

ARE WE GERMANS, OR RUSSIANS, OR AMERICANS?

The McIntosh County German-Russians During World War I

BY GORDON L. ISEMINGER

US Army Private Christian Kurlle (left), Wishek, was presented the Distinguished Service Cross and the *Croix de Guerre* August 12, 1919, by US Army Lieutenant Colonel Thomas J. Rogers. Read more about Private Kurlle on page 14. *SHSND 2002.108.3*

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Historians regard World War I as a turning point in the history of the modern world. The war ended a period of four hundred years during which Europe was the center of the world. When the United States entered the war in April 1917, it marked the emergence of this non-European nation as the world's greatest power.

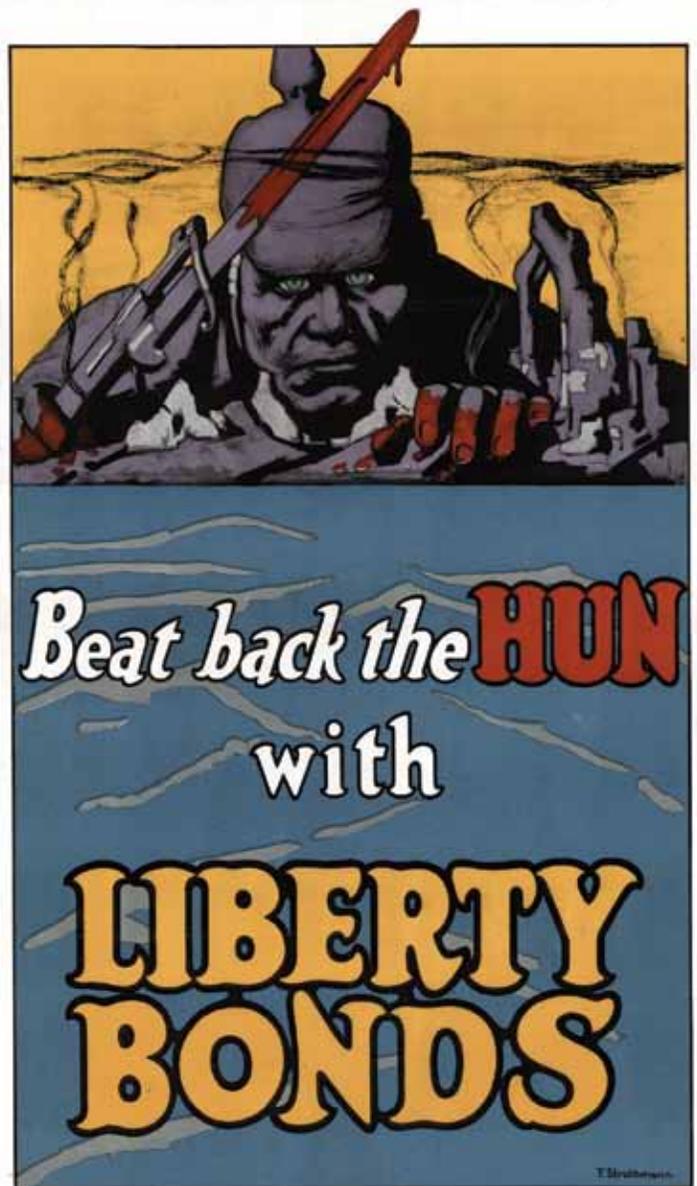
In North Dakota, the war had local ramifications for the German-Russians of McIntosh County. Isolated as they had been on their farms, this German-speaking ethnic group had not been unaffected by the war. For these North Dakotans who could have been identified as Russians, Germans, or Americans, that World War I was a reality for them was evident by their support of the war effort—coaxing their farms to produce more, purchasing Liberty Bonds and War Saving Stamps, subscribing to Red Cross drives, and giving up their sons and daughters to become soldiers and nurses.

German-Russian young men who may never have been away from home before they were drafted were changed by their experiences. In training camps, they had not worked from dawn to dark seven days a week, as they had on the farm. Rather than eating dough three times a day, they ate meat with their meals. They slept on beds with mattresses, not ticks filled with straw or corn husks. Camps had running water, indoor plumbing, and electric lights. When these young men returned home, they could have been forgiven for being impatient with those who clung to the old ways that had been brought from South Russia, including the German language.

Parents too had been changed. McIntosh County would no longer be as isolated as it had once been. With their sons in the service, parents had looked on maps to find Camp Lewis, Washington, Fort Riley, Kansas, and Camp Dodge, Iowa, places far from Ashley, Wishek, and Venturia. They had learned where the Somme, the Argonne, and Château-Thierry were, and they had tried to form these strange-sounding names with mouths accustomed to forming only German words.

Europe would never be the same after World War I as it had been before the war. Too much had been destroyed. Too much had changed. Too much had gone wrong. Just so, in ways the German-Russians might not have appreciated, McIntosh County, North Dakota, would never be quite the same after 1918 as it had been before 1914.

Gordon L. Iseminger, 2017



This Liberty Bond poster illustrated the anti-German, anti-Kaiser sentiment across North Dakota and all of America during World War I.
SHSND SA 10935-P0004

Richard Sallet, in his book, *Russian-German Settlements in the United States*, wrote that when war broke out among the major European powers in August 1914, German-Russians in the United States agonized over the question: “Which is our country?” Their ancestors had come from Germany, they or their parents had been born in Russia, and they were living in America.¹ This article will suggest how one group of German-Russians, those living in McIntosh County, North Dakota, might have answered this seemingly unanswerable question.²

People love the land of their births, and this love does not necessarily cease when they emigrate nor is it necessarily replaced with a love for their adopted country when they become naturalized. War, however, places a premium on loyalty to the nation of one's residence. “We can have,” thundered former President Theodore Roosevelt, “no ‘fifty-fifty’ allegiance in this country.” Roosevelt believed that a



Fourth of July celebration, Ashley, North Dakota, 1902. SHSND SA 00169-00014

person should love his country, but he was entitled to only one. "If he claims loyalty to two countries," he wrote in 1918, "he is necessarily a traitor to at least one country."³

Because World War I was perceived, both in the United States and abroad, as a war against Germany, for no group was the loyalty issue more difficult than for the millions of Germans in the United States. For several months after April 1917, when the United States entered the war on the side of the Allies, there was a degree of sympathy for their plight. By the late summer, however, large segments of the American population abandoned themselves to a hysteria of anti-German sentiment. Before the war ended in 1918, this sentiment was carried to ridiculous extremes.

State Councils of Defense, the American Defense Society, and other organizations launched a drive to abolish the teaching of the German language—the "Kaiser's tongue"—in the nation's schools, because to teach it was to give aid and comfort to the enemy. According to a poll taken by the *Literary Digest*, 149 schools had done so by March 1918. William G. Bek's German courses at the University of North Dakota were not canceled, but he had few students and he suffered the humiliation of

knowing that the study of German was being prohibited in all of the state's high schools.

The governor of Iowa forbade the speaking of German on streetcars, over the telephone, or anywhere else in public. In South Dakota, concern over the loyalty of the large German population in the state prompted the state Council for Defense to prohibit the use of German in all public conversations. The language could be spoken over the telephone only in cases of extreme emergency. After much protest, the ban was relaxed to allow a fifteen-minute summary of the sermon in German at the conclusion of a worship service. So many restrictions were placed on foreign-language newspapers under the provisions of the

Trading-with-the-Enemy Act of October 6, 1917, that by the middle of 1918 practically every German-language newspaper in the country was forced either to adopt a pro-government editorial policy or to maintain a judicious silence on all questions relating to the war.⁴

German books were withdrawn from public libraries, and in Shawnee, Oklahoma, German books were burned as part of the Fourth of July celebration. In South Dakota they were thrown into the Missouri River.



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A German-Russian family—John (1856–1921) and Sophie Ochsner (1863–1948), with their older sons David and Gust, and younger children, Sarah, Laya, Johnny, and Linda—photographed about 1906.
SHSND SA 00032-MT-13-0002



Symphony orchestras learned that it was neither safe nor wise to perform works by German composers such as Wagner or Beethoven. The overzealous mayor of Jersey City forbade the brilliant Austrian-born violinist Fritz Kreisler to appear on the concert stage, and Frederick Stock, the distinguished conductor of the Chicago Symphony, was forced to relinquish his baton. Universities revoked degrees they had conferred on outstanding Germans.⁵

It became more ridiculous. In a frenzy of misguided enthusiasm, hamburgers were renamed “liberty sandwiches” and sauerkraut became “liberty cabbage.” Children no longer contracted “German” measles, but the more virulent “liberty” strain of the disease. Dachshunds, by an accelerated process of selective breeding, became “liberty pups,” that is for those unpatriotic enough to own one. In North Dakota, some thought was given to changing the name of the capital city. “Bismarck” was unacceptable to many, because it conjured up images of Teutonism and Blood and Iron.⁶

German-Russians, no less than other German-Americans, were subjected to indignities. With the entry of the United States into the war, wrote Sallet, a period of intense suffering began for them. German-Russians were admonished from childhood, for example, never to forsake the mother tongue and for many it was the only language they knew. The German language united the German-Russians, linked them to their past, and helped them maintain their cultural identity. To forbid German-Russians to use their language was to impose a severe hardship on them.

In some communities, German-Russians were forced to carry the American flag, wrap themselves in it, or kiss it as a sign of their loyalty. In some instances when Liberty Bonds

were offered for sale, hapless was the German-Russian who for lack of money could not wear a Liberty Bond button in his lapel as testimony that he had subscribed to the war effort. To encourage his change of heart, he and his property might be liberally daubed with yellow paint. Some were forced to borrow money from banks with which to purchase bonds.⁷ In areas where German-Russians were heavily concentrated, of course, such as in McIntosh County, North Dakota, they were relatively isolated from outsiders and thus spared from anti-German prejudice.

The strong sentiment against all things German during World War I indicated how very seriously—and unfairly—some people took the loyalty issue. Emigrants to the United States from one of the Allied nations, particularly from England, could be passionately devoted to their homeland and still be accepted as patriotic Americans. Not so for people with German blood in their veins.

Many Yankees were convinced that people with German blood could never completely break their ties with the Fatherland. How, then, did German-Russians feel about the issue of where their loyalty lay? A study of the German-Russians of McIntosh County may provide an answer.

McIntosh County lies on the border between North and South Dakota, the second county east of the Missouri River. Dickey, McIntosh, Emmons, Sioux, Grant, and Hettinger counties along the southern boundary of North Dakota form the base of the “German-Russian triangle,” a triangle of German-Russian populated counties having its apex in Pierce and McHenry counties.

McIntosh County was opened for settlement in 1884, and the first German-Russian settlers probably entered the county towards the latter part of the same year. They

settled near present-day Zeeland in the southwest corner of the county. Most of the immigrants were Evangelical Black Sea Germans who traced their origin in Russia to the Black Sea areas of Glückstal, Liebental, Bessarabia, and the Crimea. By 1886, many families had settled near the present-day towns of Ashley, Wishek, Venturia, and Lehr. Within twenty-five years of its opening, McIntosh County had attracted hundreds of land-seeking German-Russians, many of whom by 1914 had resided in the county for only a short period of time.⁸

Because this study focuses on the question of whether McIntosh County German-Russians considered themselves to be Germans, or Russians, or Americans at the time of World War I, it is helpful, when formulating an answer, to note how rural the county was at the time of the war and also the degree to which it was populated by German-Russians.

To understand German-Russians is to appreciate their land hunger. Promised land, Germans from Baden, Bavaria, Württemberg, and the Palatinate had accepted the invitations of Catherine the Great and Alexander I to settle in South Russia. When asked by Works Progress Administration interviewers in the late 1930s why they had come to North Dakota, most German-Russians answered: "Land." Of the 217 German-Russians in McIntosh County old enough to declare an occupation in 1885, all but five—four men and one woman—were farmers who had taken up land. The four men were younger than twenty-one years of age and could not yet file on homesteads. The woman was unmarried and also under age.⁹

In 1890, 2,053 of the county's 3,248 inhabitants were German-Russians. Twenty years later, in 1910, McIntosh County contained 7,251 people, most of them of foreign stock. Of the total population, 5,745, nearly 80 percent, listed Russia as the birthplace of themselves or of their parents, that is, they were German-Russians.¹⁰



Typical house of the early days. Ashley, North Dakota, 1916.
SHSND SA 00169-00005

When asked why they had come to North Dakota, most German-Russians answered: "Land."

A common migration route followed by the Black Sea German-Russians who took up residence in McIntosh County was to travel from Odessa on the Black Sea to a German port such as Bremen by rail. Here they took ship passage across the Atlantic to New York and rail passage to Aberdeen, Ipswich, or Eureka in Dakota. Eureka, a relatively small prairie town, was for many years a terminal for the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway and, despite its size,

the world's leading primary wheat market. Eureka was also the main collecting and dispersal point for hundreds of German-Russian immigrants and, as "the

Odessa of the Northern Great Plains," it "loomed larger than life in the consciousness of countless German-Russian emigrants."¹¹

From Aberdeen, Ipswich, or Eureka, German-Russians made their way north to McIntosh County by team and wagon, and it would be logical to assume that they settled first and in large numbers on the more desirable land on the southern edge of the county. The census of 1910 suggests that this indeed is what they did.

Odessa, Berlin, Johnstons, Lowell, Myrtle, Jewell, and Coldwater are the names of the seven townships, west to east, on the southern edge of McIntosh County. The total population of these seven townships in 1910 was 1,607. In every township, with the exception of Johnstons in which the village of Venturia was located, every person lived on a farm. By far the majority, 90 to 100 percent (the exception again being Johnstons), of the male heads of households were farmers.

The census listed a total of 458 parents in the seven townships. Of these, 390, or 85 percent, had been born in Russia. In no township were fewer than 70 percent of the parents born in Russia, and in most townships the figure was 90 percent or over. Even in Johnstons the figure was 82 percent, suggesting that some of the townspeople who had been born in Russia had chosen not to live on farms. Of the total of 458 parents in the seven townships, almost 75 percent listed German as their only language. Clearly, in 1910 the southern tier of townships in McIntosh County was decidedly rural and populated by German-Russians who had only recently arrived in North Dakota and who had not yet learned English.

It would be unfair, of course, to extrapolate from these figures to conclude that all of McIntosh County in 1910 was as distinctly rural and as decidedly German-Russian as the southern tier of townships. In Frieda Township, however, twelve miles north of the state boundary and on the western edge of the county, every one of the 265 persons in the township lived on a farm, 65 of the 70 parents had



While in service in the Czar's Army, about 1888, these two German-Russian cousins, Jacob Krämer (left) and Jacob Kramer, had this portrait taken. Jacob Krämer (later changed to Kremer) and his wife and family immigrated to America and settled in McIntosh County near Ashley in 1889. Their son, Fred, was one of many young men from McIntosh County who served in World War I. The cousin arrived in McIntosh County in 1901, homesteading near Wishek. *Photograph courtesy of Ron Kremer, Linton, North Dakota*

been born in Russia, and all of the parents gave German as their only language. As might be expected, in Youngstown Township on the northern edge of the county—in which the town of Wishek is located—only half the parents had been born in Russia and about the same percentage claimed German as their only language.

The 1910 census listed only three towns, villages really, in McIntosh County—Ashley (683 population), Wishek (427 population), and Zeeland (196 population). Understandably, fewer of the inhabitants in the towns were German-Russians and a higher percentage of them gave English as their language. Nevertheless, in Ashley, the county seat, of the total of 211 parents, 116 had been born in Russia and 73 of them listed German as their only language.¹²

Even by 1920, when the population of McIntosh County had increased to 9,010, the county was still predominantly rural and overwhelmingly German-Russian. Just over 2,800 people lived in towns, most of them in Ashley (1,009) and

Wishek (1,003). Ninety percent of the county's land was divided into 1,025 farms and the county's 1,633 families lived in 1,604 dwellings.¹³

That McIntosh County was rural and German-Russian at the time of World War I can be established, but determining how members of this ethnic group might have responded to the question of whether they were Germans, or Russians, or Americans is not so easy. An appreciation for the difficulties involved can be gained by contrasting the German-Russians with the Norwegians in North Dakota. The two were among the largest ethnic groups in the state.

Although Norwegian immigrants were primarily of peasant stock—in Norway they had been small farmers, renters, and farm laborers—illiteracy was almost unknown among them. A law of 1736 required everyone to be confirmed, and the state Lutheran church required confirmands to be familiar with Luther's catechism, the hymnbook, and the Bible. Public schools were established in Norway in 1739. Norwegians could and did read.

German-Russian immigrants were also of peasant stock, but with this difference: Their ancestors had gone to South Russia determined to maintain their language, religion, and culture. As a consequence, they were an isolated people, a fact of incalculable significance. They took with them no educated Germans—pastors, priests, teachers, professionals, traders—and they lost virtually all contact with Germany. They were cut off from the remarkable progress that took place in Germany during the nineteenth century. Germans in South Russia were farmers. Few had the time, ability, money, or inclination to buy and read books and newspapers.

Isolation and the lack of educated people among themselves were responsible for the lack of interest in schools and education in the German colonies in South Russia. Displaying more interest in religion than in education, they lavished far more money on their churches than they did on their schools. Even when German-language elementary schools were established in the colonies, the people continued to be more absorbed in farming than in education. Because the educated people among them—foreign priests and pastors, Russian officials, and traders—tricked and abused them, Germans in South Russia distrusted educated people and had little respect for them. The few German-Russian young people who received an education did so because they were weak and sickly and therefore considered unfit to make a living from the land.

German-Russians in North Dakota exhibited the same characteristics they had in Russia. They clung to their language, shunned contact with other nationalities, neglected schools, and disliked free public education and compulsory attendance laws. Few German-Russian children

completed the eighth grade and it was unusual for a German-Russian young person to attend high school. Many German-Russian parents took it as a compliment when their children chose to help with farm work rather than spend their time reading or studying.¹⁴

Because Norwegians were educated and literate when they emigrated to America, they could stay in touch by letter with friends and family members who had remained behind in Norway. Archives, libraries, and museums in Norway today have extensive collections of these "America letters," as they were called. These letters were important in their time because they conveyed to their recipients reliable information and thereby encouraged further emigration. The letters were also an important channel of communication between family members and between friends. Immigrants kept in touch with events in Norway and those who had remained behind learned of life in America. Letters also made separation less painful, and for many in America it was the only opportunity to communicate their thoughts and feelings in their native language.

These letters are valuable for researchers because by studying them they can in some measure determine how individual immigrants perceived and experienced the process of migration, assimilation, and acculturation. Letter writers may have made only infrequent references to particular historical events, but the letters are a valuable resource for social history. They reflect the character of the person who wrote them and maybe something of the recipient's character as well. The letters provide insights into the daily lives and feelings of individual immigrants and represent their personal responses to events and experiences.¹⁵

There are no extensive collections in Russian archives and libraries of "America letters" written by North Dakota German-Russians to those who remained behind in South

Russia. When German-Russians arrived in Dakota, the prairie on which they settled was as untamed as the Russian steppes on which their ancestors from Germany had settled a hundred or more years earlier. They faced the daunting task of providing shelter for themselves; wresting a living from the stubborn native sod; dealing with the fearsome size of the prairie; and contending with insects, wild animals, droughts, and prairie fires. Even if they had had the time, few German-Russians were letter writers. Few kept diaries. Moreover, because of two

Until the 1930s, many German-Russian children did not learn English until they started school.

destructive world wars, a bloody revolution, a terrible civil war, the breaking up of former colonies, and forced migrations, many of the

documents that might have existed in Russia have been scattered or destroyed. Oral history can be of little help. Most of the McIntosh County German-Russians who were of mature years during World War I have died.

This far removed from the war, for information on how McIntosh County German-Russians perceived the loyalty issue, one must rely on printed recollections, secondary works, local histories, jubilee books published when towns observed the fiftieth and seventy-fifth anniversaries of their founding, and on newspapers.

The county's two newspapers, the *Ashley Tribune* and the *Wishek News*, are a possible means by which one may determine the attitudes of German-Russians towards the issues raised by the war. Using newspapers for this purpose presents problems, however, so it will be best at the outset to anticipate and respond to the criticism that newspapers may not accurately reflect German-Russian opinion in McIntosh County during World War I.

C. C. Lowe was owner, editor, and publisher of both the *Ashley Tribune* and the *Wishek News*. Lowe also owned the movie theaters in Ashley and Wishek. It might be argued, therefore, that because Lowe controlled what today is referred to as "the media," the views expressed in the newspapers did not necessarily reflect those of the county's German-Russian population.

However, professing the credo that a newspaper was "the natural mouthpiece of the community" and insisting that "every resident and tax payer in the county should be a reader of the official county paper," Lowe dedicated himself to publishing papers that would appeal to the county's residents and at the same time promote the county's best interests.¹⁶ To aid him in reaching his ambitious goal of placing his newspapers in every home in the county and convincing businessmen that advertising paid dividends, Lowe hired an experienced German-speaking staff and printed sections of both his papers in German.



Public school program, Wishek, North Dakota, February 21, 1917.
SHSND SA 00392-00001



Though most German-Russians in McIntosh County were farmers, some opened businesses in the towns. In Zeeland, Farmer's Store was owned by Henry Boshee. This 1914 photo shows Boshee (at desk) and helpers setting up harnesses. SHSND SA 00032-MT-13-00007

Albert Wallner, a competent young man who was German both by birth and by education, was Lowe's assistant in the *Tribune* office. A. R. Rudow, also in the *Tribune* office, sold ads and subscriptions. His success in signing up new subscribers—more than sixty in the first two weeks of August 1917—suggests that he got on well with German-Russians. Lowe hired Gustav Destner, “a steady, reliable and competent German editor-printer,” to handle “the German end” of the *Tribune*. Destner's wife was a German-Russian from Eureka, South Dakota, and Destner became an American citizen only on October 9, 1917. Robert O. H. Greiser, also of Eureka, was named editor and manager of the *Wishek News*. Greiser, a former school teacher, was fluent in both German and English. He purchased the *Wishek News* from Lowe in 1919.¹⁷

Lowe was no stranger to German-Russian communities. He had worked on the paper in Ellendale, the county seat of

At the time of the Armistice, on November 11, 1918, more than half the pages of the *Ashley Tribune* were printed in German.

Dickey County, another county in which German-Russians predominated, and he came to Ashley from LaMoure, North Dakota, also a German-Russian community. There he had been owner and editor of the *LaMoure Echo*. He did not sell the *Echo* until some months after moving to Ashley.

Of over five hundred newspapers in North Dakota, the *Echo* was

recognized early in 1917 as the best weekly publication in the state. That the *Echo* was selected to receive what Lowe described as a “signal honor” must attest to Lowe's ability as a newspaperman and to his rapport with his readers, many of whom would have been German-Russian.

At the time of the Armistice, on November 11, 1918, more than half the pages of the *Ashley Tribune* were printed in German—local news, legal notices (the *Tribune* was the official county newspaper), sale bills, political ads, business advertisements, and war news. Lowe wanted German

as well as Yankee readers to be informed of what was happening, even though printing in two languages required an added expenditure of money and effort because double the space was required for each item. (Lowe was forced to raise the *Tribune's* subscription price to \$2.00 per year on January 1, 1918, to cover his costs.)¹⁸

When Lowe purchased the *Ashley Tribune* in September 1915, it was a nondescript, small-town weekly with fewer than 400 subscribers. By January 1918 he had doubled the number of pages in each issue, tripled the size of the staff, and increased the number of subscriptions to over 1,000. Weekly he listed the names (and often the occupations) of new subscribers—100 of them in the issue of September 20, 1917. Most of them were German-Russian farmers. "There must be something about the paper," he editorialized, "that is worthwhile having." In March 1918 Lowe exulted: "The *Tribune* now goes into nearly every home in and near Venturia." In December he noted that almost all of the farmers "tributary to Ashley" subscribed to the *Tribune*. No longer could businessmen protest that it did not pay to advertise in the *Tribune* because so few farmers took the paper.¹⁹

The point to be served by detailing Lowe's newspaper activities is this: McIntosh County had 1,633 families occupying 1,604 dwellings in 1920, and the county's population was overwhelmingly German-Russian. The *Tribune's* circulation alone in early 1918 was over 1,000. Many German-Russian households, therefore, must have been taking either the *Ashley Tribune* or the *Wishek News*. Some county residents subscribed to both. Because newspapers such as the *News* and the *Tribune* depended almost entirely on subscriptions and ads for their revenue, it may be safe to assume that Lowe and his editors would have taken pains not to have printed anything that would have alienated or offended their German-Russian readers. And because portions of the papers were published in German by German or German-Russian staff, it is likely that the opinions expressed reflected the views of at least a portion of the German-Russian community.²⁰

In notices prominently placed on the front pages of his newspapers, Lowe advised McIntosh County young men to comply with the law requiring them to register for the draft—738 did so on June 5, 1917, alone. He also warned them of the consequences for failing to do so. Of the hundreds of county residents who were eligible for the draft in 1917 and 1918, only a few neglected to register or refused to heed their draft notices, some of them out of ignorance of the law, others because their fathers prevented them from complying with the law's provisions. Some draftees, reluctant to leave their families and farms, resigned themselves to the inevitable and heeded the government's call to service. Most entered military service willingly and not a few volunteered for the draft or enlisted

THE WISHEK NEWS Page Two

THE WISHEK NEWS
 "A NEWSPAPER WITHOUT A HEADACHE"

Published every Friday at Wishek, North Dakota
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"The emblem of the land I love---
 The home of the free and the brave."

STAND BY AMERICA
OR GET OUT

What seems a puzzle to us is that people who have lived in the United States for many years, have had the protection of our government and with that protection have acquired wealth and independence, can go against the government when it is in need of help.

The writer's ancestors came from Germany, his forefather's fought for Germany—but it wasn't the Germany that has now sunk to the lowest level humanity has ever known. The Germany of that day was a different Germany than we know today.

Those same forefathers came to this country seeking freedom, as you or your forefathers. They found it. They lived and they prospered under the protection of the stars and the stripes. Today all that you have, you man in Wishek of foreign-born parentage, you owe to America. The clothes on your back came only thru America's kindness of heart in permitting you to become a resident of this land. Every particle of food that goes into your mouth is food you might not have had had you remained in the Germany that in recent years has been exploited by a man whose greed for gain does not stop at the slaughter of innocent women and children.

In the face of all this, if you cannot speak out loud for America now, now when she needs your loyalty and your help—go back where you came from and stay there. If you whisper rumors that you know are seditious, if you pause in the streets to lend your

ear to anything that is detrimental to this nation, its president or its citizens, you are unfit to longer live under its flag. If your arrest and interment comes blame no one but yourself—and count yourself lucky that you are not back in the new Germany where you would be stood against a wall in front of a firing squad.

Its a poor time to bite the hand that has fed you and yours. If you can't be an American and outspoken in your loyalty, then for God's sake have the decency to make room for the millions of us who can.

A HOME GUARD

Citizens of Wishek have probably noticed newspaper accounts of growing unrest in every section of the country, resulting in vigilant committee and flag-kissing episodes. Since the Germans hit the allied lines for a casualty of more than 150,000 hate is deeper against them than it has been. As a result people in every part of the country are hunting down German sympathizers, and in many instances they are being treated to some rough handling.

There is no question but every community should organize to protect itself. We do not doubt for a moment but the news of a great German victory would find comfort in the hearts of several right in this section. And so long as that is true there is need of a Home Guard, or Defense League, here in Wishek.

Loyal Americans of this place and this community should band together for mutual protection. It is not enough that we hang the flag on the porch and place a Red Cross emblem in our windows. We must go farther. We must come to know who is who as regards loyalty to the nation, and we must not permit sedition to rear its head in our midst.

Talk is not going to win this war. Yelling for the flag is all right but acting for it is better. Let us leave no stone unturned, no bars down. Locking the stable before the thief arrives is still sound advice. Let us get busy now through organization.

THE OLD FARM'S FOR SALE

The old farm's for sale. It is advertised in the country papers. Two hundred good acres of land, and household articles too numerous to mention—and a few horses, and some cows, and a number of sheep and hogs and the agricultural implements. To be sold to the highest bidder. All sums under ten dollars cash in hand. On all sums over ten dollars, a credit of twelve months will be given, with approved security.

The *Wishek News*, published by C. C. Lowe, frequently encouraged as well as chided Wishek's German-Russian citizens about matters of American patriotism. This April 5, 1918, edition of the paper included an article proposing a home guard as well as the remark, "If you can't be an American and outspoken in your loyalty, then for God's sake have the decency to make room for the millions of us who can."

in the Navy or Army Medical Corps. Many young women volunteered for training as student nurses.

Providing men and women for military service was not the only way that McIntosh County German-Russians supported the war effort. They economized, collected scrap iron, contributed to the Army YMCA Fund and to the Red Cross, and purchased War Savings Stamps and

Liberty Bonds. All the while, they refused to get caught up in the war hysteria that was gripping much of the rest of the nation. McIntosh County children contracted German measles, as they had before 1917, and not the “liberty” strain of the disease that so sapped peoples’ energies elsewhere in the country. Nor did county residents eat “liberty cabbage.” Grocers continued to feature sauerkraut, especially at Thanksgiving and during the Christmas holidays. The editor of the *Wishek News* believed that no purpose would be served by changing names, including that of the state’s capital. “Such things,” he pointed out, “will not win the war for us and it is advisable that time be spent doing something else more helpful.” That “something else more helpful” included what German-Russians were best at—farming and raising foodstuffs.

Providing draftees for military service, “going over the top” in Liberty Bond sales, eating sauerkraut, and coaxing more production from their fields and livestock—all may suggest something of how McIntosh County German-Russians responded to the war. But it remains to answer the question posed in the title of this article. Possessing German ancestors, having their roots in South Russia, and resident in McIntosh County, were these people Germans, or Russians, or Americans during World War I?

Although McIntosh County German-Russians had German blood in their veins, bore German names, and spoke German, it would be a mistake to confuse them with the *Reichsdeutsche*, or Empire Germans. German-Russians were known variously as “the Czar’s Germans,” because they had lived in Russia; or as North Dakota’s “other Germans,” because they had not been born in Germany and had never lived there. Timothy J. Klobberdanz suggested that a fitting designation for the “other Germans” is *Volksdeutsche*, a term that can be rendered not altogether satisfactorily in English as “ethnic Germans.”²²

When contrasted to the *Reichsdeutsche*, German-Russians may have been akin to “stomach” Germans, Frederick C. Luebke’s somewhat inelegant term for a group of German-Americans. “Stomach” Germans wanted to read the news in their German-language newspapers, drink their beer in the company of other Germans, use the German language in their worship services, and sing the old songs in their native tongue. Distinct from the stomach Germans, according to Luebke, were the “soul” Germans. Convinced that German ideals and the German spirit were the noblest and loftiest in Western civilization and believing that they should be perpetuated in America, “soul” Germans idealized, articulated, and rationalized what they perceived to be their superior culture.²³

When German-Russians arrived in North Dakota, they suffered what Elwyn B. Robinson described as “a revolution in status.” Signs of this impending revolution became evident

BIG RED CROSS Benefit Auction

Is Next War Work Feature.

The Ashley Branch of the Red Cross is in need of funds with which to buy yarn and cloth for garments. The Branch needs Money! Money! Money!

The Date Has Been Set For JUNE 20th.

AT A MEETING HELD BY THE FINANCE COMMITTEE TUESDAY, A SELECTING COMMITTEE WAS APPOINTED. THIS COMMITTEE, ONE FROM EACH TOWNSHIP, WILL COMMENCE AT ONCE TO SOLICIT THE DONATION OF PRODUCTS FOR THE SALE. ALREADY AN ORGAN AND A BEAUTIFUL SPREAD HAS BEEN DONATED BY ONE PERSON—REPRESENTING OVER \$50 IN VALUE. IT IS EXPECTED THAT ALL MANNER OF PROPERTY WILL BE DONATED—CHICKENS, HOGS, CALVES, COWS, MERCHANDISE, FANCY WORK—ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING THAT CAN BE SOLD FOR MONEY FOR RED CROSS WAR WORK.

Let's Talk Red Cross Auction! Let's Boost Red Cross Auction!
Let's Donate Freely for the Auction!
Let's Attend and Buy at the Auction!

Big Red Cross Benefit Dinner will be Served.

Rote Kreuz Benefiz = Auktion
nächstes Ereignis zur Förderung der Kriegsarbeit.

Der Ählerer Zweig des Rotes Kreuzes braucht notwendig Geld, um Garn und Zeug für die Anfertigung von Gewändern zu kaufen. Der Zweig braucht Geld, Geld und nochmal Geld.

Der Tag der Versteigerung ist auf den 20. Juni festgesetzt worden.

In einer am Dienstag abgehaltenen Versammlung des Finanzkomitees kam die Organisation eines Benefizmahlens zustande. Dasselbe Komitee, eins von jedem Township, wird sofort mit der Werbung von Spenden in Gestalt von Produkten für die Versteigerung beauftragt. Eine Orgel hat bereits einer Person und eine wunderbarliche Deckung geschenkt, die einen Wert von \$50 repräsentieren.

Man erwartet, daß Schenkungen aller Beschäftigung eingehen werden, wie Hühner, Schweine, Fässer, Hefe, Rindfleischstücke, schenkbare Kräfte, irgend etwas und alles, was in Geld für das Rote Kreuz und helfen sollte Arbeit angebracht werden kann.

Laßt die Worte: „Rote Kreuz-Versteigerung“ unsere Parole sein. „Boostet“ Alle für die Versteigerung. Laßt uns von Herzen unsere Gaben zur Versteigerung beisteuern. Kommt Alle zur Versteigerung und bietet tüchtig.

Ein großes Rotes Kreuz Benefiz Mittagessen wird serviert werden.

From the *Ashley Tribune*, May 20, 1918.



Albert F. Stoller (1891–1961) in training camp. The “patriotic” caption accompanying it in the May 9, 1918, issue of the *Wishek News*, concluded with “Wishek is proud of its young men who have left their homes and country to fight and destroy an enemy who, if victorious, would seek to invade our country and seek to deprive us of the freedom which we now enjoy.” The caption may have been supplied by the United States Army or by C. C. Lowe, the owner and publisher of the newspaper.

as soon as the German-Russians boarded the ships that would take them to America. To their dismay, they discovered that there were very few differences between them and the peasants of other nationalities who were travelling with them. This was a bitter realization for Black Sea Germans who had come to regard themselves as belonging to a privileged class in Russia. In Russia they were leaders and in the upper social stratum. They had been admired by the Russian peasants and envied for their fine houses, productive farms, good horses, and sleek cattle. In North Dakota, they were at the other end of the social and economic scale. Other nationalities looked down on them, and many German-Russians complained that they were treated more condescendingly by the *Reichsdeutsche* than by any non-German-speaking group. Having observed this phenomenon in western North Dakota, a Roman Catholic priest wrote:

To the average German, the German-Russian was an “*Ausländer*.” A literal translation of the word “*Ausländer*” would be “a person from outside the country,” or, more briefly put, “a foreigner.” Neither definition, however, does justice to the word as a German would use it with reference to a German-

Russian. To fully appreciate the term’s implications, one would have to include in the definition what an Englishman means when he uses the word “provincial,” plus an “amused tolerance, veiled contempt, and a plentiful superiority.”²⁴

Nor did the German-Russians identify with the Germany of the *Reichsdeutsche*. Their allegiance was to the Germany of the turn of the nineteenth century, to the Germany of the time of their *Auswanderung*, or emigration. German-Russians had not shared in the remarkable economic, industrial, scientific, and cultural advances that Germans had made in the nineteenth century. There were no ‘48ers among them. They did not identify with Prussian generals named Moltke, and they took no vicarious pleasure in the Prussian victories over Austria and France on the battlefield. They did not swell with pride at mention of the Germany that Bismarck’s policy of Blood and Iron had created in 1871. They had no affinity with William II’s *Weltpolitik*, nor did they appreciate his desire to secure Germany’s “place in the sun.”

For the *Reichsdeutsche*, Germany was a distinct place—their historic homeland, their native land, their nation. To the German-Russians, however, Germany was “a deeply sentimental, even mystical,...ancient *Vaterland*.” And, despite their affection for the Fatherland, German-Russians had



Part of the crowd of three thousand people who gathered in Wishek, North Dakota, on May 25, 1918, to bid farewell to the men who were leaving for Camp Lewis, Washington. From the *Wishek News*, May 30, 1918.

not hesitated to leave in search of better conditions. International borders and governments meant little to them; they knew that both changed frequently and quickly. It seemed, observed Kloberdanz, that the only Germany the German-Russians required was “a personalized one carried deep within.”²⁵

Although German-Russians shared blood, language, narratives, proverbs, folk songs, and religious faith with Germans from Germany, they were different from them. And the *Reichsdeutsche* seemed not to consider German-Russians as with them in being German.

The first of Sallet’s three possibilities having been eliminated, were the German-Russians then Russians?

Reading the issues of the *Wishek News* and the *Ashley Tribune* published between 1914–1919, one can find no indication that the McIntosh County German-Russians had any sympathy for Russia as a political entity. The Czarist government of course remembered the German-Russians in America, and at the outbreak of the war it demanded that those with military obligations return immediately to Russia at their own expense to serve in the army. Sallet was unable to identify even a single German-Russian young man who had done so.²⁶ In their letters home that were published in the *News* and *Tribune* during the war, not once

did a McIntosh County German-Russian serviceman profess to be fighting for either the Czar or for Russia.

German-Russians could easily be identified in any American community as having come from South Russia. Their clothing, foods, architecture, and agricultural practices all revealed varying degrees of Russian influence. Their German dialects were liberally sprinkled with Russian loan words. But, McIntosh County German-Russians were not Russians, even though their Yankee neighbors often referred to them as “Rooshuns” and the United States government sometimes mistakenly listed them in the census as Russians.

Only an insignificant number of the Black Sea Germans who settled in North Dakota could converse easily in Russian and they were typically those who had served in the Russian army or those who had attended school for more than the average number of years in Russia. During a century in South Russia, German-Russians had not mingled with the Russians and they had only rarely intermarried with them. “...My father was never a Russian,” boasted one Volga German-Russian, and “no Russian blood curses my veins, even though I came into the world in Russia.”²⁷

A large number of German-Russians had planned to return to Russia once they had made their fortunes in Dakota.



Private Christian Kurle of Wishek, North Dakota, 1919.
SHSND SA 00370-00006

A McIntosh County Hero

A number of McIntosh County men lost their lives on the Western Front; many more were wounded. Others served with distinction and were cited for meritorious conduct.³³ Christian Kurle was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for heroism on the Western Front. He also received the *Croix de Guerre*, this for rescuing a wounded comrade while under heavy enemy fire. Lieutenant Colonel Thomas J. Rogers of the United States Army, acting on behalf of the French government, presented the award to Kurle in ceremonies held in Wishek on August 12, 1919.³⁴

Besides those who were on active duty in the United States and overseas, more than two hundred McIntosh County men were in army training camps when the Armistice was signed on November 11, 1918. All returned home to tearful and enthusiastic welcomes. To express their profound relief and thankfulness at having their “brave sons” home again, county residents held celebrations that included parades, speeches, dinners, and dances. There was even talk of dedicating the new \$75,000 courthouse to “the soldiers of McIntosh County, North Dakota, who fought in the Great War of 1917–1918...”³⁵



Distinguished Service Cross – US Army
SHSND 2002.108.1

Croix de Guerre
(French, Cross of War)
SHSND 2002.108.5



Others regretted having left Russia and yearned to return. C. C. Becker was among the first German-Russians to settle in McIntosh County. Asked in old age by Nina Farley Wishek whether he regretted having come to the United States, he replied, "Ach, Gott, yes, I wish I was back in Russia." Becker spoke for thousands who would gladly have returned to South Russia, but only if there were a bridge over which they could have walked or ridden. Neither threats, nor promises, nor large sums of money would have induced those who had experienced a difficult voyage across the Atlantic to make the return crossing by ship.²⁸

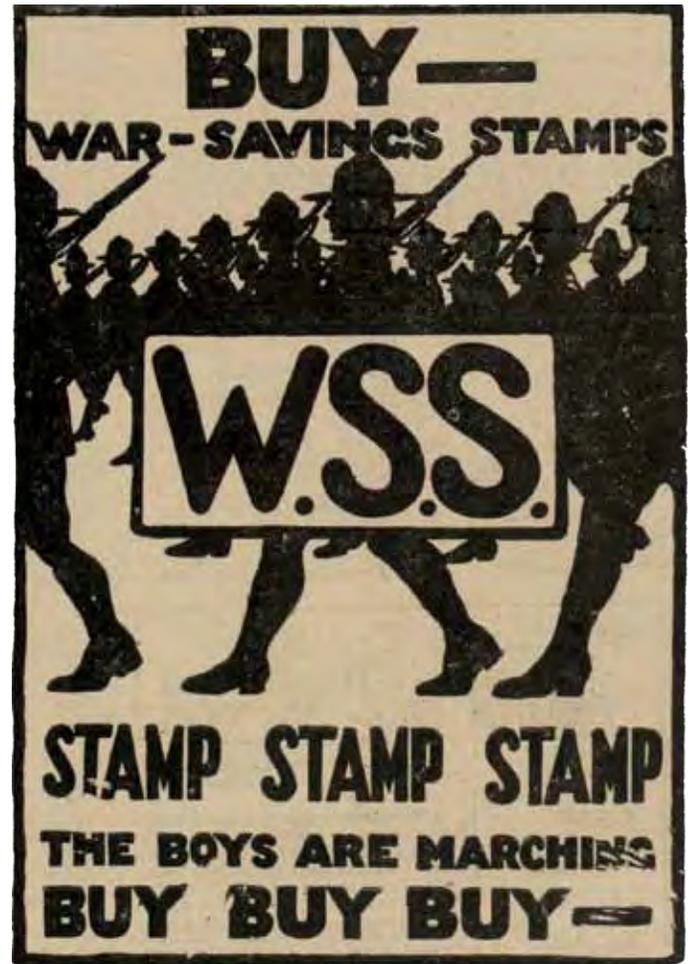
The Russia for which Becker and other German-Russians yearned, however, was not the Russia of the Czar and his officials, but *Heimat*—a word that is only inadequately rendered in English as "homeland"—the Russia of their hearts. People were homesick for their homeland and for

Besides those on active duty, more than 200 McIntosh County men were in army training camps when the Armistice was signed on November 11, 1918.

their families. Wishek observed that Becker's statement probably resulted from "the nostalgic memory of those glamorous days of youth, for certainly the few Russians who have returned to their homeland have always come back within the year to America. It is only natural for the foreigner to feel a warm and staunch affection for his Fatherland."²⁹

Not until after World War I did German-Russians begin to change their attitudes towards their South Russian homeland. Through the pages of the *Dakota Freie Presse* and other German-Russian newspapers, they became aware of how those who had remained in South Russia had suffered because of the World War, the Bolshevik Revolution, the Russian Civil War, the executions, the mass deportations, and the widespread famine. Relatives of McIntosh County German-Russians told of going into the fields and robbing the mice of their stores of grain in order to avoid starvation. After such reports, German-Russians became aware of how much better off they were in North Dakota than they would be in Russia. Not until then did they come to realize that South Russia was no longer a "paradise on the steppe." The intense homesickness they had once felt for *Russland* gradually gave way to a grudging appreciation for the prairies of North Dakota.³⁰

Proud of the fact that they had lived in South Russia for many generations and had yet remained isolated from the Russians; gratified that their blood had not been mingled with that of Russians through intermarriage; stung by being referred to as "Rooshuns" by their insensitive Yankee neighbors; and relieved that, unlike those who had remained in South Russia,



From the *Wishek News*, June 20, 1918, p.1.

they had been spared the ravages of war, revolution, forced migration, and starvation—McIntosh County German-Russians clearly did not consider themselves to be Russians.

Sallet allowed for only three possibilities. If the McIntosh County German-Russians were neither Germans nor Russians, were they then Americans?

In his detailed study of German-Russians in the United States, Sallet was able to find only two urban settlements of Black Sea Germans, leading him to the conclusion that 95 percent of those from the Black Sea area were wheat farmers. Many of them settled in McIntosh County, on land they acquired under the terms of the Pre-emption, Homestead, and Timber Culture acts. To do so, they were required to take out citizenship papers or file intentions of one day becoming American citizens. During World War I, however, Americans they were not, even though some of them had been in the county for as long as thirty years.³¹

During the 1920s, the National Illiteracy Commission, the General Federation of Women's Clubs, the American Legion, and other national organizations sought to

inculcate in United States residents, especially in the foreign born and their children, the desire “to know America, to understand America, and to love America,” that is, to *become* Americans. Good Americans were healthy and thrifty; they were good stewards of their personal possessions and of the nation’s resources; they knew the Flag Salute and the Flag Code; they were responsible voters; and, above all, they knew how to read, write, and speak English.

Large numbers of McIntosh County German-Russians at the time of World War I were illiterate in English. Throughout the war, therefore, Lowe published substantial portions of the *Ashley Tribune* and the *Wishek News* in German, not because he was particularly defiant or courageous, but because German was the only language that many of his subscribers could read. Lowe had taken great pains not to offend his German-Russian readers and he had coaxed, begged, challenged—sometimes shamed—them to support the war. He praised them for their efforts and congratulated them for their accomplishments. He printed “honor lists” containing the names of those who volunteered for the draft, those who did not request exemptions or deferments, those who contributed to the Red Cross, and those who purchased Liberty Bonds.

Once the Armistice had been signed, however, in one strongly worded editorial after another, Lowe reproached the county’s German-Russians for not being Americans. Parents had sent their sons off to service unable to speak, read, or write a word of English. Marked by their inability to communicate in English, the young men had been singled out, discriminated against, and made the butt of ridicule. When they returned home, Lowe warned, made the wiser by their experiences, they would no longer accept anything that reminded them of “Hunism.”

Lowe deplored the state of public education in the county. Teachers were poorly trained and as poorly paid, school buildings were neglected, compulsory attendance laws were not enforced, and children were given insufficient opportunity to learn English—“the language of America, the language of the country of our choice.” Parents who were denying their children an education in American ways, charged Lowe, were doing them a grave injustice.³²

On Ashley’s streets and in Ashley’s stores, Lowe heard people conversing in German. How, he asked, could they expect to improve themselves if they refused to



Paul Fred Moeckel (1894–1944) in training camp. Typical of the photographs of servicemen published in the *Ashley Tribune* and *Wishek News* during the war, this illustration appeared in the *Wishek News*, December 12, 1918.

“Those people who expect to make America their home,” he advised, “had better adopt the American language...and stick to American methods.”³⁶

Among the most difficult cultural adjustments that German-Russians had to make was to switch from using German to using English, particularly in their church services. German-Russians would have fought God Himself had He suggested that worship services could be conducted in a language other than German. “Yes,” German-Russian parents might reassure their children, “Our Lord God knows everything—but He cannot understand the heathen babbling that is English.” As late as World War II, many McIntosh County churches conducted at least some of their worship services and Bible studies in German. Until the 1930s many children did not learn English until they started school. Portions of the *Wishek News* were printed in German until 1944 and parts of the *Ashley Tribune* in German until 1955.

Language was only one means by which German-Russians maintained their identity. They came to America with an established set of minority group defenses that was rare among immigrants. Isolated on the Russian steppes, they had perfected the mechanisms of survival amid alien surroundings. Latecomers to Dakota, they settled on the poorer land, farther from the rivers, railroads, and cities. Distance, bad roads, and a deliberate avoidance of using English separated them from people they considered to be “outsiders.” Thus isolated, McIntosh County German-Russians could maintain a way of life largely unaffected by outside influences.³⁷

American cultural forces had not penetrated their communities sufficiently by 1914 to convince German-Russians of the desirability of becoming assimilated and Americanized. Through intermarriage and retention of their language and mores, they remained as isolated in Dakota as they had been in South Russia. Not until the Great Depression and then even more quickly in the prosperous years after World War II did German-Russians come to realize how interdependent they were with the rest of America and with the rest of the world. Only then did their clannishness, isolation, backwardness, and neglect of education begin to pass away.³⁸

The *Reichsdeutsche* looked down on the German-Russians. After the Bolshevik Revolution, the Russians disclaimed them. They long had the reputation for resisting

Americanization. If the McIntosh County German-Russians were neither Germans, nor Russians, nor Americans, what were they?

German-Russians were admirably equipped for living on the prairies of McIntosh County. The land was their life. They were accustomed to hard and tedious work. They were thrifty to an extreme and adamant to the point of being stubborn. They were independent, self-sufficient, and resourceful. They bore and survived adversity. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn in his *Gulag Archipelago* wrote of the methodical German-Russians that they were good husbandmen and indefatigable workers. “Is there any wilderness on earth,” he asked, “which [German-Russians] could not turn into a land of plenty?” And wherever the German-Russians went, he noted, they settled in, “not temporarily,...but forever.” “Not for nothing,” therefore, “did Russians say in the old days that ‘a German is like a willow tree—stick it anywhere and it will take!’”³⁹ And German-Russians “took” in McIntosh County.

Adolph Boschee came with his family to the United States in 1884 from Kassel in South Russia. By rail they made their way to Menno, Dakota Territory, thence to Ipswich. In the spring of 1885 they loaded their belongings onto wagons and started north to McIntosh County, to, as Boschee described it, “our new *Heimat*.”⁴⁰

Heimat meant something to German-Russians that non-German-Russians have difficulty appreciating and understanding. It was *Heimweh*, or homesickness, but it was more than that. Joseph S. Height, in his book *Homesteaders on the Steppe*, wrote that wherever a German-Russian went he remained deeply attached to the “*Heimat*” with every fiber of his being. Height’s description details the feelings and experiences of German-Russians living on the prairie of McIntosh County as aptly as it recalls their memories of what life had been like on the steppes of South Russia. *Heimat* was:

billowing fields of grain, the long sweep of stubble stirred by the mournful winds of autumn, the white pall over the boundless winter landscape, the blustering snowstorm that turns day into sudden night and dreaded darkness, the fragrant scent of the fresh earth in spring...⁴¹

Heimat awakened in German-Russians an ardent longing for eternity, for infinity, and for God. Songs, suffering, sorrow—all were “unforgettably” in the hearts and souls of those who recalled *Heimat*. *Heimat* meant the nearness of parents, relatives, friends, and neighbors. It meant mother tongue and folklore, the wisdom of the old and the pranks

of the young. It meant the ringing of church bells and the singing of children. It meant free men walking behind their plows. “*Heimat* meant the wide horizon, the big sky, the snow-bright landscape, and the wind-swept flowers of early spring.” All this and more. Much of what *Heimat* meant to the German-Russians was inexpressible.⁴²

What were the McIntosh County German-Russians during World War I?

The Reverend Salomon Joachim, pastor to a Black Sea German congregation in Beulah, North Dakota, can help answer the question. The German-Russian, he wrote,

made his greatest contribution to society in the form of manual labor. By profession he is a tiller of the soil, a farmer, a producer of food. It fell to his lot to receive land in the semi-arid regions of Russia, Siberia, the Americas, and Canada. He built a granary out of the steppes and the prairies. He did not shout that fact to the world. A real farmer lives too close to the ground and too close to God to become a braggart. He stays humble. The dust of the earth and the smell of new-mown hay do not blur his vision.⁴³

Their lives were governed by the cycle of seedtime and harvest.

A thrifty, hard-working, God-fearing people who respected authority, McIntosh County German-Russians were aware of

the war—they read about it in the county’s newspapers and their sons and daughters were serving in it. They contributed to the Red Cross, bought Liberty Bonds, sold scrap iron, and bent every effort to coax their farms and herds to produce more. But the war was thousands of miles away. They were farmers, and, like rural folk everywhere, their lives were governed by the cycle of seedtime and harvest.

During World War I, McIntosh County German-Russians were people with German ancestors who had come from Russia and who were living in McIntosh County—their “new *Heimat*.” For them, the truth of a Latin adage was particularly appropriate: “*Ubi panis, ibi patria*.” Where there is bread, there is my Fatherland.⁴⁴



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ENDNOTES

1. A shorter version of this article was read as a paper at the Northern Great Plains History Conference, September 22-24, 1988.
2. Richard Sallet, *Russian-German Settlements in the United States*, trans. LaVern J. Rippley and Armand Bauer (Fargo, N.D.: North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies, 1974), p. 100. Frederick C. Luebke observed that Americans of German origin were trapped in what he described as a "crisis of loyalty" in 1917 when the United States declared war on Germany. Many of these Germans had developed a strong allegiance to the United States, but at the same time the bonds of affection for their German culture remained strong. *Bonds of Loyalty: German-Americans and World War I* (DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974), p. 3.
3. Horace C. Peterson and Gilbert C. Fite, *Opponents of War 1917-1918* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1957), p. 81.
4. Peterson and Fite, pp. 194-97; Herbert S. Schell, *History of South Dakota* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961), pp. 272-73; Louis G. Geiger, *University of the Northern Plains: A History of the University of North Dakota, 1883-1958* (Grand Forks: University of North Dakota Press, 1958), p. 286; Harry N. Scheiber, *The Wilson Administration and Civil Liberties 1917-1921* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1960), p. 20.
5. Peterson and Fite, p. 196; Schell, pp. 272-73.
6. Peterson and Fite, p. 195.
7. Sallet, pp. 101-103; James C. Olson, *History of Nebraska* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), pp. 261-63.
8. Timothy J. Klobberdanz, "Volksdeutsche: The Eastern European Germans," edited by William C. Sherman and Playford V. Thorson in *Plains Folk: North Dakota's Ethnic History* (Fargo, N.D.: North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies, 1988), pp. 132-34, 137. For the history, culture, and experiences of the Black Sea Germans in South Russia see the trilogy by Joseph S. Height, *Paradise on the Steppe* (Bismarck, N.D.: NDHSGR, 1972); *Homesteaders on the Steppe* (Bismarck, N.D.: NDHSGR, 1975); and *Memories of the Black Sea Germans* (Chelsea, Mich.: Associated German-Russian Sponsors, 1979). Two key sources relating to the general background of the German-Russians by Karl Stumpp are *The German-Russians: Two Centuries of Pioneering*, trans. Joseph S. Height (Bonn, W. Germany: Atlantic Forum, 1967) and *The Migration From Germany to Russia in the Years 1763-1862* (Lincoln, Neb.: AHSGR, 1973). See also William C. Sherman, "Assimilation in a North Dakota German-Russian Community [Pierce County]" (Unpublished M.A. thesis, University of North Dakota, 1965).
9. "The Dakota Territorial Census of 1885," *Collections of the State Historical Society of North Dakota*, IV (Fargo, N.D.: Knight Printing Co., 1913), pp. 361-72. Joseph S. Height, the authority on Black Sea Germans, noted that land hunger was the primary reason prompting Germans to leave South Russia. They believed that in America they would find "free land for free people." Klobberdanz, p. 130.
10. Elwyn B. Robinson, *History of North Dakota* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), p. 172; U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910: Population*, III, 352.
11. Klobberdanz, pp. 131-32.
12. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910: Population*, III, 233-391.
13. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920: Agriculture*, IV, Part I, 628; *Manufactures*, IX, 1127; *Population*, I, 552; *Population*, II, 1355; *Population*, III, 759.
14. Robinson, pp. 284-87; Klobberdanz, p. 144.
15. Solveig Zempel, *In Their Own Words: Letters from Norwegian Immigrants* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), pp. ix-xv.
16. *Wishek News*, October 5, 1917; *Ashley Tribune*, August 23, 1917.
17. *Wishek News*, April 13, 1917; October 5, 1917; September 5, 1919; *Ashley Tribune*, August 2, 1917; August 23, 1917; October 4, 1917; October 11, 1917. The *Wishek News* was not a German paper as such, but it contained a special page printed in German that was headed "*Wisheker Nachrichten*." During the war this feature was discontinued, but a portion of the paper was still printed in German. Lowe purchased the *Wishek News* in 1916. George Rath, *The Black Sea Germans in the Dakotas* (Freeman, S.D.; The Pine Hill Press, 1977), p. 342; Klobberdanz, p. 146.
18. *Wishek News*, April 6, 1917; April 13, 1917; *Ashley Tribune*, September 15, 1916; December 6, 1917; January 3, 1918; August 8, 1918; November 7, 1918.
19. *Ashley Tribune*, September 20, 1917; November 15, 1917; November 29, 1917; January 10, 1918; March 28, 1918; December 5, 1918.
20. For a discussion of German-language newspapers in the Dakotas during this period, see Anton H. Richter, "*Geht ihr den Vorzug*:" The German-Language Press of North and South Dakota," *South Dakota History*, 10 (Summer 1980), pp. 189-209.
21. *Ashley Tribune*, November 29, 1917; March 28, 1918; June 27, 1918; August 1, 1918; October 31, 1918; January 3, 1918; *Wishek News*, January 11, 1918; June 27, 1918. North Dakota had a good record for protecting civil liberties during the war. Edwin F. Ladd, in his first speech in the United States Senate in 1921, boasted that the state had been "an oasis of sanity in a desert of hysteria." Robinson, p. 367.
22. Klobberdanz, p. 119.
23. Luebke, pp. 27, 50.
24. Robinson, pp. 286-87; Klobberdanz, pp. 120-21, 132-33; Sherman, pp. 12-14. See also Joseph B. Voeller, "The Origin of the German-Russian People and Their Role in North Dakota" (Unpublished M.S. thesis, University of North Dakota, 1940), pp. 55-56.
25. Klobberdanz, p. 121.
26. Sallet, p. 101.
27. Adolph Schock, *In Quest of Free Land* (San Jose, Calif.: San Jose State College, 1964), pp. 90, 134-35; Sallet, p. 100; Klobberdanz, p. 127.
28. Nina Farley Wishek, *Along the Trails of Yesterday: A Story of McIntosh County* (Ashley, N.D.: Ashley Tribune, 1941), p. 235; Klobberdanz, p. 133.
29. Wishek, p. 235.
30. Klobberdanz, p. 148. Stumpp estimated that more than one million German-Russians in South Russia were casualties of World War I, the Russian revolution and civil war, starvation, and forced migrations. Schock, pp. 75-76.
31. Klobberdanz, pp. 133-34; Sallet, pp. 26-27.
32. *Ashley Tribune*, November 21, 1918; December 5, 1918; *Wishek News*, May 30, 1918.
33. *Ashley Tribune*, June 8, 1917. German-Russians obeyed the draft laws as willingly as any group in America. Nina Farley Wishek wrote of the McIntosh County young men: "They were ready and willing, even eager to enter the great struggle," *Along the Trails*, p. 430. Most German-language newspapers urged their readers to comply with the conscription laws and explained their detailed requirements for the benefit of those whose command of English was limited. Luebke, pp. 230-31.
34. *Wishek News*, August 15, 1919.
35. *Wishek News*, November 14, 1918; March 13, 1919; March 27, 1919; April 10, 1919; May 16, 1919; *Ashley Tribune*, November 14, 1918.
36. *Ashley Tribune*, November 21, 1918; December 5, 1918; December 12, 1918.
37. Sherman, pp. 139-40; Robinson, p. 286; Richter, "*Geht ihr den Vorzug*," pp. 192-94; Klobberdanz, pp. 120, 134, 140-43.
38. Schock, pp. 170-80; Robinson, pp. 286-88.
39. Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago, 1918-1956* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), III, p. 400.
40. Height, *Memories of the Black Sea Germans*, p. 261.
41. Height, *Homesteaders on the Steppe*, p. 426.
42. Height, *Homesteaders on the Steppe*, pp. 426-27.
43. Reverend Salomon Joachim, "Toward an Understanding of the Russia Germans," (Moorhead, Minn.: Committee on Publications, Concordia College, 1939), p. 23.
44. Klobberdanz, p. 121.

