German Immigration to Saskatchewan, a statistical perspective.

Mervin Weiss, 2022.

OVERVIEW

It is well known that the majority of Germans who immigrated to Saskatchewan during the homestead era (1885-1914) did not emigrate from Germany. Rather they came from eastern European countries, particularly the Black Sea region of today's Ukraine and the Volga River region of Russia around the cities of Saratov and Samara. Alvin Knoll has told that story through 26 consecutive instalments of the SGC Postillion magazine.

Notwithstanding Saskatchewan's Russian-Germans, many German families and individuals did in fact emigrate directly from Germany. (Saskatchewan German Council is interested in collecting the immigration stories of all Germans, regardless of where they came from.) A well-known statistic from the 1916 Canada Census of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta tells us that 101,944 persons reported German as their mother tongue, but only 15,328 were actually born in Germany. That statistic spurred my interest in trying to document the numbers of Germans who immigrated to Saskatchewan after 1916, particularly after World War II (ie. after 1945).

I did not research immigration statistics specifically for Saskatchewan for the period 1914-1945. However, an overview of German immigration to Canada during these years is of interest. Immigration, of course, was not possible during the war years – 1914-1918 and 1939-1945. And after World War I, immigration of German speakers to Canada was not even permitted until April of 1921, after which only German farmers, farm labourers and female domestic servants were eligible. Germany would remain a "non-preferred" country of emigration until 1927. Tens of thousands of Germans left Germany during the years of the Weimar Republic – 1919-1933. Unemployment and re-drawn boundaries caused thousands to abandon the war-ravaged country. Many families responded to advertisements which featured closed German-speaking communities with German schools in Argentina and Brazil. The United States of America also attracted large numbers of Germans because it had a more industrialized economy than did Canada, and thus offered more opportunities for employment. Established German communities like the Kitchener-Waterloo[1] region of Ontario attracted some German immigrants to that area, while Saskatchewan attracted those who had an interest in agriculture. The German immigrants in Canada no doubt struggled to progress financially, but they comforted themselves by knowing it was still worse in Germany.[2]

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[1] Kitchener was known as Berlin until its name was changed in 1916.
[2] An excellent account of *German Population Growth in Saskatchewan* can be found in Alan B. Anderson's updated "German Settlements in Saskatchewan", published by Saskatchewan German Council, 2021, pp 10-12.

The years 1922 to 1932 witnessed 23, 997 Germans who immigrated to Canada.[3] The figure can be misleading because after 1927, the United States introduced a quota system, and it is probable that many Germans came to Canada with the expectation of proceeding to the USA at a later date. By comparison only 971 Germans immigrated to Canada during the years 1933 to 1939. (A breakdown by province was not pursued.)

The early 1930s in Saskatchewan experienced a drought which decimated the agricultural sector. Conditions on the Prairies were aggravated even more by the global economic depression which began with the great stock market crash of 1929. The crops which were raised had little or no cash value. In 1933, Adolf Hitler became Chancellor of Germany and the economic policies and propaganda of the NSDAP (Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei), otherwise known as the Nazi Party, revived a moribund country. As economic conditions deteriorated around the world, Germany seemed to offer brighter opportunities, and thousands of native Germans who had previously emigrated, now began to return. In fact, the "new" Germany encouraged them to return. This is well documented in a recently published book, "Coming Home to the Third Reich" by Grant W. Grams. This book reports the numbers of German nationals living in Canada as follows: 25,299 in 1921, increasing to 39,163 in 1931 and falling to 28,479 in 1941.

An exception to the return of German nationals from Canada to Germany is the story of the Sudetenland Germans who had been living in the German speaking region of Czechoslovakia known as Sudetenland. Hitler's Germany invaded and annexed this territory in 1938. Those Sudeten Germans who did not support National Socialism feared persecution and repressions. In January 1939 Canada accepted 1,024 Sudeten German refugees, 506 of which settled in the St. Walburg-Loon Lake-Goodsoil area of Saskatchewan. This history is capably described in Dr. Alan B. Andersen's new and revised "German Settlements in Saskatchewan".[4] A personal story, "Erica's Diary" was published in the Autumn- and Winter 2021 editions of the SGC Postillion magazine.

World War II displaced approximately 40 million Europeans, that is, people who found themselves in 1945 living somewhere other than where they were living in 1939 when the war began. As Germany struggled to rebuild its infrastructure of bombed railways, roads, bridges and warehouses, millions suffered from the poverty and hunger through the bitter winters of 1946 and 1947. But the internally displaced German citizens were not the only ones affected by the absence of a distribution system for food and essentials. Germany also had to cope with approximately 4.5 million Eastern European refugees situated within the Western Zones of occupied Germany, many of whom were also native German speakers. (Countless refugees from former states of the Soviet Union were re-patriated by Russia and sent to Gulag labour camps east of the Ural Mountains. Thousands were sent, as well, to populate and develop the agricultural plains of Kazakhstan and Siberia.) The majority of the refugees in the British and

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[3] "Coming Home to the Third Reich", by Grant W. Grams. 2021. pp 17-18.
[4] "German Settlements in Saskatchewan", Alan B. Anderson, 2021, pp 52-54.

American Zones of Occupation were accommodated in a series of refugee camps run by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) and later by the International Refugee Organization (IRO). Other organizations like the German Red Cross and the Kirchlicher Suchdienst of Stuttgart worked to re-connect family members who had been scattered by six years of war-induced turmoil. The IRO tried to connect refugees with relatives who had emigrated before the war to North America, South America and Australia.

The Second World War had left Europe physically, economically and mentally devastated. Many Europeans felt the best way to "start over again" would be to emigrate, to leave their homelands. Under the Displaced Persons Act, between 1947 and 1954, Canada accepted more than 165,000 European refugees who had been displaced during World War II. In addition, many German citizens were unwilling to wait for Germany to rebuild, possibly even unsure if Germany could in fact rebuild. They, as well, responded to the Displaced Persons Act which required that the immigrant had to have a sponsor or a guaranteed job in the host country. Saskatchewan German Council (SGC) has already collected stories of German immigrants to Saskatchewan which illustrate how this program worked.

The largest numbers of displaced persons came from Poland, the Netherlands, Italy, and Germany. Prior to WWII, Canada's immigration policies favored immigrants from Britain and the Commonwealth. This new wave of twentieth-century refugees resulted in more compassionate immigration policies, which over the years since, have contributed to our multicultural society in Canada.

A new fear of war in Europe brought on by the outbreak of war in Korea resulted in huge numbers of immigrants to Canada. The early 1950s brought record numbers, exceeding 150,000 in each of several consecutive years. These numbers included significant number of Germans and Italians, who had been removed from the list of enemy aliens. The Hungarian Revolution and the Suez Canal Crisis of 1956 resulted in the largest number of immigrants to enter Canada since 1913. And for the first time, in 1958, arrivals from the British Isles did not make up the largest group of immigrants. Between 1948 and 1963, more than two million immigrants were admitted into Canada.[5] By 2011, Asia (including India and the Middle East) became the main source of immigrants to Canada.

GERMAN IMMIGRATION TO SASKATCHEWAN AFTER 1945

Much information can be found online regarding immigration into Canada after 1945. But data for numbers of immigrants arriving specifically from Germany, and more specifically German immigrants arriving in Saskatchewan are difficult to find. The most helpful source of the statistics which follow was Saskatchewan's Bureau of Statistics Senior Economic Statistician,

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[5] https://www.canada.ca/en/parks-canada/news/2016/02/the-arrival-of-displaced-persons-in-canada-1945-1951.html

Youssef Oudad, whose timely responses to my inquiries deserve my gratitude. The data in the following charts was compiled by summarizing numerous spreadsheets provided by Youssef.

German Immigration to Saskatchewan and Canada, 1951-2020

YEARS	1951-1955	1956-1960	1961-1965	1966-1970	1971-1975	1976-1980	1981-1985	1986-1990	1991-1995	1996-2000	2001-2005	2006-2010	2011-2015	2016-2020
Total immigration to Canada	791,930	782,911	498,790	910,837	834,452	489,923	410,606	938,258	765,731	794,606	1,053,316	1,229,435	1,177,025	1,763,281
Total from Germany	n/a	89,576	33,442	40,081	13,952	9,332	12,459	8,656	9,305	11,973	10,560	16,935	n/a	n/a
% Total		11.40%	6.70%	4.40%	1.70%	1.90%	3.00%	0.90%	1.20%	1.50%	1.00%	1.40%		
Total Immigration to Saskatchewan	18,622	13,126	8,378	14,952	7,677	10,472	8,099	9,043	5,641	3,966	7,145	28,776	56,560	67,836
Total Germany to Saskatchewan				705	196	187	221	105	104	n/a	85	895	330	
% Total				4.70%	2.60%	1.80%	2.70%	1.20%	1.80%	n/a	1.20%	3.10%	0.60%	

Chart developed by Mervin Weiss, from data supplied by the Senior Economic Statistician, Government of Saskatchewan.
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The data tables which follow better illustrate the numbers of German emigrants to Saskatchewan since 1966. Emigrants to Saskatchewan from the former West Germany amounted to 183 in 1966, 245 in 1967 and 178 in 1968. But those numbers dropped off dramatically in 1969 (50) and remained low through the 1970s, averaging 41 per year, and through the 1980s (average of 33 per year). The first Germans from East Germany appear in 1977 (2) and two more in 1979. A total of nine Germans from East Germany arrived in Saskatchewan during the 1980s. Statistics for the years 1997, 1998 and 1999 are not available to the public (no reason given), but the numbers of Germans from a unified Germany through the years 1990-1996 totalled only 148 over seven years. See tables below.

The numbers of Germans to Saskatchewan remained low into the 2000s. A sharp increase occurred in 2008 for four years until tapering off again. This increase might be explained by the arrival of Germans who had been living in former districts of the Soviet Union up until the 1989 Fall of the Berlin Wall. Several million ethnic German-Russians were allowed to immigrate into Germany, after which family reunifications and job opportunities attracted many of them to Canada and Saskatchewan.

My personal observations include many Germans who have immigrated to Saskatchewan over the last twenty years who form a new "wave" of scientists and academics who have come to research and to teach. Saskatchewan's agricultural potential has also attracted German immigrant investors. But in summary, Saskatchewan currently attracts only a very small number of German immigrants. The numbers in the charts make that very evident.

# of Germans immigrating to Saskatchewan by year.

Year			Year			Year	
1966	183		1970	49		1975	41
1967	245		1971	37		1976	36
1968	178		1972	17		1977	51 + 2
1969	50		1973	34		1978	55
			1974	67		1979	17 + 2

Year			Year			Year			Year	
1980	24		1990	18		2000	15		2010	225
1981	35		1991	19		2001	5		2011	105
1982	97 + 1		1992	18		2002	25		2012	70
1983	40		1993	18		2003	15		2013	60
1984	29		1994	29		2004	15		2014	45
1985	19		1995	20		2005	25		2015	50
1986	17 + 1		1996	26		2006	35			
1987	26 + 1		1997	n/a		2007	30			
1988	15		1998	n/a		2008	240			
1989	21 + 5		1999	n/a		2009	335			

Data Source: Saskatchewan Vital Statistics, Senior Economic Statistician, Youseff Oudad, Index titled "Permanent Resident Landings to Saskatchewan 1966-2015".

Notes to dataset:

1- The immigration data are not available publicly from 1997 to 1999.
2- Data compiled to capture before and after Germany's reunification.
3- The Permanent Resident Landings to Saskatchewan data are by Intended Destination and does not confirm if they arrived at their intended destination.
4- Since 2000, the data are by country of citizenship.

Conclusion: The 2011 Canada Census confirms that the largest ethnic group in Saskatchewan has German roots, at 28.6 percent.[6]   Over the last forty years, less than 2 % of Canada's immigrants have come from Germany, and of the Germans immigrating to Canada, less than 2 % have come to Saskatchewan. The small number of Germans coming to Saskatchewan belies the disproportionate contribution of these Germans to research and innovation in our province, particularly in agriculture, mining (ie. potash) and medicine. And for nearly forty years, the Saskatchewan German Council has provided a forum and a meeting place for ex-

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[6] https://worldpopulationreview.com/canadian-provinces/saskatchewan-population   The largest ethnic origins in Saskatchewan are: German (28.6%), English (24.9%), Scottish (18.9%), Canadian (18.8%), Irish (15.5%), Ukrainian (13.5%), French (12.2%), First Nations (12.1%), Norwegian (6.9%) and Polish (5.8%), Metis (4.2%), Dutch (3.4%), Swedish (3.1%), Russian (2.9%), Hungarian (2.5%), Austrian (1.5%), Welsh (1.4%), American (1.2%), Romanian (1.1%).

patriate Germans, while promoting the German presence in our province. Since 1984 SGC has worked to preserve German culture, language, customs and traditions within the wider context of a multi-cultural Saskatchewan. Germans in Saskatchewan have embraced their new home and will continue to contribute to the Canadian mosaic.

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Sources:

https://arolsen-archives.org/en/ and

https://arolsen-archives.org/en/news/neue-publikation-displaced-persons-in-arolsen-nach-1945/

https://cha-shc.ca/_uploads/5c3749072d483.pdf   "The Germans in Canada"

https://www.cbc.ca/history/EPISCONTENTSE1EP15CH3PA1LE.html

https://ccrweb.ca/sites/ccrweb.ca/files/static-files/canadarefugeeshistory3.htm

https://www.canada.ca/en/parks-canada/news/2016/02/the-arrival-of-displaced-persons-in-canada-1945-1951.html

https://dalspace.library.dal.ca/bitstream/handle/10222/58908/dalrev_vol42_iss3_pp287_300.pdf?sequence=1

Appendix 1:

Saskatchewan Immigration Statistics, a broader overview

Country of origin		Period of Immigration to Saskatchewan				
		Before 1961	1961-1970	1971-1980	1981-1990	1991-2001
USA		1,190	1,110	1,370	930	1,270
Central America		45	25	30	515	315
Caribbean		30	155	280	135	90
South America		30	65	680	220	215
Europe	Western incl. Germany	3,225	685	570	490	380
	Eastern	4,410	390	195	730	780
	Northern incl. UK	4,060	2,240	1,725	795	860
	Southern	765	790	340	135	1,145
	Europe total	12,460	4,105	2,830	2,150	3,165
Africa		30	170	365	325	1,415
Asia	West Central incl. Middle East	25	55	65	310	765
	Eastern incl. China	415	495	525	875	1,835
	Southeast	45	180	1,235	1,610	1,530
	Southern incl. India	10	265	380	400	635
	Asia total	495	995	2,205	3,195	4,765
Australia and Oceania		15	75	70	80	135
All countries		14,325	6,725	7,835	7,570	11,365

Source: https://harvest.usask.ca/handle/10388/327

Appendix 2:

TABLE III
TOTAL NO. (and %)
DISTRIBUTION OF PEOPLE OF GERMAN ORIGIN IN CANADA

	Atlantic* Provinces	Quebec	Ontario	Prairies	British Columbia	Northern Territories
1901	45,545 (14.6)	6,923 (2.20)	203,319 (65.4)	46,844 (15.08)	5,807 (1.80)	2,063 (0.60)
1911	42,538 (10.5)	6,145 (1.50)	192,320 (47.6)	140,020 (34.70)	11,880 (2.90)	417 (0.10)
1921	29,004 (9.8)	4,668 (1.50)	130,545 (44.3)	122,979 (41.70)	7,273 (2.40)	167 (0.05)
1931	30,039 (6.3)	10,616 (2.20)	174,006 (36.7)	241,760 (51.00)	16,986 (3.50)	137 (0.02)
1941	16,604 (3.5)	8,880 (1.90)	167,102 (35.9)	249,458 (53.60)	22,407 (4.80)	231 (0.04)
1951	32,059 (5.1)	12,249 (1.90)	222,028 (35.8)	297,820 (48.00)	55,307 (8.90)	1,095 (0.17)
1961	55,320 (5.2)	39,457 (3.70)	400,717 (38.1)	433,369 (41.20)	118,926 (11.3)	1,810 (0.17)
1971	52,645 (3.9)	53,870 (4.00)	475,315 (36.0)	534,170 (40.50)	198,310 (15.0)	2,885 (0.20)

*Newfoundland statistics are not included until 1951   **p.18 The Germans in Canada, K.M. McLaughlin**