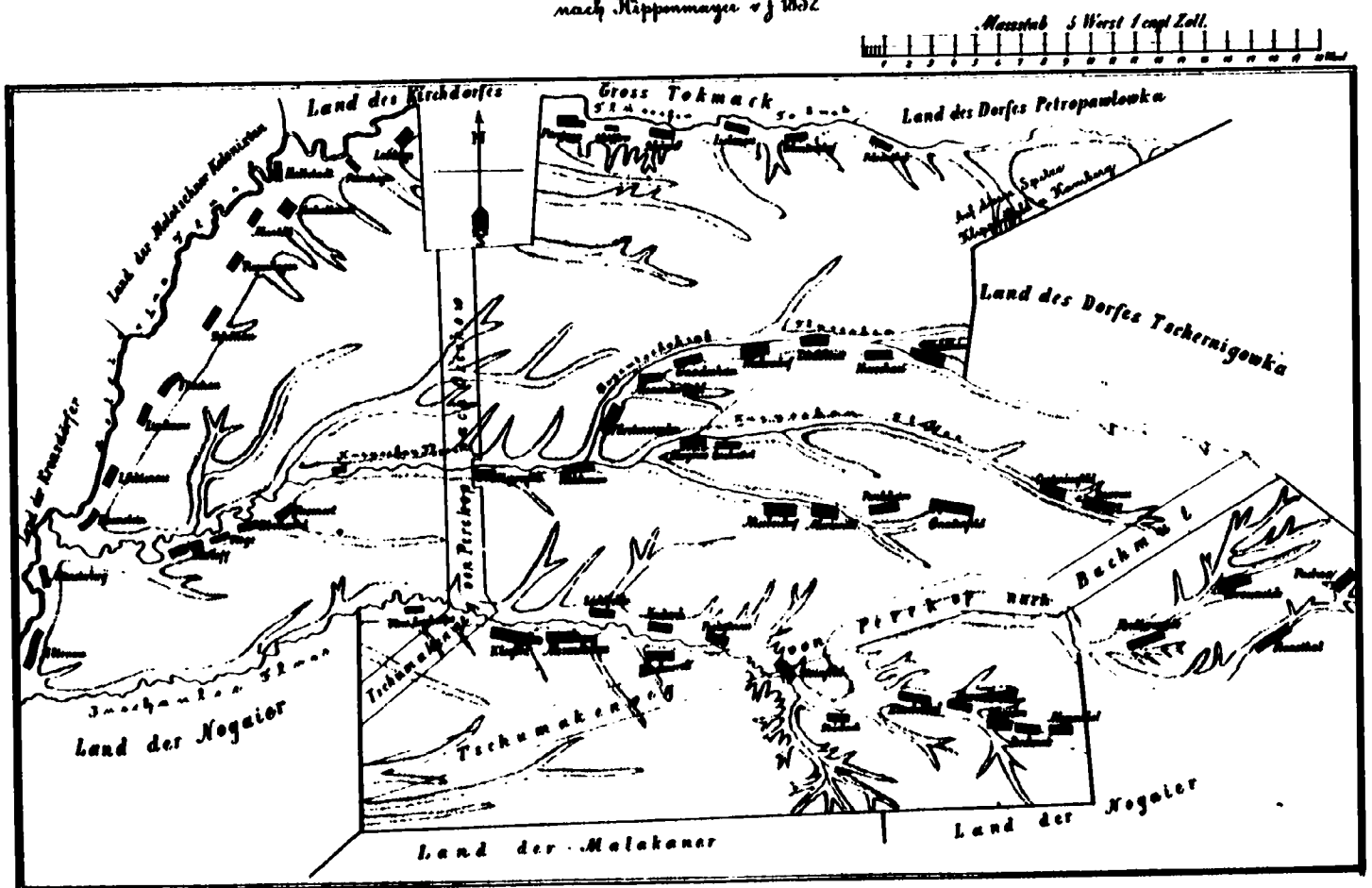


families had a meager existence. The heads of these families were artisans and laborers, such as blacksmiths, shoemakers, wheelwrights, saddlers, and farm hands.

The Alexanderwohl Church had two ministers when they came to Russia, Elder Peter Wedel and his assistant Heinrich Buller, the father of Jacob Buller who succeeded Peter Wedel as elder. Some of the other assistant ministers during their stay in Russia were: Heinrich Goertz, Heinrich Richert, Peter Voth, Peter Balzer, David Schroeder, Heinrich Banman and Dietrich Gaeddert. The church was built about 1865, some 45 years after they emigrated to Russia. Before 1865 the church held its services in the school. In 1869 Elder Peter Wedel ordained Jacob Buller as elder. Peter Wedel continued to serve as elder emeritus until his death on July 8, 1871. By accessions from other Mennonite churches in Russia the Alexanderwohl Church had added to its membership such names as: Banmann, Bergen, Boese, Dalke, Hiebert, Krause, Penner, Schroeder and others.

The threat of compulsory military service by the Russian government in the early seventies and the pressure of the landless families for living space, caused the Russian Mennonites to look toward America for their future haven. In 1873, the elder Jacob Buller was chosen as one of the twelve delegates to be sent to America to investigate the status of freedom from military service in America and to explore fertile tracts of land suitable for settlement. The report of the delegates was favorable for settlement

*Parte*  
des Molotschnaer Mennoniten-Bericks  
nach Kippenhagen v. J. 1852



Map of the Molotchna colony in Russia where our forefathers lived.  
(Courtesy Mennonite Life)