

The Swiss-Volhynian Story

NORTH SEA

England is directly west of here.

Mennonites in Holland assisted Swiss refugees.

Montbéliard was not adjacent to the main part of Württemberg.

FRANCE

From 1873 to 1884, around 18,000 Mennonites left Russia for North America. Approximately 8,000 went to Canada, and possibly 10,000 went to the United States. Both Mennonites and Amish in North America provided assistance for their brethren leaving Russia.

BALTIC SEA

In 1874, three groups of Swiss-Volhynians traveled on the *City of Richmond* and one group on the *City of Chester*. These sister steamships were launched in 1873 and could also use sails.

Hamburg

The Elbe River connects Hamburg to the North Sea.

The Kotosufka congregation traveled by wagon to a train station. Then they traveled by train to Hamburg.

From Hamburg, they traveled in a small ship to England. They traveled across England by train. Then they traveled on the S.S. *City of Richmond* to New York.

GERMANY

The Anabaptist movement began in Zurich, Switzerland in 1525. It spread to the Canton of Bern where it flourished. In the 1600's, persecution drove Swiss Anabaptists to Alsace and the Palatinate. In the 1700's, some went to Montbéliard.

On 17 Dec 1671, Palatinate minister Valentine Hütwohl wrote a letter to Mennonites in Holland. He said that at least 450 Swiss refugees had fled to the Palatinate.

In the 1700's, French intolerance resulted in many Anabaptists moving from the Alsace to Montbéliard which at that time was not a part of France.

PALATINATE

Discrimination influenced many Mennonites to leave the Palatinate for Pennsylvania in the 1700's.

ALSACE

BADEN

WÜRTTEMBERG

The Duchy (Dukedom) of Württemberg ruled Moempelgard (Montbéliard) when *Moses Gering* lived there.

Montbéliard

Zurich

Bern

Jost Krähenbühl was imprisoned at Bern.

The ancestors of the Volhynian *Gering* and *Graber* families likely traveled from the Canton of Bern to Alsace and then to Montbéliard. In 1791, *Moses Gering* left Montbéliard for Poland. It appears that he went to Podolia.

His son *Johann* moved from Adampol to Michelsdorf.

LIGURIAN SEA

ADRIATIC SEA

Austria ruled East Galicia from 1772 until WWI. Lemberg (Lviv) is near Falkenstein in East Galicia.

Prince Ludwig (Louis) of Württemberg was a son-in-law of Prince Czartorinsky.

AUSTRIA

Austria used to be a lot bigger than it is today.

Danzig (Gdańsk) was a somewhat independent city until Prussia took it about 1793. Napoleon's victories resulted in independence in 1807. It went back to Prussia in 1815.

Danzig

In 1772, Prussia took much of the Vistula Delta region.

VISTULA DELTA

Many Dutch Mennonites came to the Vistula Delta region. Menno Simons visited here in 1549 to assist the church. Because of their faith, they experienced discrimination. Starting in the 1780's, many moved to the area of Russia that is now Ukraine.

POLAND

On 3 Jan 1802, *Johann Gering* (son of *Moses*) married *Anna Albrecht* at or near Michelsdorf. A letter states that he was "from Adampol in the Ukraine." (Krehbiel, James W. *Swiss Russian Mennonite Families Before 1874*. p. 41)

In 1781, Joseph II, the Emperor of Austria, invited colonists to settle in lands that Austria had taken from Poland. Mennonites inquired about religious freedom. In 1784, they were assured of religious freedom.

The *Schrag*, *Huwen*, *Albrecht*, and *Zerger* families likely fled from Switzerland to the Palatinate as did the *Krähenbühl* family.

After the assurance of freedom, the *Johannes Schrag*, *Peter Krehbiel, Sr.*, and *Joseph Mündlein* families traveled from the Palatinate to Falkenstein. The *Christian Albrecht*, *Johann Zerger*, and both *Johann Huwen* families traveled to Einsiedel from the Palatinate.

A passport from "the Duchy of Wuerttemberg at Moempelgard" mentions *Moses Gering* and other "German-Swiss people ... who are on their way to Poland." Below the passport is a note: "The Swiss people and Anabaptists whose names appear in the above-mentioned passport have in part entered, or are entering now the service of the Prince Adam Czartorinsky, Great General of Podolia ..." The note is dated February 8, 1791 (Schrag, Martin H. *The European History of the Swiss Mennonites from Volhynia*. p. 42). Prince Czartorinsky owned land both in Podolia and the Urszulin region. Both lands were part of Poland in 1791. The Amish congregation of Moempelgard chose *Christian Graber* "as minister of the book to go to Poland" (Krehbiel, 56). Moempelgard was the German name for both the city of Montbéliard and the county around the city. Along with Amish from Moempelgard, it appears that Amish from the southern Alsace also traveled east to Poland at the invitation of the Polish Prince Czartorinsky. The Alsace was in France and Moempelgard (Montbéliard) was in the Duchy of Württemberg.

Two groups of Swiss Anabaptists had members who went to Volhynia. One group went from the Palatinate to Galicia. Austria at the invitation of Emperor Joseph II of Austria. *Johannes Schrag* was in that group. The other group went from Montbéliard to Poland at the invitation of the Polish Prince Adam Czartorinsky. *Moses Gering* was in that group. It appears that no one initially planned to be in Russia.

Around 1801, Swiss at Michalin (including *Johannes Schrag*) moved to lands of Prince Edward Lubanirsky in western Volhynia. Later, Swiss at Michelsdorf moved to Edwardsdorf which was also on his lands in western Volhynia. Now a number of members of both groups were near each other.

This map does not show every country in the region of the world that it covers. Latvia, Lithuania, and Belarus are in this unlabeled section.

Much of this region of Russia used to be in Prussia.

In 1579, Mennonites asked for permission to settle in Königsberg. They were denied the privilege.

In 1736, Leonhard Euler's solution to "The Seven Bridges of Königsberg" problem was published.

Königsberg

Much of this land was in Prussia even before the partitioning of Poland.

In 1817, *Johann Wedel* left the Vistula Delta region. In 1823, he married *Anna Schrag*.

Warsaw

Michelsdorf was near Urszulin.

Urszulin

Edwardsdorf, Zahoriz, Horodischitz, Futtor, and Waldheim are some of the Volhynian villages not plotted. In 1861, many moved from Edwardsdorf in western Volhynia to Kotosufka in eastern Volhynia.

Vignanka

Lemberg

Falkenstein

Einsiedel was near Falkenstein. In 1772, Austria took **East Galicia** from Poland. Later, Falkenstein and Einsiedel were built in that region. From 1784 to 1939, Mennonites lived near Lemberg (Lviv).

Adampol

Michalin

About 1791, a small group of Dutch Mennonites moved to Michalin from the Vistula Delta region. Russia took Michalin from Poland about 1793. *Johannes Schrag* and other Swiss moved from the Hutterites to Michalin in 1797. About 1801, he moved to Beresina in western Volhynia. He soon moved a short distance to Vignanka because of the building of a dam.

At the invitation of Catherine II (Catherine the Great), Dutch Mennonites from the Vistula Delta region established the Chortitza colony in 1789. They established the Molotschna colony about 1804.

As a result of their stay in Prussia, these Dutch Mennonites spoke German.

From 1873 to 1884, around one-third of the Mennonites in Russia came to North America.

Russia lost the Crimean War (1853-1856). Then in 1863, Poles rebelled and Russia crushed the rebellion. These events were a likely factor in the rise of Russian nationalism that finally resulted in a plan for loss of special privileges for Germanic colonists.

Crimea

CRIMEA

RUSSIA

Information from Google and other sources was used to assist in locating places and drawing boundaries. These boundaries are approximately accurate for 2016.

Poland occupied Moscow in 1610. The Poles were expelled in 1612. Michael Romanov was elected czar in 1613. The Romanov family ruled Russia until 1917.

Moscow

Catherine II, the German wife of Peter III, succeeded him as ruler of Russia in 1762. She invited Germans and other Europeans to settle lands in southern Russia.

The militarism of the Prussian government encouraged nonresistant Mennonites from the Vistula Delta region to accept the invitation of Catherine II. In 1788, she granted a special charter of privileges to Mennonites.

RUSSIA

In 1870, Russia planned to end military exemption for Germanic colonists by 1880. After appealing the plan, many nonresistant believers decided to leave Russia.

Once the government learned of the exodus, it tried to discourage emigration. It also made concessions that influenced many Dutch Mennonites to stay in Russia.

In 1796, Swiss from the Falkenstein area moved to a Hutterite colony near Wischenka. This includes the *Johannes Schrag*, *Peter Krehbiel, Sr.*, and *Johann Zerger* families. Except for

Wischenka

In 1667, Russia regained this area from Poland, including the city of Kiev. Most of the Kiev province was regained about 1793.

Schrag and Zerger girls who married Hutterites, they left in 1797. Many moved to Michalin.

UKRAINE

Kiev

Kotosufka

VOLHYNIA

GALICIA

PODOLIA

Russia took Podolia about 1793.

SEA OF AZOV

BLACK SEA