

Geography of German Settlement in the Russian Empire 1721-1914

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- Good morning.
- My name is Sandy Schilling Payne.
- Today, I am presenting “Geography of German Settlement in the Russian Empire.”
- In this session, I will walk you through the territorial growth of Imperial Russia and note its significance to German settlement and migration across the empire up to 1914.
- 200 years is a lot to cover, so this will be a high level overview...and I will focus on the accumulation of territory, and not every military action, or loss and gain.
- About half way through, we will be leaving Europe for what was then Asiatic Russia, the Caucasus, Central Asia, Western Siberia and Far East Russia.
- These were places of migration...and eventually deportation. Deportation locations, however, are not in the scope of this presentation
- Finally, I will be showing historical maps next to known places of German habitation from the Germans from Russia Settlement Locations map for comparison.
- While this research is ongoing, there is enough that I think you'll clearly see the patterns emerge.

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Questions

1. What territory did the Imperial Russian Empire gain and when?
2. What did those territorial gains ultimately mean for German settlement and migration throughout the empire?

When you look at clusters of German habitation either on modern or historical maps, maybe you've wondered...why here and not there?

My questions preparing for this this were these:

- What territory did the Russian Empire gain and when?
- What did those gains ultimately mean for German settlement and migration throughout the empire?

What land was available and when.

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Why here and not there?

At the end, I hope you will have a better understanding of why our German ancestors settled **here** on the map and not **there**...and why so often... it was at edges of the empire.

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- There are many maps that show the territorial growth of the Russian Empire.
- Your syllabus has several listed.
- Most of them focus on European Russia, but this one from 1914 shows the entire empire
- The dark green area on this map is Russia in 1700 when Peter the 1st was Tsar.
- Even by this point, it was by no means small.
- For a point of reference, I have placed a camel on the city of Saratov in the Volga region in case we have any Volga Germans with us today. His name is Konrad...Konrad the Camel.
- If you were not already aware, camels were used as beasts of burden in that part and further east in the Russian Empire.
- Back to the map.
- Territorial gains are shown in the colors around the perimeter...the edges of the empire.

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The Baltics and Finland in the northwest of European Russia.

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Eastern Europe to the west and southwest

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The Black Sea region to the south.

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Further south and into Asiatic Russia is the Caucasus region, north and south divided by the Caucasus mountains.

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Moving eastward is Central Asia and Western Siberia.

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And finally, the Far East.

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Agenda

1. Baltics & Finland
2. Eastern Europe
3. Black Sea Region
4. Caucasus Region
5. Central Asia & Western Siberia
6. Far East

And that is our agenda for this session.

I had wanted to do this in one integrated timeline.

But Russia tested so many of its borders with concurrent wars....I thought for clarity, we'll look at just one region at a time instead of bouncing all over the map.

Each region will have a pared down timeline, too.

We'll just hit the highlights.

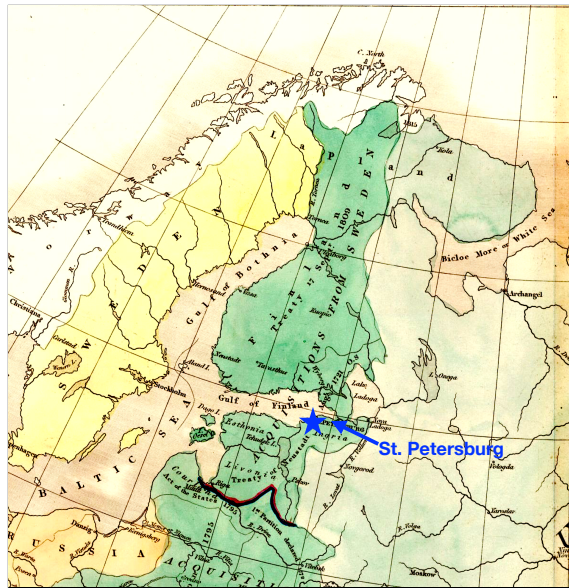
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Baltics & Finland

Northern and Western Expansion

We'll start with the Baltics and Finland.

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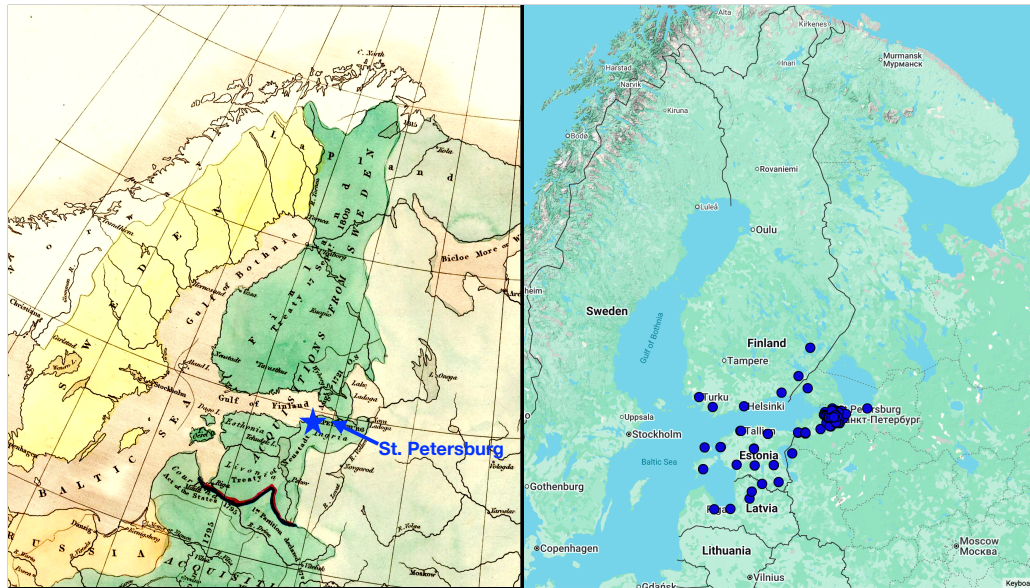
Baltics & Finland

1700	— Great Northern War (1700-1721)
1703	— St. Petersburg founded
1721	— August — Treaty of Nystad — October — Russia declared an empire
1741	— Russo-Swedish War (1741-1743) — 1743 — Treaty of Åbo
1803	— Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815) — 1806 — War of the 4th Coalition — Treaty of Tilsit — 1808 — Finnish War — Treaty of Fredrikshamn — 1815 — Treaty of Vienna

- The Great Northern War was fought over control of the Baltic Sea and Sweden's dominance in Northern Europe
- In 1721, the war ended with the Treaty of Nystad [KNEE-stad], and from it, Russia emerged as a major European power.
- From Sweden, Russia gained Estland, Livonia, and Ingria—today these are parts of Estonia, Latvia and Russia.
- Russia also gained control of the city of Vyborg from Sweden, an important location due to its proximity to the newly founded city of St. Petersburg on the Gulf of Finland.
- Shortly after signing the treaty, the Russian Senate conferred the title of “emperor of all the Russias” upon Tsar Peter I, who became Emperor Peter I, or Peter the Great.
- This was the beginning of the Empire of Russia.
- Imperial empires generally have expansionist ambitions...a desire for economic and territorial growth.
- For Russia, this meant, gaining warm water ports, control over trade routes....access to fertile lands and lands with natural resources, and creating buffer zones against neighboring empires and defending those borders...all the while pushing to expand them farther and farther.
- The Russo-Swedish War in 1741 followed...and was mainly about Sweden's attempt to regain lost territory.
- However, Sweden lost and ceded more of Finland to Russia...extending Russia's border farther westward.
- The Napoleonic Wars spanned from 1803 to 1815, and encompassed a series of conflicts between Napoleon's French Empire and various European coalitions.
- The War of the Fourth Coalition took place between 1806 and 1807, and was one of the major conflicts of the Napoleonic Wars.
- It involved a coalition of powers, including Prussia, Russia, Sweden, and Great Britain, fighting against French forces.
- The Treaty of Tilsit [TIL-zit] at the end of the war ceded to Russia the area around Białystok from Prussia.
- And France granted Russia permission to invade and take Finland from Sweden.
- ...and so it did.
- The following year, The Finnish War was fought between the Kingdom of Sweden and the Russian Empire.

- From it, Russia gained the eastern third of Sweden, which became the autonomous Grand Duchy of Finland within the Russian Empire.
- This created the desired land buffer around St. Petersburg.
- At the end of the Napoleonic Wars, for this region at least, the Treaty of Vienna confirmed to Russia the conquests of Finland, including territory in Lapland.

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- **What does all this mean to German settlement?**

- The Baltic states came with free Germans!
- So did Finland, although fewer.
- They had been there since at least the 13th century and were mostly nobles and merchants.
- They owned land and businesses.
- Many were professionals—architects, engineers, merchants, musicians, etc.
- They did not live together in ethnic neighborhoods and enclaves like we see elsewhere with the German colonists.
- But they did maintain their churches, schools, and associations in German.
- And they played a large part in developing Russia's civil and military service.
- And over time, some migrated to other urban areas in Russia.
- In 1764, when the German colonists began to arrive at the invitation of Catherine the Great....they travelled through the Baltic Sea....into the Gulf of Finland to St. Petersburg, which was now surrounded and protected by Russian lands.
- While most of the German colonists headed for regions inland along the Volga River or to Chernigov....some founded colonies...around....and south of St. Petersburg on land that came from Sweden.

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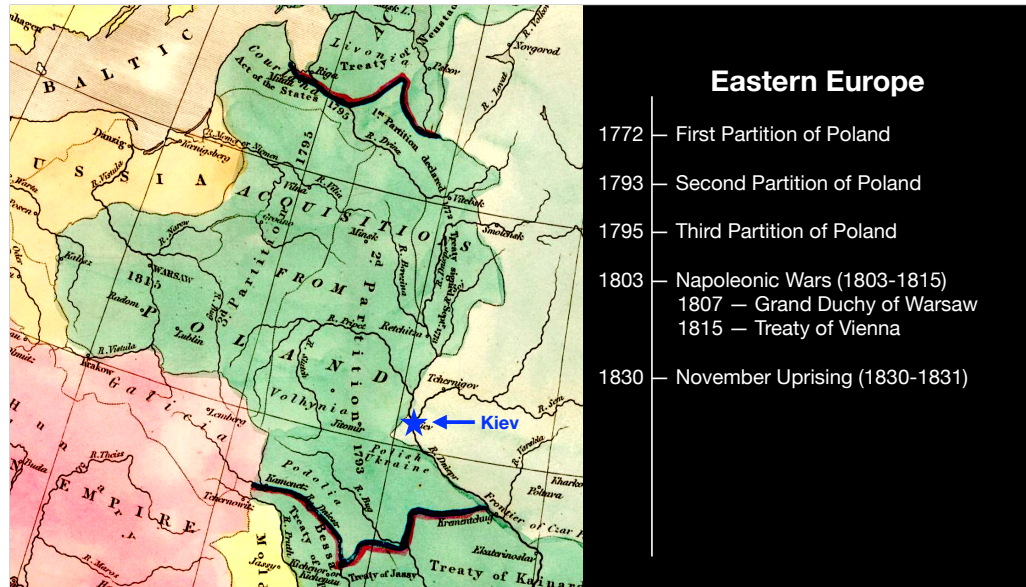
Eastern Europe

Western and Southwestern Expansion



Now let's move to Eastern Europe.

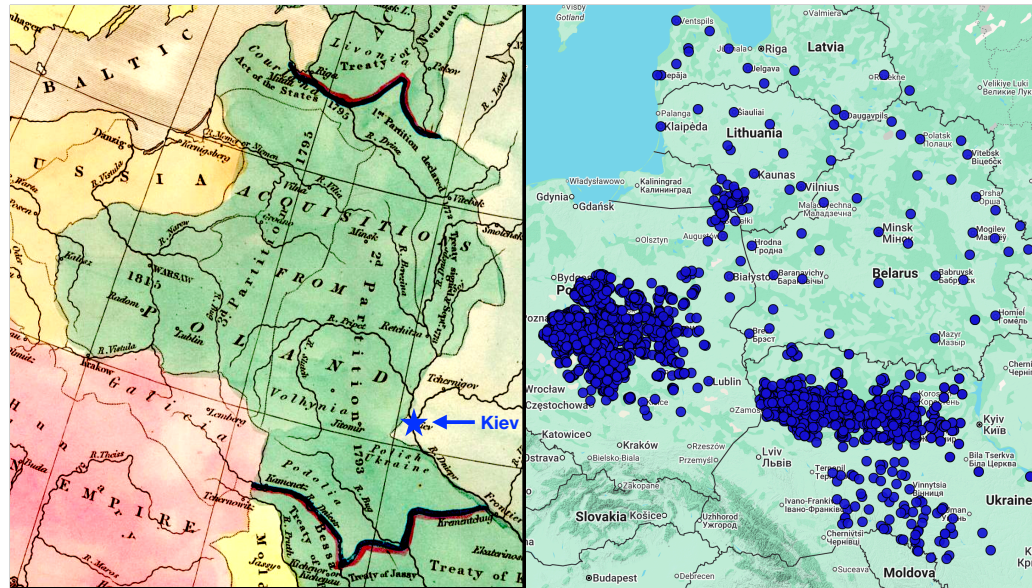
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- By the mid to late-1700s, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth had been weakened by both internal strife and external pressure by neighboring empires.
- Namely: the German Kingdom of Prussia, the Austrian Habsburg monarchy, and the Russian Empire.
- Under Catherine the Great, while not formalized, Poland became a de-facto protectorate of the Russian Empire between 1768 and 1771.
- A protectorate meant it was controlled and protected by Russia while retaining its own monarch.
- And in most cases, like this one, Russia kept a military presence in the countries that it supposedly protected.
- It was often the first step before annexation of territory, as we will see throughout this presentation.
- During these years, Russia was at war with the Ottoman Empire...one of many...over the territory around the Black Sea.
- Some Poles took up arms against Russia and allied with Turkey.
- After Russia's victory over Turkey, it allied with Austria and Prussia and began carving up the Commonwealth.
- Russia's take in the first partition of Poland was the district of White Russia, or White Ruthenia, the eastern part of Belarus.
- Russia's take in the second partition were the Polish governments of Minsk, Podolia, and part of Volhynia.
- This roughly includes modern-day central Belarus and part of western Ukraine.
- The final partition occurred in 1795.
- From this Russia acquired the region of Kurland...an historical region southwest of Riga on the Baltic Sea...the remainder of Lithuania, and the rest of Volhynian Ukraine.
- With this, Poland ceased to exist as a sovereign state.
- The Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815) continued to redraw borders.
- In this region, Napoleon defeated Prussia where it had established South Prussia from its take of the second partition of Poland.
- From this was created the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, a client state of France.

- That's the bump you see on the left.
- Napoleon was said to be a champion of Polish independence and gave control back to the Poles.
- French occupation was short-lived, and at the end of the Napoleonic Wars, the Duchy of Warsaw was again divided in the Treaty of Vienna.
- Most of it went to Russia.
- It was officially called the Kingdom of Poland but was referred to as Congress Poland, or Congress Kingdom of Poland....to differentiate it from all the previous kingdoms of Poland.
- The king of Congress Poland was not a Pole.... but Russian Tsar Alexander I.
- In addition to Congress Poland, the Treaty of Vienna confirmed to Russia its territories taken during the partitions.
- The November Uprising did not gain territory per se for Russia.
- It was a Polish rebellion against Russian rule in Congress Poland and political repression.
- It was not the last, of its kind.
- A revolutionary government was formed.
- It formally deposed the Tsar as King of Poland.
- Although it garnered much support, the rebellion was eventually crushed by Russian forces, after which the area was completely incorporated into Russia and became **Russian** Poland, solidifying the territory as part of the Russian Empire.

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- **So...What does all this mean to German settlement?**

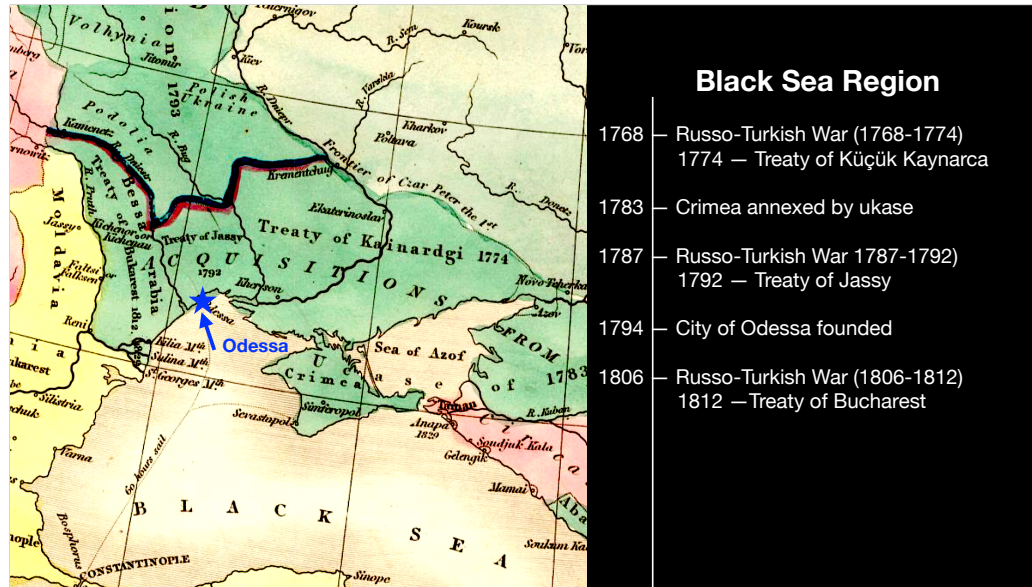
- For one thing, it came with more free Germans!
- As early as the 1650s, Germans were known to be living in the Vistula River delta around Warsaw.
- After Prussia took that region in the second partition of Poland and called it South Prussia, the king was eager to populate it with even more Germans.
- As history would have it, there were Germans in Napoleon's path after the French Revolution who wanted nothing more than NOT to be in his path.
- Many of those living in Alsace and the western and southwestern regions of Germany today immigrated to South Prussia...only to find themselves occupied by the French again in 1807 when South Prussia became the Grand Duchy of Warsaw.
- In 1808, many began immigrating as colonists to South Russia and were a part of founding the Black Sea colonies in the provinces of Kherson, Ekaterinoslav, Taurida, and later Bessarabia.
- More on that in a bit.
- If you have ancestors who lived in this region, as I did, sometimes you'll sometimes see the area referred to as Poland...sometimes Prussia...sometimes Russia...it all depends on **when** they were there.
- Both the provinces of Volhynia and Podolia were mostly populated by Germans who had lived in Russian Poland long before it was called that, and arrived after the Partitions and at the invitation of wealthy land owners who needed farmers.
- Eventually there were **many** Germans who lived in **many** places in this region that is now western Ukraine.
- There were a few villages that were 100% German or Mennonite like we see in enclaves in other regions; most were mixed ethnically.
- This area bordered the Prussian Empire and the Austrian Empire.

Black Sea Region

Southern Expansion

Moving on, let's look at the Black Sea region.

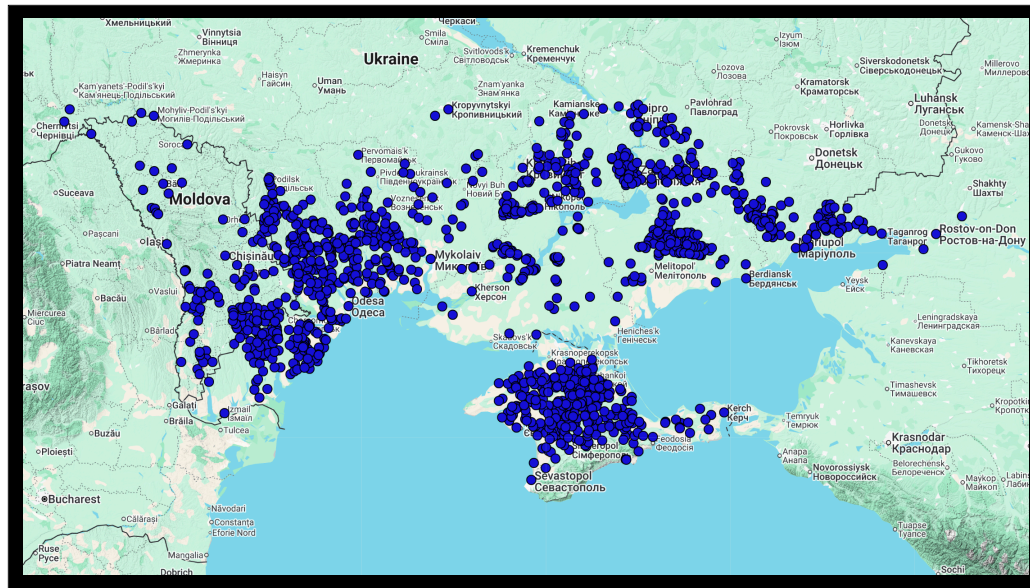
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- Up to this point, the territorial gains have come from the Kingdom of Sweden and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and a good chunk from Prussia thanks to France.
- The Black Sea region came entirely from the Ottoman Empire.
- The Russian Empire and the Ottoman Empire were at war from the mid-1500s until the early 1900s, with 12 or 13 wars, depending on how you count them.
- Peter the Great had little success in gaining and keeping territory and a warm water port on the Black Sea, although he did try.
- Catherine the Great, however, made significant gains in 1774 at the end of that particular Russo-Turkish War.
- In the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca [KOO-CHOOK Kai-NAR-ja], Russia finally gained Azov and added the territory between the Bug [Boog] & Dnieper [Knee-prh] rivers and Taganrog.
- Russia was assured free navigation of the Black Sea and passage through the Bosphorus and Dardanelle straits out to the Mediterranean... in exchange for its conquests on the Danube River and Crimea.
- Crimea became the edge of the Russian frontier; its independence was recognized...and independence meant it was ripe to be annexed.
- And Catherine did just that.
- In 1783, she annexed Crimea by ukase [oooh-kas], or by edict.
- Although the act broke the previous peace treaty, the Ottoman Empire acknowledged the annexation.
- The following year Crimea was incorporated into the Taurida province of the Russian Empire.
- The final Russo-Turkish war under Catherine was from 1787-1792.
- In Treaty of Jassy [YAHsh], Russia was gained control over the region known as Ochakiv [Oh-chay-kiv], along with a fortress of the same name on Black Sea.
- It also was ceded the territory between the southern Bug [Boog] and Dniester [Knee-ster] rivers, including the Black Sea coastline.
- With this came the warm-water ports on the Black Sea—and also a great swath of extremely fertile land which was ideal for growing grain and grapes.
- In 1794, the city of Odessa was founded and grain port established.

- You can probably see where this is going, right?
- Let's continue.
- While not directly a part of the Napoleonic Wars, the Russo-Turkish War (1806–1812) is considered by historian as a parallel conflict...with the Russian Empire encroaching into Bessarabia...and the Ottoman Empire interfering with Russian controlled territories on the Danube.
- In the Treaty of Bucharest, Turkey ceded Bessarabia and part of Moldavia to Russia, extending its frontier to the Prut River.

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- **What does all this mean to German settlement?**

- Well, this time, the territory did **not** come with any free Germans.
- They were all imported.
- The first German colony in this area was Alt-Danzig in 1785.
- Remember: the manifesto of Catherine the Great was still in effect.
- Although between the founding of the last Volga mother colony in 1776 and now, 1785, not many Germans or Mennonites immigrated.
- Several more early Black Sea colonies were founded between 1789 and 1791: Josefsdorf, Fischersdorf, Jamburg.
- They were a mix of Lutheran and Catholic colonies.
- The first Mennonite group also arrived from West Prussia in 1789.
- They had negotiated with Russia for land near Melitopol to be near the Sea of Azov, but continued unrest with Turkey—namely the Russo-Turkish War in 1787 —prevented them from going that far south.
- They formed the Chortitza Colony near Zaporizhia today.
- The Napoleonic Wars started to push Germans out of Europe...and free land pulled them to the Black Sea region.
- They showed up even before 1804 when Tsar Alexander II reaffirmed Catherine's manifesto.
- And as I mentioned in the last section, some of the Germans who went to South Prussia first...immigrated again to the southern part of Bessarabia and elsewhere around Odessa.
- There was no German settlement in Bessarabia until 1813 because it wasn't an option.
- It wasn't part of the empire yet.
- Settlement across the territory that came from the Ottomans began with small pockets of German colonies here and there in enclaves named Liebental, Beresan, Glückstal, Kutschurgan, Prischib,

Planer or Grunau and in Bessarabia and on Crimea...and two large Mennonite settlements... and eventually, it looked something like this.

- This area bordered the Ottoman Empire both to the west and southeast of the settlements you see here.

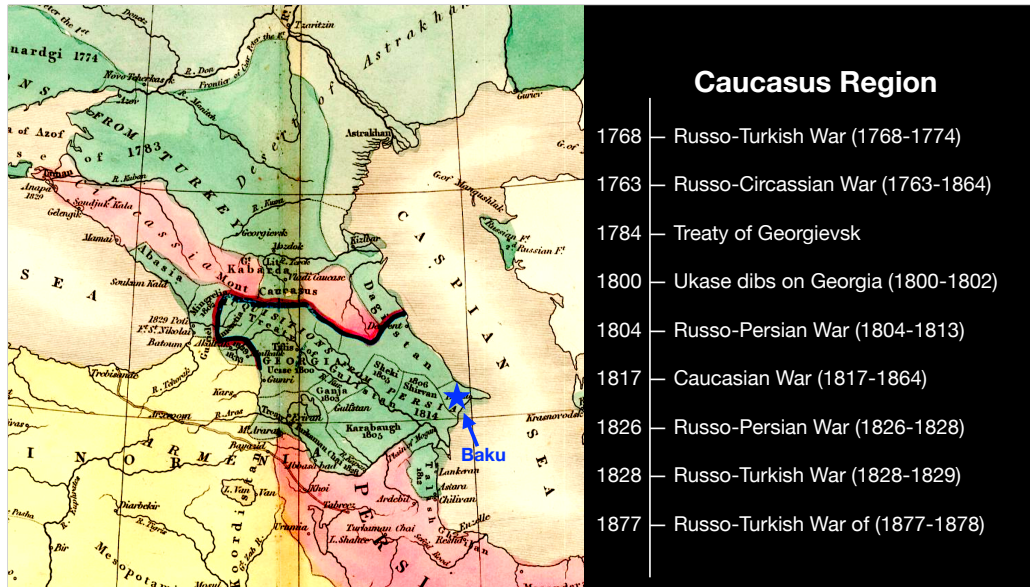
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Caucasus Region

Southern and Asiatic Expansion

Now let's look at the Caucasus.

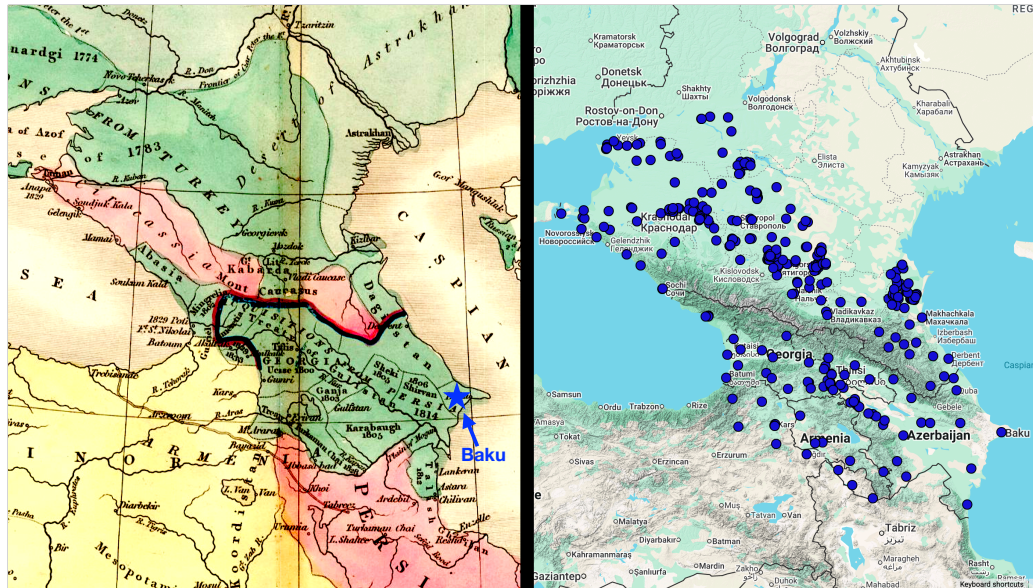
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- This is a complicated region.
- There were three major empires competing for dominance: the Ottoman, Persian, and Russian empires.
- Also numerous kingdoms and tribes lived here that were fiercely resistant to Russian rule.
- You had empires fighting each other...and also fighting the people who lived here.
- This all set the stage for prolonged conflicts...but gradual acquisition of territory.
- The first real gain for Russia was by Catherine the Great in 1774.
- She had made significant gains in the Black Sea region.
- The same treaty granted Russia control over the principality of Kabarda [Ka-BAR-da] in the northern Caucasus
- The Treaty of Georgievsk established a Russian protectorate over the east Georgian Kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti [KAR-te-lee KAK-heti].
- This marked the beginning of Georgia's integration into the Russian Empire.
- Between 1800 and 1802, Russia "declared herself possessed" (totally love that phrase)...basically Russia called dibs on three Georgian kingdoms: Kartli-Kakheti [KAR-te-lee KAK-heti], Imereti [ee-MEH-reh-tee], and Mingrelia [Min-GRE-lee-uh].
- They were officially annexed by 1810.
- The First Russo-Persian War (1804-1813) concluded with the Treaty of Gulistan [Go-less-TAHN], where Persia ceded Dagestan, northern Azerbaijan including Baku, and portions of Armenia to Russia.
- I'll get back to the Caucasian War in a bit.
- The Second Russo-Persian War (1826-1828) resulted in the Treaty of Turkmenchay, ceding to Russia the Persian khanates of Yerevan [Yeh-rre-vohn] and Nakhichevan [Nack-CHA-vohn].
- These territories roughly correspond to modern day Armenia.
- On the heels of one war was another.

- Russo-Turkish war (1828-1829) ended with the Treaty of Adrianople.
- This secured Russia's control over the eastern Black Sea coast from the mouth of the Kuban River at the Sea of Azov...all the way down to Poti [PO-tee], a Georgian port city
- The Caucasian War was crucial in consolidating Russian control over the north Caucasus.
- It was a prolonged conflict, over 40 years, between Russia and various North Caucasian peoples, including Circassians, Chechens, Dagestanis, and others.
- Circassia endured a century-long war with Russia, beginning with Catherine the Great's reign.
- It ended with ethnic cleansing of the Circassian people during the Caucasian War; they were driven out of their homeland, deported to the Ottoman Empire; many died in massacres and starvation.
- I include this as a sobering reminder here: when our German ancestors moved into the Russian Empire into newly conquered territory, in many cases...to make room...other populations were moved out.
- The Caucasian War ended without a formal treaty.
- It was prolonged subjugation.
- The final territorial acquisition occurred following the 1877-1878 Russo-Turkish War
- The Treaty of San Stefano transferred Kars and Batumi from Ottoman control to the Russian Empire. Today Batumi is in modern Georgia and Kars returned to Turkey.

#



- What does this mean for German settlement in this area?
- The earliest German colonists in the South Caucasus arrived in 1817 and 1818.
- Remember was around the beginning of the Caucasian War.
- Mother colonies were founded in the Tiflis and Elisavetpol provinces...today around Tbilisi and Ganja [Gaaan-jah].
- The colonists wanted to go to the Caucasus earlier, but they were not allowed to because...you know...war.
- So they settled elsewhere in the Black Sea region and migrated when they could.
- The **last** Mother colonies to be found in the Russian Empire were also in the South Caucasus, three Separatist settlements in 1884 near Sukumi [soo-KOO-me] on the Black Sea coast of Georgia today.
- This was one of the groups that believed in radical separation from the world to keep the flock pure. Sometimes referred to as the Württemberg Separatists, but this seems to have been an extreme version of it as there were other Württemberg Separatists in the Black Sea region already.
- We'll see this theme again as we get to settlement further into Asiatic Russia.
- Aside from the early mother colonies in the South Caucasus, the rest of the settlements you see here are migrations and daughter colonies.
- And they were from all over Russia, something we'll see again in Asiatic Russia, but not quite as dynamic as is seen here.
- The Germans in the Caucasuses came from the provinces of Bessarabia, Chernigov, Don Host, Ekaterinoslav, Estonia, Irkutsk, Kiev, Kharkov, Kherson, Kursk, Livonia, Minsk, Moscow, Omsk, Penza, Poltava, Samara, Saratov, Smolensk, Taurida, Tula, Ufa, Volhynia, Voronezh [Vo-RO-nez].
- There was also movement from province to province within this region.
- And 5 Mennonite daughter colonies were established in the northern Caucasus... from the Mother Chortiza and Molotschna colonies.
- The empires that bordered this region were the Ottoman and Persian empires.

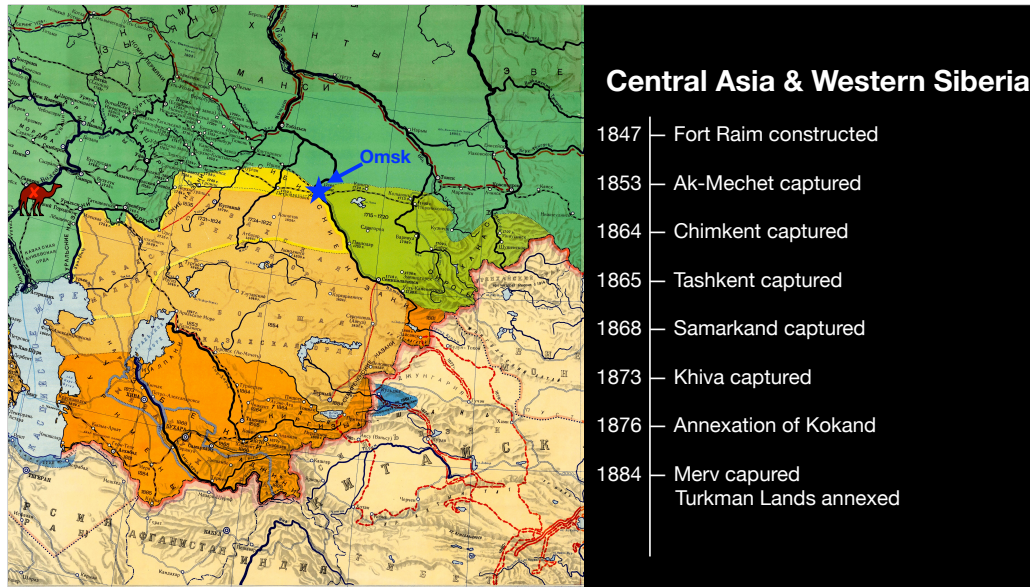
Central Asia & Western Siberia

Eastward Expansion



Moving east, Central Asia and Western Siberia.

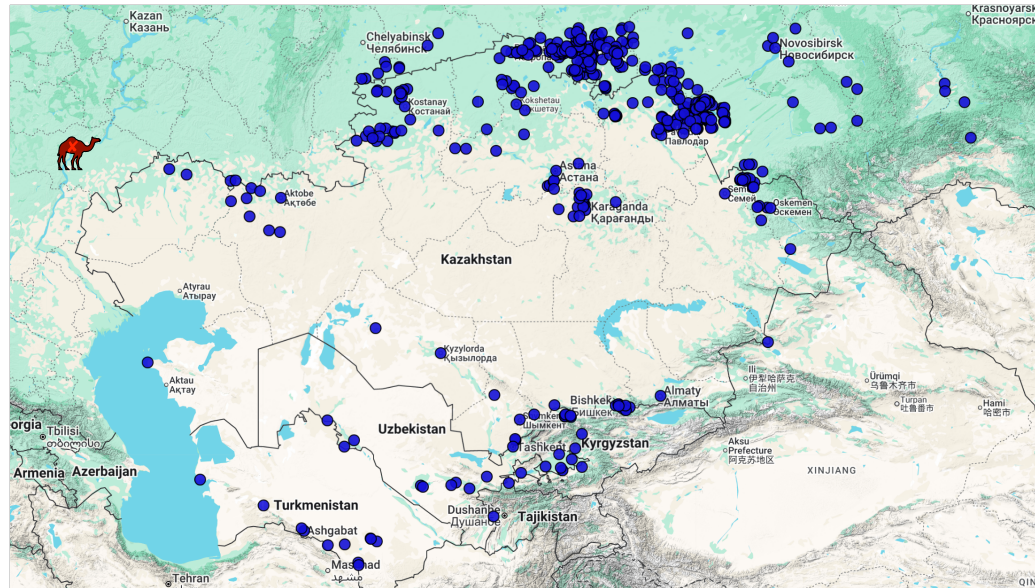
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- Note that Konrad the Kamel is back on the map as a point of reference. Again, he is standing in the Volga region. This time looking east.
- Before the mid-1800s, the Russian empire was mostly consolidating its forts and outposts in Western Siberia and on the Kazakh steppe.
- Between 1715 and 1745, Russian expeditions, the construction of defensive forts, and ultimately annexations of territory, gradually added to the steppe region of Western Siberia around Omsk and Semipalatinsk.
- At this time, there wasn't a lot of settlement; fur trade was mostly what was going on here.
- Interestingly, these areas were among the lands offered up in Catherine the Great's manifesto in 1763.
- They were mentioned specifically in the register of lands that the Crown was trying to push; but there were no German settlement there until much later.
- Territorial growth picked up in the rest of this region in the mid-1800s due to the rapid Russian conquest of three powers in Central Asia: the Khanates of Khiva and Kokand [KO-Khahn-d] and the Emirate of Bukhara.
- These were all on the Silk Road, and for centuries had been a part of many larger dynasties, one after the other.
- But at this point, instead of one, they were three, smaller and less powerful than under previous rule.
- In 1847, the construction of Fort Raim [RYE-im] at the mouth of the Syr Darya River at the Aral Sea led to conflict with Khiva and Kokand [KO-Khahn-d].
- It was intended to form the new frontier of the Russian Empire.
- In 1853, Ak-Mechet [Aahk-MEE-chit] near Kyzylorda [Kaza-LORDa], was captured by Russia.
- This significantly weakened the Khanate of Kokand [KO-Khahn-d].
- Russia began establishing a line of forts along the Syr Darya River.
- Chimkent was captured next in 1864, further weakening Kokand.
- Tashkent fell in 1865. This was...still is...the largest city in Central Asia.

- In 1868, Samarkand was captured from Bukhara....after which Bukhara became a Russian protectorate.
- Remember: having Russia protect you was the first step toward being annexed by Russia.
- In 1873, Russia captured Khiva, and turned the khanate into another protectorate.
- By 1876, the Russian Empire had annexed all of the Kokand Khanate, extending its control to the fertile Ferghana valley of modern Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.
- The last area to be annexed was the Turkmen Lands, or Turkmenistan today.
- Residence was strong against the Russian Empire, but by 1884, the Merv or [MEEr-fv] oasis fell.
- This completed Russia's conquest of Central Asia.
- By this time, Trans-Caspian railway line was being built into this new territory.
- The line was started in 1879 and completed in 1906 when it was connected to the Tashkent line that connected Central Asia to the rest of the Russian railway system.
- This would facilitate German migration and settlement into this area.

#



- **What did this mean for German settlement.**

- This was a region of voluntary migration and resettlement **before** it was a region of deportation and special settlement.
- These were all daughter colonies, and like the North Caucasus migrations, they were often populated with a mix of Germans from various regions.
- Beginning in 1881, the first Germans arrived in Russian Turkestan.
- This is the area in the south on this map and includes *southern* Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.
- A group Mennonites from the Molotschna and Am-Trakt Colonies, from the Black Sea and Volga regions arrived as a part of the Great Mennonite Trek to Central Asia in 1882.
- They were a part of that radical separation movement that we saw in the Caucasus, except Mennonite this time.
- They came to wait for the Second Coming...and maybe to avoid Russian military conscription. I've read accounts that both played into their decision.
- In 1887, Volga Germans, some from the colony of Frank, settled in colonies in Trans-Caspia on the border with the Persian Empire, or Iran today.
- Settlers to this area came from Samara, Saratov, Orenburg, Voronezh [[Vo-RO-nez]], Poltava, Ekaterinoslav, Don Host, Kherson, Volhynia, and Akmola, further north.
- Toward the north into the Western Siberian steppes, there was more an organized resettlement effort by Russia.
- This is the area in northern Kazakstan that borders Russia today.
- The Trans-Siberian railway reached Omsk in mid-1890s, and that was a jumping off point for most Germans to this area.
- The rush of German settlement in this area began in 1890, and again, they came from all over Russia.
- Bessarabia, Kherson, Ekaterinoslav, Taurida, Don Host...Samara, Saratov, Astrakhan...Oryol, Mogilev, Voronezh [Vo-RO-nez], Kursk, Tambov, Kharkov, Poltava... Kiev, Podolia, Volhynia, Chernigov... Stavropol and other provinces in the North Caucasus.
- And there were resettlers to this area from the Baltics — modern day Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania.
- They all had to get permission to migrate and provide information about themselves and their families, prove they were not in debt and able to work.

- The land was fertile and plentiful on the Western Siberian steppes, but not everyone was permitted to migrate.
- And some who did migrate didn't like it and went back to their original colonies.
- This area bordered the Qing Dynasty to the west and the Persian Empire to the south.

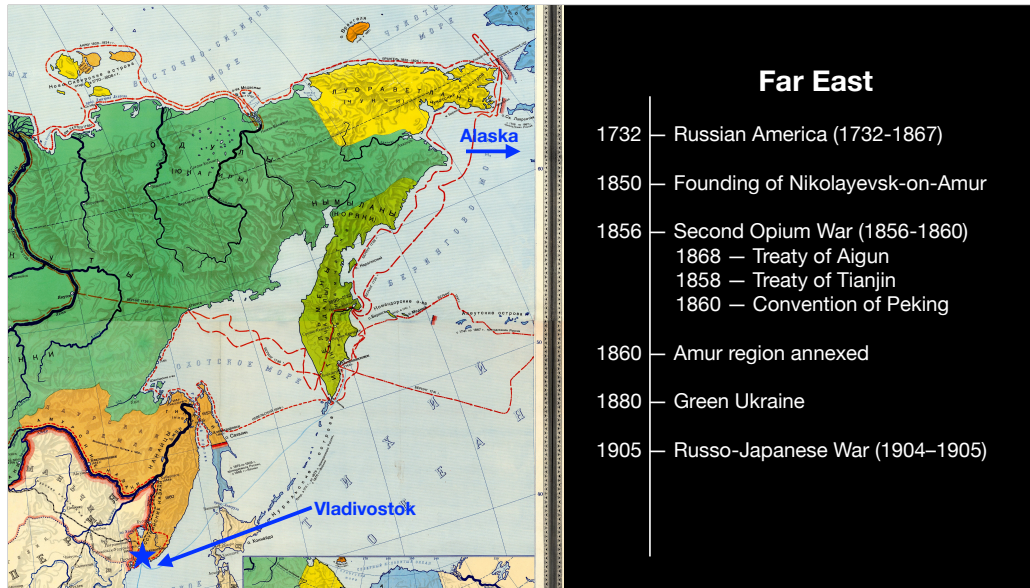
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Far East

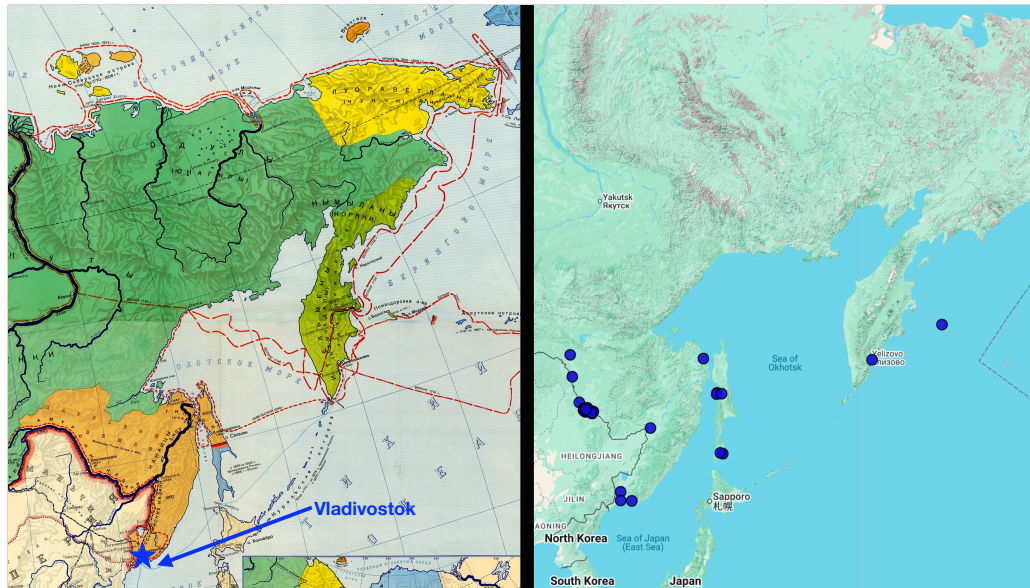
Far East and North American Expansion

Finally, we have the Far East.

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- There was German settlement in these areas, but not much.
- I'm going to talk about them anyway.
- In 1732, the Russian Empire began to colonize North America, modern-day Alaska and Northern California.
- The possessions were called "Russian America."
- By 1812, Russian-American Company, a trading company, established Fort Ross.
- This was a Russian outpost in northern California, or Alta California at the time, a province of Spain.
- It was inhabited until 1842 and was the center of Russian colonial activity.
- But it didn't work out.
- American territory was too far away to adequately protect.
- Alaska was sold to the United States in 1867 and later became available for homesteading.
- In 1850, Nikolayevsk-on-Amur was founded and this marked the beginning of renewed Russian expansion in Far East Asia.
- Russia was a mediator and negotiator, not a combatant, in the Second Opium War.
- It was fought by the Qing Dynasty of China against Britain, France and unofficially the United States.
- Russia still walked away with some territorial gains as a result, including lands both north and south of the Ussuri River and the left bank of the Amur River.
- This all resulted in the annexation of the Amur region, which opened up new trade routes and settlement and important coastline.
- The last area I want to mention is the Sakhalin Island, which was jointly administered by Russia and Japan until 1905. Russia established settlements on Sakhalin, using it as a penal colony from 1869 to 1906 and a strategic outpost in the Pacific. After the Russo-Japanese war, Russia lost that territory among others.
- The territories to the northeast do not play into German settlement, but they were developed as labor and mining camps within the Gulag system, and Germans were deported to them under Soviet rule.



- **What did this mean for German settlement?**

- Once the Amur Oblast was created, settlement began around 1880 and continued into the early 20th century.
- Germans arrived as early as 1882 according to EWZ records.
- From the few records I've found so far, they came from Kiev, Podolia, Moscow, Ufa and Saratov.
- The surname from Saratov seems to be associated with Kratzke colony.
- The First Imperial Census noted a total of 738 Germans in this region in 1897.
- After the fall of the Russian Empire...and this is also a bit out of scope for this presentation....Ukraine made attempts at being an independent state before being absorbed again into the USSR.
- One of those states was Green Ukraine, or Zeleny Klyn [Zeh-lenny Klen]...in the Amur region of the Russian Far East.
- Many of the settlers were Ukrainian farmers seeking new agricultural opportunities.
- This was around the same time as Mennonite colonies were established on the Amur river in 1927.
- Were they somehow connected?
- I don't know. Further research is needed to better understand German settlement in this region.

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Here again is the map I showed at the beginning of the Russian Empire in 1700 under the rule of Tsar Peter I showing all the territorial gains around it up to 1914.

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- And here is where we know Germans lived in those areas of territorial growth on the edges of the empire.
- My time is up.
- I hope this session was useful.. and that you come away with a better understanding of where Germans settled and how it paralleled the territorial growth of the Imperial Russian Empire.

Map Sources

- 1842 "Sketch of the Acquisitions of Russia Since the Accession of Peter 1st to the Throne"
- 1856 "Treaty Map Shewing the Boundaries of Russia & the Eastern European States & the Proposed Boundary between Russia & Turkey"
- 1947 "Карта Роста Территории Российской Империи с 1700 По 1914 г." [Map of the Growth of the Territory of the Russian Empire from 1700 to 1914]
- 2025 Germans from Russia Settlement Locations

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Thank you!

Are there any questions?

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