

# Chronicle of Eigenfeld (Radejdea) Community

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[Note: Comments in square brackets in the document are those of the translator.]

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## **Chronicle of Eigenfeld (Radejdea) Community, Akkerman (Cetatea-Alba) District, Bessarabia written by Sexton-Teacher W. Schöch**

On the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the existence of the Schoolhouse and Prayer House

“Faithful in heart, sincere in speech and behavior,  
Strong and firm in faith, in hope not disheartened—  
These are foundation stones upon which one can confidently build.”

The bell tower in front of the Eigenfeld community school and prayer house is crowned with a cross which bears the date 1882 at the base. So, in 1932, the school house and prayer house celebrate their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Therefore, we want to review on the occasion of this anniversary year the development of Eigenfeld community since its founding and up to the present.

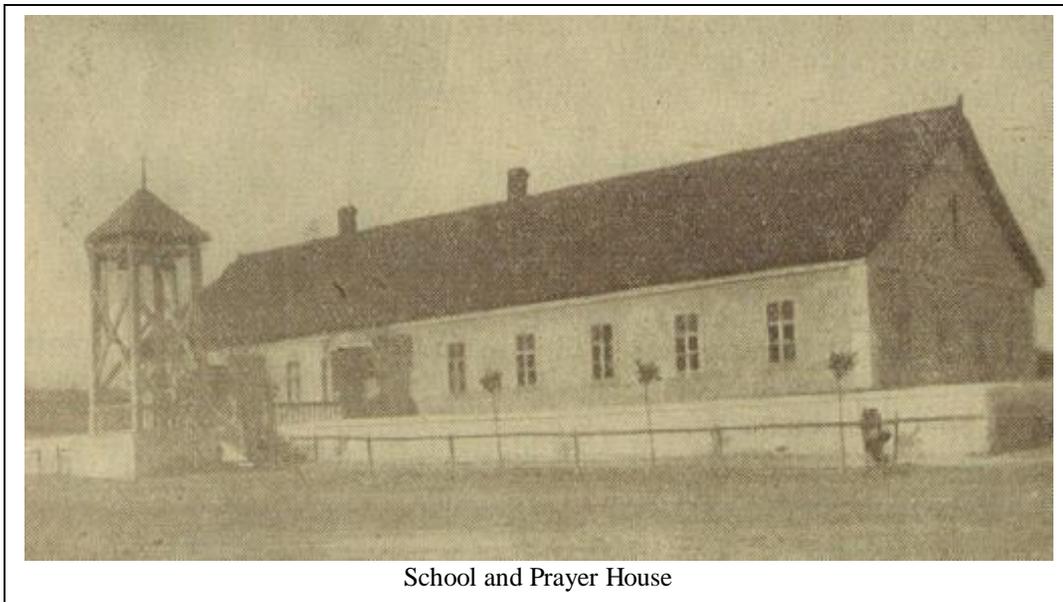
It was in the 70s of the last century when it became too crowded in the old colonies, such as Alt-Posttal, Wittenberg, Kulm, Brienne and others, for the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of colonists who immigrated from Germany. A real migration fever seized a number of the old colonies at that time. The consequence of this was the emergence of a lot of daughter colonies during the 70s and 80s of the last century.

So, 40 families also set out and founded the daughter colony of Eigenfeld in 1880. It is located 22 km [1km=0.6214 mi] north of the Sarata railway station, on the left bank of the Sarata River, in a flat, wide valley. The name “Eigenfeld” indicates that the site of 2,500 *dessiatinen* [1 *dessiatine*=2.7 acres or 1.09 hectares], purchased by the community from the landowner Rodi Ganati, formerly a resident in Odessa, land which until 1880 was worked by the people, but which they were not allowed to call their “own land” (*Eigenfeld*). And that is actually how it was. This site was worked by tenants since the 60s of the last century. These folks laid out a small village on the place where Eigenfeld is situated today, which was known at that time under



Only House Remaining from Lease Era

the name of Neu-Paris. The tenants were living in fairly shabby, for the most part, miserable earth huts. Our picture shows the only small house (at least one of the best) which remains from the tenant time until today. The remaining houses were demolished in part by the tenants themselves, in part also by the people of Eigenfeld. The people of Eigenfeld quickly replaced the clay huts, one after the other, with big, beautiful stone houses, put up along a straight street which stretches from north to south.

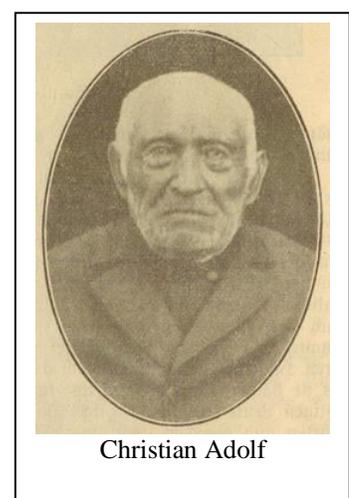
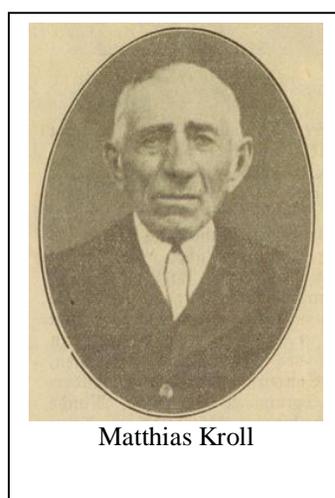
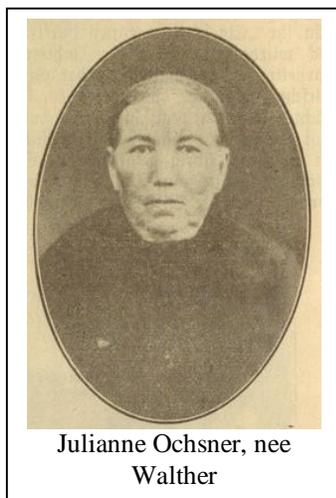


School and Prayer House

The people of Neu-Paris were culturally and materially very neglected. They did not care much for the work even if the result was wine. At the founding of Eigenfeld, the people of Neu-Paris, in spite of everything, already had their “school teacher” by the name of Walter, from Friedenstal. In the first year of the Eigenfeld settlement, this person became mentally ill and his relatives came to get him. Nothing more is known about his person and his work. After 1880, when the Neu-Paris people lost any right to the land previously leased, they grabbed the walking stick and went in all directions into the world. Some of the people of Neu-Paris parted from their little houses only with a heavy heart. They lived together with the Eigenfeld people for another 1-2 years until they were gradually shoved out. A people who have a desire for wandering seemingly have few worries. This proves the saying that they are always talking about and which still lingers as a reminder in the lives of the Eigenfeld founders:

*(Kommt Zeit, kommt Not,  
Kommt's Fuehjahr, kommt d' Sot)*  
“Time comes, Want comes,  
Spring comes, Seed comes.”

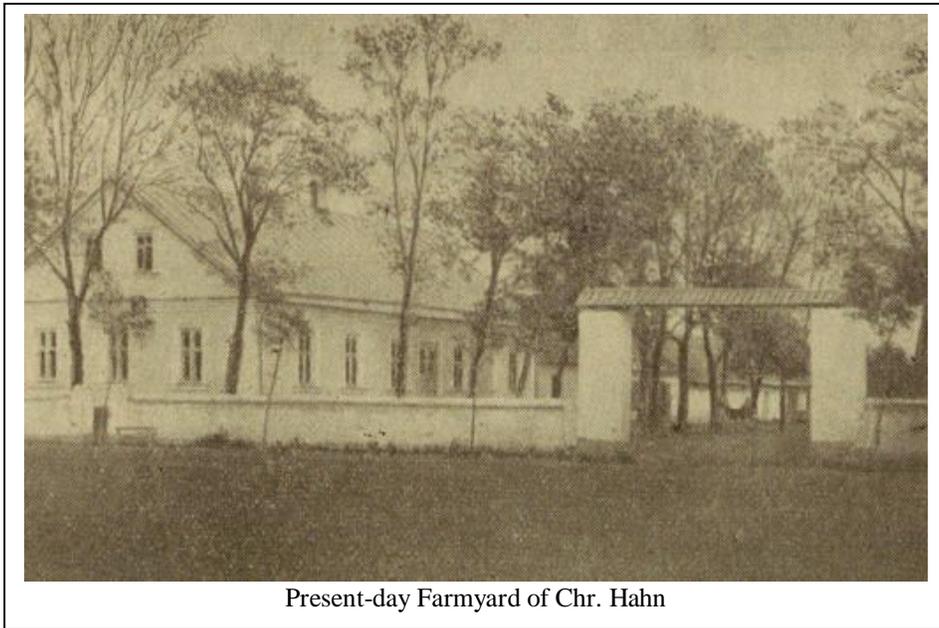
The proper history of Eigenfeld begins in 1880. As mentioned before, 40 families settled here in this year and they were—from Alt-Posttal 10 families: Jakob Friedrich, Joseph Flaig, Johann Schulz, Matthias Kroll, Christian Jauch, Christoph Jauch, Konrad Haag, Jakob Schulz, Gottlieb Beitz and Jakob Sauter; from Brienne 11 families: Wilhelm Richter, Johann Quiram, Christian Adolf I, Gottlieb Jans, Johann Häußer, Gottlieb Werner, Ludwig Hannemann, Georg Folz, Georg Kuch, Karl Hinß and Christian Oster; from Kulm 9 families: Gottfried Leischner, Johann Leischner, Daniel Schulz, Gottfried Lemke, Gottlieb Schimke, Daniel Raugust, Johann Raugust, Daniel Radke and Peter König; from Katzbach 2 families: Johannes Bauer and Andreas Schill; from Grossliebental (Cherson) 1 family: Friedrich Ochsner; from Dennewitz 1 family: Karl Schlauch; from Alt-Elft 2 families: Samuel Thilemann and Samuel Kraft; from Friedenstal 1 family: Friedrich Walther; from Alt-Arzsiz 1 family: Georg Kurz; from Wittenberg 2 families: Ferdinand Bohnet and Georg Schmied.



As can be seen from the list of founders, the population of Eigenfeld was already quite mixed at the time of the settlement. A number of families were added in the course of the first decade

after the settlement, namely— from Alt-Posttal: Johann Enßlen, Jakob Bietz, Christian Sauter and Michael Kroll; from Dennewitz: Christoph Böppe and Johann Schiewe; from Brienne: Phil. Mattheis; from Klöstitz: Peter Wirth; from Gnadental: Mich. Bantel; from Wittenberg: Adam Widmer, Bernhard Widmer, Joseph Schöttle and Karl Nittel; from Sarata: Christian Hahn, Martin Roßmann and Jakob Schuh; from Teplitz: Jakob Breitmeier. In the last two decades, the following also came—from Lichtental: Reinhold Würt and Georg Gall; from Teplitz: Jakob Kern and August Haisch; from Kulm: Johann Scholske; from Klöstitz: Adam Wallentin; from Hoffnungstal: Eduard Eisenbeiß; from Borodino: Emil Bodschatzki; from the Cilighider [Tschiligider] Estate: August Krüger; from Jakobstal: Immanuel Siegler; from Gnadental: Johann Schnaithmann; from Ketrossi: Fr. Wächter; and from Sarata: E. Stuhlmüller.

Many families left for America in the 80s of the last century. Such families as Flaig, Werner, Hannemann, Folz, Kuch, Hinß, Oster, Leischner, Schimke, Raugust, Radke, König, Kraft, Walther, Kurz, Schmied and Friedrich are no longer represented in Eigenfeld today.



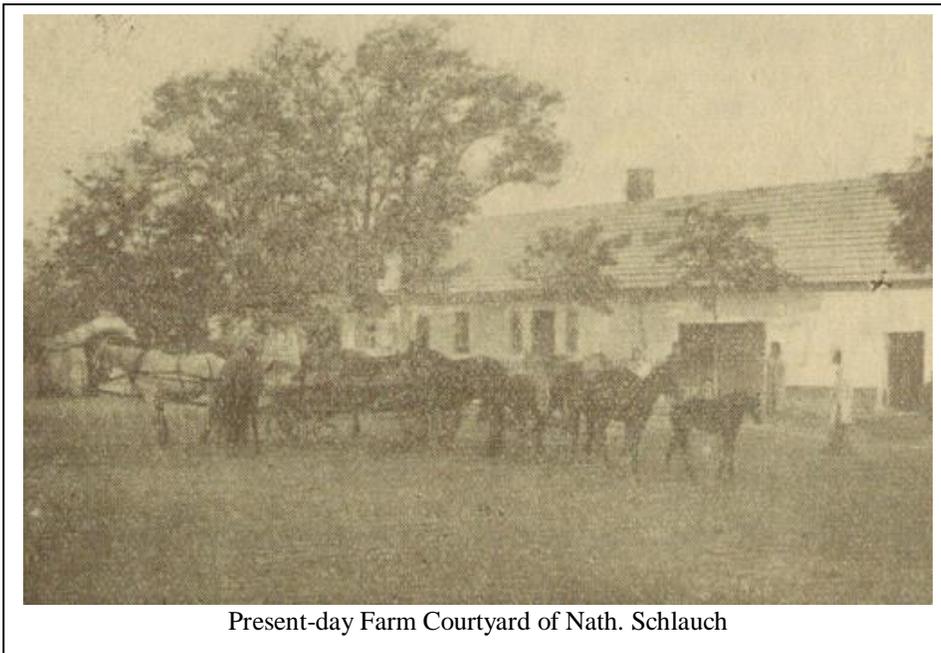
Present-day Farmyard of Chr. Hahn

Nevertheless, the community numbers 116 families today whose origins are from 17 different old colonies. Therein, the population of the daughter colony differs quite substantially from the population of an old colony. Fortunately, all these families are still living on good terms up to today; there are to this day neither parties nor divisions in the community. Over time, the residents have assimilated to the point one cannot distinguish the difference today between Low Germans (*Plattdeutsche*) and Swabians (*Schwaben*). Swabian ways have prevailed so much over the Low German language and character that one must consider Eigenfeld as one of the Swabian villages today.

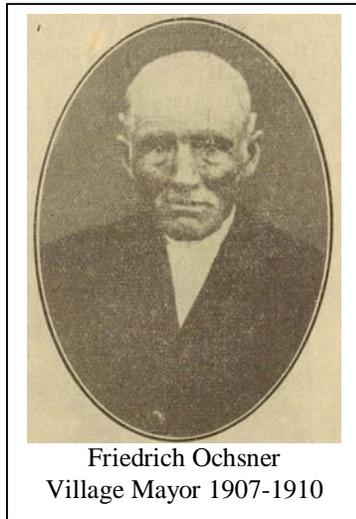
Of the 40 founding families of Eigenfeld, 3 are still alive today, namely: Christian Adolf I, at the age of 92 he is the oldest man in Eigenfeld; Matthias Kroll; former member of the building committee for the construction of the prayer house; and Friedrich Ochsner, who took on the mantle of the office of mayor in 1908, when the community store was built. Julianne, born

Walther, the wife of the last named person, is the only woman still living from the time of the founding.

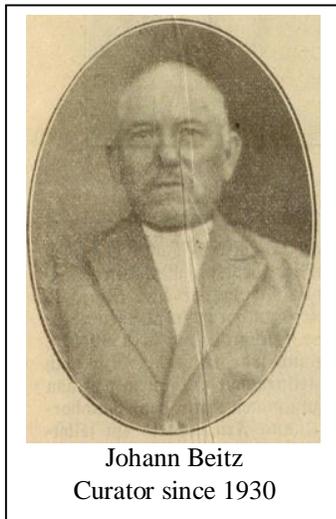
Of course, the outward image of the village has changed quite a bit over the years. To the 50½ yards originally created on one street, a row of new yards was plotted to the north and to the south of the row of houses in the 90s of the last century, and in 1902, the community found it necessary to add yet another row of yards to the upper and the lower yards. So, today, it presents the overall picture of a main street with two rows of houses and two side streets, each of which have a row of houses. There is still a row of undeveloped places between the built-up yards on the side streets. At the center of the village square, the founders left an approximately 35m [1 meter=3.28 feet] wide alley, where they anticipated that a church and a community store could arise in the middle of the village.



Before the prayer house was constructed, and also in the first two years from 1880-1882, the worship service, as also school instruction, took place in the home of Peter König. (Today the yard belongs to Bernh. Schöttle). Teaching was no small matter; the class had no real desks, also no blackboard, and not even the most basic school furniture. The result of that teaching can be imagined. You can therefore hardly imagine how rich and fortunate the settlers felt when, in 1882, on 28 October, on the Festival Day of [Apostles] Simon and Judas, the large, spacious school and prayer house was solemnly dedicated by Pastor Peters from Klöstitz. Today, after 50 years, the prayer house serves as a school hall, although neither the benches nor the premises meet the requirements of a modern school. Be that as it may, for the settlers the finished school and prayer house was a big step forward. From 1882 on, school instruction was held regularly in the winter months. Instruction was given by a teacher that was hired by the community. This teacher was always, at the same time, also the sexton and the village clerk (*Dorfschreiber*). For the duration of school instruction, the teacher usually retained an assistants at his own expense. Besides religion, only reading German, write and arithmetic were taught in the school. So it went until 1893. The russification of the school started at this time. The Russian Ministry of



Friedrich Ochsner  
Village Mayor 1907-1910



Johann Beitz  
Curator since 1930

Education put in place the first certified teacher in Eigenfeld in 1893 and paid for him. This required first and foremost a knowledge of the Russian language for the completion of elementary school (*Volksschule*). Because Christian Gerling, the first so-called "Russian" teacher, served at the same time as the sexton and clerk, the community was still able to make do with only one teacher. But in 1898, when the first non-German teacher was hired, the community was forced to hire a certified German teacher to its roster. Since 1898,

except for a brief interruption during and after the war years of 1914-1918, Eigenfeld has always had 2 certified teachers, one paid by the community and the other by the State. Naturally, the teaching results of the school were also much better now as the Russian final examinations held annually since 1897 clearly show.

In 1923, the Romanian government introduced a second teaching position. Since then, the community has not had to support a teacher. Since 1928, however, a private female kindergarten teacher is employed each summer.

The following is a list of the teachers from the time of the founding until the present.

In the Number 1 position: (1.) Emanuel Böpple from 1880-1886; (2.) Peter König from 1886-1887; (3.) Simon Albrecht from 1887-1890; (4.) Johann Meyer from 1890-1893; (5.) Christian Gerling from 1893-1898; (6.) Georg Pietrow Bianow from 1898-1900; (7.) Simeon B. Stoikow from 1900-1902; (8.) Michail J. Manoila from 1902-1903; (9.) Emil Eckert from 1903-1910; (10.) Emanuel Schulz from 1910-1922; (11.) Ida Enßlen from 1922-1924; (12.) Oskar Keller from 1924 to the present.

In the Number 2 position: (1.) Konstantin Eckert (1898-1904; (2.) Christian Necker 1904-1919; (3.) Rud. Knauer (191-1920; (4.) Heinrich Jauch 1920-1923; (5.) Wera Kolpakowa 1923-1924; (6.) Irma Botschiakowski 1924-1925; (7.) Jakob Beitz 1925-1927; (8.) Wilhelm Schöch 1927 to the present.

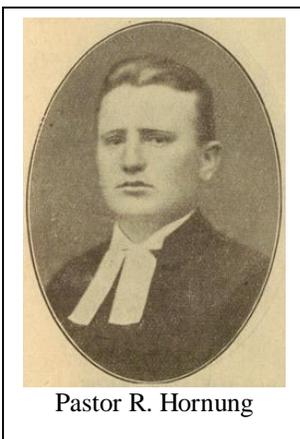
Those conducting the kindergarten: (1.) Mrs. Ida Schöch in the summer of 1928; (2.) Miss Anna Gerling in the summer of 1929; (3.) Miss Helene Gerling in the summer of 1930 and 1931.

Until 1898, school instruction was all in one place, and that was in the prayer hall. But after two teachers were employed, it was also in the premises of the government office converted into a school class room, which was under one roof with the prayer house and the sexton's living quarters.



Community Store, built in 1908

Church-wise, for 47 years, the community was served from the Klöstitz Parish by Pastors Peters and Wolleydt. The members of the congregation had to make many a difficult journey from Eigenfeld to Klöstitz and back again over a period of 47 years. Yes, some people can tell downright adventurous stories about that, because it is about 30 km from Eigenfeld to Klöstitz, always going up and down the hills. The circumstances were also such that because of the need for worship services to be conducted more often by a pastor, the Eigenfeld congregation took the initiative, together with the neighboring congregations of Gnadenfeld, Annowka, Korntal I, Korntal II, and Friedensfeld, to establish their own independent church parish. The Consistory approved the plan and helped to achieve the same. So, along with the aforementioned congregations, Eigenfeld established an independent church parish, Eigenfeld Parish, on 15 August, 1927, which was served by Pastor Rudolf Hornung.



Pastor R. Hornung

To this day, the community has remained totally an Evangelical Lutheran community; the sect spirit has not found entrance into the community up to today. In their midst, there are two brotherhood assemblies (*Brüderversammlungen*).

Generally, there was at all times an active interest in the Eigenfeld community for continuing education, that two veterinarians emerged from their midst proves it: Doctors Rud. Sauter and Wilh. Hahn; also, Doctor of Commercial Science Jakob Schöttle and Agricultural Engineer Rob. Bantel. At this time, Oskar Hahn is studying veterinary medicine in Giessen (Germany); seven boys are attending the Tarutino Secondary School (*Gymnasium*) and one at the Sarata Teachers' College. So far, six certified teachers have also come out of Eigenfeld.

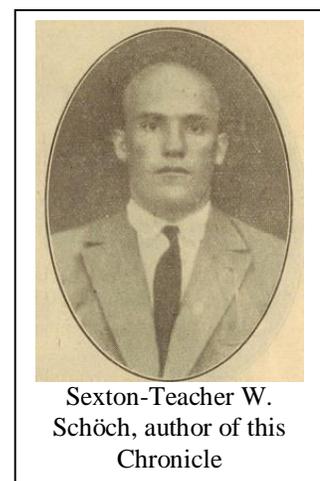
It is also an indicator of the progressive disposition in Eigenfeld that there are about 45 readers of the “*Deutschen Zeitung Bessarbiens*” [German Newspaper Bessarabian]. There are also a number of Christian and fine magazines being read.

In 1920, the youth, under the leadership of the previously mentioned academics (at that time students), joined together to form a cultural association under the name “*Die Eiche*” [The Oak]. Because the students left Eigenfeld after the association was brought to life, the “*Eiche*” lacked energetic leaders and helpers and the work of the association collapsed (*lag am Boden*). The growing number of middle school students seems to be bringing new life to the old root. At least, it can be observed that the number of members has more than doubled in recent years.

The Eigenfeld community was administered since its founding by a village major (*Dorfschulzen*). In the tradition of the old settlers, this person was, in most cases, at the same time the judge in some cases which came up in the community. His word carried a lot of weight and his opinion was decisive in most cases. Already in 1882, Eigenfeld also received the office of the Senior Mayor (*Oberschulzenamt*) and joined together with Korntal, Gnadenfeld and Friedensfeld to form the Eigenfeld Regional Office (*volost*). This was abolished in 1924. Since then, the political community is under the administration of a village mayor (*Dorfprimar*) and the ecclesiastical community, since the joining the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Bessarabia with the Evangelical State Church of Greater Romania in 1927, is under the leadership of a congregation curator. The first curator was Ed. Quiram. Undoubtedly, the most difficult years in office for the village mayor were the war years 1914-1918. But the postwar years also brought many difficulties with it for the mayor’s office (*Schulzen/Primaren*), since during and after the war, good German discipline and strict order have more and more disappeared. Respect and reverence for the office are no longer what it used to be. The unity and the sense of community have become deficient. Gradually, only the old order and some good adjustment will bring the old ways back again.

A list of the mayors (*Schulzen und Primare*) since the founding of Eigenfeld until the present time.

(1.) Friedr. Walther from 1880-81; (2.) Gottfr. Leischner from 1881-1884; (3.) Johann Häußler from 1884-1887; (4.) Jakob Sauter from 1887-1890; (5.) Christian Jauch from 1890-1892; (6.) Karl Schlauch from 1892-1895; (7.) Johann Enßlen from 1895-1898; (8.) Johannes Bauer from 1898-1899; (9.) Gottl. Jans from 1899-1901; (10.) Peter Wirth from 1901-1904; (11.) Johann Richter from 1904-1907; (12.) Friedr. Ochsner from 1907-1910; (13.) Jakob Schulz from 1910-1913; (14.) Christ. Sauter from 1913-1914; (15.) Johannes Jauch from 1914-1917; (16.) Johann Schulz from 1917-1918; (17.) Jakob Bietz from 1918-1923; (18.) Johannes Kroll from 1923-1925; (19.) Im. Schulz from 1925-1926; (20.) Jakob Enßlen from 1926-1927; (21.) Eduard Richter from 1927-1928; (22.) Jakob Enßlen from 1928-1930; (23.) August Adolf from 1930-1931; (24.) Robert Bantel from 1931 until the present.



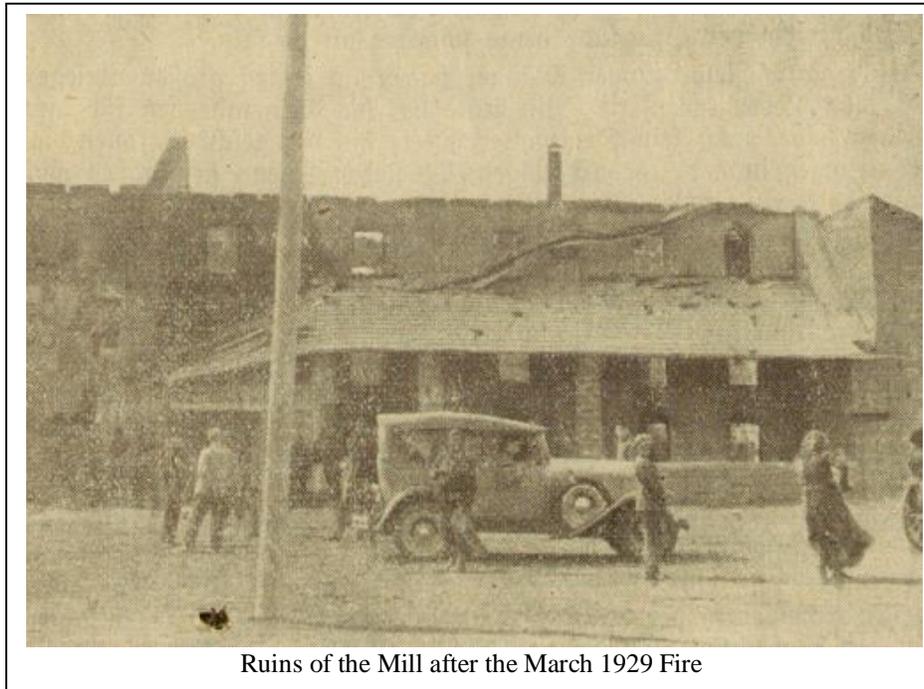
From the outset, in regards to the physical and economic development of the community, the conditions were very good: much and good land, also in the first two decades always relatively good harvests, with the exception in 1899. But the main thing was that the farmer got paid good prices for his products. So each farmer, through diligence and thrift, was brought to prosperity and a time of blooming within a short period of time. Certainly, many must have experienced distress with the total crop failure of 1899. Many came up short on bread and seed in the spring of 1900, but ways and means were found. In the spring of 1900, through the efforts of Purischkewitsch, President of the Akkerman District (*Landschaft*), a commendable support of up to 25 rubles per family was paid out as a loan, through Pastor Peters, to those in need. Besides this support money, the district administration offered the community 10 ruble fruit trees free of charge and, over and above, all kinds of fruit trees at the lowest prices. So it was that the majority of the former and to some extent still beautiful orchards of today were planted just around the turn of the century. 1904 brought a poor harvest again from which the farmer quickly recovered, so that in 1908, the community, under the leadership of the then Mayor Fr. Ochsner, proceeded to build a community store. This community store, temporarily from 1923-1931, was a cooperative under the name "*Concordia*". Now it has been transformed back to community store "*Landwirt*" (*Agricultor*), after which the dairy "*Nertus*" was joined to it in 1922.

The People's Bank "*Cornelia*" was also of great importance for economic development. It was originally a branch of the Mannsburg Bank since 1913. It was called into existence thanks to the efforts of Christian Necker, the then teacher in Eigenfeld, but no longer with us. Later, it was a branch of an independent credit company and only in 1922 did it become a People's Bank (*Volksbank*). This bank has not only provided money to those in need of cash during hard times, but also, especially after the war, driven an extensive trade by providing the farmers of the surrounding area with timber and agricultural equipment; but also all the products the farmer sells. Thus this bank developed into a welfare institution in the true sense of the word, until it turned out a large deficit through a thorough revision in 1928, which crippled all further trade operations of the bank. Under very favorable conditions, maybe the bank will once again become what it was before: a welfare institution.

Industry has evolved little up to now in the relatively land-rich community. The few craftsmen, mainly wagon-makers and blacksmiths, who were among the settlers, soon hung the craft on the nail, but agriculture at that time was much more productive than the craft and each farm had its own craftsman. Love for handicraft found a resurgence among the sons of the settlers again, but all remained at a modest level. Today, Eigenfeld has two blacksmiths, three carpenters, three cobblers, and a tailor. In recent years, three adventurous boys got up and went to Transylvania (*Siebenbürgen*) to more appropriately learn this and that craft to meet the demands of the modern era. In any case, they left with the correct understanding that a half-trained craftsman today is no match to the competition.

With regard to industry, a single large mill is to be mentioned, which, unfortunately, burned up in a terrible fire during the night of 18-19 March, 1928. For the first time around, the mill in Eigenfeld was constructed in 1889; passed through many hands and finally ended up in the hands of a Jew. The mill had an unhappy fate: it burned down completely three times. It was rebuilt two times. Now, when it was set up the second time, it was not put up as it was at first, but it

was modernized as a big mill with 7½ crushing rollers (*Walzenstühlen*). Unfortunately, the whole undertaking was not opportune, that is, considering what took place over time and the inevitable outcome of the mill, the unfortunate tragic end. Our picture shows the ruins of a lost magnificence.



Ruins of the Mill after the March 1929 Fire

It should also be mentioned that Eigenfeld is the center of a State medical district from 1920 to the present, and has as such, since then, a State doctor as well as a certified midwife in the village, salaried by the State.

The World War, like everywhere else, so also here, strongly held back economic development. Due to unfavorable conditions, especially by lower prices of agricultural products, the material and, consequently, the cultural advancements of the community are more difficult today than ever.

A large number of young men have offered their life for the homeland in the last big war. Unfortunately, up to today, the community has not erected a memorial for those who fell for the homeland; and until that happens, the names of those sacrificed in war stand in the Eigenfeld Chronicle; since these are very deserving of it that we keep them in sincere memory. Their names are: (1.) Gottlieb Nittel, married; (2.) Hugo Bauer, single (teacher); (3.) Friedrich Schill, single (teacher); (4.) Paul Häußer, single; (5.) Emanuel Jans, married; (6.) Benjamin Richter, singer; (7.) David Scholske, single; (8.) Heinrich Sauter, single; (9.) Heinrich Thielemann, single; (10.) Daniel Mattheis, married.

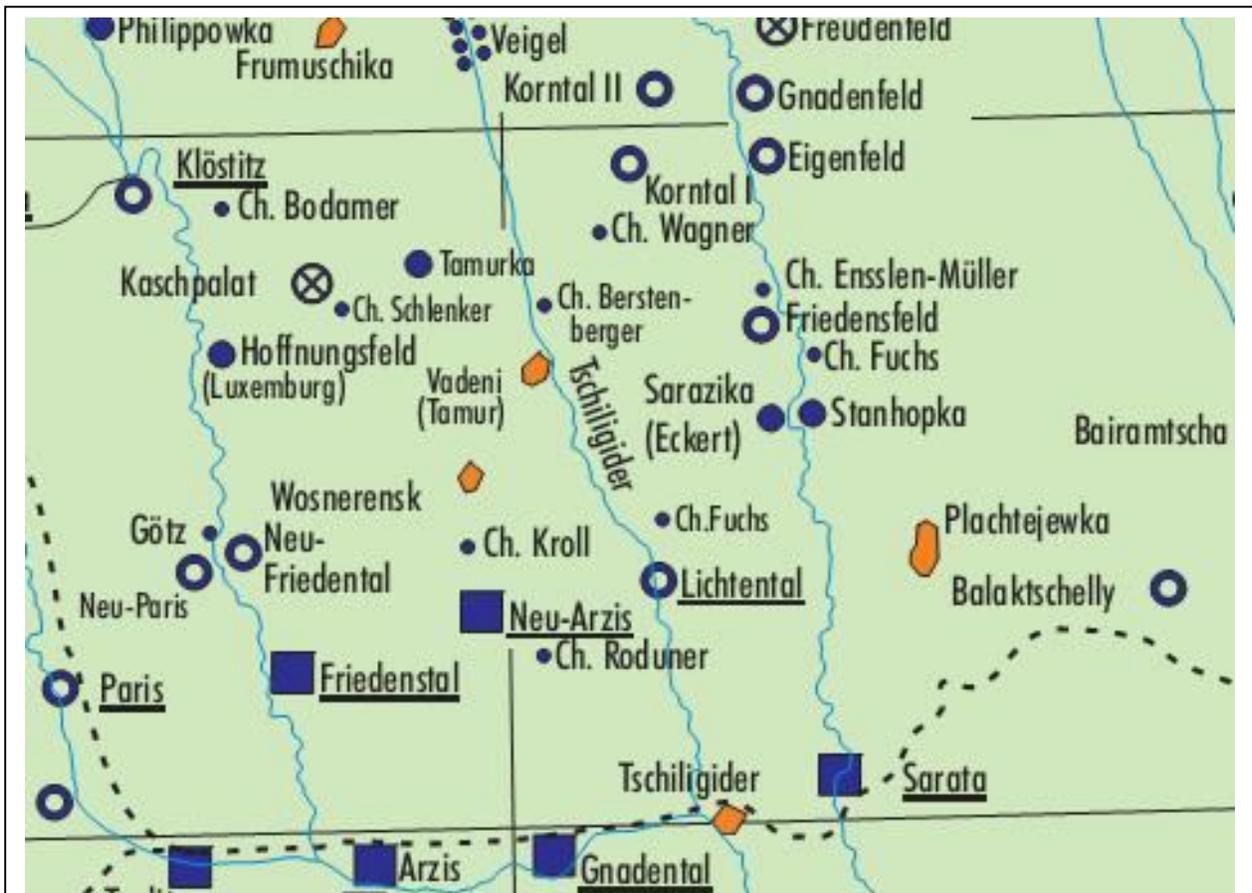
Something else to mention in the Eigenfeld Chronicle has to do with 1883. In this year, 36 children died, all of them due to diphtheria (*Diphtheritis/Halsbräune*), whereas only 5-8 children died during a normal year. There are no other extraordinary catastrophies to mention in the Eigenfeld Chronicle.

This has been a broad stroke of the history of Eigenfeld up to 1932.

May the community remain in God's protection and shelter! May it be granted to bring up a generation that always joyfully moves about its streets in faith and trust in God! May it always safeguard its interests as a German Evangelical community and also make the necessary sacrifice, whenever it is necessary, to promote the welfare of everyone! Then every member of the community will experience good health and enjoy his life without bitterness.

So be it at all times:  
Your heart true and your word sincere,  
Your mind German and your treasure God!

[Translation Ends]



Stump Map of Bessarabia reworked by Rolf Jethon—not in original document