

“Migration and identity: Swiss colonies  
in 19<sup>th</sup> century Russia”

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Jan 24, 2014

## NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION:

The project for which I request Research Council support is an investigation of the results of an 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian Imperial policy of promoting immigration of skilled and artisanal communities; the purpose of this policy was to promote economic development and what the Russians of the day would have called “modernization” or Europeanization, concepts that they would have seen as nearly equivalent.

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the rulers of the Russian Empire (in particular Catherine II and Alexander I) issued invitations to a variety of West European communities to move to Russia to participate in the upgrading of Russian agricultural practice. The general idea was that the “Europeans” would offer their Russian colleagues new European technical knowledge as well as a close-up view of a “European” ethic of work, skill and persistence. In return the incoming communities were offered a variety of incentives, including exemption from military service.

One relatively well known example is the response of German Mennonites to a specific invitation from Catherine II, the Great, in 1763 to Europeans to settle the recently conquered Pontic steppe. Because the Prussian state insisted that pacifist Mennonites undertake military service, some considerable number of them responded to Catherine’s invitation, which included the offer of 100 years’ exemption from Russian military service. These Mennonites became successful producers of a drought-resistant strain of wheat on the Russian/Ukrainian steppe for much of the 19<sup>th</sup> century—to their own and Russian Imperial benefit. When their Russian military exemption expired in the late nineteenth century, some of these Mennonites resettled to Kansas, with equal success, an account featured in a rather charming children’s book entitled, *The King of Prussia and a*

*Peanut Butter Sandwich* (but also in more scholarly materials, such as Norman E. Saul, “The Migration of the Russian-Germans to Kansas,” *Kansas Historical Quarterly* Vol 40 no. 1: 38-62). It should be added that the Mennonite experiment was otherwise unsuccessful, in that Mennonite agricultural and working habits did not apparently transfer to the surrounding Russian communities. Instead, both nearby Russians and the Mennonites themselves retained a clear sense of separate identities for nearly 100 years.

My new project will focus on the sources and character of non-Russian identity over more than a century in another European colony in southern Russia. The colony which has attracted my interest began with the re-issue of an invitation by the Russian crown (Alexander I, d. 1825) for skilled vintners and tradesmen to settle in Russia’s recently acquired regions of Bessarabia and there to restore vineyards that had formerly been not only productive but which had also established a considerable reputation under the Ottoman Empire. Because Tsar Alexander I had been tutored by Frédéric-Cesar de La Harpe, who was a native of the Swiss *canton* (province) of the Vaud, this invitation was directed in particular to vintners from that region, which is at the eastern end of Lac Lemman / Lake Geneva and which had/had an established reputation for wine-making. Land ownership, freedom of religion, the right to establish trade, and certain short-term tax and military exemptions were offered as incentive.

As a result of this highly specific invitation to the Canton of the Vaud, in 1822 a convoy of Swiss vintners and artisans set forth to establish under the leadership of a young botanist, Louis-Vincent Tardent, a community of French-speaking Swiss Protestants in the vicinity of Achabag/Chabag/Shabo on the Black Sea, where they hoped to re-create a successful wine-producing community.

The initial experience of the Swiss vintners was not encouraging. A variety of ecological and economic barriers rapidly became obvious: despite the enthusiastic reports from Ukraine to Switzerland, an inadequate number of settlers were initially involved, nearby Russians were uninterested in contributing to the project, and the Russian government did not stick to its promises. Within a decade, fortunately, more colonists arrived, the community took root and prospered. The Russian government, however, was not satisfied and Chabag proved to be among the very last of its efforts to target specific communities of skilled European agricultural and artisanal migrants, although a stream of such migrants travelling to already established communities continued. Chabag itself continued to produce wines, surviving even the devastation of their vines by phylloxera, until World War I, after which it became Romanian. (Wine-production then declined because of the competition from a prosperous Romanian industry). The territory was among those ceded to the Soviet Union by the Nazi-Soviet pact in 1939, at which point the colony became a political target of the Stalinist government. To the end, however, the Chabag vintners persisted in identifying themselves with French-speaking, Protestant Switzerland (and indeed with an imagined French-speaking, Protestant Switzerland of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century), despite generations of co-existence with Russian and Ukrainian neighbors. Under wartime conditions in 1939-44, some 750 out of 930 descendants of the Chabag colonists then living in the area successfully claimed links to their “homeland” of 120 years previously; they returned by various means (including re-patriation sponsored by the Swiss Embassy) to Switzerland, where they experienced considerable trouble in re-integration. In Chabag, however, a community of vintners persisted throughout the

post-war Soviet Union; there is now a winery on the spot, which boasts of its Swiss heritage (and investors).

Chabag is interesting to me because of its implications for understanding the history of international migration, migrants' adopted identity, and economic change in receiving culture/country. There is a rich literature on this topic for the 19<sup>th</sup> century U. S., and a somewhat different one, focused significantly on internal migration, for several countries of 19th Europe. These questions retain a certain contemporary relevance, as the US receives communities of migrants (albeit under different conditions) whose participation in American society and its economic condition continues to shape a national political debate.

While there are certainly broad similarities in the social history of migration between the Chabag migrants and other immigrants referred to above, Chabag and other Russian cases are framed by an unusual set of questions. First, these were relatively atypical cases of invited migrants that the Russian government viewed as highly skilled and/or with other desirable qualities, such as a 'work ethic.' The government thus wooed such migrants with the explicit aim of skill transference and what the Russians of the time would have called 'modernization,' or Europeanization. It was for its time a relatively unusual approach, but it was one which the Russian Empire had successfully used before—to encourage military Europeanization, for example. Histories of the Russian Empire tend to ignore this particular aspect of skilled international migration, which focused on entire communities; the exception is a limited body of work on the "Volga Germans," which is of exceedingly uneven quality. Part of my project then is to contribute to a developing vein in 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian history, locating this community

within the spectrum of the official and unofficial treatment of invited migrants by the Russian empire: How were they defined by a government that at that period largely categorized its residents by 'estate,' rather than by social class or occupation? What did the migrants share with those who surrounded them in terms of taxation, local governance, social and political interaction, and what distinguished them? What did they offer the Russian Empire that the Empire allowed them to persist, despite a variety of problems? And was this particular colony treated differently than other invited migrant communities? The purpose of these questions is to ascertain the degree to which Russian Imperial policies might have contributed to the isolation within Russia and the imagined Swiss identity of the colonists, which may have undermined the Russian government's intentions for these in-migrants. Most of this part of the project will be completed in the United States, using Colgate interlibrary loan and other library resources.

The other segment of this project focuses more immediately on Chabag itself, to ascertain the reasons and institutional sustenance for the distinctive world view which developed among the Chabag residents, in which some imagined and some real linguistic, religious, and ideological traits of the lands that they had left (that is early 19<sup>th</sup> century Switzerland) were preserved and retained into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. How did this happen? A series of questions guide this part of the research: first, what institutions of governance and religion encouraged cultural isolation and self-determination. Second, what elements of interaction with Russian and Ukrainian neighbors were encouraged, necessary, and prolonged, and how did these have an impact on 'imagined Switzerland?' A final question focuses on socio-economic factors fostering the creation and retention of an imagined 19<sup>th</sup> century French-Swiss community in southern Russia.

The Swiss were in the 19<sup>th</sup>-century, and long before, a nation of out-migrants, with an enduring interest in the fate of their departed citizens, luckily for me. The Swiss National Library in Zurich, the Cantonal and University Library of Lausanne, and the Cantonal Archives of the Vaud (near Lausanne) have collected a considerable number of papers, dossiers, articles and books on the Chabag colony; please see the attached bibliography. While a certain percentage of these books and materials are available through Inter-library Loan and online, some of the published material is non-circulating, as of course is the archival collection. Further, personal connections may allow me access to papers still held by descendants' families.

Chabag materials housed in Ukraine have not been much studied, in part because the records of the Bessarabian committee of viticulture and winemaking (Komitet vinogradarstva i vinodeliia) have not survived—and this is the most frequently studied aspect of the Chabag community. Despite the devastation of the area during World War II, however, according to correspondence with the local museum (The Belgorod Dniestrovskii Museum) and the Russian State Archive of Odessa, materials on the governance and taxation of the community remain, as well as local newspaper reports; particularly rich sources will be the records of the Imperial Russian Guardianship Committee for Foreign Settlers in Southern Russia; the Imperial Odessa Office for Foreign Settlers in South Russia.

I therefore request funding to travel to Lausanne and Odessa to visit the archives, libraries and museum mentioned above; a list of some of the relevant materials in those locations is attached.

#### Bibliography

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- Besson, David, *Résumé historique de la colonie Suisse de Chabag*. Lausanne : Imprimerie Georges Conne, 1952. 15 pp.
- Bridel, Sylvie, *La Réintégration d'une colonie vaudoise dans sons pays d'origine: la colonie vaudoise de Chabag, rapatriée de Bessarabie dès 1945* (Lausanne: Travail de diplôme, Ecole d'Etudes Sociales de Genève, 1954).
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- Église réformée de Chabag *Registres de l'église réformée de Chabag, 1872-93*. Salt Lake City, Utah, filmed by Geneological Society of Utah, 1991. 1 reel of Microform at Family History Library, Salt Lake City (on order)
- Etterlin, Jakob, *Chabag, eine Schweizerkolonie in Bessarabien: geschichtlich und wirtschaftlich dargestellt* (Glarus: 1937, 1942) Ca. 30 pp with addenda.
- Fondy Gosudarstvennogo Archiva Odesskoj Oblasti: ukazatel' / vol. 1 Do-sovetskij period. (*Funds of the state archive of Odessa oblast: a guide / vol. 1—the pre-Soviet period*).
- G. T., in *Le Conteur vaudois: journal de la Suisse romande* 30 (Sunday, Jan 30, 1892). On persistent link: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5169/seals-192771>. And sequel. online copy
- \*Gander-Wolf, Heidi, *Chabag, Schweizer Kolonie am Schwarzen Meer: ihre Gründung und die ersten Jahrzehnte ihres Bestehens*/Lausanne : Multi-Office, 1974  
Dissertation: Diss. Phil. I Zürich, 1974. 259 pp (Their establishment and early existence)..
- Gander, Louis, *Notice historique sur la foundation de la colonie vaudoise de Chabag* Lausanne: L. Vincent, 1908 (16pp).
- Gander, Louis, "Histoire de la colonie de Chabag," *Revue Historique vaudoise* 16 (1908): 115-125, and sequel: 149-154. Online copy
- Genton, Annick, *Les vigneronns de la mer Noir: de Lavaux à Chabag* Yens sur Morges [etc.] : Editions Cabédita, 2008 (histoire romancée). Not useful
- Gos, Charles, "Chabag ou les vigneronns vaudois de la Bessarabie" *Gazette de Lausanne et Journal Suisse* 1936/2 (10 August and 23 October, 1936).
- Gotte, Henriette, *Von der Heimat verleugnet* Köln : Verl. H. Götte, 2008. Also in Russian, *Otvergmutye rodinoi* (Köln: Verl. H. Götte, 2008, 2011). Russian version at Harvard
- Grivat, Olivier, *Les vigneronns suisses du tsar* Chappelle-sur-Moudon : Ketty & Alexandre, 1993. Personal copy
- Hilberer, Jean-Emile "Le Pasteur Bugnion et la colonie de Chabag en Bassarabie," *Société vaudoise d'histoire et d'archéologie* 1914. Online copy
- Hilberer, Jean-Emile, *Les suisses dans la Russie méridionale: La Société d'Odessa ; La Colonie de Chabag. Notice historique*. Odessa : L. Nitzsche, 1912. 28 pp. Swiss National Library; non-lending.



Schelbert, Leo, "Vevey, Indiana and Schabag Bessarabia: The making of two winegrower settlements," *Yearbook of German American Studies* vol 25 (1990): 109-129.  
Personal copy.

S. G. "La colonie vaudoise de Chabag," *Le Conteur vaudois: journal de la Suisse romande*. 52 (1914) online copy

#### SWITZERLAND:

Bibliothèque Cantonale et Universitaire—Lausanne / Riponne @ Palais de Rumine 6, Place de la Riponne – CP CH -1014 Lausanne. Access: Francoise Simonet, [info-riponne@bcu.unil.ch](mailto:info-riponne@bcu.unil.ch) or +41 21 316 7863. Information desk open: Lundi, mardi, mercredi, vendredi 10:00-18:00; Jeudi 14:00-20:00 (horaire décalé du jeudi) ; samedi 9:00-12:00 AND open access reading room hours: Mon-Fri 8-22 and Sat 8-17.

At the Cantonal Archives of the Vaud (Lausanne), Rue de la Mouline, 32, CH-1022 Chavannes près Renens. Tel: 41-21- 316-3711 Fax: 41-21-316 3755. E-mail contact from website only: <http://www.patrimoine.vd.ch/archives-cantionales/annexes/contacts/> with street adress in message line. Documents:

- (1) Documents given by Michel Tardent, PP217 / T 249: Documentation concernant l'histoire de la famille Tardent, réunie par Michel Tardent, né en 1904 et décédé le 17 décembre 1986: correspondance diverse, notes diverses, cours de cosmographie, chansonnier vaudois (1883), locutions vaudoises, album de photographies, pièces concernant les différents membres de la famille Tardent, recherche sur les origines de la famille (branche belge et australienne), actes originaux des Ormonts (18e-19e siècles), documentation sur la colonie de Chabag et divers. (Open access, 11 small boxes)
- (2) Dossier Tardent, Auguste-Henri Dossier ATS Tardent: Swiss emigration to Ukraine. (Open access, 1 envelope)
- (3) Dossier Tardent, Henry Dossier ATS Tardent: Colonie of Chabag, Ukraine. (Open access, 1 envelope)
- (4) Dossier of materials in Russian (with German summaries) on the Swiss colony in Chabag, P 1000/45: \*Deux documents réunis par le conservateur du Musée d'Osnava, A. Jakowlew, en Ukraine, et écrit en lettres cyrilliques, sur la colonie des vigneronns suisses de Chabag. Henriette Götte l'a adressé aux Archives cantonales vaudoises, avec un sommaire en langue allemande. \*Quatre documents sous forme de photocopies en relation avec la bénédiction de la pierre commémorative dédiée "aux colons suisses Louis Hächler, Jean Jatton et Jules Mayer, fondateurs de la viticulture en Tauride et de l'agglomération d'Osnova», 2 octobre 2009, \*2 tirages de photographies représentant l'évêque Leonid Zwicki, le conservateur de musée, Anatoli Jakowlev et Henriette Götte. \*Tirages sous forme de photocopies en relation avec l'inauguration de stèle commémorative, en présence de Henriette Götte, 2 octobre 2009, selon message électronique du 17 octobre 2010. Some of these materials are in Grivat's *Les vigneronns suisse du tsar* (1993) (Open access; 10 items)
- (5) Correspondence of Auguste Tardent (1848-1909) addressed to his brother Louis. PP 217 / 10. (Open access; 1 box).

- (6) Dossier on Chabag, colony in Ukraine, 1908-2011. Y Dos her Chabag. (Open access, 1 envelope).
- (7) Dossier on the Dogny famiy of Bioley-Orjulaz and Chabag, Y dos gen Dogny. (Open access, 1 envelope).
- (8) Dossier on the Forney fmily of Puidoux and Chabag, Y dos gen Forney (open access, 1 cartable (package, pack))
- (9) Documents on the colony of Chabag, 1750-1986. PP 217/8 (Open access, one box).
- (10) Notebook of Pastor Bugnion, 1822-1880, "Historical notes on Russia, 1848" on the colony of Chabag. Copies transferred from Museum of Belgorod Dnestrovskii. RMS 296.9 bdkm kp-5849 no. P-13749. (Open access, film).
- (11) Office memorandum of Ch. Gander, 1862-1884. Copies transferred from Museum of Belgorod Dnestrovskii RMS 296.9 bdkm kp-5839 no P-13750 (open access, film).
- (12) Copies of letters about the commune of Achabag (original Turkish name for Chabag or Chabo), 1832-1849. Copies transferred from Museum of Belgorod Dnestrovskii RMS 296.9 BDKM KP no P14530 (Open access, film).
- (13) Newspaper of the commune of Achabag, copies transferred from Museum of Belgorod Dnestrovskii. RMS 296.9 BDKM KP 5827 no P-14539 (Open access, film).
- (14) Hächler family documents from Oberkulm (in French) emigrés to Chabag and Corbeyrier, Y dos gen Hächler. (Open access, one envelope)
- (15) Dupasquier, Marcel, *Une colonie vaudoise en Bessarabie* [S.l.] : [s.n.], [s.d.] in Archives cantonales vaudoises (Listed in WorldCat; 3 folio, 30 cm)

#### UKRAINE:

The Belgorod Dniestrovskii Museum in Belgorod-Dniestrovskii, Ukraine.

For access: [b-dkm@mail.ru](mailto:b-dkm@mail.ru) (<http://bdkm.ucoz.com/index/kontakty/0-6>) closed Monday.

Государственный Архив Одесской Области (State Archive of Odessa Region)  
 Reading room hours: M- Th 10:00am – 5:00pm, F 10:00am – 3:45pm. For access:  
 First Admin. Bldg., Zhukovs'kogo str. 18, Одеса, Одеськая область, Ukraine, 65000  
 +380 48 722 9365 [daoo@ukr.net](mailto:daoo@ukr.net) and to Director: *Nitochko Ivan* ([initchko@te.net.ua](mailto:initchko@te.net.ua));  
 Web: [archive/odessa.gov.ua](http://archive/odessa.gov.ua)

#### Records:

- (1) records of the Imperial Russian Guardianship Committee for Foreign Settlers in Southern Russia
- (2) records of the Imperial Odessa Office for Foreign Settlers in South Russia

#### LONG TERM PLANS:

The described research is intended to be a part of a longer upcoming research project on international migration into Imperial Russia and its connection to economic

change. I am planning to present the immediate results of the research proposed above at the national Slavic convention (ASEEES, San Antonio TX, Nov 20-23, 2014), where there will be a panel on south Russian settlement. I will be re-writing the conference paper as an article within the year, although it is of course a bit more difficult to predict when it will see publication. The longer research project, on international migration into Imperial Russia, I am expecting to turn into a book-length manuscript, although I'll be finishing a prior book-length commitment before I get down to serious work on other segments of this one.

#### TIMELINE:

My current plan is to leave for Europe as soon after White Eagle as possible. I expect to spend much of May 14-15 travelling (to Geneva and from there to Lausanne). **Lausanne: May 15-24.** May 25<sup>th</sup> will be spent in travel back to Geneva and on to Odessa. My Russian experience and comments from colleagues working in Ukraine suggest that my Ukrainian research will be much more time consuming, not least because living, moving among nearby communities and research arrangements will take considerably longer. My stay in-and-near Odessa should total about 2 weeks, that is **Odessa: May 26-June 7.** I plan to leave Odessa for the two-hour trip to Belgorod-Dnieprovskii late in the day of May 26 (after having submitted orders at the Odessa archive) where I'll remain until June 1. This allows time for a visit to the Shabo vinyard as well as the archive at the Belgorod-Dnieprovskii Museum. A Sunday return to Odessa (June 1) will allow me to begin work first thing on Monday morning at the Odessa archives, where I'll finish on Friday, and depart on Saturday for the US.

#### BUDGET:

The basic budget for my trip is on page 14. Past experience suggests that I'll come in under budget, but it is very difficult to predict in cities where I have little experience since the 1980s (oi!).

#### PREVIOUS GRANT SUPPORT:

I applied for and received Colgate Research Council support in 2007-08 for a visit to the archives in Moscow. My research trip on that occasion has resulted in several publications, including:

- "A Woman in Possession: Household Goods and Social Status of a single woman in early St. Petersburg," *Russian History* vol 41 no. 1 (2014): (forthcoming)
- "Anna Dorothea and the Major: Rape and the Military Courts in Petrine Russia," *Dubitando: Festschrift for Don Ostrowski* Brian Boeck, Russell E Martin and Daniel Rowland eds., (Slavica: Oct 2012), 475-486.
- "Women and War in Early Modern Russia" *Companion to women's military history* (Brill: Sept 2012) part III, ch. 9: 387-408.
- "Women and the Russian Military, 1650-1730," *Rude and Barbarous Kingdom Revisited* eds. Chester S. L. Dunning, Russell E. Martin and Daniel Rowland (Bloomington, IN: Slavica Press, 2008).

I will apply for an IREX short-term travel grant for the Ukrainian piece of the current proposal, but application deadlines and specifics have not yet been posted for the 2014-15 academic year.

#### BRIEF PROFESSIONAL RESUME (on p. 13)

## Short Curriculum Vitae

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### EDUCATION:

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor: M.A., Ph. D. (1985)  
University of South Carolina / Warwick University, England: A. B. cum laude.

### EXPERIENCE:

Associate Editor, *Russian History*, 2012-2015  
Social Science Division Director, Colgate University, 2012-  
Prof, History Department, Colgate University, 1984-  
Visiting Scholar, Harriman Institute, Columbia University. Vys.  
Post-doctoral Fellow, Ukrainian Research Institute, Harvard University, 1985-1987.

### RECENT PUBLICATIONS AND WORK IN PROGRESS

- Women and War in Eastern Europe, 1550-1750* (work in progress).
- "Land Warfare" in Hamish Scott, ed., *Oxford Handbook of Early Modern European History* (in progress)
- "Chapter 9: The struggle for power in North-East Europe and the Emergence of Russia to 1721." In Arthur Waldron and David Parrott, eds., *Cambridge History of War* (submitted).
- "A Woman in Possession: Household Goods and Social Status of a single woman in early St. Petersburg," *Russian History* vol 41 no. 1 (2014): (accepted)
- "Anna Dorothea and the Major: Rape and the Military Courts in Petrine Russia," *Dubitando: Festschrift for Don Ostrowski* Brian Boeck, Russell E Martin and Daniel Rowland eds., (Slavica: Oct 2012), 475-486.
- "Women and War in Early Modern Russia" *Companion to women's military history* (Brill: Sept 2012) part III, ch. 9: 387-408.
- Contributing Editor, *The Encyclopedia of War* ed. Gordon Martel (Wiley-Blackwell, Nov. 2011) entries and review of entries
- Russia's Wars of Emergence, 1462-1730 (New York, Harlow, UK: Longman-Pearson, 2007).
- Soldiers on the Steppe (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1995).
- with J.E. Knox, trans. and introduction, Problems of Abnormal Psychology and Learning Disabilities: The Fundamentals of Defectology vol. 2 of The Complete Works of L. S. Vygotsky (New York: Plenum Press, 1993).

Languages: fluent Russian, Old Russian, French, Spanish; managable Ukranian, German.

**SAMPLE BUDGET FOR MAJOR GRANTS AND PICKER FELLOWSHIPS\***

Budget Category. Please describe each item.	Amount
A. Travel (Please itemize and give total amount)	
Multicity airline ticket SYR-GVA-ODS-SYR according to kayak.com, currently \$1731. listed here at \$2000 to allow for fluctuation Car Rental, 1 week; Odessa TOTAL Travel	\$2,000.00  \$250.00
B. Living Expenses (See rate schedule)	
15-24 May in Lausanne (high expense city) \$250 x 10 25 May - June 7 in Ukraine (lower expense) split between Odessa + Belgorod Dniepr. \$100 x 13 TOTAL Living Expenses	\$2,500 \$1,300
C. Student Wage (University minimum). Specify rate and number of hours	
TOTAL Student Wages	
D. Supplies and Services (Please give exact amounts and itemize)	
TOTAL Supplies and Services	
E. Equipment Description (Not to exceed \$1,500)	
Total Equipment	
TOTAL AMOUNT REQUESTED	\$6050.00
Total Grant Request (if request differs from total budget)	

\*An Excel spreadsheet is also available on the Dean of Faculty web page under 'Funding Opportunities.'