Germans from Russia Immigration Populations to the United States

Volga Germans vs. Black Sea Germans, 1800–1940

Period / year	Volga Germans — population & events	Black Sea Germans — population & events	Famine / losses	Migration to U.S. & principal destinations
1800	~40,000–50,000	German colonies expanding in southern Russia	—	Virtually no significant U.S. migration
1815	~55,000–60,000	Growing colonies around Odessa/Black Sea	—	—
1825	~70,000	**~50,000**	—	—
1835	~100,000+	~70,000–80,000	—	—
1848	~145,000	**~100,000**	—	—
1860	~215,000–250,000	**~140,000–150,000**	—	—
1870	~260,000	~180,000	—	Immigration to America begins on a large scale
1873	~280,000	~190,000–200,000	—	**Black Sea Germans establish settlements near Yankton/Tyndall, Dakota Territory.**
1874	~290,000	~200,000+	—	**Volga Germans arrive in Kansas and Nebraska.** Fourteen Volga German representatives arrived in New York July 15, 1874.
1875–76	~300,000	~210,000	—	Volga Germans concentrate in **Kansas, Nebraska and Colorado**; Black Sea Germans increasingly move into Dakota Territory.
1880	~300,000+	~220,000	—	Rapid immigration to Great Plains
1890	~325,000	~270,000–300,000	—	Large settlements develop in **Kansas, Nebraska, Dakotas**
1891–92	**~330,000+**	~280,000+	**Major Russian famine.** Volga German communities badly affected; famine stimulated additional emigration.	More Volga Germans leave for America
1897	**345,000**	~300,000+	—	Approximately **100,000 Volga Germans had immigrated to U.S. by 1900**.
1900	~350,000+	~330,000	—	Volga: **KS, NE, SD, ND**. Black Sea: particularly **Dakotas**

Period / year	Volga Germans — population & events	Black Sea Germans — population & events	Famine / losses	Migration to U.S. & principal destinations
1910	~430,000–450,000	~400,000+	—	North Dakota becomes a major center of Germans from Russia
1911	~450,000+	**426,397 in Kherson, Taurida and Yekaterinoslav combined**	—	Black Sea migration continues to Dakotas
1914	**>500,000**	~450,000–500,000+	—	Immigration continues until World War I/revolution
1917	~500,000+	~450,000+	Revolution disrupts migration	**Large-scale immigration essentially ends** after the Russian Revolution.
1920	~330,000–350,000 in Volga region	Large population still in Ukraine/Black Sea region	Civil War, displacement	U.S. Germans begin organizing relief for relatives
1921–22	**Severe population loss**	Severe losses in southern Ukraine as well	**Great famine.** Volga German communities were among the hardest-hit areas. American Volga relief organizations formed in Nebraska and elsewhere.	Immigration largely closed; **relief rather than immigration** becomes the major American connection
1926	**379,630 in Volga German ASSR**	~394,000 Germans in Ukrainian SSR	Recovery but continuing Soviet pressure	U.S. communities already established
1932–33	Major losses	Major losses	**Soviet famine/collectivization** affects both groups; Black Sea Germans particularly affected in Ukraine	Virtually no legal mass emigration
1937	~322,652 in Volga German ASSR	~402,000 in Ukrainian SSR	Continuing demographic effects and Soviet repression	U.S. descendants increasingly established
1939	**366,685 in Volga German ASSR**	~392,000 Germans in Ukrainian SSR	—	Established communities across Great Plains and western states
1940	~367,000	~390,000 in Ukraine, broadly defined	Deportation preparations begin	The great prewar immigration era is over
1941	**Volga German ASSR abolished; Volga Germans deported eastward**	Black Sea Germans also face wartime evacuation/deportation	World War II	American communities become increasingly separated from relatives in USSR

Where they settled in the United States

There is a particularly important geographical distinction between the two groups.

U.S. area	Volga Germans	Black Sea Germans
Kansas	**Very large**	Moderate
Nebraska	**Very large**	Smaller
North Dakota	Large	**Extremely large**
South Dakota	Large	**Extremely large**
Colorado	Significant	Some
Oklahoma	Significant	Some
Montana	Some	Some
Minnesota	Some	Some
Iowa	Some	Some
California	Later migration	Later migration
Oregon/Washington	Later migration	Later migration

The distinction is especially striking in **North Dakota**. The Germans from Russia Historical Society estimates that **nearly 98% of German-Russian families settling in North Dakota were from the Black Sea region**, and about **two-thirds of the Black Sea settlers who came to the United States were in North Dakota by 1920**.

The National Register documentation similarly says that **Volga Germans generally went to Kansas, Nebraska and Colorado**, while **Black Sea Germans generally headed north into Dakota Territory**.