

The Germans in Western Canada, A Vanishing People

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How many people of German extraction are there actually in Western Canada? Theoretically it should be easy to find the answer for this question in the census figures of the Bureau of Statistics. Unfortunately the census figures for this particular ethnic group are not always reliable. One cause for discrepancies resulted from the way in which the question or questions about ethnic origin were asked.

Table I
COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN OF GERMAN SETTLERS
IN WESTERN CANADA¹

1. Germans from Russia	44%
(Black Sea, Vothynia and Volga.)	
2. Germans from Austria-Hungary	18%
(Galicia, Bukowina and Banat.)	
3. Germans from the United States	18%
4. Germans from Germany	12%
5. Germans from Roumania	6%
6. Germans from Ontario, Switzerland & South America	2%

If the census taker were to ask a person of German extraction living in Western Canada, "Where were you born?," he would get one of many answers. A few would answer, "Germany," and some would say, "Austria," but by far the largest number would say, "Russia." Still others would answer, "Hungary, Roumania, Poland Bulgaria, the Ukraine or the United States." To record the ethnic origin of these people under the country of birth would be wrong as in actual fact their racial origin was German.

The second cause for discrepancies in the census figures is related to the international situation at the time of the census During the First World

¹ H. LEHMANN, *Das Deutschtum in Westkanada*, p. 93.

War the Canadians of German extraction lost the franchise and all German newspaper publications were banned. The racial tensions of this period had a very definite effect on the census.

Table II
ETHNIC GROUPS IN CANADA²

Year	Total					
	Population	Austrian	German	Dutch	Russian	Ukrainian
1911	7,206,643	44,036	403,417	55,961	44,376	75,432
1921	8,787,949	107,671	294,635	117,505	100,064	106,721

In 1911 according to the census, there were 403,417 people of German extraction living in Canada, but in 1921 there were only 294,635. Even if there had not been any immigration there should have been a natural increase rather than a decrease. During this same period, the number of Dutch increased from 55,961 to 117,505, while the number of Austrians increased from 44,036 to 107,671. The Slavic groups also showed substantial increases. (Table II.)

Table III
ETHNIC GROUPS IN MANITOBA³

Year	Total					
	Population	Austrian	German	Dutch	Russian	Ukrainian
1911	492,394	8,354	34,530	2,853	7,761	30,584
1921	610,118	31,035	19,444	20,728	14,009	44,129

As one may suspect, the census figures for the Western Provinces showed similar changes. In Manitoba in 1911 there were 34,530 people of German ethnic background, while in 1921 there were only 19,444. During this same period the number of Dutch increased from 2,853 to 20,728. (Table III.)

² *Canada Year Book*, 1948-1949, p. 154.

³ *Canada Census 1931*, Table 61, p. 1182. Table 82, p. 1194.

Table IV
SASKATCHEWAN⁴

	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971
Austrian	7,636	39,738	17,061	10,655	7,220	18,983	3,845
German	68,628	68,202	129,232	30,258	135,258	158,209	80,095

The number claiming Austrian ethnic origin increased during periods of tension while the number claiming German ethnic origin decreased. (Table IV.) The reverse seems to occur in periods of peace. This switching of ethnic allegiance makes it virtually impossible to determine accurately how many people of German extraction there are living in Western Canada. By studying the statistics of mother tongue, ethnic origin and religion, it is hoped that some of the apparent discrepancies can be corrected.

Since the Germans and Austrians have a common language, it seems reasonable to add these two groups together; this gives us a total of 295,446 people claiming German and/or Austrian ethnic origin. (Table V.)

Table V
1931⁵

Province	Total Population	Ethnic Origin Austrian	Ethnic Origin German	Mother Tongue German	Percentage of Germ. & Aust. Origin in each Province
Manitoba	700,139	8,858	38,078	58,219	6.7
Saskatchewan	921,785	17,061	129,232	140,009	15.8
Alberta	731,605	6,737	74,750	64,410	11.1
B.C.	694,263	3,891	16,986	12,932	3.0
Yukon	4,230	2	98	16	2.3
N.W.T.	<u>9,723</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>39</u>	<u>73</u>	0.5
	3,061,745	36,563	258,883	275,660	

⁴ Canada Census figures for each year.

⁵ *Canada Census*, Table 61, p. 1182, Table 62, p. 1164.

The Mennonites in the pre-war period called themselves German, but subsequently many of them switched. In 1931 a total of 47,282 Mennonites had changed their German ethnic background to Dutch or Russian. (Table VI.)

Table VI
1931⁶

Province	Mennonites claiming Dutch Origin	Mennonites claiming Russian Origin
Manitoba	19,047	4,738
Saskatchewan	14,266	4,608
Alberta	2,060	1,675
British Columbia	<u>761</u>	<u>127</u>
	36,134	11,148

Many of the German Catholics, Lutherans and Baptists also changed their ethnic allegiance from German to Russian during the war years. If indeed their ethnic origin were Russian as they stated, their religion should be either Greek Orthodox or Doukhobour. However, 33,660 who claimed they were of Russian ethnic origin, gave their religion as Baptists, Lutherans or Roman Catholics. (Table VII.)

Table VII
RACIAL ORIGIN – RUSSIAN – 1931⁷

Religion	Man.	Sask.	Alta.	B.C.	Total
Baptists	383	1,583	1,028	303	3,297
Lutherans	2,335	5,266	4,033	661	12,295
Roman Catholics	1,853	11,543	3,295	1,377	<u>18,068</u>
					33,660

⁶ *Census 1931*, Bulletin XXXV, Religious Denominations by Racial Origin. (LEHMANN, p. 136).

⁷ *Census of Canada*, Vol. I, Population Summary 1931, pp. 924-945.

This number presumably represents those who had switched their ethnic allegiance from German to Russian.

There remain to be counted the second and third generation German Canadians and German Americans, a few Germans from Switzerland, plus those who had switched to Hungarian or the Slavic groups. Dr. H. Lehmann estimated this number to be approximately 12,000, a figure which is probably low.

GERMANS AND AUSTRIANS IN WESTERN CANADA IN 1931

1. Of German ethnic origin	258,883
2. Of Austrian ethnic origin	36,563
3. German Mennonites who switched to Russian or Dutch	47,282
4. Catholics, Lutherans and Baptists who switched to Russian	33,660
5. Second and third generation who switched to British and/or Slavic groups	<u>12,000</u>
	388,388

By adding all of the previous estimations, the number of people with German background living in Western Canada in 1931 was 388,388, representing approximately 12.7 percent of the total population of 3,061,745. This is 112,728 more than the number who gave German as their mother tongue and presumably it is representative of the degree of assimilation that had occurred.

The economic depression of the thirties resulted in severe restrictions on immigration and of course, there was no immigration of Germans during the Second World War. In the post-war period of 1946 to 1970 there were 308,297 German and 65,464 Austrian immigrants who entered Canada.⁸ The number of these new immigrants who settled in Western Canada plus the natural growth rate are reflected in the 1971 census. (Table VIII.)

⁸ F. HAWKINS, *Canada & Immigration, Table XII*, p. 58.

Table VIII
1971⁹

Province	Total Population	Austrian Ethnic Origin	German Ethnic Origin	Mother Tongue German	Percentage of Germ. & Aust. Origin in each Province
Manitoba	988,250	3,200	123,065	82,715	12.7
Saskatchewan	926,245	3,845	180,095	78,885	19.5
Alberta	1,627,875	6,310	231,005	92,805	14.5
B.C.	2,184,620	9,845	198,315	89,020	9.5
Yukon	18,385	110	1,555	560	9.0
N.W.T.	34,805	60	1,339	425	2.0
	5,780,180	23,370	527,365	341,410	

The total population in Western Canada in 1971 was 5,780,180 of whom 550,735 were of German and/or Austrian ethnic origin. 341,410 of whom gave German as their mother tongue, representing a figure of 61 percent. In 1931 there were 295,446 people of German and/or Austrian ethnic origin, 275,660 of whom gave German as their mother tongue, or approximately 93 percent.

These statistics would suggest that people of German ethnic background are losing their identity and are disappearing in the melting pot of "New Canadians," a society in which the English-language and culture are predominant.

THE GERMAN SETTLEMENTS IN WESTERN CANADA

It is not intended to discuss the German settlements in Western Canada in great detail, only brief mention will be made of the larger ones.

The first Germans in Western Canada were part of a group of 100 soldiers engaged by Lord Selkirk in 1817 to protect his Scottish Red River settlement. The soldiers were part of two regiments consisting of Germans as well as a few Swiss and Italians. These soldiers had helped the English

⁹ *Census of Canada 1971*, Table 34.

fight Napoleon in Spain and from 1812 to 1815 they were allied with Canada in its defence against the United States. The officers and soldiers had their land near the small fort and were settled along 'German Creek,' a small tributary of the Red River, so named because of their presence there. The site of the colony subsequently became known as St. Boniface.

When the Hudson's Bay Co. and the North-Western Co. joined forces in 1821 and hostilities ceased with the Selkirk colonists, the soldiers lost their purpose and their presence was no longer required. In 1826 they moved to Galena, Illinois, where they became farmers and miners.¹⁰

THE MENNONITE SETTLEMENTS

The first Germans to settle permanently in Western Canada were a group of Mennonites who settled in Southern Manitoba. William Hespeler, a German born Winnipeg business man, was visiting his home in Baden-Baden, Germany, in 1872. While there, he heard through the Russian Count Menschikov, that as a result of the recent regulations of the Russian Government regarding military service, etc., many of the German Mennonite people in South Russia were unhappy and wanted to leave. Hespeler related this information to the Canadian Government, who in turn sent him to South Russia to contact these people. He visited many of the Mennonite colonies and invited the people to come to Western Canada where they could set up new homes for themselves. "Having arranged for a delegation to visit Canada, he returned home where he was made a Commissioner of Immigration and Agriculture, and placed in Winnipeg to oversee the anticipated immigration."¹¹

Subsequently a delegation of four Mennonites inspected the area in Southern Manitoba and decided that the land would indeed be suitable to start a new settlement.¹² On July 23, 1873, they negotiated an agreement with the Dominion Government which included the following provisions:¹³

¹⁰ LEHMANN, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-47.

¹¹ F.H. EPP, *Mennonites in Canada*, p. 187.

¹² E.K. FRANCIS, *In Search of Utopia*, pp. 45-46. The delegates were David Klassen, Jacob Peters, Heinrich Wiebe & Cornelius Toems.

¹³ EPP, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

1. Exemption from military service.
2. Eight townships of free land.
3. Exclusive use of reserved land by the Mennonites.
4. Full exercise of religious principles.
5. Control of their own schools.
6. Transportation credits from Hamburg to Fort Garry, of up to \$30.00 per adult.

The land reserve which contained 8 townships was located some 30 miles south-east of Winnipeg, on the east side of the Red River. The first Mennonite immigrants from Russia arrived at the end of July, 1874. They discovered that much of the land on which they settled was marginal and some 32 families moved to the west side of the Red River soon after their arrival. In 1874 they applied for a block settlement, which was granted, and a reserve containing 17 townships was officially created by an Order-in-Council in 1876.¹⁴ Between 1876 and 1882 about 400 families moved from the east to the west side of the river.¹⁵ The areas became known as the 'East' and 'West' Reserves.

The immigrants continued to come in large numbers and by 1877 there were 700 families living in 38 colonies in the East Reserve, and 467 families living in 25 colonies in the West Reserve. By 1879, 6,902 people had settled in 110 colonies.¹⁶

The population in both reserves increased rapidly, so that in a few years there was no land available for the young couples wishing to get started. Commissioner Jacobsen stated in 1890, "the greatest grievance (of the Mennonites) is that they have not land enough for their increasing families."¹⁷ The Canadian Government became aware of this situation and in order to prevent the migration of these people to the United States, set aside a second large area comprising some 42 townships near Rosthern, in the North-West Territories 40 miles north of Saskatoon.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 211.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 219.

¹⁶ LEHMANN, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 153. Sess. Pap., 1890, No. 6, pp. 146-148.

The first group of Mennonite settlers, mostly young people from Manitoba, came to this new area in 1891. They were soon joined by Mennonites from Russia who had been working on the farms of their friends and brethren in Manitoba. They were also joined by Mennonites from the states of Nebraska, Kansas and the Dakotas. The news of a good crop in 1899 resulted in a further influx of both Mennonites and German Lutherans.

On the January 23, 1895 the Dominion Government reserved the even numbered sections of four townships in the Hague-Osler region for the exclusive settlement of Old Colony Mennonites from the West Reserve. The land was located along the railway line between Saskatoon and Rosthern, the odd numbered sections were owned by the railway.¹⁸ By 1931 the number of Mennonites living in the Rosthern district had increased to 12,708.

The increasing population and the new Mennonite immigrants coming from both Germany and Russia required the opening of yet another Mennonite settlement, this time in the south-west part of the province. In 1903 the first Mennonite settlers arrived in the Swift Current-Herbert district and by 1905 there were more than 100 families in the area. Most of these Mennonite people who came from Russia settled on 15 colonies south of Swift Current, but some 200 families settled in the area of Main Center, north-west of Herbert. Again their numbers increased rapidly; by 1911 there were 4,598 and by 1931 there were 8,231 Mennonites in the Swift Current-Herbert district.¹⁹

In the post-war years of the First World War, some 1,800 Mennonite families settled in small groups in nearly all parts of Saskatchewan. However, some 200 Mennonite families from Russia settled around Rabbit Lake and Glenbush, west of Prince Albert.

Although Manitoba and Saskatchewan seemed to be the first choice for the Mennonites, some did settle in Alberta. The first group came from Waterloo, Ontario, in 1893 and settled in the Didsbury-Carstair district. In 1900 a further group from Ontario were joined by some members from the United States and settled in the Knee Hill area, east of Didsbury and in colonies near Beiseker. By 1911 there were 1,147 Mennonites in the CalgaryDidsbury district. In the post-war period, some 2,000 Mennonites

¹⁸ EPP, *op. cit.*, p. 312.

¹⁹ LEHMANN. *op. cit.*, p. 172.

from Russia and 1,500 members from Saskatchewan were accommodated in 43 different settlements.²⁰

In 1894 Hutterites from Volhynia settled at Bruderheim, north of Edmonton, and at Bruderfeld and New Sarepta south of Edmonton. In 1918 Hutterites from the United States formed 12 “bruderhofe” in the area between Lethbridge and Cardston. A few more came later. By 1931 there were 8,289 Mennonites and Hutterites in Alberta. (Table IX.)

In 1907 a small group of 15 Mennonite families settled in the Okanagan Valley; their centre was Renata, from which they spread into Penticton, Kelowna and Nelson.²¹ The first large group of Mennonites to settle in British Columbia came in 1926; they comprised some 300 families from Russia who were sponsored by their kin in Rosthern, Saskatchewan. They settled in the Fraser Valley with Yarrow as the centre. New members from the prairies soon swelled their ranks and they spread into the areas of Sardis, Abbotsford and vicinity. About the same time, some 29 families (approximately 300 members) settled in the Black Creek area on Vancouver Island, north of Nanaimo.²²

In 1931 there were 1,085 Mennonites in British Columbia.

Table IX
RELIGIOUS DENOMINATIONS OF GERMANS AND AUSTRIANS
IN WESTERN CANADA - 1931²³

	Baptists	Lutherans	Mennonites	R.C.
Manitoba	1,987	17,061	30,352	11,647
Saskatchewan	5,140	44,857	31,338	57,276
Alberta	4,227	28,238	8,289	17,779
B.C.	960	4,781	1,085	6,599
Yukon	0	34	3	42
N.W.T.	<u>2</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>14</u>
	12,316	94,984	71,068	93,357

²⁰ C.A. DAWSON, *Group Settlement*, Ethnic Communities in Western Canada, Vol. VII, p. 101.

²¹ K. STUMPP, *Heimatbuch*, 1963, p. 86.

²² EPP, *op. cit.*, p. 304.

²³ *Seventh Census of Canada 1931*, Vol. I, Summary Table 42, pp. 793-97.

Table X
RELIGIOUS DENOMINATIONS OF GERMANS AND AUSTRIANS
IN WESTERN CANADA – 1971²⁴

	Baptists	Lutherans	Mennonites	R.C.
Manitoba	5,460	29,985	43,960	13,400
Saskatchewan	3,320	40,170	20,790	70,425
Alberta	11,955	61,285	14,310	52,930
B.C.	9,860	44,180	18,355	40,430
Yukon	70	330	40	445
N.W.T.	55	225	20	395
	30,720	176,175	97,475	178,025

GERMAN CATHOLIC SETTLEMENTS
IN WESTERN CANADA

There were no significant German Catholic settlements in Manitoba; small groups were intermingled with the Mennonites and Lutherans. The 1931 census showed only 5,445 German Catholics in Manitoba.

On the May 22, 1886, a group of four German Catholic families took up homesteads at Balgonie, a town in the North-West Territories, some 16 miles east of Regina.²⁵ They were soon joined by four more families. New immigrants continued to arrive, and by 1890 there were 24 families in the district. All of these people had come from Josephstal, a small colony of German Catholics in South Russia, 17 miles from Odessa. More families followed. What the new settlers found most difficult was the loneliness of the wide open prairies. Thirty families elected a committee who purchased the N.W. ¼ S 5, T 18, R 16 from the C.P.R. on the September 5, 1891, at a price of \$4.00 per acre.²⁶ Under clause 37 of the Homestead Act, a hamlet or colony was established in July 1894 and called St. Joseph's Colony.

More German Catholics from Russia followed and in 1890 five families settled along Many Bone Creek, near Kronau, 15 miles south of Balgonie. More families came to this district, and by 1899 there were 65 families living in three small colonies known as Katharinental, Rastadt and

²⁴ *Canada Census 1971*, Table 19, pp. 5-10.

²⁵ A. ZIMMERMAN, *Zum Fünfzigjährigen Jubiläum*, Anton and Joseph Diewold, Johann Kuntz and George Eckert, p. 8.

²⁶ Glenbow Foundation, C.P.R. Land Sales Series, Vol. 109.

Speyer. The three colonies amalgamated in October 1916 to form St. Peter's Parish.²⁷

Vibank, located 30 miles southeast of Regina, received its first group of Catholics in 1891. This group of Germans from Russia were joined in 1897 by Germans from the Banat in Hungary. In 1901 a further group of Germans arrived from the Banat, Bukowina and South Russia. In 1904 they formed St. Paul's Parish.²⁸

The Odessa district slightly further east from Vibank was first settled in 1901. By 1904 there were 63 families in the area. It was served as a mission by priests from Balgonie, Qu'Appelle and Wolseley. The first modest church was built in the autumn of 1908 and dedicated to St. Wendelin. On November 14, 1914, the first resident priest, Rev. Peter Schorr, was installed and the name of the parish was changed and dedicated to the Holy Family.²⁹

There were approximately 5,000 German Catholics in the seven parishes of St. Joseph's at Balgonia, St. Peter's at Kronau, St. Paul's at Vibank, the Holy Family at Odessa, the Lady of Grace at Sedley, the Immaculate Conception at Qu'Appelle and St. Ignatius at Kendal.³⁰

The flood of new immigrants from Russia continued; they pushed the new settlements east and south as far as Weyburn and Estevan.

St. Peter's Parish at Humboldt, Saskatchewan, was founded in 1902 as the result of a conjoint effort by the Benedictine order of Monks, the German American Land Company and the Catholic Settlement Society of St. Paul, Minnesota.³¹ Many American-born Germans, whose parents had settled in the United States between 1860 and 1880, were looking for new homesteads in Western Canada. The problem was the scarcity of Catholic, German speaking priests who could provide for the spiritual needs of the new immigrants. Requests for help to the priests of the parishes from whence these new settlers had come, did bring results. The Benedictine order of Monks decided to investigate conditions in Western Canada with

²⁷ H. METZGER, *Geschichtlicher Abrisz, St. Peter's, Pfarrei*, p. 141.

²⁸ P. ABELE, *Der Grundung, St. Paul's Kirchengemeinde*, p. 10.

²⁹ F.K. GEREIN, *History of Odessa*, pp. 10-12.

³⁰ LEHMANN, *op. cit.*, p. 187.

³¹ WINDSCHLEGL, *Fifty Golden Years, 1903-1953*, pp. 7-9. Members of the German American Land Co. were H.J. Hascamp of St. Cloud, Moritz Hoeschen of Freeport and Henry Hoeschen of Melrose, Minnesota. Members of the Catholic Land Settlement were F.J. Lange and Costello.

a view to selecting a location that would provide for a more or less closed colony, with a monastery in the center to act as a unifying force.³²

A suitable location was indeed found and plans were made for immediate settlement. "The German American Land Co. entered into an agreement with the Dominion Government whereby a block of land comprising 50 townships was set aside for the colony. The company agreed to bring 500 settlers per year for three years. During this period, only those people brought in by the company or their associates, would be allowed to homestead within the limits of St. Peter's Colony. The German American Land Company bought 108,000 acres of land from the North Saskatchewan Land Company at \$4.50 per acre. This land comprised only part of the land in the colony, and only the odd numbered sections. The even numbered sections were reserved for homesteading. The Catholic Settlement Society undertook the task of providing settlers by advertising extensively in the German papers of the United States and distributing numerous pamphlets among the German Catholics."³³

The Benedictine order supplied the priests for the colony and Prior Alfred from the monastery at Cluny, Illinois, accepted the invitation to take charge in the new settlement. The first group of 26 Catholic land seekers settled on their homesteads on October 11, 1902, aided by Father Bruno Doerfler. By December, 1902, some one thousand homesteads had been occupied and by 1906, the population had increased to 6,000. The settlers came mostly from Minnesota, but also from the Dakotas, Wisconsin and Kansas. Practically all were German Catholics; probably not more than 10 percent of the original settlers in St. Peter's Colony came directly from Germany.³⁴ They were joined by German Catholic families from South Russia and from the Banat. Following the war, many more German families came from the Banat in Hungary and from Germany. The 1931 census indicates nearly 9,000 German Catholics living in St. Peter's Colony.

St. Peter's Colony was well settled and nearly all of the free homestead land had been taken by 1904. Many of the people living in St. Peter's Colony were not satisfied with their land because there was too much bush and shrub. With the intention of finding land to please these people, and providing homesteads for later arrivals, Mr. F. Lange decided to start a new

³² *Ibid.*, p. 7.

³³ Dawson, *op. cit.*, p. 286.

³⁴ Dawson, *op. cit.*, pp. 286-287.

colony on the open prairie.³⁵ On the July 24, 1904, he drove with horse and wagon on a tour of inspection to the Tramping Lake area, west of Saskatoon, and decided that the district would be most suitable for a new settlement.³⁶

This time there was no Land Company to buy up land for a closed colony as had been done at St. Peter's. However, a Catholic Colonization Society was formed at Rosthern with Mr. Lange as president and Mr. W. Bens (Bentz) as secretary, as well as three Oblate priests as members.³⁷ The Society realized that it was necessary to advertise the location and advantages of the new colony in all areas of prospective German Catholic immigrants, namely in the United States, Russia, Austria-Hungary and Germany. They could not get any money from the Federal Government, but did induce the Canadian Pacific Railway to provide some money for this purpose. This money was not nearly enough and Mr. Lange gave all of his personal earnings to defray the expenses of the advertising. Their efforts however, were well rewarded and soon there was such an influx of German immigrants that the planned colony in reality became a closed community. The colony expanded well beyond its originally intended size and eventually covered an area of 77 townships. The official founding of St. Joseph's Colony is given as May 12, 1905, as it was on this day that the first settlers came to Tramping Lake from Saskatoon, under the guidance of Father J. Schweers.³⁸

For the most part the settlers were Germans from South Russia and the Volga who had been living in the United States for some years. There were also many Germans from the Banat, Austria-Hungary, as well as some from Germany. By 1907 there were 581 German families at Tramping Lake. The 1911 census reported 5,300 and by 1931 there were 10,099 German Catholic people in the region.³⁹

³⁵ LEHMANN, *op. cit.*, p. 180. There seems to be some confusion as to who originated the idea of a new colony. In Sess. Pap. 1906, No. 25 II, p. 114, Mr. Speers, chief immigration officer stated, "In August 1904, I recommended a new location for the German people, who had placed 1000 families on the Quill Plains. Mr. F.J. Lange, who had settled this district, inspected the new territory at my request, which proved highly satisfactory and he has already placed a large number of German families in the new district."

³⁶ *Silberne Jubilaum*, p. 21.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 25. Fathers J. Laufer, A. Suffa and J.W. Schulte.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

³⁹ LEHMANN, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

The Happy Land region, located in the area 40 miles north of Maple Creek and south of the South Saskatchewan River, comprising some eleven communities centered around Prelate and Leader, was yet another large settlement of German Catholics. The community was founded in 1908 and by 1909 it comprised 500 German Catholic families. Many of the people came from South Russia via the Dobrudja.

Many smaller settlements of German Catholics were also formed; these are summarized on Table IX. Some German Catholics of course lived in the cities. The 1931 census showed 47,121 German Catholics in Saskatchewan. (Table IX.)

German Catholic settlements in Alberta were few and small; some who had come from the United States settled at Pincher Creek in 1896. They were second generation Germans whose ancestors had originally come from Westphalia in Germany. By 1906 there were 40 German Catholic families in this community.

In 1902 a German Catholic Colony was formed at Spring Lake; these settlers were mostly from Minnesota and the Dakotas. More came and by 1932 they had increased to 180 German Catholic families living in 4 communities.

The colony of Rosenheim, located on the Alberta border, was an overflow from St. Joseph's Colony in Saskatchewan, and in 1932 there were over 1,000 German Catholics there. Smaller German Catholic settlements were located at Beiseker, Lethbridge, Morinville, Peace River, Berwyn and Battle River.

SMALL GERMAN CATHOLIC SETTLEMENTS IN SASKATCHEWAN⁴⁰

Year	Founded	Name of Colony	Adjacent Station	No. of German Catholic Families (1932)	Origin of Settlers
1.	1892	Mariahilf	Grayson	250	Moldavia, Czernowitz, Bukowina
2.	1900	Maryland	Steelman	70	Banat, South Russia, Roumania, Ontario and Wisconsin.
3.	1902	Marienthal	Estevan	100	South Russia, Roumania, Germany, North Dakota, Ontario.
		Jacobsberg Bergfeld		62	Russia, Germany, Bulgaria, Austria-Hungary
4.	1903	Allan Seltz	Allan	250	South Russia via United States.
5.	1904	Claybank	Claybank	90	Sea of Azov, Bukowina, Bavaria and East Prussia.
		Spring Valley	Same	62	
6.	1904	Holdfast	Holdfast	170	Black Sea, Banat
		Wolfsheim	Raymore	180	Banat, Germany and Donau Monarchy
7.	1905	St. Pius	Windthorst	100	United States, Germany
		Kronsberg	Dysart	100	Galicia
		Arat	Edenwold		Galicia and Bukowina
8.	1906	Horizon		70	Banat
9.	1908	St. Elizabeth	St. Boswell		Banat
		St. Joseph	Hodgeville	120	United States, Perkhams, Minnesota, Bukowina
		St. Mathias	Gooding		Galicia and Hungary.
10.	1910	Billimun	Same	80	South Russia
11.	1910	Rockglen	Same	65	Germany, Austria-Hungary
12.	1923	St. Boniface	St. Wallburg	100	Bavaria, Westphalia, Austria and Saskatchewan.

⁴⁰ The above information has been summarised from LEHMANN, pp. 185-197.

The 1931 census showed 12,180 German Catholics in Alberta.⁴¹

There were no large German Catholic settlements in British Columbia. Some 60 German Catholic families settled at Kelowna and about 80 families settled at Rutland in the Okanagan Valley. Most of these people came from St. Joseph's Colony and Claybank in Saskatchewan. Some German Catholics also lived in the Fraser Valley, Vancouver and New Westminster. The 1931 census showed only 3,841 German Catholics in all of British Columbia.

GERMAN EVANGELICAL SETTLEMENTS IN WESTERN CANADA⁴²

Waldersea, located at the southern tip of Lake Manitoba, was settled by 15 German Lutheran⁴³ families from Galicia in 1891 and in 1896 they were joined by 114 Lutheran families from the Crimea, East Prussia and Volhynia. This same year, 90 Lutheran and 20 German Baptist⁴⁴ families from Volhynia founded a settlement north-east of Winnipeg centered around Beausejour, Thalberg and Whitemouth. Later they were joined by Lutherans from Galicia, Russia and Germany. Small groups of Lutheran families had also settled on the periphery of the Mennonite colonies in southern Manitoba.

Moosehorn, located between Lake Winnipeg and Lake Manitoba was settled by Lutherans from Volhynia and in 1913 they also founded Friedfeld near Kamsack. Other Lutheran settlements were at Inglis, Grandview, Boissevain and Dauphin, while Baptists settled at Rose-du-Lac and Mintonna. Lutherans and Baptists also settled in the city of Winnipeg. In 1931 there were 16,379 German Lutherans and 1,080 German Baptists in Manitoba. (Table VIII.)

The first Lutherans in Saskatchewan came from Germany in 1884 and settled at Neu-Elsass, now called Strasbourg. In 1885 a group of Baptists from Tulcea in the Roumanian Dobrudja settled at Neu-Tulcea, now called

⁴¹ LEHMANN, pp. 223-224.

⁴² LEHMANN, *op. cit.*, pp. 225-237.

⁴³ Hereafter referred to as Lutherans.

⁴⁴ Hereafter referred to as Baptists.

Edenwold. This group intended to settle in Neu-Elsass but because it was so far from a railway centre at that time, they decided to form their own colony. In 1889 they were joined by a group of Germans from Bukowina. Many more of their friends and relatives from Bukowina followed them, and by 1896 there were 265 Baptist families in the Edenwold district. Later they were joined by Germans from South Russia, Poland, Galicia and Germany. These people spread into homesteads in the surrounding districts of Vibank, Earl Grey and Southey, while twenty Baptist families from the Dobrudja settled near Raymore.

Lutherans also settled in the Edenwold district in 1890 and formed the rural parish of St. John and in 1916 they founded the parish of St. Paul in the town of Edenwold.

Langenburg, located near the Manitoba border, was founded in 1885 by 27 Lutheran families from Germany. In 1890 they were joined by Germans from Eastern Europe, and soon the district expanded into 5 additional German settlements. namely. Landshut, by settlers from lower Bavaria and the Black Sea; Hoffnungstal by Germans from Bessarabia and Galicia; Beresina by Germans from Bessarabia, Volhynia and Kurland; Landestru by Germans from Galicia, and Riversdale by Galician Germans. By 1931 there were 2,031 Germans in the district, nearly all Lutheran.⁴⁵

Ebenezer, located north of Yorkton, was founded in 1887 by Baptists from Volhynia and the Volga. The settlement enlarged as new members arrived and by 1889 there were 100 German families in the district. By 1931 there were 6,604 Germans in the nine districts of Yorkton.⁴⁶

Neudorf was founded in 1890 by Lutherans from Galicia who had settled at Dunmore, Alberta and Grenfell, Saskatchewan in 1888, but because of complete crop failures in those areas, they had moved to Neudorf. They were joined in subsequent years by more Lutherans from Galicia. The expanding community eventually occupied most of twelve townships. By 1931 there were 2,842 Germans in the Lemburg-Neudorf district.

In 1904 Lutherans settled in Melville and district; 60 families were from Bessarabia, 20 families from Galicia and five from Germany. More settlers came and by 1931 there were 1,178 Germans in the town of Melville, and 1,700 Germans in the surrounding farm district.

⁴⁵ LEHMANN, *op. cit.*, p. 206.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 207.

Other Lutheran settlements were Lipton, Cupar, Markinch, Southey and Earl Grey. In the area between Lipton and Earl Grey, there were approximately 3,600 Lutherans. Smaller Lutheran settlements were located at Gartenland near Quill Lake, and Prairie Rose near Dafoe, both settled by Volhynian Germans while Jansen was settled by Volga Germans. Smaller Lutheran settlements were also scattered throughout the province; Luseland had 100 Lutheran families, St. Boswell 180 families, Bateman 130 families and Yellow Grass 80, while Regina had 190 Lutheran and 60 Baptist families. Lutherans also formed the largest number of Germans in Saskatoon. The 1931 census showed 41,059 German Lutherans and 1,499 German Baptists in Saskatchewan. (Table IX.)

The first German Lutherans to settle in Alberta were Gustav Neumann and Carl Schoening. They had come from Ontario and settled at Pincher Creek in 1882. They were joined by other German Lutherans in 1884, and in 1896 by some German Catholics from the United States.

Many Germans from Galicia and Russia had settled in colonies (e.g. Rosenthal, Josephsburg) in the Dunmore district south of Medicine Hat in 1889. Because of severe drought all but two of the families moved north to colonies near Stony Plain, Fort Saskatchewan and Wetaskiwin. The Galician Lutheran Germans established the colonies of Hoffnungsau and Rosenthal near Stony Plain 30 miles west of Edmonton, and Josephsburg near Fort Saskatchewan, 20 miles northeast of Edmonton, while the Russian German Lutherans founded Heimthal at Rabbit Hill, about 12 miles south of Edmonton, just west of the present station of Nisku.

New immigrants from Galicia, Volhynia and Russia arrived every year. Soon all of the land around Stony Plain was occupied and the settlers overflowed into the surrounding districts. They were joined by Germans from the United States and Ontario and by 1897 the regions of Stony Plain, Spruce Grove and Golden Spike were completely filled. Josephsburg also grew and by 1897 there were 40 families in the colony. The largest German Lutheran settlement developed around Wetaskiwin, south of Edmonton and along the Canadian Pacific Railway connecting these two points.

Lutherort, just south of Edmonton, now called Ellerslie, was founded in 1892 by Lutherans from Volhynia, while Leduc was settled by Baptists from Volhynia in 1893. Volhynian Germans also settled at Hay Lake and Bittern Lake north-east of Wetaskiwin, at New Norway, Bashaw, Forestburg, Galahad and Castor to the south-east, at Hobbema, Bismarck, Thorsby, Brightview and Patience to the west and south-west. Blumenau,

now called Stettler was founded in 1903 by German Lutherans from Switzerland.

In 1913 Lutherans from Württemberg, Germany, settled at Westlock, Dapp, Fawcett, Newbrook, Styal, Junkins and Speers, all located north, north-west and west from Edmonton, and at Tomahawk and Little Volga in the south-west. Another large group of Germans came in 1927 and settled at Barrhead, Stettin, Freedom, Mellowdale, Monola, Mystery Lake, Bloomsbury, Meadowview, Rochfort Bridge and Mayerthorpe, while others settled at Flatbush, Edson, Rosevear, Pinedale, Sunnybrook and Warburg. Most of the later settlers came from Germany and Poland and were joined by members from the United States and the southern parts of the prairie provinces. In 1931 there were approximately 11,000 Germans, mostly Lutheran, within a 40 mile radius of Edmonton.

In 1911 Germans from Bessarabia and the United States settled a block of 30 townships south of Medicine Hat which included Irving, Walsh, Newburg (previously Josephsburg), Elkwater, Thelma, Gowan, Gros Ventre, Little Plume, and Wisdom.

The Peace River district was the last to be settled. Lutherans from the United States first settled at Waterhole, four miles south of the present village of Fairview in 1916. Sexsmith to the south was settled in 1920. A heavy immigration into the region southwest of the village of Peace River started in 1926 when Lutherans settled at Grimshaw, Berwyn, Whitelaw, Bluesky, Hines Creek and Clear Prairie. They also settled at Deadwood, North Star and Notikwin in the north and on both sides of Burnt River, Spirit River and Northmark in the south. Further settlements occurred at Sexsmith, Grand Prairie, Wimbley, Hythe, Wanham, Hart Valley, Peoria, La Glace, Clairmont and Rivertop. The area was served by nine Lutheran ministers.

Lutherans also settled in the cities of Edmonton, Calgary, Lethbridge and Medicine Hat. The 1931 census showed 27,551 German Lutherans and 2,165 German Baptists in Alberta. (Table IX.)

In British Columbia German Lutherans lived in the Fraser and Okanagan Valley, in the interior at Trail, Nelson and Creston, in the north at Prince George and Kamloops, and on Vancouver Island at Duncan and Courtney. The 1931 census showed 4,470 German Lutherans and only 35 German Baptists in all of British Columbia.

The settlements described in this report were the oldest and largest. There were however, many small German settlements throughout the prairie provinces.