

FIELD REPORT

Trip to Beebee Draw (La Salle, Colorado)

May 16, 1976

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Field Report: A Survey of Sources & Informants in the Beebee Draw
Area, La Salle, Colorado
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According to available historical records on of the earliest Russian-German settlements in the state of Colorado was established in the Beebee Draw area near La Salle by several German Families from Odessa in the late 1880's.

On April 20, 1976 I received a letter from Mrs. Donald Brantner who lives in La Salle. She inquired about some early stage stations that were build on the South Platte in the 1860's and have been destroyed by the Indians. Sine I have done historical research in this area, she was interested in learning what I knew about some of the stage stations in the Greeley area. Mrs. Brantner happened to mention that she heard I was working on a study project concerning the Russian-Germans and enclosed a very early clipping from the Greeley newspaper about the Beebee Draw settlement. She wrote in her letter, "I noticed from your stationery that you are doing a study project on Russian-Germans. My grandparents and one of my husband's grandmothers were Volga Deutsch so I have always been interested in their history. We are researching Beebee Draw too and it was settled in 1888 by 9 families from Odessa. Some of these people have attempted to collected and preserve their history over the years although we haven't attempted to gain access to it yet. I don't know the nature of your study but will pass on any information on that subject we find if you desire." Mrs. Brantner's address is Route 1, Box 183L, La Salle, Colorado, 80645. A copy of the article that Mrs. Branter sent is included with this report. It is very intersting and describes some of the early hardships of the pioneers in the Beebee

Draw area. The piece originally appeared in the November 15, 1947 issue of the Greeley Daily Tribune.

The Beebee Draw area is located 4 miles southeast of La Salle, Colorado in the Milton Reservoir area. On Sunday May 16th I went to the Beebee Draw area to learn if any descendants of the early pioneers were still living in this area, and also to visit an old cemetery that Mrs. Brantner had told me about in her letter of April 20th. I was surprised to discover that the Beebee Draw area is still inhabited by an extremely large number of Russian-Germans and most of these individuals are descendants of those early pioneers from Odessa. For instance, as you are driving along in the Beebee Draw area you will see on mailboxes the names of Moser, Oster, Lorenz, and many others that trace their ancestry to those immigrants who came in the 1880's.

To reach the Beebee Draw cemetery one should go south through La Salle (a town south of Greeley), turn left at First Avenue and proceed east down the street which becomes Todd Avenue. Then turn right at Walnut Street, proceed south onto Highway 39, turn left at Roadcrossing 44 east. Then turn right at Road 43 and go a little over 1 mile to the trailer home of Mrs. Oster, who is a descendant of the Odessa pioneers. On the way to Mrs. Oster's home you will pass the Beebee Draw cemetery.

I recommend that anyone who wants to find out something about the Beebee Draw pioneers talk to Mrs. Oster. Her full name is Mrs. William Oster of La Salle, Colorado, and her telephone number is 284-6472. She was born in 1908 in the United States.

Mrs. Oster told me that there are a couple of individuals living near her who also should be interviewed. They are Henry Duppert (77) who was born near Odessa, Russia and is an uncle of Mrs. Oster. Another name that

was mentioned was that of Ben Bolander (76) who also could provide much information about the Beebee Draw settlement. It is interesting to point out that according to Mrs. Oster most of the early German pioneers from Odessa in the Beebee Draw area were either Seventh Day Adventists or Baptists. They were very instrumental in starting an Adventist Church in 1913 in that area. Mrs. Oster lives in a trailer home, but a short distance south of her is a rock house that was built on the homestead there by Willaiam Oster Sr., the father-in-law of Mrs. Oster. This is still standing and several color slides were taken of the stone building and also of Mrs. Oster posing beside it.

Mrs. Oster indicated that there are actually two cemeteries in the Beebee Draw area. One, of course, can be seen on the roadside before reaching the home of Mrs. Oster, and there is another located near Milton Reservoir on private property. Mrs. Oster indicated she would be more than willing to show someone the latter cemetery in an effort to check some of the names of individuals buried there.

Later in the day, I drove several miles south to the Milton Reservoir area. According to Mrs. Oster and a number of other informants I briefly talked to, some of the early pioneers settled exactly where Milton reservoir now stands. When the Reservoir was put in many years ago the families, of course, were forced out except for one old individual who reluctantly left by row boat as the Reservoir was filled.

Southeast of Milton Reservoir I stopped at the home of Norman A. Moser, whose address is Star Route, Box 105C, Hudson Colorado, 80642. Norman Moser, who is in his early 50's is very interested in the early history and told me that his great grandfather, Chris Moser, was very influential in the establishment of the Beebee Draw colony. Norman told me he would be willing to help in researching the history of the Beebee Draw area, as he

knows most of the people there. He gave me the following names of individuals who might also prove helpful. They are as follows: Adam Moser, at 3614 Pueblo Street Evans, Colorado, 80620; Adam Moser is an uncles of Norman; is a member of the Baptist Church in La Salle, and is in his late sixties. Another individual is Carl Hetterly, who is in his eighties, and lives in Greeley. Mr. Hetterly married a Bolander. He would be able to give some insights concerning the life of the Beebee Draw pioneers. Another name is Roy Moser, who lives in Hudson, Star Route, is a County Commissioner, and might also be willing to help. The final name is Fred Elgner, who is in his sixties and lives in Greeley, Colorado and his telephone number there is 352-1189.

While talking to Norman Moser, I learned that he and his family presently farm some 5,000 acres. He indicated that many of the descendants of those early pioneers who came with very little now own large farms and are doing extremely well. Norman Moser proudly brought out a picture, and extremely old portrait, that showed himself as a child, along with his father, grandfather and great grandfather, Chris Moser. I took several pictures of Mr. Moser holding the family portrait. Before I left, he again indicated that he would be more than willing to help in piecing together the little-known history of the Beebee Draw pioneers near La Salle, Colorado.

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