

many of them had frozen feet and frozen hands. With total disregard for the frozen limbs and weather conditions the women had to work seven days a week – Sunday to Sunday. When the brigade was brought back to Hodschag in the spring, it was dissolved and the women were sent to different work places. A larger group of these women came later to Batsch.



In the spring and summer of 1946 colonists from the southern part of the country were placed in the depopulated villages of the district. In the course of the summer, they had to take over the cultivation and management of the fields. This made the slave laborers superfluous and they were brought back to the Central Camp in Hodschag. In the middle of September all those who were not needed for work in the Hodschager district were brought to Gakovo and Kruschevlje. When all remaining inhabitants of the camps in the Hodschager district were gathered and ready to be transported to Gakovo and Kruschevlje, they numbered less than a thousand. In the fall of 1945 the camp in Hodschag counted 4,000 people. Within one year, approximately 3,000 ethnic Germans succumbed and some of those remaining were destined to die in Gakovo and Kruschevlje.

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Our German Heritage

A bit of German History

Up to the last century, it was a widely held belief that German history began in the year A.D.9. That was when Arminius, a prince of a Germanic tribe called the Cherusci, vanquished three Roman legions in the Teutoburg Forest (southeast of modern-day Bielefeld). Arminius, about whom not much else is known, was regarded as the first German national hero, and a huge memorial to him was built near Detmold in the years 1838-1875.

Nowadays a less simplistic view is taken. The fusing of a German nation was a process which took hundreds of years. The word "deutsch" (German) probably began to be used in the 8th century and initially defined only the language spoken in the eastern part of the Franconian realm. This empire, which reached the zenith of its power under Charlemagne, incorporated peoples speaking Germanic and Romance dialects. After Charlemagne's death in 814, it soon fell apart. In the course of various inheritance divisions, a western and an eastern realm developed, whose political boundary approximately coincided with the boundary between German and French speakers. Only gradually did a feeling of cohesion develop among the inhabitants of the eastern realm. Then the term "deutsch" was transferred from the language to its speakers and ultimately to the region they lived in, "Deutschland".

The German western frontier was fixed relatively early and remained fairly stable. But the eastern frontier moved to and fro for hundreds of years. Around 900 it ran approximately along the Elbe and Saale rivers. In subsequent centuries German settlement extended far to the east. This expansion stopped only in the middle of the 14th century. The ethnic boundary then made between Germans and Slavs remained until World War II.

