COSE THE | NOTE | 14 CENTRESS 2012

This article about our group tour to Zurichtal appeared in a Crimean newspaper in September, 2012. The translation follows.

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# Древо страданий, любви и мечты



и решил съездить на родину отца. Села Мурзалы-Битак дав но не существует. После Вели-Отечественной войны его переименовали в Васильково. А рез время здесь остался одининственный дом, но немецкой тройки: с большими окнами, ными, до метра шириной. стенами и добротным куполо-образным погребом во дворе. Земля и дом принадлежат ныне Надежде Лю-Ван-Фа, эта дивная илия досталась ей от быв назад в его роду были китайцы.

Лю-Ван-Фа в переводе означает «светлый князь, надежный», – улыбается Надя, – так что считайте меня княжной. Кстати, в Иркутске, где он жил, фамилий таких – что у нас Ивановых.

В этом немецком доме какое-о время была молочная ферма. В 1972 году строение выделили под жилье семье Пидвирных (девичья фамилия Надежды). Папа приехал в Крым со Львовщины, а мама - из Белоруссии.

Отец чабановал, мы перебирались с хутора на хутор, так сюда попали, – вспоминает здя. – В детстве собирали в округе какие-то монетки, осколки посуды, может, и немецкие.

во как лихо закрутилась гео-графия планеты! Потомок немцев, ныне живущий в Канаде, встретился в сакской степи с украино-белорусских кровей, у которой китай-

вец и коров, нужно детей подать. Есть у нее дом в Ильинке го в трех километрах от Битака,



вейн с разрешения хозяйки побродил по окрестностям, где-то здесь был дом его отца, теперь только вросшие каменья фундаментов проглядывают. Набрал он горстку камешков, повезет их

Когда папе было лет десять, он вместе с моим дедушкой поехал в Евпаторию продавать зерно, – рассказывает всем Вейн. – Расторговавшись, они пошли купаться. Было очень красиво, мимо шли корабли и лодки. Отдыхающие бросали в море монетки, а мальчишки ныряли и доставали их. А потом дедушка повел папу в парк.
После посещения Надиного

хутора иностранцы направи тем местам, о которых всю жизнь



в котором рисинка от рисинки

Интересно, а сохранились ли в ваших семьях какие-нибудь крымские рецепты? - спраши-

И все наперебой стали вос-клицать: «Чебуреки! Чебуреки!» И дома они, оказывается, их готовят, и в ресторанах заказывают. Прабабки швейцарские и немецкие больше ста лет назад научились делать чебуреки мских татар. Здорово-то как!

### От Цюриха до Цюрихталя

Ирина Федосова, заведующая школьным музеем истории и культуры швейцарских поселенцев в Крыму, упоительно проводит экскурсии. Она знает судьбу колонии Цюрихталь в уникаль

Есть любопытные воспоминания, - говорит Ирина. - Один из цюрихтальцев написал о себе и односельчанах: веры, мол, мы лютеранской, граждане Российской империи, прадеды наши родом из Швейцарии, а народностью мы немцы.

А начиналось все так. В конце XVIII века российская императрица издала манифесты, приглашающие иностранцев Тавриду. Так немецкоговорящие швейцарцы из кантона Цюрих попали в Крым. Добирались они тяжко. На кораблях и конных повозках через горы и степи. В дороге от оспы погибли, как сообщают источники, от 30 до 40 детей. Отправились переселенцы из Швейцарии поздней осенью 1803 года, а прибыли на полуостров только летом 1804-го. Голод, новые эпидемии, набеги саранчи

... Типичная крымско-варварская традиция — мспользовать кладбищенский материат для нового строительства и для нового строительства и замению прамо в кладку забора вмонтировам, хорошо хоть они не заметили. А может, кто-то из хи предков под этим камнем покоится... Местные рассказывают, что в мачале 90-х купил один товарищ в Золотом Поле один товариш в Золотом Поле дом. Огляделся и ужаснулся полы во времянке и дорожка во дворе выложены надгробия ми. Бегал он по инстанциям, да замаялся, вывез кладбищенские но, что в такие ужасы гостей не посвящают.

#### Теплота души

Эти немолодые эмоциональные туристы поражают всех, кого бы ни встретили, трелетным отношением к прошлому. Слышали бы вы, с каким восторгом инженер-ядерщик Мет Кли и строитель Пол Хернер, приехав-Эндрю (их предки жили в селах Кроненталь и Розенталь Кольчугино Симферопольского района и Ароматное Белогорско го), делились воспоминаниями



Клалбишенский материал в кладке забора



дневник, двух девчо

**Кровинушки** Бизнесмен Мерв Вейс пр ехал в Украину уже в пятый раз и собирается еще. Удивительный еловек, он восстанавливает ветчеловек, он восстанавливает вет-ви своей родословной с одержи-мой увлеченностью. В этот раз он взял с собой в Крым двух бра-тьев – Рем и Кена, а до того при-езжал с супругой. Предки Вейса жили в Цюриктале, Розентале и других крымских немецких копо-ниях. Он почти все посетил. А в свой следующий приезд хочет отправиться в Александерталь Это бывшее селение Саурчи (ныне Заветное Советского района), оказывается, одновременно

Александертале родилась в 1828 году его прапрабабушка Катерина Бухман. Наша далекая землячка, память о которой хранит благодарный потомок, и предположить не могла, что почти через 200 лет ее имя будет упомянуто в газете! Вот ведь как бывает.

.Идут линии древа жизни через страдания и любовь по странам и континентам, и тайны эти остаются до поры до времеется человек с большой мечтой и хочет все разузнать, отыскать родных кровинушек и, наверное, так понять себя. И насколь же интересной становится жизнь всех, кого коснется его

руку, Мерв! Р.S. Исторический очерк швейцарской колонии Цюрих таль читайте в следующем выпуске «Крымского ветра»

## The Tree of Suffering, Love and Dreams

Article by Margarita Nikiforova

The call of their ancestors brings Canadian and American Swiss and Germans to remote places in Crimea.

Canadians and Americans travel the scorched Crimean steppes of Ukraine by van. Some irresistible power brings these strange, at first sight, tourists to our remote areas... At the beginning of the XIX century their forefathers founded German and Swiss colonies on the territories of Nikolaev, Kherson region and the Crimean peninsula...

Their ancestors lived in poverty and buried their relatives, but they survived and built up their wonderful houses, raised livestock of excellent breeds; they brought up their children and grandchildren. But later they had to leave their new home country... After much suffering, they settled in other countries. Nowadays their descendants are visiting these places as tourists. They stop at some god-forsaken place which used to be a colony and start their search. If they find at least one abandoned house there, they are very lucky, otherwise, they just breathe the air of their historical motherland - and continue their traveling...

#### **Crimean Planet**

Wayne Schaad is travelling with his wife Mary. He is a descendant of Crimean Germans, who once lived in the village of Murzaly-Bitak (Saky district). Wayne's father used to tell him nostalgic stories about Crimea. His biggest dream was to see Crimea at least one more time!

Wayne used to work as a production manager, but after he retired, he decided to visit his father's homeland. The village of Murzaly-Bitak does not exist anymore. After WW II, it was renamed as Vasylkovo. But today there is only one house left, and it still has its original German structure: with big windows, strong one-meter thick walls and durable dome-roofed cellar in the yard. This land and the house are now in possession of Nadezhda Liú-Wang-Fa; she inherited this astounding last name from her ex-husband – there were Chinese in his family about seven generations ago.

- Liú-Wang-Fa means "bright, reliable prince" – Nadezhda explains smilingly – so you can consider me as a princess. By the way, in Irkutsk, where my husband used to live, this last name appears very often, just like Ivanov here.

There used to be a dairy previously in this German house. In 1972 the building was designated as a home for the Pidvirnis family (Nadezhda's maiden name). Her father left Lvov region for Crimea; her mother came from Belorussia to this village.

My father was a shepherd, so we had to move from one farm to another constantly; this is how
we got here – Nadezhda recalls. – When we were children, we used to find some coins and
pieces of pottery in this area. They could be German as well...

How perplexing the geography of our planet is! On the Saky steppe this German Canadian has met a Crimean lady with Ukrainian-Belorussian roots and a Chinese last name.

These days Nadezhda is breeding livestock and raising her children. She also has a house in Il'inka, which is 3 km away from Bitak; she gets her water from there. There are certainly some 100-meter [approx.] deep wells left on the Bitak steppe, but there is no water in one of them, and the other was used as a burial pit for cattle during Soviet times. It is no wonder, of course, that no one wants to clean it up today. With the permission of the landlady, Wayne walks around the area; his father's house once stood somewhere around here, but now only over-grown stone foundations can be seen. He picks up a handful of stones to take home with him as a memory.

When my father was ten years old, my grandfather took him to Eupatoria to sell his grain –
 Wayne recalls. Having sold everything, they went to the seashore to go swimming. Everything looked so beautiful; one could see ships and boats going by. Campers were throwing coins into the water, and boys were diving and picking them up. Then my grandfather took my father to the park.

After vising Nadya's farm, the Canadian and American tourists went to Eupatoria to walk down those places Wayne's father remembered his whole life.

#### Chebureki – for a whole lifetime

The next day the van was rushing to the other side of peninsula – to the former Swiss colony of Zürichtal, which is now the village of Zolote Pole in Kirov district. They had their lunch in a Crimean-Tatar café and were delighted with Plov, a Tatar dish with very crumbly rice.

- "I am wondering if there are any Crimean recipes left in your families?" – I ask the guests.

Everyone started shouting out "Chebureki! Chebureki!" It turned out that they still cook it at home and order it in restaurants in Crimea. Their German great-grandmothers learned from the Tatars how to cook Chebureki more than hundred years ago. Amazing!

#### From Zürich to Zürichtal

Irina Fedosova, the director of the School Museum of Culture and History of Swiss Colonies in Crimea, leads very interesting excursions. She knows the details of the unique history of Zürichtal Colony.

 There are some interesting memories – Irina relates. – Once someone from Zürichtal Colony wrote this about himself and his fellow-villagers: we are of the Lutheran faith, we are citizens of the Russian Empire, our ancestors were from Switzerland, and we have German nationality.

This is how it all started. At the end of the XVIII century, the Russian Empress issued a manifesto to invite foreigners to Taurida [former province of Russia which included Crimea –MW]. This is how German-

speaking Swiss came from the Canton of Zürich to Crimea. It was a very hard journey. They were travelling by ships and horse carts through mountains and steppes. According to some sources, on their way to Crimea there were about 30 to 40 children who died of smallpox. The Swiss resettlers left Switzerland late autumn of 1803, and arrived on the peninsula in the summer of 1804. Famine, new epidemics, locus infestation—this was the way Taurida met her new guests. After having suffered so much, they founded a prosperous colony nevertheless. But evil destiny made them leave their new home again...

On one of the museum's desks Ken Messmer suddenly sees a picture of his ancestors. Happily, he shows it to everyone and says that he doesn't even have this picture in his own archive. Ken pursues his genealogical research with passion. Then Irina showed the group some postols [hand-made leather shoes – MW], which were used as working shoes by Tatars, Germans, Karaites [a Jewish sect common in Turkey –MW], and Swiss. The foreign tourists looked at these shoes with keen interest.

## **Cemetery building materials**

Later they take a walk down the streets of the former Swiss colony, which used to be prosperous and beautiful. There are some houses still standing as well as the former Lutheran church which is today the Orthodox temple. However, there are only few gravestones left where the cemetery used to be.

...It was a typical Crimean Tatar tradition to use cemetery stones as building materials. One such grave stone was set in a stone-work-fence, which is now exactly on the street, where our guests took their walk. Luckily, they did not notice that. It could be one of their ancestors, who was buried under that stone... There is one story the locals know. It happened in the 1990s, when one fellow bought a house in Zolote Pole. When he took a closer look at everything, he was shocked, because the floor in a jerry building [what we might call a yard shed or out-building –MW] and a path in the yard were built from gravestones. He petitioned the local administration several times, but was unsuccessful, and finally, desperate, he removed the stones himself and took them somewhere far out on to the steppe. Certainly, no one would tell the guests such a horrible story...

#### The warmth of the soul

These tourists, no longer young but still emotional, amaze everyone they meet with their passionate interest about their past. If one only could listen to nuclear engineer-physicist Matt Klee and builder Paul Hoerner, who came here with his son Andrew, a programmer, (their ancestors lived in Kronental which is now Kolchugino, Simferopol district, and in Rosental or Aromatnoe, Belogorskyi district), and hear how they were sharing memories of their forefathers about Crimea. Their whole lives their forefathers missed the beauty of our land, our delicious grapes and wonderful wines... No wonder that now Americans and Canadians are drinking it with such pleasure, eating these sunny berries with delight, and after visiting the villages, they go to Yalta, Sudak, and Sevastopol for a day or two... – in a word, to experience Crimea's best sites.

They even have made friends in Ukraine<sup>1</sup>... They get to know people closer, ask about their needs, and help personally. The family of one young boy, who was severely burned in a fire, received financial help for several operations on his skin; a war veteran received help to publish his diary from the Front during World War II; two young ladies were helped with money to pay for their university education. ..

#### Own flesh and blood

This is already the fifth visit of businessman Merv Weiss to Ukraine and he is going to come back again. He is an amazing person; he is doing research on his family genealogy with a keen obsession. He brought to Ukraine his two brothers this time – Rem and Ken; he also brought his wife to Ukraine on a previous visit. Weiss's ancestors lived in Zürichtal, Rosental and several other Crimean German colonies. He has visited almost all of them. During his next trip he is planning to visit Alexandertal. This is the former settlement of Saurchi (which is now Zavetnoe in Soviet district); as it turns out the village possessed two names at one time. In 1828 in Alexandertal, his great-grandmother Katherine Buchman was born. Our distant countrywoman, the memory of whom her thankful descendant keeps alive, would never have guessed that 200 years later her name would be mentioned in this newspaper article! How amazing it all can be in our life...

The lines of the Tree of Life proceed with suffering and love through the countries and continents, and this mystery remains a secret ... until a certain moment comes. Then suddenly a man appears, with his big dream and wants to find out everything, to learn more about his own flesh and blood, and, probably, to understand himself this way. It is striking how interesting everyone's life becomes, when this man's research talent touches upon it. I shake your hand, Merv!

**P.S.** You can read a historical review of the Swiss colony Zürichtal in the "Krimskij veter" (trans. "Crimean Wind") next issue.

#### Photo Captions.

Фотография на память. На пороге бывшей кирхи. Commemorative Photo. On the steps of the former Lutheran church.

Кен Месмер увидел музее фотографию своих родственнников. Ken Messmer saw a photo of his relatives in the museum.

Кладбищенский материал в кладке забора. Cemetery material in the masonry fence.

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Translated from the original Russian by Jenia Kramarenko, Berlin. October 2013. [with edits by Merv]

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> One of these friends translated this article!! – [comment by Jenia K.]