

Belowesh Parish

Source: DAI Microfilm T-81; Roll #599; Serial 817; Group 1035;
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Translated by Allen E. Konrad – May, 2012
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[Translator's Note: Pastor Johann Kludt's wife giving a brief overview of the Belowesh Lutheran Parish in the Chernigov Gubernia of Russia. The following information has been gleaned by the translator from this web-site:

(<http://www.zum.de/whkmla/region/russia/xgovchernigov.html>)

History and Administrative Division

From 1797-1802 known as Little Russia Gubernia. In 1802 established as Chernigov Oblast. Chernigov Gubernia bordered on Mogilev and Smolensk Gubernia in the north, on Oryol Gubernia in the east, on Kursk and Poltava Gubernia in the south, on Kiev and Minsk Gubernia in the west. It was divided into 15 districts (Uyezds): Borzna, Chernigov, Glukhov, Gorodnya, Konotop, Kozelets, Krolevets, Mglin, Novgorod-Syever'sk, Novozybkov, Nyezhdin, Oster, Sosnitsa, Starodub and Surazh. The Zemstvo Laws passed in 1864 granted regional self-government on Gubernia and Uyezd level; the regional administrative bodies are referred to as Zemstvos. In Chernigov Gubernia, the Zemstvo constitution was introduced in 1865 (IEU). The Zemstvos were abolished in the course of the October Revolution. In 1918-1919 Chernigov Gubernia, except for the two northernmost Uyezds, was allocated to Ukraine, Mglin and Surazh Uyezds to the RSFSR (to newly created Bryansk Gubernia).]

[Begin Translation]

Report about the Belowesh Church Parish

(Information by the wife of Pastor Joh. Kludt, Korntal)

The Belowesh Parish was centrally located in the former Chernigov Gubernia (*Tschernigow Gouvernement*), in the middle of the fertile low lying plain of the Ukraine. In 1763, Empress Catherine had prompted the ancestors of the settlers in Chernigov to also come to Russia where they could pursue their craft, weaving and agriculture. The settlers originally came from the Palatinate (*Pfalz*) and Franconia (*Franken*). They settled in the corner, bordered in the north by the rail line running between Kiev and Kharkov, and in the east by the intersecting line of Libau and Rowno, 5km from the railway station of Grigorowka (Libau-Rowno railway) and 25km from the Plisky railroad station (Kiev-Kharkov railway). They established four villages in that area which they named: Belowesh, Gorodok, Rundewiese and Kaltschinowka. The first one was the village where the pastor lived. There were one or two Catholic villages in the vicinity who were served spiritually for a long time in the beginning by Polish clergy who did not even understand German. Even the Lutheran villages did not have school buildings or permanent teachers up until 1882. During the winter, a learned farmer took the children into his own large living room to teach them reading and writing and was paid a little for that. In 1881, Pastor Theodore

Neander began his service as pastor, in 1882 he married Maria Baumann, the oldest daughter of Paul Christian Baumann, the provincial pastor of Podolia, and now these two expended great effort to lift up these held back colonies. They visited the existing teaching sites, sought out the most adept and promising boys and began to give them daily instruction and did this for four years, as long as they did not have children of their own. Then they turned to the district (*Zemstvo*) and asked for them to build schools and hire a Russian teacher, while the villages hired their own German and religion teacher, trained in the parsonage, to be supported by them. Soon the intellectual level of these colonies was raised. Pastor Neander died in December of 1907, after over 25 years of service in this parish. His widow moved with their 6 children to the eastern province, the home of her husband, where even until now her son, Eduard Neander lives in the town of Cesis (Wenden) and is the head of the German school there. (There are 4 schools in the Vidzeme Upland of Cesis, Latvia [Cesis is an ancient, little town in northern Latvia, 90 km from Riga]. Maybe you can come to know still more information about the peculiar practices and customs of these German settlers, who carefully handed them down from the fathers to the children over the 175 years of their existence. The costumes were also the same up until before the world war as they wore them in Germany in the middle of the 18th century. The Neanders wore high boots and shirts, which were fastened on top, in the front, with hooks and eyelets and secured close to the waist. The women wore home-woven thick skirts, colorful bodices and over this a loose silk jacket. They wore bandannas (*Rauben*) of colorful silk patchwork which they never took off. Even those who married as early as 16 had to wear them. The young people were married at the age of 18. The rule of the house was absolutely patriarchal. Father and mother had authority over the married and unmarried children. When the father died, the oldest son and his wife took over that position. Once enough money was set aside so that the oldest son was able to occupy his own land, the next son in line became the head of the family until all were taken care of. Since they married at such an early age, they really increased in number. They initially stayed with each other. In the 19th century, they started to move out and established daughter colonies in the Don and Jekaterinoslaw Provinces (*Gouvernement*). In the Grunau Parish of the Jekaterinoslaw Province, three colonies were founded with similar names: Belowesh, Rundewiese and Kaltschinowka. In Stavropol [region between Black & Caspian Seas by the Caucasus Mountains] there are also daughter colonies from Belowesh. After the death of Pastor Neander in 1907, Pastor Juergens came to Belowesh. He stayed only a few years. This place was also a provincial preaching station and associated with a lot of grueling travelling. The colonies were then served by vicars from Poltowo and, once the Bolsheviks showed up, being served stopped altogether because the pastor no longer had the privilege of using the train. At this time, from subsequent information from a Reich German chaplain of the forces, this parish, which maybe with His permission might have amounted to something, has collapsed.

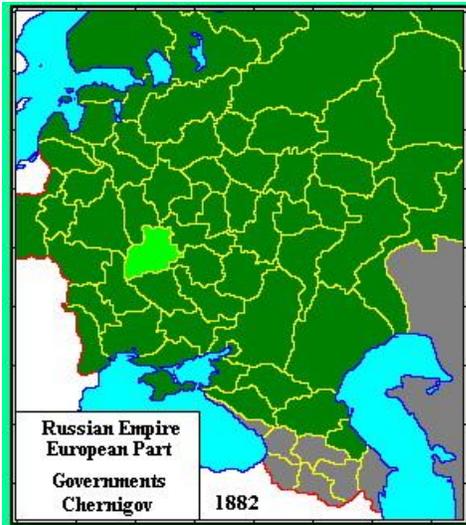
with German Greetings!
by Johann Kludt

[End Translation]

Maps on page 3 provided to help reader have a sense where above mentioned places are located.

Map of Chernigov Gubernia

[<http://www.zum.de/whkmla/region/russia/xgovchernigov.html>]



Russian Empire : Gubernias 1882

Map of Stavropol Region

[[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_Russia_-_Stavropol_Krai_\(2008-03\).svg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_Russia_-_Stavropol_Krai_(2008-03).svg)]

