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THE GERMAN CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF MARIENBURG FROM THE END OF THE 19th TILL THE BEGINNING OF THE 20th CENTURY: SOME ASPECTS OF THE LOCAL HISTORY

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Abstract

The agrarian crisis in the main agricultural provinces of European Russia made peasants migrate beyond the Urals where there was a lot of unoccupied land. At the end of the 19th – early 20th century about 3.77 million people migrated to Asian Russia. Most of the migrants moved to the South of Western Siberia (Tomsk province), including Germans, whose ancestors had moved to Russia in the second half of the 18th – early 19th centuries. New monoconfessional settlements appeared in the Altai district. They were founded by Catholics, Lutherans and Mennonites from the Volga region, Novorossiya, territories near the Visla and other regions. One of the largest settlements founded by Catholic Germans was Marienburg. Living in a foreign ethnic and confessional surrounding, Germans had to build their own community providing for its economic and spiritual flourishing. They adapted to new conditions in the course of the 1900s. Marienburg became the centre of economic and religious life of Catholics (Germans, Poles, Lithuanians) in the South of Western Siberia. The article discusses some aspects of the local history of German Catholic community: resettlement, relationships with local Russian peasants, local authorities, economic and spiritual adaptation. The article is based on materials found in St. Petersburg, Barnaul and Tomsk archives.

Keywords: German community, Catholics, religious community, economic and household activities, adaptation.

НЕМЕЦКАЯ КАТОЛИЧЕСКАЯ ОБЩИНА МАРИЕНБУРГА КОНЦА XIX – НАЧАЛА XX в.: НЕКОТОРЫЕ АСПЕКТЫ ЛОКАЛЬНОЙ ИСТОРИИ

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Авторское резюме

Аграрный кризис в основных сельскохозяйственных провинциях Европейской России заставлял крестьян переселяться за Урал, где было много свободной земли. В конце XIX – начале XX в. около 3,77 млн чел. переселилось в Азиатскую Россию. Наибольшее число мигрантов оказалось на юге Западной Сибири (Томская губерния). В интернациональном миграционном потоке присутствовали немцы, предки которых переселились в Россию во второй половине XVIII – начале XIX в. В Алтайском округе появились моноконфессиональные переселенческие поселки, основанные католиками, лютеранами, меннонитами из Поволжья, Новороссии, Привислинского края и других регионов. Одним из самых крупных поселений, основанных немцами-католиками, был Мариенбург. Оказавшись в иноэтничном и иноконфессиональном окружении, немцы должны были выстроить свою общину, обеспечив ее экономическое и духовное процветание. В течение 1900-х гг. они адаптировались к новым условиям. Мариенбург стал центром экономической и религиозной жизни католиков (немцев, поляков, литовцев) юга Западной Сибири. В статье представлены некоторые аспекты локальной истории немецкой католической общины: переселение, взаимоотношения с русскими крестьянами-старожилами, местными органами власти, экономическая и духовная адаптация. Статья написана на материалах архивов Санкт-Петербурга, Барнаула, Томска.

Ключевые слова: немецкая община, католики, религиозная община, экономическая деятельность, адаптация.

Introduction

A myth that Germans were deported to Siberia and Central Asia in 1941–1942 is deeply rooted in the public opinion. This statement is false, however. German population of Asian Russia started to form in the middle of the 18th century when there appeared servicemen

and government officials originating from Ostsee region and German countries, who entered the Russian service. One of the most numerous professional groups in which Germans were represented was mining engineers of Kolyvan-Voskresensk (Altai) plants (Afanas'ev 2015: 134–135). From the confessional point of view they were mostly Lutherans. However, assimilation and integration lead to German's dissolving among Russian servicemen and officials.

Since the end of the 19th century, mostly due to economic reasons German settlers-landowners had been migrating to Siberia from European Russia where they lived in large numbers (from the Volga region, Novorossiia and Volynia). The South of Western Siberia (Altai part of the Tomsk province) remained one of the peasant resettlement centers at the turn of the 19th–20th centuries. Several districts with high concentration of German population appeared there within a short time. Marienburg became the center of German Catholic settlement on the territory of Zmeinogorsk uezd of the Tomsk province, where several more settlements with German Catholic population were formed over time.

At present the history of Siberian Germans in the pre-Soviet period has its own extensive historiography, which has been noted by scientists (Smirnova 2008; Shaidurov 2013). Two particular lines can be seen in it: socio-economic and religious. The overwhelming majority of today's research papers of the 20th – the beginning of the 21st century view these sides of historic past independently. In some of them historians raised the question of confession influence on economic well-being (Shaidurov 2003, 2016; Vibe 2007).

The history of German Catholic population in pre-Soviet Siberia has been studied insufficiently against the general background. It can be explained by a number of reasons. On the one hand this group was small in number and dispersed in nature. At the same time while studying the history of Catholic community of Siberia the main attention is given to Poles who without any doubt were the dominant part in it. It is very difficult to recognize Catholics while studying economic history of Siberian Germans. This process is made more difficult by its shortness, scarcity of historical sources which could help fully reconstruct economical life. At the same time we can note separate articles and monographs placing different aspects of German Catholic population historical past in the center of the scientists' attention (Shaidurov 1996, 2003; Nedzeluck 2009, 2016).

Contemporary German, American and Canadian historiography does not pay much attention to pre-Soviet history of Siberian Germans. German historians mostly pay their attention to the political history of Germans in Russia (Fleischhauer 1986; Stricker et al. 1997), at the

same time American and Canadian historians traditionally pay their main attention to the history of Mennonites in Russia and particularly in Siberia (Pohl 2009).

Material and methods. The purpose of this article is to reconstruct the formation and development of German Catholic community in the South of Western Siberia at the end of the 1890s – the beginning of the 1910s as illustrated by Marienburg. Several questions connected with resettlement of Germans to the Altai, economic adaptation in new location, creating a full-fledged religious life will be analyzed in the article. It has formed the circle of sources which were used in the article as well as the research methods.

The outlined research problem can be solved with the help of methodologic synthesis. Thus, problems of adaptation should be studied together with the provisions of the theory of adaptation and the social side of the Catholic community life should be studied from the point of view of the new local history. It will allow to reconstruct the studied object and to include it into the general context of regional and national history. Different methods were used in our work. The comparative method was used as a tool to find out about general regularities and distinctive features of the community's social and economic evolvement. The chronological technique is instrumental in breaking down the subject into a number of specific issues to be dealt with in chronological order. The statistical analysis makes it possible to isolate required information and generalize data from statistical sources on the community's economic development. Methods of historical geography help link historical, economic, and demographic phenomena to a specific area.

The shortness of the history of German Catholic communities influences the narrowness of the sources. Only in post-Soviet period (since 1992) active research work of historians helped to form a stable scientific interest in the history of Siberian Germans. New historical sources have been implemented and analyzed by contemporary historians. Thus, materials of the All-Russian Agricultural and Land Census carried out in 1917 are one of the most comprehensive primary sources regarding economy of a Siberian village in the epoch of the Great Russian Revolution in 1917. We can reconstruct separate aspects of the economic life of a German village by processing and analyzing them (Shaidurov 2003; Vibe 2007). Access to parish registers, documents issued by different governmental and religious authorities found in central and regionals archives allow to reconstruct various sides of confessional life lead by German communities in Siberia (Nedzeluck 2009, 2011).

Different historical sources kept in central and regional archives were used in our work. The first group of sources – correspondence regarding settlement of German Catholic population on lands occupied by them. Analysis of these documents allows to find out reasons why Germans migrated to Siberia from Samara and Saratov provinces, to characterize relationships between migrants and locals inhabitants, to analyze the process of adaptation to their new living conditions.

The second group of sources is statistical digests. The most valuable for us is “Vedomosti ob Ekonomicheskom Polozhenii” (Register of Economic State) composed in German settlements in 1900 for the Head Office of the Altai district and household cards of the All-Russian Agricultural and Land Census carried out in 1917. These sources help re-create the geography of immigrants outflow, some demographic characteristics (number of population, gender, age, number of family members), level of economic differentiation based on the cultivated area and number of horses belonging to one family.

The third group of sources is presented by church registers of the Marienburg (Mariinsk) Catholic parish from 1913 to 1917, which allow to describe separate demographic characteristics (birth, death and marriage rate), pinpoint relatives and neighbors etc. Church entries regarding baptizing, wedding and funeral of German Catholics from 1912 to 1914 were used. According to the existing stereotype of ethnic and confessional identification Catholicism in the Russian Empire was perceived as an ethnic and religious marker of Poles; that is why religious buildings of Catholics belonging to any nationality were called “kostels” (Polish Roman Catholic Churches) in Russia even in the documents of Catholic Church Consistory.

Unique features of the life of Catholic community in Marienburg can be seen in the correspondence of its spiritual leaders with the representatives of church authorities in Mogilev, Omsk, Tomsk.

It is necessary to explain some of the most frequent terms. Up to 1871 the descendants of Germans who had migrated to the Russian Empire and settled in agricultural colonies of the Volga region, South of Russia, Volynia, and the North-Western region were called “colonists”. In 1871 the foreign colonies were reformed and their residents and descendants were included in the social rank “landowners settlers”. However, if applied to the following period researches prefer to use the term “colonists”.

The term “resettler” has an ambiguous meaning in the history of Siberia at the turn of the 19th – 20th century. On the one hand in its broad sense it is a synonym of the term “migrant” and refers to anyone who moved beyond the Urals. On the other hand it has some legal meaning:

resettlers were peasants included in the resettlement campaign of the state. Status of a resettler was proved by a specific document which gave the right for some preferences from the state (allocation of land, reduced traffic rates, full or partial exemption from state and local taxes for a certain period, etc.). The opposite was unauthorized resettlers who did not have such a document and could not get the benefits.

Results. At the turn of the 19th–20th century German landowners settlers were involved in the migration processes inside Russia. At the beginning the Volga Germans and then Germans from other regions started to migrate to Siberia. One of the main reasons making them move to the East was economic situation in the colonies. One of the most numerous ethnic local groups was formed in the Altai. The majority of migrants in the Altai consisted of Lutherans from the Volga region and Mennonites from Novorossiia. The number of Catholics among German resettlers was small.

Economic state in German settlements of European Russia at the end of the 19th century was critical. Agrarian crisis spread to the German colonies in the Volga region where principles of land community with shifting ownership has been implemented since the end of the 18th century. At the turn of the 19th–20th centuries there appeared a numerous layer of colonists who owned insufficient land plots. High commercial value and rental cost of land did not allow the overwhelming majority of colonists to increase the size of cultivated land. Financial well-being was undermined by harvest failures at the beginning of the 1890s, which stimulated migration among German population.

Resettlement to Siberia has been regulated by law since the 1860s. Its faults, however, as well as attractiveness of some Western Siberian regions for peasants were behind the fact that at the turn of the 19th–20th centuries the flow of unauthorized migrants rose sharply. Not unfrequently peasants settled on the lands they liked without any authorization. Chosen lands were cultivated; houses and maintenance buildings were built on them. Often district authorities having found an unauthorized settlement offered the peasants to rent the land they claimed from the Cabinet of His Majesty¹. The situation was made worse, however, by the fact that resettlers occupied lands belonging to old inhabitants. It lead to conflicts which were difficult to settle.

64 families of the Volga Germans founded an unauthorized (it was found out later) settlement on the lands of an existing village Borodulikha in Novo-Shulbinsk volost of Zmeinogorsk uезд in spring of 1899. It provoked a negative reaction of the peasants inhabiting the land² as they supposed that the appearance of migrants would lead to negative consequences. Very soon “private information” about

unauthorized settlement of German resettlers and connivance of local authorities began to leak into the Head Office of the Altai district.

The local administration had the situation under control from the very beginning. In one of the reports sent to Barnaul it was noted that the assistant of the estate manager “as early as at the end of April of this year (1899 – author’s note)... saw a number of German resettlers on the Removka river” (GAAK 3: 3). Wishing to avoid a conflict between the old inhabitants and resettlers the administration of Loktevskoye estate developed a project of Germans’ settling as tenants and paying rent to the Cabinet. It should be noted that these lands could be officially leased out for up to five years.

Germans cooperated with the local administration in solving the land issue. In May 1899 they concluded a collaborative rental agreement for state-owned rentable property “Tuma” with the area 300 dess. which were ploughed up in the same year. Additionally, the administration was ready to lease out 2 thousand dess. of virgin soil from state-owned rentable property “Removskaya Steppe”. It was supposed that a permanent settlement would be founded and exploited on these lands.

The Steppes of Southern Siberia are poor in fresh water sources. Knowing this the colonists wanted to find out if they were going to have enough fresh water in the new place of living. “Having dug ten wells along both sides of the road leading from Borodulikha to Zolotukha they found water in small amounts only in two of them; the rest of them had granite deep inside” (GAAK 3: 3). This fact made Germans refuse the proposed land. But at the same time they were willing to rent the said 2 thousand dess. for 1900 to grow bread.

Analyzing the situation one faces the question: why did German colonists who settled without authorization on the lands of old inhabitants, build a settlement on them, but did not cultivate the virgin soil around? The problem of founding a small settlement within the limits of a foreign rural community could be solved by concluding a voluntary agreement or its renting from the rural community; besides unauthorized settlers could join the old inhabitants having the same rights but living separately. Ploughing the soil could exacerbate the confrontation and additionally lead to prosecution. It was not in the interests of German colonists. Joining the old inhabitants meant for them that they should immediately turn into tax-payers. The prospect of living permanently on the lands belonging to the Cabinet or the state with the status of resettlers and all its consequences was more beneficial. It was possible only if they managed to settle on these lands in any status. Unauthorized Germans chose the status of tenants of the lands belonging to the Cabinet, pursuing several goals. Legal explanation

can be found in the work written by I.M. Morozov "The Altai District in the Context of its Colonization" in which he noted that "every person wishing to migrate to the Altai district should receive an authorization issued by the Interior Minister and the Court Minister; and to those who could show a certificate issued by the Head Office regarding certain plots allotted to them or to their representatives – authorizations, according to the circular letter of the Interior Minister dated January 20, 1897, should be issued by the local authorities" (Morozov 1908: VI–VII). That is why unauthorized German resettlers acted perfectly from the legal point of view: having rented 300 dess. of land from the Cabinet they insisted on being granted the status of resettlers with the accompanying rights and benefits.

Unlike administration, the old inhabitants took a negative attitude demanding to banish the self-willed settlers from their land. The defiant attitude of the old inhabitants had its reasons which they desperately tried to conceal. The peasants explained their attitude by the fact that the "willfully occupied land gave hay" and its loss would lead to "lack of hay for livestock in winter" (GAAK 3: 21). It turned out that the old inhabitants did not use the land in question at all, but leased it out to the Gromovs, merchants from Semipalatinsk, and to local Kazakhs. The community did not want to lose the profit received from leasing 200 dess. out, that is why they tried to protect their rights so ardently.

The authorities of the District and the estate protected the Germans because they were interested in the same thing: the colonists tried to acquire some legal status even on rented land, the authorities saw tenants of the land which was going to increase by 2,000 dess. in the nearest future and bring more money to the Cabinet. Purely human factor was not the least: the land occupied by the colonists was the only plot in the neighborhood suitable for living. A request submitted to the Head of the Altai district by the curate of the Tomsk Catholic parish played its part. The curate asked to "leave them in peace on this land where they now live, let them have some rest. Otherwise they will die out and become paupers due to their barbaric wanderings", and "some of them are living in the third place, losing their last property" (GAAK 3: 2).

As a result the land occupied by Germans came into their possession according to the decision of the authorities; the community was thus granted the status of resettlers, and its members could enjoy tax benefits and other exemptions according to the applicable law.

The materials of departmental statistics kept by the Cabinet allow us to reconstruct some of the demographic and economic characteristics of German peasants settled in the South of Western Siberia by 1900.

By 1900 there existed the village of Marienburg (64 families or 316 persons), Fridental (21 families or 112 persons), Gololobovka (53 families or 305 persons) and Nemetskiy (36 families or 197 persons), which shows high attractiveness of this place to German resettlers.

Characteristics of the families show that the number of men and women was balanced (see Diagram 1).

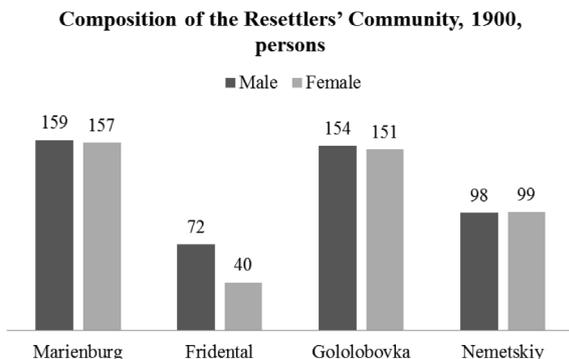


Diagram 1. Source: GAAK 2: 102–105, 117–118, 121–124, 131–133. Author's calculations.

Gender imbalance in Fridental can be explained by the fact that there lived German settlers who arrived in the Altai district later than others and still had the status of tenants not of official resettlers. It also explains the smallness of this village.

The number of family members is illustrated by Diagram 2.

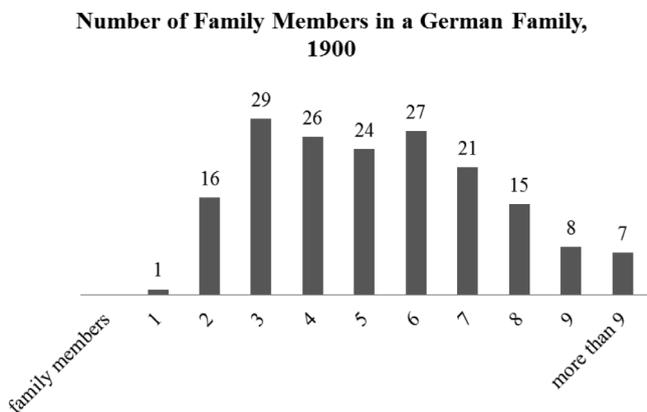


Diagram 2. Source: GAAK 2: 102–105, 117–118, 121–124, 131–133. Author's calculations.

An average family of resettlers consisted of 5.3 members. Families of 3–6 members were the most frequent (60 % of all families). It shows that young pairs with 1–3 children dominated among resettlers as they were mostly subject to migration. Large families of 9 and more members constituted less than 9 %.

Geography of the previous place of residence is rather interesting. Comparative analysis of data across settlements allows to conclude that immigrants from the Volga region dominated in the flow of resettlers. They constituted 89.4 %; at the same time the number of colonists from Saratov and Samara was almost equal (45.7 % and 43.7 %, respectively) (GAAK 2: 102–105, 117–118, 121–124, 131–133). Immigrants from the Visla provinces and Novorossiia were not numerous.

Church registers give additional information regarding the previous place of residence: Rashtat volost of Anapovsk uезд of Kherson province (parents of baptized Matvey Tome) (CGIA 1: 3), Semenovsk volost of Saratovsk province (parents of Ekaterina Schmidt) (CGIA 1: 4). It is possible that migration to Zmeinogorsk uезд was secondary in its nature as in most cases in the box “information about parents” one can see the place of registration: “a peasant of Uspensk volost of Tomsk province” (the village of Marienburg according to its administrative status and geographic position belonged to Uspensk volost of Zmeinogorsk uезд of Tomsk province).

Several words should be said regarding the system of land ownership and agricultural activities in German Catholic settlements in the Altai district. The first unauthorized resettlers were tenants of the land belonging to the Cabinet of His Majesty. Temporary nature of land-based relationship could be stopped at any time by the Cabinet. It made Germans seek their own land. When in 1900 the land was given to them by the administration it changed their legal status, they became collective owners of the granted land but could not sell or mortgage it. But the majority of Germans stayed as tenants in 1900 living in the villages of Fridental, Gololobovka, Nemetskiy (GAAK 2: 102–105, 117–118, 121–124, 131–133).

By 1917 the institution of private ownership of land had not been formed in the Altai district. Land belonged to the state, which structured special relations with village community, which came into possession of the land and distributed it among its members. Peasants had to pay taxes and carry out civil duties for land ownership. It all showed that traditional land relations characteristic for pre-capitalist type of society were maintained.

Formation of a village belonging to resettlers made Germans resolve the matter of land utilization. General analysis of the life lead

by Germans in Siberia at the beginning of the 20th century proves that institutions were borrowed from the previous place of living. Thus, the Volga Germans living in the Altai district retained characteristics of land community with shifting ownership which had been widely spread in German colonies of Saratov and Samara provinces since the end of the 18th century.

Mass land development which began in 1907 was carried out in the Altai district within the framework of the Stolypin agrarian reforms. In German settlements founded by Catholics and Lutherans from the Volga region one could find households in the form of otrubs. The size of the granted land depended on the number of men in the family. By law the size per person was 15 dess., but in reality it depended upon the actual situation. There often were landless peasants in resettlement villages.

By 1913 the German Catholic community consisted of lawful owners and resettlers who had not gained this status yet. For example, 103 households of 161 could vote at the village community assembly in Marienburg in December 1913 (GATO 1: 8). Such differentiation has mostly fiscal basis. This right was granted only to the family which paid state and local taxes in full (GAAK 1: 21). One should bear in mind that from 1896 till 1906 authorized resettlers were tax exempt for the first three years of living in Siberia and had to pay just 50 % of them for the next three years. P.A. Stolypin increased each of these periods to 5 years.

Surviving documents give us an opportunity to reconstruct separate sides of economic life led by German Catholic population. Ploughing was a traditional occupation for Germans. The main workforce utilized in field work was a horse. Livestock breeding was secondary in nature and primarily aimed at food production. In the middle of the 1900s they started to produce butter which was sold to dealers of a Danish "Siberian Company". Nonagricultural trades gave peasants additional income.

Taking into consideration "Vedomosti ob Ekonomicheskome Polozhenii Pereselentsev" (Register of Resettlers' Economic State) as of 1900 we can find out the size of the plough-land granted to a family, livestock belonging to a family and the level of economic discrimination of peasant households if we take two economic indices as the basis: size of the plough-land and livestock belonging to one household.

Let's study availability of plough-land to resettlers in their first years in the Altai district (see Diagram 3).

Availability of Crops to German Resettlers' Households in 1900

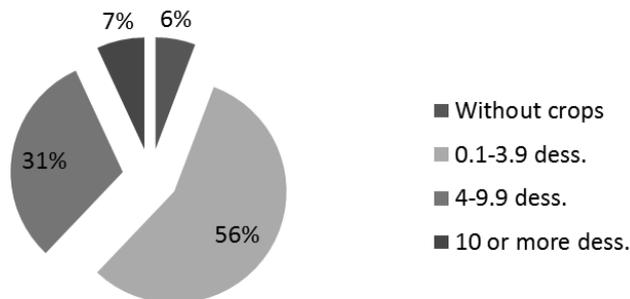


Diagram 3. Source: GAAK 2: 102–105, 117–118, 121–124, 131–133. Author's calculations.

As can be seen in the diagram 6 % of all families did not have their own crops and 56 % had 0.1–3.9 dess. of plough-land. Mean size of the plough-land in this group was within the range 2–3 dess. This situation can be explained by a relatively high rent, which the resettlers had to pay to the Cabinet, low level of their financial well-being after moving to the Altai, and limited amount of land suitable for agricultural activities. At the same time almost 40 % of the households had more than 4 dess. in their possession.

Distribution of resettlers' households according to crops and number of horses presents the following picture (see Table 1).

Table 1
Economic Discrimination of German Resettlers in the Villages of Uspensk Volost, 1900

	No horse	1 horse	2 horses	3–4 horses	5 or more horses
No crops	2	4	1	0	0
0.1–3.9 dess.	20	40	15	0	0
4–9.9 dess.	1	15	21	7	0
10 or more dess.	0	0	2	9	1

Source: GAAK 2: 102–105, 117–118, 121–124, 131–133.

Surviving statistic data let find out availability of horses to resettlers' households which amounted to 83.3 %. At the same time the ratio of families having neither plough-land nor horses was only 1.4 %. The group

of families having 0.1–3.9 dess. but no horse is dominant (14.5 % of all households). This category included families which resettled within the last year and did not have time to acquire livestock or did not have enough money to buy a horse having spent the money on the way or while settling in the new location (building a house etc.). The main solution of the problem of using livestock for field work was renting horses from fellow workers belonging to the same community. Cases of using cattle for these purposes are very seldom among the Volga Germans.

Almost 3/4 of resettlers' households were provided with plough-land and horses during their first years in the Altai district. But the level of it was poor. Financial losses suffered by Germans while resettling were the reason. They did not know the local agricultural practices and it made them careful and prompted to use small plots of land. Remoteness of settlements from the main markets for agricultural products hampered the development of commercial farming and promoted its self-sufficiency. At the same time this group was the platform for further economic development of German households on microeconomic level.

From the social point of view the resettlers' society was not uniform which can be explained by various level of financial well-being (see Diagram 4).

Economic Differentiation of Households according to Crops and Number of Horses in 1900, % of Households

■ Proletariat ■ Poor ■ Middle-class ■ Prosperous



Diagram 4. Source: GAAK 2: 102–105, 117–118, 121–124, 131–133. Author's calculations.

As we can see, the share of rural middle class among German Catholics was relatively small and amounted to 7 % in 1900. 20 % of poor families formed the opposite pole. The remaining majority of the reset-

tlers' families should go bankrupt and become poor or improve their financial situation and move towards the middle class in the conditions of economic adaptation.

We can notice evolution of economic and social differentiation of the analyzed societies in the materials of the agricultural census carried out in 1917 (see Table 2).

Table 2

Economic Differentiation of German Catholic Households in Orlovsky Vill. of Uspensk Volost of Zmeinogorsk Uezd of the Altai Province, 1917

	No horse	1–2 horses	3–4 horses	5 or more horses
No crops	0	0	0	0
0.1–3.9	8.1 %	8.1 %	0	0
4.0–9.9	0	24.3 %	21.6 %	0
10 or more dess.	0	2.7 %	21.6 %	13.6 %

Source: GAAK 2: 102–105, 117–118, 121–124, 131–133.

As we can see there were some changes in economic and social structures of the analyzed society in comparison with 1900. Thus by 1917 all the families had their own or rented plot of plough-land. The number of households without plough cattle halved (from 16.6 to 8.1 %). Integration into the local market promoted financial welfare in a German village and growth of prosperous households, the share of which now amounted to 35.2 % (7 % in 1900). This growth was primarily caused by multiple well-to-do households, the share of which reduced from 73 to almost 57 %.

It should be noted that data on German Catholic settlements in different regions of Siberia are comparable with the above data. Thus, there were no families without plough-land among German Catholic population living in the Kulunda steppe. The share of families without plough animals was 12 % and the share of prosperous households having 4 and more horses and more than 10 dess. of plough-land – more than 20 % (Shaidurov 2003: 127).

At the same time we should compare not only German Catholic households in different regions. It is necessary to compare the level of financial well-being of Germans belonging to different confessions. Comparison of data on availability of plough-land and horses to German Catholic, Lutheran and Mennonite households in the South of Western Siberia allows us to come to the following conclusion. The

highest level of availability was typical for Mennonites (the share of prosperous families having 4 and more horses and more than 10 dess. of plough-land amounted almost to 70%) (Shaidurov 2003: 126). In a German Lutheran village this index was considerably lower – about 35 % (Shaidurov 2003: 127).

In the new place of living Germans faced the necessity to adapt not only economically but also culturally. In the Volga region they lived in a world limited by colonies which emerged as early as in the 1760s. During 150 years German Catholic colonies in Saratov and Samara provinces became sustainable societies coopted into the Catholic world of the Russian Empire. In Siberia German resettlers had to face numerous difficulties in creating religious community life in a new place surrounded by dominant Orthodox population.

Social and cultural adaptation of German Catholics in the South of Western Siberia took place in more difficult conditions than economic. Firstly, it was connected with living in a place surrounded by dominant Orthodox population. In this part of Siberia in settlements founded by resettlers, towns of Semipalatinsk, Ust Kamenogorsk and Zaisan there were about 4 thousand Catholics and 3 thousand of them were Germans (RGIA 1: 1). According to the data provided by the elder of Marienburg village society, by 1912 within the settlement there lived about 1300 persons of both sexes and temporarily lived about 400 persons (RGIA 1: 8).

Remoteness of Marienburg and other German settlements from the nearest Catholic church (the distance was 300 versts, the nearest Roman Catholic priest lived in Barnaul) caused isolation of the community. Germans addressed church authorities in Tomsk and Omsk to ask for support in different matters more than once. But up to 1912 they had not had any constant preacher.

The curate of the Tomsk parish had been in charge of the Catholic community of Marienburg up to 1903. But since 1903 actually and since 1910 legally the curate of the Omsk parish was in charge of it. It should be noted that it had its sense. The main transport routes were along Siberian rivers. Navigating along the Irtysh the Omsk dean could visit not only the communities of the Akmola and Semipalatinsk regions, but also the south of the Tomsk province. From 1909 to 1912 from time to time the community was visited by chaplains (P. Silovich, S. Tirozenskiy, B. Kozakovskiy) (Nedzeluck 2006).

Absence of a constant priest did not prevent Germans from having religious life as far as it was possible. Thus, in 1912 in Marienburg there was a temporary chapel built of clay, where community meetings were lead. According to the testimony of a contemporary it could not hold all who wished to come. Some of the necessary article were absent: cha-

suble, cups, surplice (RGIA 1: 14). But there was a Catholic cemetery in the village. 21 persons died and were buried “in the Catholic cemetery of Marienburg, in the Tomsk province of Zmeinogorsk uezd” (RGIA1: 36–38).

The numerousness of the religious community is proved by the data on baptizing, burial and wedding services found in the remaining parish registers (see Table 3).

Table 3

Processes in the Catholic Parish of Marienburg, 1913–1917

Year	Baptized, persons	Married, pairs	Buried, persons
1913	102	31	54
1914	131	20	38
1915	136	11	25
1916	72	9	71
1917	85	13	25

Source: CGIA 2–5.

Birth rate on the verge of the war was relatively high. In combination with low mortality it caused sustainable growth. Falling birth rate (after 1915) and number of marriages (after 1914) is connected with the First World War. The rate of mortality among German Catholics taking into consideration those who were off at the front was the same. 1916 was an exception when pox ravaged the settlements.

A large religious community, a temporary chapel made of clay, a chaplain, a cemetery – all of these prove that a confessional society was formed within a local village space. But it was not enough to lead a full-fledged religious life established in the Volga region or other former places of living. Germans addressed the Catholic Archbishop of Mogilev more than once asking him to appoint a preacher for them. In the petitions they pointed out their “desperate religious situation” (RGIA 1: 5). Thus, in the petition dated October 11, 1910 it was noted that “more than 200 persons died without Holy Communion and many children die without Holy Baptism” (RGIA 1: 8). “Our children die without being baptized, we have to wait for a year to be married, people die without confession and Communion, because the priest from Omsk visits our district only once a year” (RGIA 1: 2), they wrote in another document.

The Omsk Dean, Roman Catholic priest Alexandr Bilyakevich explained the unwillingness of clergymen to go to Siberia in his report submitted to Bishop Ioanne Tseplyak: “Priests are accustomed to well-organized parishes in Russia, they live like kings and will soon be tired of the poor life conditions and position of their flock as well as of their own monotonous village life” (RGIA 1: 14).

The Omsk Dean, Roman Catholic priest Alexandr Bilyakevich took an active part in the religious life of Marienburg community. Thus, he managed to find a compromise with the leaders of the community regarding the annual fee of 500 rubles paid to the priest-to-be. At the same time the resettlers asked to take into consideration the fact that “the community consists of poor people” (RGIA 1: 9). The best house in the settlement which included two rooms was provided to the priest. 100 dess. was provided to support the priest from the land-fund of the community. It should have created comfortable conditions for the spiritual guide.

The first rector of the Marienburg parish was Bronislav Kozakovskiy who baptized a child on March 18, 1912, and it was noted in the register (CGIA 1: 1). But he could not find the way to the hearts of his people. Germans were not ready to accept just any priest. The reason was the language barrier between mainly Polish or Lithuanian priests and native Germans. They pointed out that two thirds of the members of the community did not speak Russian (RGIA 1: 8). In 1912 Germans asked to send a Prussian priest – Jakob Wilhelm “coming from Prussia and living in Sukhaya Varina, a post station of Rovinki in the Voronezh province” (RGIA 1: 8), but this request was not fulfilled. Later the abbots of the Catholic church were A. Bilyakevich, V. Chaplinskiy.

At the beginning of the 20th century Marienburg was the center of religious life not only for German Catholics living in the nearest settlements. Germans, Poles, Lithuanians from other settlements of Akmola and Semipalatinsk regions came here for different sacraments (CGIA 2: 6, 11, 13). From time to time the chaplain visited Catholic resettlers living in different settlements where there was no priest. Thus, on February 11, 1914 priest Chaplinskiy baptized 7 babies on the farm Chudak in Semipalatinsk region (CGIA 3: 5–6), 5 babies on the farm Donskoy (CGIA 3: 6–7). These cases were not single.

Marienburg differed from other German Catholic settlements not only by the number of its population. Studying the life of this community one can accept the opinion of T.G. Nedzeluck, who pointed out the independence of opinion characteristic for its members and conscious desire to keep their traditional culture and identity (Nedzeluck 2006).

Conclusion. A few mono-confessional Catholic settlements appeared in Western Siberia at the turn of the 19th–20th centuries. Ethnically their population consisted of Germans. Before migrating to Siberia the majority of the families lived in Samara and Saratov provinces and belonged to the Volga Germans. Germans showed high level of resilience in their new location. In a comparatively short period they could adapt to nature and climate new for them, establish strong households and

take part in regional trade. Growing number of prosperous households allowed to prevent social contradictions in the local society. Growth of financial well-being gave an opportunity to develop religious life. As a result by the middle of the 1910s there was a full-fledged German Catholic Marienburg community which became the center of economic and religious life for Catholic population of the South of Western Siberia.

The First World War, the Great Russian Revolution of 1917 and the Civil War of 1918–1920 became a challenge for Germans. Called into the Imperial Army they took part in military actions against Turkey in the Caucasus. Anti-German campaign beginning in European Russia in September 1914 affected Siberia in 1915–1916. Rental agreements with Germans were cancelled, German names of numerous settlements were replaced with Russian. Marienburg has been called Mariinsk since 1915.

Destruction of the community life began as early as in 1918 when some of the members asked to confiscate the land allotted to the parish. 1, f. 1825, p. 43). The Civil War damaged German Catholic communities of Siberia. Along with other population of the region Germans were called to the active duty. Some of them were in the subdivisions of Admiral Kolchak's army, some of them were in the Red Army. Peasant economy was damaged by confiscation of food and horses for the army. Only in 1922–1927 German communities could restore the pre-war level of economic and spiritual life. But collectivization and repressions of the 1930s were disastrous for Germans in Siberia and they managed to recover after this blow only by the end of the 1980s - the beginning of the 1990s.

NOTES

1. Cabinet of His Imperial Majesty, a special administrative agency, managed the property of the sovereign in power. Revenue was spent on the Emperor's private needs.

2. Old inhabitants were peasants who had lived for more than two generations in Siberia by the end of the 19th century. They enjoyed special rights in the matters of land ownership.

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