

Summary of documents for the year 1798
St. Petersburg (RGIA) Archives
Fond 383 Opis 29 Delo 161

Translation from Russian prepared by Danila Sobchakov for Glenn Penner, Nov 2019

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Scans obtained by Paul Toews, CMBS Fresno, 2011-14.

Our comments in [square brackets]

Note that some of the documents mentioned below have been translated.

Pg. numbers refer to the single pages in the order they appear in the original, not the irregular page numbering given at the top of each page.

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pg. 1 – no date

an order to send a reliable person to inspect all the colonies in Novorossiyskaya Guberniya, referencing a resolution from March 17th

pg. 2 – no date

“In Regards to Sending Court Councillor Kontenius to Inspect the Foreign Colonies;” a request to send Kontenius to the colonies in order to determine their true condition

pg. 3 – March 30th 1798

a notification that Kontenius’s inspection is approved; addressed to the Expedition of State Economy, Trusteeship on behalf of the Foreigners and Rural Housekeeping; signed by Alexey Kurakin

pg. 4 – April 6th 1798

a document referencing the approval of the Kontenius’s expedition and the need to notify him how much money he will be given for the needs of the expedition; mentions that the idea to send an expedition came from Duke Kurakin

pg. 5-6 – April 14th 1798

discussion of instructions for Kontenius, including a direction to make plans of all the colonies, their land and buildings

pg. 7-15 – no date

an instruction for Kontenius discussing various issues that he must investigate; mentions the number of Mennonite families arrived with each group, as well as what colonies they have settled in

pg. 16 – April 26th 1798

a resolution regarding the amount of travel money to be given to Kontenius as well as to Councillor Gavrilov who is going with him

pg. 17 – April 26th 1798

a report of how much money was issued to Kontenius and Gavrilov for the road

pg. 18 – no date

a calculation of how much distance Kontenius is expected to cover over the course of the expedition

pg. 19-20 – April 30th 1798

a letter, presumably by Kurakin, asking Ivan Yakovlevich Seletskiy to assist Kontenius in his work, particularly when it comes to mapping out the colonies

pg. 21-22 – May 27th 1798

Kontenius's report stating that he has met Seletskiy and spoke to him about surveyors he needs to map the colonies, requested the relevant financial statements from the local Treasury Office and intends to proceed to Chortitza

pg. 23 – June 23rd 1798

a confirmation that Kontenius's report from May 27th has been received

pg. 24-27 – June 3rd 1798

Schoenwiese and Krons Garten are mentioned; a letter from Seletskiy to Duke Kurakin, discussing what men could be spared for the purpose of mapping the colonies for Kontenius

pg. 28-29 – June 30th 1798

a notification that Seletskiy's letter from June 3rd has been received

pg. 30-41 – July 29th 1798

a report by Kontenius back to the Expedition; discusses inspection of Kronsweide and the issue of the colony's resettlement; discusses the issue of lack of land in the colonies Schoenwiese and Krons Garten; discusses a shipment of wood lost on the way to Chortitza and some other wood-related business; mentions plans of Schoenwiese, Chortitza and Krons Garten and offers some commentary on these plans; relates the Mennonites' request for the charter, which was promised to them on September 7th 1787; at the end Kontenius states that having inspected the Mennonite colonies he is proceeding to inspect the Lutheran colony Josephstal

pg. 42-43 – October 22nd 1797

a letter from colony director Brigontsi to the Governor of Novorossiyskaya Guberniya Ivan Seletskiy; a request to give some land claimed by Collegiate registrar Otchenashk's widow to the Lutheran Colony Josephstal and the Mennonite Colony Krons Garten; the letter also briefly discusses the history of the land in question, its geography and the needs of the colonies

pg. 44-45 – September 7th 1787

parallel text is available in Russian and in German; a copy of a statement on behalf of Catherine II addressed to the Mennonites in the Danzig district, promising them a certain charter if they resettle to Russia and will be satisfied with the conditions offered by Duke Potemkin's

pg. 46-76 – July 8th 1798 [this item translated separately]

a report by Kontenius on the state of Mennonite colonies; the first page is a table detailing the number of people and livestock, as well as the state of agriculture and housing in the colonies Chortitza, Rosenthal, Kampe [Insel Chortitza], Neuendorf, Neuenburg, Einlage, Schoenhorst, Kronsweide, Schoenwiese, Krons Garten; the rest is a description of the house economy of the Mennonites living in Chortitza, Schoenwiese and Krons Garten, the subtitles for the sections of the report are:

- on resettlement of the Mennonites to Novorossiyskaya Guberniya
- on the place of their settlement and the size of land dedicated to that
- on the number of villages built by them, their location and names
- on the 118 families that arrived to this guberniya, 86 out of whom settled in Chortitza

- on the quality of land in Chortitza
- on the Mennonite agriculture and are they hard working
- on the sowing of grain
- on the harvest of grain
- on the quality of pastures and their inability to support the livestock in winter
- on pastoral farming
- on the produce of pastoral farming
- on the produce of kitchen gardens
- where they [Mennonites] sell their products and is it convenient for them
- on their housing and is it successful
- Mennonite trades
- on their income
- on the morals of their domestic life
- on the number of mills
- on the number of drinking houses in the Chortitza colony, their income and how it is spent
- on river crossings
- on houses of prayer and schools

pg. 77-83 – November 22nd 1788

a copy of a brief summary of privileges promised to the Mennonites by Duke Potemkin with comments regarding their approval

pg. 84-86 – August 2nd 1798

a statement that Kontenius's report from July 8th was received and resolutions based on it

pg. 87-88 – August 9th 1798

an order given to Kontenius in response to his report, asking him to inspect all the colonies like he inspected the Mennonite colonies, as well directing him to investigate the lawfulness of Otchenashka's widow's land claim and stating the need to look for land where Mennonites can be resettled from Chortitza

pg. 89 – August 9th 1798

a letter to Seletskiy concerning housing issues experienced by 15 Mennonite families as reported by Kontenius

pg. 90-92 – July 8th 1798

a report by Kontenius talking about mills in the Chortitza colony, which the government failed to provide; the Mennonites have built them by their own means, and are now asking for compensation

pg. 93-94 – August 2nd 1798

Kontenius's report about the mills has been received and a decision has been made to issue compensation to the Mennonites through baron Vasilyev

pg. 95-96 – August 9th [17]98

a letter to baron Vasilyev retelling Kontenius's report about the mills and asking him to issue the requested compensation to the Mennonites

pg. 97-98 – July 15th 1798

a report by Kontenius, mainly concerning Jacob **Hoepfner**, who had no need in subsidies for building mills and instead asked for other privileges; cursory mentions Johann **Bartsch**; mentions

Jacob and Peter **Hoeppner** being excluded from the community; also mentions that the Mennonite community from Einlage asks for a punishment for Peter **Rempel**

pg. 99-100

a document in German [Copy of von Trapp's privileges to Jacob **Hoeppner**. This item has been translated]

pg. 101-103

a document in German [Report on **Hoeppner** by Brigonsky. This item has been translated.]

pg. 104-107 – no date

a translated excerpt from a colony's account of the actions of Jacob **Hoeppner** dated July 8th 1798; first part is signed by colony director Johann Brigontsi; the second part is a collective statement signed by colony director G. Trappe and Collegiate assessor S. Sokolovskoy

pg. 108 – August 9th 1797 [sic!]

Kontenius's report from July 15th has been received, a decision has been made to translate the attached German documents

pg. 109-110 – July 5th 1798

a letter to Duke Kurakin from the governor of Novorossiyskaya Guberniya stating that the money owed to the Mennonites for the housing needs have been paid

pg. 111 – August 9th 1798

Novorossian governor's report from July 5th has been received

pg. 112-126 – no date

a note with no stated authorship, consisting of a summary of information about Mennonites provided by Kontenius, starting from their resettlement from Western Prussia, foundation of the first villages Chortitza, Rosenthal, Einlage, Kronsweide, Schoenhorst, Neuendorf, Neuenburg and Kampe [Insel Chortitza] and their location; also mentions some reports by director Brigontsi; in the end there is a cursory mention of some notes presented by the Mennonites in September 1798, which will be reviewed after the end of the inspection of all the Novorossian settlers

pg. 127-132 – September 3rd 1798

the Senate reviews the work of Kontenius and decides that he should be allowed to continue his work in Novorossiyskaya Guberniya

pg. 133 – August 31st 1798

a report from the Treasurer, stating that following the Expedition's request from August 9th 1798 an order has been issued to the Novorossian Treasury Office to pay out to the Mennonites the money owed them for building the mills

pg. 134 – September 29th 1798

a report from the Treasurer Vasilyev has been received and a decision is made to order Kontenius to supervise the distribution of the money

pg. 135 – October 18th 1798

an order to Kontenius to supervise the distribution of money paid out to the Mennonites as a compensation for the mills

pg. 136 – August 31st 1798

a report from the Treasurer Vasilyev that the Novorossian Treasury Office was ordered to pay out to the Mennonites money owed to them for the logs as requested by the August 9th letter

pg. 137 – September 29th 1798

Treasurer Vasilyev's report from August 31st has been received, a decision is made to order Kontenius to make sure the wood bought with that money is used for the benefit of the Mennonites

pg. 138 – October 18th 1798

an order for Kontenius to supervise the purchase of wood and its use for the benefit of the Mennonite community

pg. 139-146 – September 16th 1798

Kontenius's report, where he relates that the local court has examined Otchenashka's widow's land claim and found it to be lawful; Kontenius also talks about resettlement of the Kronsweide colony, looking for possible locations to do so, in relation to which topic come up the names of Kornelius Pauls, Isaac **Heinrichs**, Martin **Siemens** and Abraham **Unrau**.

pg. 147-152 – September 16th 1798

Kontenius's report relating to the progress of surveying the land occupied by the colonists; Schoenwiese and Krongarten are mentioned separately in the beginning

pg. 153-154 – October 26th 1798

a report from the government of Kiyevskaya guberniya stating that the Mennonites [spelled "Memonisty"] of the Mikhaylin [Michalin] village, Makhnovskiy uyezd, cannot respond if they are willing to resettle to another guberniya and on what conditions, until suitable land is found.

pg. 155 – November 22nd 1798

a report from Kiyevskaya guberniya from October 26th is received

pg. 156-174 – October 14th 1798

a report by Kontenius, where he discusses his efforts to determine the real amount of real debt owed by the Mennonites as well as the sum of money that must be paid to them by the government; in this regard come up the names of Chortitza, Josephsthal, as well as a separate mention of the Mennonites that arrived recently; the money in question mainly seems to be the travel money promised to the colonists; in the end Kontenius asks for orders in regards to some issues that he has uncovered in regards to this matter

pg. 175-179 – October 14th 1798

a report by the colony director Brigontsi regarding the conflicting accounts of the debt owed by the Mennonites and the amount of money they must yet receive; here he often mentions the originals of documents from the Treasury Office, which are supposed to be attached to his report

pg. 180

a document in German [account of money lent out by Heinrich Janzen]

pg. 181-191 – November 18th 1798

the report by Kontenius from October 14th is received; resolutions are made in regards to the issues he raises in that report

pg. 192-201 – December 23rd 1798

orders for Kontenius regarding the issues he brought up in his October 14th report

pg. 202-209 – December 23rd 1798

orders to the Novorossian Treasury Office regarding the payments owed to the Mennonites and the colonists from Josephsthal discussed in Kontenius's report from October 14th

pg. 210-211 – November 15th 1798

a report from the Novorossian Treasury Office stating that the sum of money that should be paid out to the Mennonites (for logs) as per baron Vasilyev's order from August 31st was handed over to director Brigontsi

pg. 212-213 – November 15th 1798

a report from the Novorossian Treasury Office stating that the money owed to the Mennonites for the mills was handed over to director Brigontsi as per baron Vasilyev's order from August 31st

pg. 214-215 – November 10th 1798

a report by Kontenius stating that he supervised the transfer of money for the mills from the Treasury Office to director Brigontsi and then to the Mennonites that arrived first, as well to the Mennonites from the second group in Chortitza and the Mennonites in Schoenwiese and Kronsgarten

pg. 216-218 – November 10th 1798

a report by Kontenius stating that he has supervised the transfer of money intended for buying logs by the Mennonites as well as the purchase of said logs; he also mentions that next he is visiting a Swedish colony

pg. 219-225 – November 10th 1798

a report by Kontenius analysing the discrepancies in the statements regarding the amount of money received by the colonists between the Treasury Office and the colonists, i. e. the Mennonites and the Josephsthal Lutheran Colony

pg. 226-233 – November 10th 1798

a statement detailing the spending of the Novorossian Treasury Office on the settlement of the first group of Mennonites to arrive; this statement contains dates on which money has been spent for each individual task; deputies Hoeppner and Bartsch are mentioned in one transaction; signed by Kontenius and Brigontsi

pg. 234-242 – November 10th 1798

a statement detailing the spendings of the Novorossian Treasury Office on the settlement of the Iozefstal Colony; follows the same format as the previous statement; signed by Kontenius and Brigontsi

pg. 243-246 – November 10th 1798

a statement detailing the spendings of the Novorossian Treasury Office on the settlement of the 118 Mennonite families that arrived recently; generally follows the format of the previous two statements, signed by Kontenius and Brigontsi

pg. 247-252 – October 23rd 1798

an account from the Treasury Office in regards to the apparent discrepancies found in its records of the money spent on the Mennonites that arrived first and the colonists from Iozefstal, addressed to Kontenius; mainly consists of explanations as of what was the money spent on, what were the prices etc.

pg. 253-257 – November 4th 1798

an account from the Treasury Office in regards to the apparent discrepancies found in its records of the money spent on the Mennonites that arrived first, the colonists from Josephsthal and the 118 Mennonite families to arrive recently; the records which are clarified here should be dated July 1st and October 23rd

pg. 258-262 – November 4th 1798

an account of the payments received by the newly arrived 118 Mennonite families in Riga and in other places along the way; contains information on who received which sum on which date; also contains comments explaining the discrepancies in the records. [no names given]

pg. 263-268 – June 30th 1798

“1st account of the payments approved in the Josephsthal colony and made towards the Mennonites and Josephsthal colonists, made at request of Brigontsi, who claimed that not all the money was paid out”; the two columns in the document are the calculations of Brigontsi and what was found out upon checking the records in the Treasury Office; all the deliberations are quite detailed

pg. 269-282 – June 30th 1798

“2nd account of the payments made by the Novorossian Treasury Office towards the 118 Mennonite families, made upon Brigontsi’s demand that they receive certain payments on top of what they have already received”; the two columns in the document are the calculations of Brigontsi and what was found out upon checking the records in the Treasury Office; all the deliberations are quite detailed

pg. 283-292 – December 8th 1798

a letter detailing Baron Vasilyev’s request to the Novorossian Treasury Office asking it to compile two statements comparing Brigontsi’s claims and the records of the Treasury office regarding the money paid out to the Mennonites, and ordering to provide some financial aid to the Mennonites; the letter is addressed to the Expedition and comes from the Treasury office

pg. 293-299 – December 8th 1798

an account of the records of the payments paid out to the Josephsthal colonists and the first group of Mennonites to arrive, made at the request of Brigontsi who claims that some money they are owed as part of their privileges has not been paid out; contains Brigontsi’s calculations, the records of the Treasury Office, and Brigontsi’s explanations as of why he thinks that the colonists and the Mennonites are owed something on top of that

pg. 300-313 – December 8th 1798

an account of the payments paid out to the 118 Mennonite families to arrive last, made at the request of Brigontsi who claims that they are owed above what is determined by the Treasury Office; contains Brigontsi’s calculations, the records of the Treasury Office, and Brigontsi’s explanations as of why he thinks that the Mennonites are owed something on top of that