

Crafts and Trades

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Dr. Elvire Necker-Eberhardt for several specific words in this article.*

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With the immigrants there also came craftsmen, as already mentioned. Therefore, everything could be manufactured with their own craftsmen. Each farmer was also able to make for himself everything needed on his own farm. Nevertheless, our craftsmen also had enough work. During the time that Bessarabia belonged to Russia, it was not necessary for our craftsmen to undergo an exam. Only ability was measured. The joiner, who could produce the most beautiful and best furniture also had sufficient work. He earned so much that he could soon become wealthy. The wooden barrel maker had to look around for something different. It was like that in all types of trade. It was also natural that the best master had the most apprentices. He could not sign up all that came for an apprenticeship. They had to go through a three-year training. It was a hard nut to crack for these youngsters, as they were strictly bound. If something was badly done, then some ears were boxed. Master journeyman and apprentices tried to fulfil their orders exactly.

Those who supplied good work were always sought. Since the Germans, however, preferred agriculture, each father tried to buy more land. Because of this, non-Germans also went into apprenticeship with German masters. Every now and then there were able journeymen and masters. In the course of time, in particular the cabinet-makers and the coach smiths grew. Also the blacksmiths and tailors may not be forgotten. Furniture had to be made for all the German and non-German colonies.

The master coach smiths of the Swabian villages Teplitz, Alt-Posttal and Wittenberg received even more work. They supplied the best carts. They soon were well known in the whole region. Not only in South Bessarabia could they sell their wares, but also in the Ukraine up to Odessa and further into the Crimea. After the First World War the situation changed. Bessarabia went to Romania. Thus we were cut off from Ukraine and our brothers. Through that a large distribution area was lost. This change was of great significance. In Romania our masters were still perfectly free. Nobody required anything of them. They only had to pay their taxes regularly. In all other respects, nobody worried about them. After some years, however, an order came requiring that all those wishing to be masters had to take an exam. There was a lot of agitation among the young people. In addition, the older people were worried. No one had required anything like that from them before. Nevertheless it had to be implemented. Thus all younger masters held a master's certificate. These had to be acquired in the county town before a legally appointed commission. However, there was complete freedom of trade under Romania.

Trade developed strongly, particularly during the last decade before our resettlement and repatriation to Germany. At the end there existed many workshops, which were operated with machines. There were some in nearly every mother colony. Our German-Swabian colonist sons manufactured all agricultural machines. Industry flourished noticeably. The same can be said of our cloth factories and dye-works. These all began in a very small way. By the end, they were already multiple millionaires. They were very active. They did not allow themselves peace, either day or night.

Different training courses (e.g. for beginners and intermediates) were set up by our public organization in Arzis, even for masters. The course participants could take home many good things. Their knowledge and skills were perfected. Thus they again had a larger clientele and also greater earnings. To list the

many individual companies would take too long. Our mills went through a colossal rapid upswing and just as rapid development. If we think of our forebears, who had come from Swabia to South Bessarabia, then one must remember that they still milled their rye or summer wheat with the "grating mill." The windmill superseded this, however. There were many in South Bessarabia. However, they disappeared in our Swabian colonies over the course of time. The steam mill became effective. Probably one of the largest mills in Bessarabia was that of Mr. Eduard Lemke & Co. in Beresina. It had 13 rolling machines. All machines were bought from the company "Miag" in Braunschweig. Then there was the mill Stelter & Co. in Arzis. In addition there were a number of larger mills. These not only had to provide for the needs of the German population of our colonies, but also for different Romanian companies. Flour was even exported to Germany.