prussia, and Russia for Translation and Interpretation," *Mennonite Historian* XXXI (March, 2005), 8-11. The prices were likely quoted in Prussian currency, possibly in Groschen and Pfennige (ducats?).

³⁷ Hildebrand noted that they could travel "*per Post*" meaning by postal coach. Trappe had included reference to arrangements for return from St. Petersburg, either via Warsaw, or otherwise, in his September 22 agreement with the delegates. Hildebrandt, *Erste Auswanderung*, 18. See also Rempel, *The Mennonite Commonwealth*, 30, and Hildebrand, *Erste Auswanderung*, 22. Mennonite maps of the total journey have up to this point usually failed to indicate the Warsaw part of the journey which the delegation did include in its return itinerary. For a map not showing this portion of the trip see Hildebrand, *Erste Auswanderung*, 26b. The Warsaw part is included on the route map in this study. It needs to be noted that this map is somewhat of an approximation of the route. More recent research provides corrections and needed related information. See Edwin D. Hoepfner, "Comments on the map of the route taken by Hoepfner and Bartsch, 1786-1787," *Preservings*, Issue No. 26, 2006, 83-84.

³⁸ Six family heads of the group are mentioned in the sources: Hans Hamm, Kornelius Willms, Peter Regehr, Jakob Harder, Diedrich Isaak and Franz Barkmann, along with an unmarried man, Abraham Krahn. George K. Epp, *Geschichtd der Mennonitien, Band I*, 66-67, Hildebrand, *Erste Auswanderung*, 22, David H. Epp, *Die Chortitizer Mennniten*, 26. Barkman is not listed with the group in Klippenstein, "The Mennonite Migration", 22. See also B.H Unruh, *Die niederlaendish-niederdeutschen Hintergruende*, 203-205, who mentions seven families in this initial group (perhaps counting Abraham Krahn, the single

Here in Riga Bartsch decided to write one more letter to Susanna which may have reached her only shortly before the delegates got back in early November. It is dated October 7, 1787, Old Style (i.e. October 18, New Style), the first one in which Bartsch's dating recognizes the two-calendar difference explicitly.³⁹ The text follows below:

Herzlichgeliebte u. werteste Ehefrau!

Ich habe die Nachricht mir zur grossen Freude erhalten, dass du ein Schreiben von mir aus S. Petersburg richtig erhalten hast; ob ich zwar darin gemeldet nicht mehr zu schreiben, so hat mich doch die gute Gelegenheit anjetzo bewogen dieses wenige dir zuzuschicken. Der Inhalt macht dir bekannt dass ich Gottlob noch gesund in St. Petersburg 7 Wochen, nachdem 6 Tage auf der Reise, also glücklich in Riga angekommen bin, die Zeit aber da wir wieder aus Riga abreisen, wird nicht durch mich bekannt gemacht. Viele wichtige Geschäfte zu vieler Menschen bestes erfordert Zeit, es ist daher unmöglich festzusetzen meine Ankunft zu Hause, möchte es aber noch etwas dauern und undeutliche Menschen Betrübnis erweckende Reden zuwege bringen, das es uns unterweges etwa wo unglücklich gegangen und wir daher so lange ausbleiben, so bitte ich dir, liebste Frau, recht herzlich, glaube nicht jedem Maul denn obwohl an vielen, jedoch nur von wenigen Verständig geredet wird, Wir haben die Ehre dass wir mit dem Herrn Hofrat von Trappe zusammen reisen. Noch ist uns nichts zu Leide geschehen, und wird hoffentlich ferner auch nicht, Gottes Schutz ist allenthalben und wir werden uns nun bald sehen. Ich wünsche von Herzen dass ich dir liebe Frau mit allen unsern Kindern auch gesund und guten Mutes sehen möge. Befinde ich dieses nebst anderen unterschiedlichen Umständen, die da alle zusammen nur antreiben können dir Lob und Ruhm

man, as one family) and notes that the delegates had written already from St. Petersburg that prospective emigrants should put up some grain in preparation for moving thus giving encouragement to the most eager families to get underway immediately. It would be four or five months before the emigration proper would begin. Hoepfner would take his group in March, 1788, making a total of 19 families en route to New Russia up to that point.

³⁹ The Old Style notation could raise the question whether Bartsch already used Old Style dating for his August 28 letter written in St. Petersburg, without saying so. For this instance of dating it is also possible that he no longer had a New Style dating calendar with them hence, being unsure of the New Style date of writing, he simply reverted to the Old Style used in Riga.

beizulegen. Es soll mir eine grosse Freude sein und die herzliche Liebe zu dir soll unauslöschlich bleiben. Lebe wohl in Gott.

D.G.M

Johann Bartsch

Riga 1787 d. 7ten October a.Stils
Or. b. Joh. Hildebr. Ins. Chort. cop. v. p. priess

[My warmly loved and dearest wife:

I am very pleased and happy that you have received my letter from St. Petersb. in good order. I had written that I did not intend to write again, but a good opportunity /to send one?/ moved me to write this short note. I am pleased to tell you that God be thanked, I was well throughout the 7 weeks we spent in S. Petersburg, and that after 6 days' travel we arrived safely in Riga. However I am not able to say when we will leave this city. Some important matters of business concerning the well-being of many people need to be looked after, and that takes time, so one cannot know how long it will be till we arrive at home.

But if it should still be a while and if disturbing rumor-mongers should spread talk about some misfortunes on the way having delayed us, I ask you, dear wife, not to listen to such scandalous chatter.⁴⁰ Only a few can speak intelligently about these things. We have had the honor to travel with Counselor von Trappe. So far nothing harmful has happened to us, and we trust that God's protection will be with us and that we will see you again soon.

I hope with all my heart that I will find you and the children all in good health and good spirits. If I find it so then with various other circumstances I will be moved to praise and honor you. That will be a great joy to me, and my sincere love for you remains as always. God's best to you always!

Your faithful husband⁴¹

⁴⁰ Rumors about possible misfortunes happening to the delegation were indeed circulating in Danzig, and are discussed in David H. Epp, *Die Chortitzer Mennoniten*, 25-26.

⁴¹ The meaning of the closing abbreviation "D.G.M" in the original is somewhat unclear. The translation here assumes the abbreviation to mean "d(ein)

Johann Bartsch

Riga 1787, the 7th of October, Old Style
Orig. w, Joh. Hildebr. Chortitz Is. cop. by p . priess]

The three-man delegation arrived in Danzig on a Saturday, October 30 / November 10, a market day just before Martini (St. Martin's Day). That holiday fell on October 31 / November 11, 1787, which was a Sunday. The trip had taken them one year and eleven days. The three men now headed straight for the Russian consulate on Langgarten Street and were warmly welcomed there. People generally were astonished to see the delegation again, many having doubted that they would in fact return.⁴² Interest in emigration was significantly heightened at once, and people came from near and far to discuss the future of the move. Trappe set about immediately to debrief to the Russian consulate and then also to the Mennonites themselves.⁴³

The consulate quickly gave the green light to proceed with the emigration. Trappe now prepared a report to the churches with a further invitation to join the move, emphasizing especially the land grant prospects of the terms of settlement. He also invited all interested parties to gather at the Russian consulate on January 8/19, 1788 at nine o'clock in the morning, to receive the original documents of the Charter of Settlement (*Privilegium*) and the royal imperial approval signed by Catherine herself, as well as other information pertinent to the emigration. Trappe then distributed this report in the two Mennonite congregations of Danzig and other locations on

g(etreuer) M(ann) [Your faithful husband]. On the matter of ranking re *Hofrat*. see James Hassell, "The Implementation of Russian Table Ranks During the Eighteenth Century," *Slavic Review* 29 (June, 1970), 283-295, and Hans-Joachim Torke, "Das russische Beamtentum in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhundert," *Forschungen zur Osteuropäischen Geschichte (Researches in East European History)* (Berlin, 1967), 55, along with an email from Edwin Hoepfner to the author dated April 9, 2009.

⁴² A trip of one year and eleven days would assume the departure date to have been October 30, 1786. See Footnotes 14 and 15 on the date of departure discussed in other sources. David H. Epp, *Die Chortitzer Mennoniten*, 26; Hildebrand, *Erste Auswanderung*, 15. Langgarten 74 was the address of the Russian consulate (it is not certain when the number came into use) where Trappe would now reconnect with Russian officials to get the movement of people underway immediately. To speak of the consulate as being "in Langgarten", as in Klippenstein, "Mennonite Migration", 22, is imprecise with both the suburb and the street having the same name.

⁴³ Hildebrand, *Erste Auswanderung*, 22ff; Rempel, *The Mennonite Commonwealth*, 288; David H. Epp, *Die Chortitzer Mennoniten*, 25ff.

December 21/January 1, 1788.⁴⁴

Johann found his family had managed quite well in his absence, their great longing to have him back notwithstanding. Susanna had milked their cows daily and had the milk picked up for delivery to the city several miles away. They may have had help from neighbors and others to get by. By all accounts the family's needs had been well met.⁴⁵ No doubt Susanna and Johann now spent hours discussing their experiences during their separation, sharing many details about the trip which the letters had not included, and about the family over the past year. Most certainly they thanked God again for His protection of the family, and that the delegation had been given a safe trip with results which they hoped would benefit the whole community.

They now needed themselves to look at the question of emigration. What precisely motivated Johann and Susanna with their family to leave also is not altogether clear. The remuneration and rights promised by Trappe to him and Hoepfner assumed the move and may have helped them decide to go.⁴⁶ Nothing Johann had seen or heard had seemingly dissuaded him from joining other Danzig and Prussian Mennonite families now poised to leave for the lower Dnieper Berislav area of New Russia, and establish new homes there.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LETTERS

The four letters Bartsch wrote to Susanna in 1786-87 did not provide her with very much information about what the delegates experienced on the trip, or about the discussions they had with officials and others along the way. There would obviously have been a great deal to say. There is some oral evidence that Hoepfner may have kept a travel diary,

⁴⁴ The German text of this printed information is found in a photo of the December 29 document in Rempel, "From Danzig to Russia", 10, as well as in Hermann Enns, "From the Vistula to the Dnieper," *Mennonite Life* 6 (October, 1951), 14-18, 30, and printed in David H. Epp, *Die Chortitzer Mennoniten*, 34-35. An English translation is in Hildebrand. *From Danzig to Russia*, 16-17. New Year's Day mentioned in connection with the distribution is assumed here to have had the New Style dating in Hildebrand's reference, as is the scheduled date in Trappe's brochure for the meeting at the Russian consulate just over two weeks later.

⁴⁵ Hildebrand, *Erste Auswanderung*, 23ff.

⁴⁶ It can be assumed these had been discussed before the exploration began. The nature of the remuneration was outlined in a document, in identical copies for both delegates dated January 8/19, 1788, which was given to the two men at the January 19/30, 1788, meeting at the Russian consulate. As Rempel points out, the special privileges and gratuities promised in this document, were very generous, and among other things, may have contributed to the resentment against the recipients which would be generated in the early period of the settlement in Chortitza. Rempel, *The Mennonite Commonwealth*, 289.

although a copy has not surfaced for research so far.⁴⁷ One may assume that Trappe will have reported to the authorities at Kremenchug and St. Petersburg, or both. Perhaps Hoepfner wrote to people back home and filled that information gap, but again, no letters from this trip showing that he did so are available to date.

There could have been other letters by Bartsch which too did not survive. We know he did write to other people like David Epp in Danzig when the emigration got underway and later. The four written to his wife were basically personal letters which could reassure Susanna that all was going well on the trip, that he himself was in good hands, and that wherever they stopped, as they traveled, provisions were available for them. That would have meant a great deal to Susanna, perhaps was what she would be most interested in, as Bartsch will have surmised.

That the correspondence could be undertaken does speak of a functioning postal system efficient enough certainly to get the four letters through. New roads were being built at the time though travel was still somewhat primitive in places. There may in fact have been personal couriers who could take mail with them alongside the regular mailing system. The letter dated October 7, 1787, suggests as much.

Along with his reporting on the progress of their movements, Bartsch does give us a glimpse of his personal piety and spirituality through these extant letters. A great deal of Christian concern is reflected in the writing, and his love for Susanna and his family is amply documented there. It is still a good question to ask: How was it that Bartsch, with three (four?) small children, and still a young man himself had the courage and readiness to undertake the venture as he did? Material rewards alone would not explain it all.

The letters also offer details which help to fix the time line of the venture more accurately. They give the first indications of what would become the transit route to the settlement site at Khortitza, New Russia, in the next several years. The delegates blazed the trail, as it were, for many families who would come later, 228 in the first wave of the emigration. Bartsch himself would take charge of one such emigrating family group in

⁴⁷ A former Canadian Member of Parliament, Jake Hoepfner, of Morden, Manitoba, has claimed to have spoken to Hoepfner *Ruecksiedler* (returnees from the Soviet Union) in Germany, who informed him that at the time of their conversation, in the late 1980s or early 1990s, a Hoepfner family in Siberia was in possession of a travel diary manuscript covering the land scout expedition of 1786-87. This traveler related further that the owner of that manuscript has since moved to Germany, but that the manuscript had been damaged by rain when left on a window sill somewhere. He was also told that the manuscript had been photocopied by some archives in Germany but could not say which one it was, nor indicate where the manuscript might be now.

the late fall of 1788.⁴⁸ In joining this land scouting expedition, as he had done, Bartsch had played a formative role in beginning to write an important East European chapter in the Mennonite story as a whole.

⁴⁸ The story of the emigration itself is beyond the scope of this article. For a short summary of the total experience see Klippenstein, "Mennonite Migration", 23ff, and his article, "The Khortitza Colony in New Russia: Its Founding and Early Years," in Heinz Bergen, ed., *Chortitza Colony (Altkolonie) Atlas* (Saskatoon: Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan, 2004), 94ff. A more detailed description within a broader context is given in David G. Rempel, "Mennonite Migration to New Russia (1787-1870)," *MQR* 9 (April, 1935), 71-91 and (July, 1935), 109-128, and his article "From Danzig to Russia", 17-28. Note also his *The Mennonite Commonwealth*, 35, which claims that "all official Russian sources state that 228 families had been sent from Dubrovna to Chortitza by the spring of 1789". For a discussion of the Prussian background for the move see also Paul Karge, "Die Auswanderung west-und ostpreussischer Mennoniten nach Südrussland (nach Chortitza und Molotschna) 1787-1820," ["The Emigration of West and East Prussian Mennonites to South Russia (to Chortitza and Molotschna) 1787-1820] *Elbinger Jahrbuch*, Heft 3 [*Elbing Yearbook, Volume 3*], Elbing, 1923. 80-88.