

FROM THE LIFE OF YOUR GRANDFATHER HEMPEL AND HIS FAMILY

Since you gave me the task to research the relationship of your father, I am able to give you some information now. That which I can inform you of I learned from my Uncle Frick who was the brother of my mother. He was born in 1902 and is still alive today. This Frick was married to your father's sister, Anna Margaretha. She died in February 1972 in Korkino near the town Tscheljbinsk. He still lives in the same town with his only daughter. Up to now he is the only person who still knows something about your father, his sisters and parents.

Before I begin this story I need to make clear to you that your grandfather's sister is my grandmother. If that's the way it is, your parents were not only man and wife but also cousins.

On account of this question, I have written once more to Russia. I'll begin this story of your great grandfather. He had the nickname Bakschta Hempel because he had a house of baked (fired) bricks. The baked bricks were called Bakschta in the village of Huck.

This Hempel had 3 sons, one of them was Peter Hempel who was supposed to be your grandfather. Uncle Frick knows only of one daughter Maria Elizabeth who is my grand mother.

This Peter Hempel married Anna-Margaretha nee Huck. The two, your grandparents produced 8 children, 6 boys and two girls. Now I will list them according to their ages. George, Peter, Jacob, John, Philip, Anna-Margaretha, Elizabeth. The last was George Henry.

Now as I continue I will acquaint you with the facts concerning what happened to each of the eight. It is a gruesome story, your eyes will become tearful. Whether your grandparents died in Huck, my Uncle Frick did not say. But the remains of their 8 children are scattered throughout Russia, Japan and America. Your grandparents were a well-to-do farm family. All wealthy farmers were run out of the village. Many fled on their own.

I'll begin with George Hempel. He returned to the village in 1935 after the persecution had slacked off. Since he was a very good carpenter, he established a carpenter shop in Huck. From then on he became carpenter Hempel. This George had already built a cleaning machine in the village of Huck before the villagers had been chased out. This machine had been recognized by the Tsar's government and it had been sold all over Russia as well as to other countries.

In 1924 there was an exhibition in Moscow where he brought a machine which could sort grain very well. For this machine he received a beautiful money award and was recognized as a designer of the Volga German Republic. In 1941 he had to leave the village, the same as anyone else. How or where he was killed or died I was not informed. Perhaps I will yet learn from his sons of whom two are still living and with whom I am now exchanging letters.

Now we begin with his brother Peter. He did not leave behind much of a life story He died in 1916 of a lung condition. Three sons survived him and its possible the three died of starvation during the war in Tscheljbinsk.

<https://www.volgagerman.net/huck-videos-letters>

About the next one, brother Jacob, you must be well informed, he is your father. He took my Aunt as his bride in 1912. There was no time to celebrate the occasion since he left immediately for America. The reason for no exchanging of letters must be known by you. Travelers preparing to leave for other countries were put in jails. I do remember very well that we once received a package, a box with old and discarded clothes from America. What a joy that was for my parents!

John did not return from the 1914 war!

Now then to Philip's turn. He worked in the same employment, a type that his brother George had established in Huck. The way we figure it, he had 10 children of which I myself knew four. It is said there were only two boys. With the transferring of the population we came to a region near Kasachstan without seeing any village. As his able-bodied daughters and my father's sons had been dragged into labor camps, he moved into the village where my parents lived. Since there wasn't any kind of shelter, my father had to take him in with his children in his dugout. It was a room about 8'x 12', halfway under and halfway out of the ground. In this small room they spent the winter of 1942-43, 14 people in such a small area. There was a small window -- a glass pane stuck into the wall -- There was a small door; if one backed up, one was soon outdoors. In our life today, that is unbelievable.

They slept side by side on the floor. I, myself saw this dugout in 1950 as I visited there. About those terrible times and suffering the Germans encountered, one could still relate many stories. The surviving children of Philip Hempel are stowed away somewhere in Russia.

I'll begin with the 6th child, Anna Margaretha who married George Frick who has helped me write all of this. They had just one daughter with whom George Frick still lives today. Anna-Margaretha died in 1972 of lung cancer. Orally I could tell you much more about her life.

Now, I'll begin with the 7th child, your grandmother, Elizabeth. Elizabeth married Jacob Schleich. They had three children. Many members of this family starved to death during the great famine.

Now we begin with the last one - George-Henry. He, too, starved in Tscheljbinsk. Of this family, two sons and two daughters survived who live in Stavropol today. (a village in North Caucasus)
Here I have given you a sad story of the large Hempel family. All those who died were separated from the families.

No doubt the first years for your father in America were difficult, although all of you remained alive and I absolutely believe that none of you had to go hungry and could always be together until you were grown up. Let us hope that the dear Lord took care of all those who were so blameless in the giving up of their lives.

(written by Helen nee Hempel Smith, sister of George Hempel (a son of Jacob Hempel))

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Lincoln NE