

The Fate of the Kulak--- Johann Bauder

Johann Bauder was born the first day of March 1893 in the closed settlement of Hoffnungstal, Odessa Russia, 60 miles north of the Black Sea. This was four years after my great grandfather Andreas Bauder *1838 and family left the Hoffnungstal daughter colony of Seebach for the German Settlement located on the prairie lands north of Burlington, Colorado.

Johann grew to manhood in Hoffnungstal, the colony which was founded in 1819 by 64 German families from Wurtemberg including Josef Bauder from Pfullingen. Josef is the direct ancestor of Johann and myself. Johann's hope of obtaining his own land in Hoffnungstal was not possible because the land could not to be divided or sold. It could only be inherited by the youngest son. When word came that a new colony -- Wilhelmsfeld also known as the Krassny Chutor, was being started and Johann asked to be included. Wilhelmsfeld was 30 miles North of Hoffnungstal.

Johann then became a colonist in Wilhelmsfeld and according to custom he may have been allotted (or he may have been on leased land) crown land of up to 60 dessiatin (162 acres) of plowland in addition to a house and garden lot in the village and use of the village's communal pasture for his livestock. These were some of the privileges and rights of a colonist. (But the communists would soon say he qualified as a Kulak¹. All the colonist had to do to claim his rights was start from basically nothing except the crown grant (or loan) of a plow and seed grain; and somehow make tillable farm land out of the thick steppe sod, overcome drought, blizzards, locus and all other many perils of farming. If there was a crop to sell, then haul it by wagon to the nearest rail point, Marienheim 10 miles southwest of Wilhelmsfeld. If by his own toils and with favorable weather his crops provided some small degree of prosperity, that would enable him to buy some building materials, then he could go to the rock quarry and break out the limestone blocks to construct a house for the shelter of family and livestock. His challenge was similar to the Bauders that left Germany 75 years earlier for the steppes of South Russia, and also the Bauders that left Russia in 1889 to homestead on the Colorado prairies.

If only Johann could have came to America with my grandfather Jakob, he would have not had to go through the reign of terror and persecution that was soon to hit him and his family like an unexpected storm. But it was 1918 and the Bolsheviks were in control for they had been successful in the October 1917 revolution over the Czars. The Bolsheviks and peasant gangs were encouraged to requisition anything they desired from the Kulaks and to even kill them if they resisted. The entire countryside and village was alarmed as to where the gangs would strike next and plunder and pick the village clean of all that could be carried off.

¹ Kulak was the name the communists used for the wealthy land owning German farmer, whom they said were an enemy of the people.

The situation changed quickly when the Great War (World War 1) brought the German army against Russia and in March 1918 they had advanced as far as Hoffnungstal where they were welcomed with a celebration. German soldiers from the old homeland were greeted as though they were family and there was much expectation that now the Bolsheviks would be subdued. However by November Germany had capitulated because of the revolution with fighting ceasing on all fronts and the German army withdrew from all of Russia. Communist and peasant gangs could now roam free to requisition anything they desired from the Kulaks and to renew their campaign of terror throughout the German villages. There was no authority to control these gangs, and in each village the people were alarmed as to where the Bolsheviks would strike next. The gangs repeatedly entered Hoffnungstal and went through the houses, granaries and cellars taking so much food that it rotted before it all could be eaten.

Another surprise action occurred mid year 1919 when General Anton Denikan and his anti-Bolshevik army (the White Army) which was pushing toward Moscow, and was expected to pass near Hoffnungstal. The men of the village decided to form a Home Guard army and join General Denikan in opposing the Bolshevik army (the Red army). They would arm themselves with the guns and equipment that was left by the German army. This was a very bold move for the villagers because already the most able young men for fighting had been conscripted into the German army, with more than 100 inducted at one time. Also the remaining men being farmers and craftsmen had no training in warfare.

The fledging Hoffnungstal army quickly rounded up 50 Bolshevik militants that were in positions around the village and imprisoned them in the most secure building available. Bolsheviks soon came from Odessa and engaged the Hoffnungstalers in a battle that was to last 5 days. The ammunition ran out and the men engaged in hand-to hand combat. The Bolsheviks using train mounted cannon shelled the village from the Wesioly-Kut rail station 7 miles distant and the Home Guard was pounded into submission leaving the entire village in the tight grip of the murderous Bolsheviks. The participation of Johann in the 5 day war is not documented, but one is lead to consider that involvement in the war may have lead to the many arrests and imprisonments and deportations to slave labor camps that he was later to experience.

“Murderous” is not to strong of a word to use to describe the Bolsheviks, who would later form the Communist Party and by their actions would cause their nation to be labeled “The Evil Empire”. The evidence against these evil murderers lies in the examination of just some of the facts available about Bauder men and other Hoffnungstal men.

Odessa Province executions 1937-1938

	Birth date	Father
Bauder, Friedrich	1897	Jacob
Bauder, Gustav	1903	Johann
Bauder, Jacob	1879	Jakob
Bauder, Karl	1883	Jakob
Bauder, Wilhelm	1906	Jakob
Bauder, Wilhelm	1899	Johann

Hoffnungstalers killed in the revolution – 1919 only

	Birth date	Father
Engel, Lorenz	1863	Christian
Engel, Johann	1898	Lorenz
Walth, Johann	1869	Georg
Guthjahr, Johann	1895	Andreijewitsch Guthjahr
Gaub, Jakob	1847	
Walth, Johann	1879	Gottfried
Kessler, Friedrich	1882	Johann Georg
Flemmer-Wenz, Jakob	1898	Karl
Rott, Friedrich		Johann
Martel, Johann	1891	
Engel, Christian	1853	Christian
Will, Eduard	1896	Philipp
Rott, Jakob	1878	
Flemmer, Christian	1881	
Brandner, Jakob	1897	Heinrich
Jundt, Jakob	1891	Jakob Jundt
Geist, Karl	1867	
Gross, Georg	1852	
Nehlich, Johann	1869	

It was also in 1919 that Johann Bauder met the widow Elisabeth Bieber nee Leibbrandt. Her husband Friedrich Bieber had died as a result of an accident in the oil mill where he worked. The oil mill crushed sunflower seeds for the oil.

Elisabeth was the sister of Dr. George Leibbrandt, the author and researcher of German Russians and among his publications was the landmark work "Hoffnungstal und Seine Schwaben". Elisabeth's father was Johann George Leibbrandt *28.11.1860 in Hoffnungsfeld. He also was known as Hans George (picture page 96 in the Hoffnungstal book by Leibbrandt). He was a militant church leader in Hoffnungsfeld and because of his anti-Bolshevik teaching and activities he and his wife Elisabeth Nee Harsch were sentenced to a "special settlement" near Perwomaisk, which is located next to Archangelsk on the White Sea 1,000 miles north of Moscow. The Russians called them "special settlements" but in reality they were slave labor camps with armed guards. The camps had the most deplorable of living conditions. The Leibbrandts never recanted their stand for their right to the freedom they had as colonists nor would they settle down and become Russianized. Both were worked to death in Perwomaisk, but forever will be examples of people of faith and human dignity, and freedom under God even when under the most horrible servitude.

It's apparent that Johann Bauder became very militant after the brutal killings of Bauder men and fellow Germans from Hoffnungstal. Inhumane treatment, deportation or verschleppt¹ were in store for those who had survived, and had been involved in resisting the requisitioning by the Bolsheviks or had been a part of the Home Guard that fought the Red Army. The deportation of Johann's future father and mother-in-law to a slave labor camp also contributed to his militant actions. In 1920, the Reds captured Johann and he was imprisoned. He was released by 1921,

which was the beginning of the great Russian famine that lasted 2 years. Five million people starved as a result of the Bolsheviks requisitioning all food, grain and even the seed grain for the next year. Before the Bolsheviks took control there was not a German that died of starvation. Each village then had a communal grainery to which each colonist contributed during the good years. During the lean years the grain was distributed to the needy.

Johann married the widow Elisabeth in 1921. They had two sons Edward *1921 and Otto *1923. The marriage may have doubled his land holdings and that would have certainly targeted him by the Bolsheviks as a Kulak to plunder.

With the deportation of his wife's parents, Johann's militant anti-Bolshevik activities increased, resulting in repeated arrests and imprisonments until an arrest in 1929 when he and his family were verschleppt and banished to Archangelsk, by the White Sea of the Arctic. There they spent eight long years of hunger and oppressive work with Johann and Elisabeth never being willing to settle in to the Russian demands and becoming so unruly that the family was again deported. That was in 1937, when the Reds brutal atrocities reached an unimaginable level of cruelty through their rein of terror on the German colonists.

This would be the last deportation. It was to one of the coldest places on earth, the slave labor camp of Buchta Nagajni Lager (camp by the Bay of Nagajni, which was probably a fish factory) located in far Northeast Siberia on the Bering Sea. They must have thought that it was at the end of the earth, because now they were 5,700 miles from their home, fields and gardens of Wilhelmsfeld, their homeland.

It was in this far off place of the frozen north that they were worked and starved to death, seemingly forgotten by the world.

But we cannot and must not forget!

¹ Verscheppt was to be taken away in the middle of the night, never to be seen again.