

Early Settlement of Bessarabia

Note: This German document was given to me by Elvire Necker, which she received as a photocopy of an extract from a microfilm located at the Auslandsinstitut in Stuttgart, Germany. The microfilm was identified as [BAK R 57, DAI 1758]. The document was authored in 1857, by the Malojaroslawetz I Colony secretary, Johann Georg Kurz. It addresses the following: Land & Soil; Population; Use of the Soil; Moral & Intellectual Development; State of Country Prior to Settlement; From Settlement to the Present (1857).

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Contribution towards a full Description of the Foreign Settlements in South Russia as it Concerns the German Settlements in the Province of Bessarabia by Johann Georg Kurz, colonist of Sarata Colony, that is, as community secretary in Malojaroslawetz I Colony, in Bessarabia, in 1857.

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Your Excellency

Your Excellency, Senior Director and Chairman at the Welfare Committee, concerning the foreign settlers of South Russia

Councillor of State W. Islawin

In deepest reverence from the author.

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Right Honorable Councillor of State

Sir!

Your Excellency, joy swells in the breast of the submissive colonist that Your Most Gracious is pleased to so kindly ask me to cooperate in drafting "a complete description of the foreign settlements in South Russia.

So, in deepest respect and in all obedience, I submit this little contribution to Your Excellency.

May Your Excellency receive from the benevolent God a cherished and favorable life in the administration of the colonies.

May He open his heaven and pour out His blessing upon Your Excellency so that unshakeable good fortune be established in the colonies and also blessings of peace and joy.

Your Excellency, in all sincerity,

Your submissive colonist

Johann Georg Kurz

Malojaroslawetz I
13 July, 1857

Statistical Section

Chapter 1.

Land & Soil

The land area which makes up the Bessarabian German settlement is 1258½ square verst [1verst = .67 miles/1.07km], land which is a treeless, grass-rich steppe, which gave the first colonists ample grazing land for their cattle and especially well suited for agriculture because this rich, long unplowed land generated rich harvests in the wet years. Everywhere in the valleys, wells and dams could be made which provided the colonists with water in abundance for themselves and their livestock. In most places, there were good stones for building and firewood could be replaced with dried cow dung and tall growing grass (*Burian*) which was abundant. But adversely, due to the frequent high winds, extreme heat of the sun and a lack of rain in this climate, there was and still is for the colonists the occasion when the soil dries out and its fertility is hindered. Due to lack of forested areas, the colonists, even up until today, were forced to buy their required lumber in the cities for a high price and because, in the first few years, there was little local commercial activity, could only dispose of their products at a cheap price in the trading cities of Ismail and Odessa. Add to this that there were few villages and the neighbors were mostly nomadic herders, resulting in few ways to earn wages and so there a lack of money and poverty was prevalent among the first settlers.

Chapter 2.

Population

On the whole, approximately 2,100 families from Germany settled in Bessarabia over the years, including about 370 families who had immigrated from the Kingdoms of Württemberg and Bavaria, 1,646 families from the Kingdom of Poland, and about 84 families who were resettled

from the Cherson Gouvernement. About a third of those who had earlier emigrated to Poland came from the Kingdom of Württemberg (and Bavaria) and now all colonists originating from Württemberg and Bavaria collectively received the name "Swabians" (*Schwaben*), while the other colonists who immigrated from Poland were nicknamed "Kashubians" (*Kassuben*) [for more information see: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kashubians>] Both ethnic groups differ strikingly from each other in their customs and language: the Swabians especially well mannered, more refined tradition and way of life, also wealthier and speaking the High German while the Kashubians spoke the Platt or Low German dialect. This difference between the two showed up particularly during the time of the settlement. Both ethnic groups were hostile toward each other, causing a national hatred time and again until circumstances forced them to come together, at which time the animosity began to disappear and the Kashubians began to adopt the Swabian culture and custom. Among the immigrants there were probably several heads of households who had the means of establishing themselves on their own, while, however, the High Crown assumed all support of all emigrants with construction material, cattle, farm implements, seed & money, except for the colonists who settled in later years, during which time the High Crown no longer provided support.

From the year 1833, this support lasted for six years, with an annual sum of 15 rubles B.A [Assignment Bank rubles] for each family; thereafter, annually 25 rubles B.A. per family to be fully paid back, which refund most colonists have yet to complete.

In the beginning, the population increased little in as much as the colonists were not accustomed to the confined area, it was only the colonies not lying in the "Kugelnik" and Chaka (*Tschaga*) river valleys that multiplied faster, and only in the colonies of Klöstitz and Alt-Arzis, where the plague of 1829 and cholera in 1831 claimed many victims, making it necessary to replace these people by moving several families from the colonies of the Cherson Gouvernement. On average it can be assumed that every year there was a birth rate of 6%, while the colonies of the Kugelnik and Chaka river valleys had 4-5% die every year. As for the others, in regards to the villages, the mortality rate is lower at 3-4% annually. The cause of greater mortality in both these valleys is primarily due to its lower elevation and the vapors coming off the saltpeter soil located there. At that time the total population of both males and females was about 22,330 souls.

Among the colonists, the Swabians were better off than the others due to their strong physique and better health, attributable mainly to their way of life and hard work. All of the colonists are excellently suited for agriculture and handicrafts and only very few are occasionally engaged in a trade.

Chapter 3.

Use of the Soil.

The settlement of the land moved forward quickly. Colonies Tarutino and Borodino were founded in 1814. In 1815, Malojaroslawetz I, Krasna, Klöstitz, Kulm, and Lepizig were settled. Fere-Champenoise I, Alt-Arzis, Brienne, Paris, and Beresina followed in 1816, Teplitz

established in 1818, Katzbach in 1821, and Sarata in 1822. In 1823, Colonies Malojaroslawetz II and Fère-Champenoise II were founded, in 1824, Neu-Arzis, named after the old colonies of the same names, because their fields were too far away and could be better managed by this separation. Gnadental was founded in 1830, Friedensthal in 1833, Lichtenthal and Dennewitz in 1834, Plotzk in 1839, and Colony Hoffnungstal in 1842.

In the beginning, the colonists focused mainly on agriculture and cattle breeding because they were not familiar with the characteristics of the country, so they neglected plowing in the fall for the spring seed and so planted their seeds in the field too late in those early years which led to their obtaining poor harvests in unfavorable years; also, their bad tools did not help much in working the fields, and even up to now there still remain things to be desired in that there are still no regulated field divisions and no machines are available. Only since 1838 did the colonists start mowing their grain with the scythe, while in earlier times they cut it with the sickle.

Since the settlement, the colonists experienced nine total crop failures due to drought. Locusts devastated the fields in 1823, 1824, 1825 and 1847, some of which they crushed with thorn sleds and sped up their departure by chasing them out of the fields.

Fertilization of fields and meadows was not yet implemented and this reduced the yield of the fields, because there is a loss of potential over a long period of cultivation, so that a field which used to yield a quality of 15-18, now, in a good harvest, barely yields 10-12.

There is a perpetual expansion of agriculture, but cattle-breeding is not declining by means of which cattle are kept for butchering and so there are less benefits afforded as formerly.

Wine-growing.

The first vineyards were planted in the Sarata Colony in 1824, and two years later in both Malojaroslawetz I and Malojaroslawetz II, after which, gradually, the other colonies followed. However, because the colonies did not deal with the vine-plants properly, there were only bad grape harvests and only beginning in 1840 did the colonists begin to think about introducing better grape varieties, and better treatment of vine-stocks, and from that time onward received better harvests and, because of better wine-pressing & treatment of the grape juice, things got better, so the wine is also better than formerly and, annually, the wine yields on average 50 *Wedro* [liquid measurement: 1 wedro=10 stoof; 100 stoof=27.069 English Imperial gallons] from 1,000 vine-plants.

Fruit-growing

Orchards were already planted, from time to time, in 1825, and later expanded, but the local soil and climate is unfavorable for fruit trees, and they soon wither, so the success of the fruit tree has been quite modest up to now.

Afforestation

Natural forest was present only in the Kulm colony, which so far has been maintained through good care. From 1842 on, the authorities provided forest plants to almost all colonies, consisting of acacia, elm, poplar, and cherry trees, and these were planted. Up to now, these plants are preserved in good formation and secure, where they are close to the village, they are a beautiful ornament for the same, but in some colonies they are planted only along the streets of the village.

Cattle-breeding

The introduction of German cattle (Molotschnaer) was experimented with to some extent, but because these were more subject to the local epidemics than the original native breed, the colonists preferred to stay with the latter, which, however, have been improved little up to now. Main diseases rife through the Bessarabian German colonies: anthrax in 1826; horned-cattle plague (*Uebergälle*) in 1829; *Lesedürre* in 1844 & 1845; and anthrax again in 1854 with greater distribution. Besides these, there has never been a year in which the German colonies were entirely spared from cattle diseases.

Horse-breeding

There are no proper breeding studs yet and horse breeding is limited to the work horses of the colonists. The original breed was not improved by means of foreign breeds. Horses are being kept in large numbers and seldom is work done with oxen, usually with horses, but stable feeding has still not been introduced anywhere.

Sheep-breeding

Until now, only a few Spanish sheep have been kept and sheep-breeding is focused on the original local breed, and there are also no municipality sheepfolds. Nothing can actually be said about prevailing sheep diseases, only that every now and then smallpox shows up.

Pig-breeding

Pig-breeding is only limited to the original local breed. In most colonies, during the summer, the pigs are driven to the pasture during the day and penned in at night. However, in some colonies they walk around freely in the village without any supervision.

Silkworm-breeding

The German colonists in Bessarabia are not pursuing silkworm-breeding up to now.

Bee-keeping

So far, several colonists have made a serious attempts to introduce bee-keeping, but the vapor of the soil and the southerly winds destroy the trees, and so all attempts have remained unsuccessfully.

Industrial Facilities and Farming Implements

Up to this time, there have been no brickworks and lime kilns; also, no buildings are being constructed with bricks. The necessary roof tiles, bricks and lime, until now, are obtained from the Bulgarian colonies and from the Moldavia. The colonists had a lack of mills in the beginning and many worked their grain on the hand mill, but soon the communities, virtually every community, pooled money and bought a horse mill. Later, when the colonists were wealthy, several obtained their own simple horse-mills and windmills. Also, several colonies currently have oil presses. There are no factories, breweries and distilleries in the Bessarabian German colonies.

Initially, the colonists had wooden wagons, bad wooden plows and harrows. By and by, they improved so that most of them now have iron wagons, iron plows and harrows and also chaff frames. Reaping machines are not yet available.

The women, especially, excelled in weaving in that nearly every housewife saw to the needs of the house by preparing the necessary linen thread and making the cloth.

Chapter 4.

Concerning the Course of the Moral and Intellectual Development of the Colonists.

The moral and spiritual development of the colonists had to contend with many difficulties since the settlement. Right at the beginning of settlement, before suitable prayer and school houses could be built, a place was provided for this purpose, even if it was to be only a sod house; but pastors and school teachers were not available and so it happened that men, in the capacity of school teachers, baptized children, conducted funerals, and performed the marriage ceremony for bride and groom without being licensed to do so.

Some of these couples married by a schoolteacher subsequently sought an ecclesiastical blessing from Pastor Schnabel, in Tarutino; others separated again, and some of them lived to the end of their lives without a church wedding.

Right from the time of its settlement, the Catholic Colony of Krasna had a priest, and in 1819, the Arzis Parish was occupied by Pastor Peter Paul Williams. In 1822, Catholic Probst Ignatz Lindl founded the Sarata Parish and, in most of these colonies, schoolhouses were built in which worship service were also held. In 1841, the two parishes of Tarutino and Arzis were divided, a parish was established in Fere-Champenoise I Colony and one in Klöstitz Colony, staffed by pastors who had a harmful influence on ecclesiastical and civil order in the colonies with the coming together of colonists from different countries and provinces. Everyone wanted to enforce the laws, manners, and customs of his country; therefore it was worst in the colonies where Kassuben and Swabians lived together, where, as noted in Chapter 2, there remained

enormous national hatred, until finally time and circumstances gradually regulated ecclesiastical and community relations.

Pietists

Due to the manifest confusion and faulty ecclesiastical care, because the former parishes were too big, which had to be cared for by a proper pastor, Christian minded folks joined together, calm people, conducting worship service gatherings in their homes and built each other up in the Word of God. In this manner they diligently attended church and manifested themselves to others by their righteous, life-changing Christian life. These societies spread into all colonies and worked unmistakably to improve morals and order. The members of such an assembly were called pietists (i.e. pious). But gradually this meaning prevailed that only such a one was a true Christian who joined himself to these pietists and that anybody opposing them was an enemy of Christianity, even regarded as Antichrist. By and by, the pietists became proud and presumptuous, sought to exert their influence on all matters of the church and community; even on the pastors and teachers, and the pastor or teacher who resisted their pretensions was hated by them, often also persecuted. Due to their carrying on in this manner, they departed more and more from the right paths, elapsed into all sorts of secondary opinions, put Christianity more in the realm of knowledge, and in so doing more members made themselves guilty of the grossest sins and even the best of them strayed from the true path of godliness, so much so that the good order in a community has often been disturbed by them.

As things are, the pietists are currently present in all German colonies in Bessarabia and one can rightly say to me concerning them: "You have the appearance of a godly being, but deny its power." —Formerly they were a salt; but Christ says: "If now the salt becomes foolish, with what does one salt? So it is good for nothing, only to pour it out and to let the people trample it underfoot." Matthew 5:13

Separatists

A problem arose in 1841 in respect to the support of clergyman when the Tarutino and Arzis parishes were divided and, as a result, the salary of the pastors was increased from 600 to 1200 RBL. D.A., plus additional amounts for spiritual acts were increased; several colonists began to find fault with the Lutheran Church system of government. They claimed: "Christ, the Lord commanded his disciples, you have received it free of charge; also give it free of charge." Matthew 10:8. For that reason, neither clergy nor school teachers are entitled to take a salary and were thus instructed to live on what God, through generosity (having proved themselves by their actions), would allow to flow to them. All Pastors and teachers are hired servants in the service of God and not real workers. Furthermore they maintained, the theological training of the clergy is unnecessary; the Apostles of the Lord were common illiterate people, but were taught by the Holy Spirit. Every Christian can be a capable preacher when enlightened by the spirit of God if he only has a desire and gift to teach. They called the pastors and school teachers spiritual hucksters and the church a pile of dead stones. They demanded a church discipline such as was common among the first Christians, and were particularly unhappy that Holy Communion was distributed to anyone who desired it without excluding the big sinners until such a time that they had done penance. Anyone who confesses Christianity must of necessity also live a holy

life. They did not differ from the essential teachings of the Lutheran Church, but were very strict about the teaching of repentance. As a result of the things mentioned,, they completely separated from the Church and chose spiritual leaders and teachers from their midst. Among the separatists were some who traveled around in the colonies and preached that folks separate themselves from the church and join themselves to a people of God. Prominent persons were: Karl Ehni from Borodino, Martin Kranich from Leipzig and other individuals. By means of a letter from a certain priest Ignatius Lindl—who founded Sarata Colony in 1822, living there after having been expelled from Germany—supported their efforts and, around 1846, a teacher by the name of Heinrich Jahn came from Württemberg who traveled to where their principles and establishments ruled, but by the undertaking of the clergy was forced to return to his fatherland. These sects spread quickly in all colonies, but were mostly in the colonies of Borodino and Leipzig. They were recognized as independent by the authorities, although they had their own administrator, meetings and cemetery. They baptized their children themselves and also administered holy communion, but were considered Lutheran members despite their disconnection from the Church and had to let the pastors confirm their children and marry their bridal couples and contribute toward the salaries of the pastors and school teachers.

At this time, there are a significant number of separatists in all German colonies. Their main teacher is the colonist Karl Ehni from Borodino; however, in each colony where there are a number of separatists, they choose someone from their midst who then directs their meetings and takes care of the religious business. Generally, it must be said that those separatists hold that their principles (for there are insincere ones among them) shown by their performance of a virtuous life, and their leaders have a thorough knowledge of the Word of God. In every respect, the separatists among most colonists are opposed to the authorities. The majority of the colonists belong to the orthodox church and, although it seems that the true fear of God was gone from the country, it is obvious that the Lord has his children among all confessions and sects, who are truly in the spirit and serve Him.

School

Things were bad in regards to the school situation at the time of settlement. People who could hardly read and were unable to write their names were hired as school teachers. At first, schools were held in sod buildings and later in private homes until proper school buildings could be built. The children were seldom sent to the school and there was a time when many did not learn to read. Later, the authorities insisted that a child of the 7 years until his confirmation should attend school daily every day the school should visit and what followed was a dedicated and qualified teacher profession, also better school buildings were put up, although too small for what was needed, and procured lots of teaching aids. For the training of school teachers, the Werner school was established in Sarata and thus the impression was that everything was well provided for and one could have high expectations. Due to the rural conditions where during the summer there was no school for a full 6 months, and school in the winter, at which time there was snow and no work could be done in the fields, and where most school settings were too small and could hardly accommodate half the school children, so in most colonies half of the students attended before noon and the other half after noon so that each child could at least attend school daily on a regular basis, since in several colonies the school ward was too large for one teacher, due to the number of students, so that good instructions could be given, many parents, not all that excited

about the education of their children and themselves offered poor support for the school, so it is easy to come to the conclusion that the youth of the colonists were able to learn very little. Add to this yet another bad situation. Most young men educated at the Sarata Werner School have the theoretical knowledge required by the School Board, but many of them fall short of the fear and love of God, without which even the most educated, as soon as he becomes an educator, is confronted by the foremost central culture of the entire education of the country man being entirely built on the Word of God, and those teachers who don't really believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, not grounded in the training of the Spirit of God and applying themselves to the matters of sanctification, are just hypocrites, not brought up to be good Christians and citizens and can, therefore, not be a qualified school teacher. Such young people, proud of their knowledge, barely out of school, rush into this important office, and by their behavior it is easy to conclude that they now have swollen with self-conceit and pride, having been placed in this important office, to lead a comfortable aristocratic life, without having any concept of the teacher's so necessary practical experience of patience and self-sacrificing love. However, hardly have they been in office for a time, when it begins to show itself by their discontent and impatience over their situation, they manage their office in an annoying and crabby manner, are themselves unhappy people and, for the community which hired them, a useless burden. By school directive, it is mandatory for the school to promote reading, writing, arithmetic, catechism and Bible history, even general geography, geography of Palestine, and church history. But from the above reasons it is clear that what is expected from the student is nothing more than to read well, be able to write a little, be able to recite the catechism from memory, and be able to give a simple account of the truths of salvation.

At the time of settlement, and some years afterwards, the colonists were forced to buy all their needs in the cities, and drive there to sell their surplus products, which was very difficult until about 6 years after the settlement when a market was held every 2 weeks in the colony of Tarutino. In 1840, a market was established in the colony of Alt-Arzis, which also every 2 weeks, so that market was held one week in Tarutino and the next in Arzis, each a day long. Merchants registered in the Guild never settled in the colonies, and only in some colonies were small general stores opened by colonists and strangers, whereby the shopkeepers, according to arrangement, paid something to the concerned community annually.

By means of the commercial development of these annual markets and those in the cities, the colonists could more easily sell their products and thus also came to better prosperity. Therefore, they began to build better homes, better organized their economic systems, and dress better, and so all kinds of artisans were needed. Several young men learned a craft in the cities and expanded them in that they taught others back in the colonies. But it is to be pitied that the artisans, as soon as their apprenticeship came to an end; also so soon as independent master stepped forward, before they had quite perfected themselves through other masters, they found among themselves several inferior craftsmen. Up to now, the craftsmen enjoyed no privileges until now with other colonists, but also do not have any regulations for billing.

In 1842, by order of the authorities, an association was established in the colonies for the promotion of growing grapes, gardening, woodlands, and raising silk-worms. This association consists of a director and 2 assistants and it had the responsibility to encourage the colonists in all sectors of agriculture.

The movable property of the colonists, upon their death, was to fall to their children and, in the absence of any, go to their next of kin, divided equally among them. But each settler was also empowered, strictly set forth through a written will, to indicate to what extent his things should be possessed by his own at the time of his death.

The administration of justice was administered by the colonists first through mayors, and next by area officials under the direction of the Colonial Inspector, and only the most important matters were to be presented to the Welfare Committee of all foreign settlers in southern Russia for a decision. Those colonists who were guilty of small transgressions were to be punished—sometimes by a money fine, sometimes by doing community labor, sometimes with corporal punishment.

Each community determined among themselves the necessary amount of Crown duty to be paid by the colonists, paid annually in two installments, in the month of March and in the month of October, in addition to an amount for the repayment of the Crown debt to the appropriate district revenue office. Similarly, all salaries for village officials and herdsman were taken care of three times a year and paid out to the persons concerned by the mayors—or district officials. Funds were deposited in the office of the mayors to cover various goods and for the Welfare Committee to take care of things pertaining to the community. About all, incoming funds and money spent was properly accounted for through the office of the mayors by means of 3 selected, reliable colonists who, on behalf of the community, examined the books monthly and, at the end of the year, certified the accounting at the end of the year and submitted it to the Welfare Committee.

The assets of the orphans were managed by their guardians and paid it out to that person at the time that that individual got married.

With the level of education of the colonists low and most of them not prepared to read, they had no interest in scholarly matters. Therefore, no community libraries were available and, among the magazines, every now and then were the St. Petersburg and Riga newspaper, mission news and an entertainment journal edited for the colonists, but among all these writings read by such colonists, most important were those which were printed in Germany.

There were no noble amusements for the colonists, outside of hunting, which they were little able to do in as much as there was little wild-life; so the colonists, to enjoy themselves, went to the wine or whisky taverns, all getting drunk and often ending up in brawls for which they had to give an account to the local authorities.

There was a time when all weddings, church festivals, and other events usually had music and dancing; but so far the clergy has tried and succeeded to suppress all such entertainment of this kind and have so far succeeded so much so that the colonist youth of genuine amusement. Therefore, colonist youth has only a little understanding to true amusement. So, whenever permission is given by the authorities for music and dancing, the young people become so rambunctious that the local authorities have to use every precaution and severity to keep order. This is why the authorities try to avoid all entertainment. This is the real reason why the church festival fell into disuse in many places. Because every village official up to now has sought out

all practices which were not to his tastes, then abolish them and in their place introduce others according to his tastes, so the German colonists in Bessarabia find nowhere a standing custom of which there is something worth saying about, and the customs change with almost every official and are different in each village.

Historical Section

Chapter 1.

State of the Country Prior to the Settlement

When the Germans were settled in Bessarabia, the country was little cultivated; tenants and landowner moved around with their horses, cattle and flocks of sheep and there were very few villages present, mostly consisting of few houses. Ruins of former stately buildings and traces of trees and vineyards and planted forests were not to be found; however, on the built-up sites, formerly numerous, were small residents (Tartars and Moldovians) who lived in sod huts. According to the Moldavian people, they only speak of the former residents of the settlement as breeding cattle, planting only corn, millet and some wheat; preserving their grain in pits in the ground, but claimed that in this county the farmer must always have a reserve of grain every 2 to 3 years, because often there were 2, also 3, years in a row that there would be a crop failure and that within 7 years one could always count on one really good year, but also one totally unproductive one.

Chapter 2.

From the Settlement to the Present Day

Early in this century and the end of the previous, many Germans had emigrated to Poland from Württemberg and Prussia and had settled there. Due to the revolutionary unrest in Poland in the years 1810 and 1811, and the invasion of France via Poland of Russia in 1812, they had experienced a lot of sorrow there and some of them lost their entire fortune because the conditions in Poland were very unstable at that time, so many of them wished to emigrate. In these circumstances came the friendly invitation of the Russian Government to move to its country and provided very useful privileges to attract them. The privileges were as follows: 1. Free practice of religion; 2. Twenty years free of taxes; 3. Exemption from the obligation of conscription; 4. The right to return to the fatherland.

Already in 1813, 200 families got together and moved to Bessarabia. In 1814, the Russian Government sent a Commissioner by the name of Krüger to Poland to register those Germans desiring to emigrate to Russia and issued them with the necessary passports, and so they travelled to Russia in different groups, under the leadership of a Russian official. After their arrival in Russia, they were billeted with residents of Bessarabia until they settled in the various villages and were provided with the necessary provisions. The colonists were given construction material by the high Crown to the build their homes, first shrubs to braided the houses and some money to set up their farmstead: wagons, farm implements, the necessary livestock and some furniture; for planting they received some wheat and potatoes, and until the first harvest,

monthly, every soul received a *Pud* [36 pounds] of flour and some grits. Unaccustomed to the land and climate, and by living in sod huts and bad houses, the first settlers suffered a lot with fever and dysentery and a great part of them died soon after the settlement.

Weakened through poor clothing and bad food, also due to a lack of understanding of the local agriculture resulting in poor management, they were not able to properly carry out their work; through a lack of knowledge of manners and speech of the old inhabitants of this country, they were often cheated and robbed, and since the funds they brought with them were small and soon exhausted, a large part of the colonists had to live in bitter poverty for several years. In addition to this also was the cruel treatment of the colonists by the authorities of that time. The *Comptoir*, at one time located in the Tarutino Colony, after that in Kauschany (Kauschan), and his supervisors, who lived here and there in the colonies and had oversight of the colonists, ill-treated the colonists in every way. No small thing, often, without a verdict and unjustly, the colonists were stretched on the ground and received 25-30 lashes of the whip, or strapped in the stocks, or put in the neck iron: lots of penalties, which quashed the German lofty spirit, the German character, and the whole person became truly mean in that he, as the experience unfortunately shows, after enduring such a penalty, self-esteem was lost and nothing else mattered anymore. Pastor Schnabel—of blessed memory—resided in Tarutino Colony at that time and took upon himself, as best as he could, the cause of the beleaguered Germans, but because of that was vehemently pursued by the secular officials. Pastor Schnabel died after the settlement and was mourned by all the colonists.

More families emigrated from the Kingdom of Württemberg in 1817 and founded Töplitz Colony in 1819.

In 1822, Ignatz Lindl, a Roman Catholic Provost and excellent preacher, founded Sarata Colony. He brought his Catholic parishioners out of the Kingdom of Bavaria, who, out of love for him, had joined themselves to him in the homeland and followed him and settled in Sarata Colony with him. Lindl withdrew his parishioners from the Roman Catholic Church doctrine and wanted to establish a Brotherhood community (*Brüdergemeinde*) according to his interpretation. He put a lot of effort into his endeavor and the colonists from all over Bessarabia flocked to him to listen to his lectures. His restless drive alone evoked the hatred of the Catholic clergy. He was expelled from the country and his congregation, who did not want to stay in the bosom of the Catholic Church, finally accepted the Evangelical Lutheran confession. There is no mistaking in coming to the conclusion that the emergence of the Separatists, as recorded in Section 1, Chapter 4, came about as a result of the work of Lindl.

In 1823, the colonies of Malojaroslawetz I and Fère-Champenoise I, and, in 1824, Alt-Arzis, founded the colonies of Malojaroslawetz II, Fère-Champenoise II and Neu-Arzis on the other half of their territorial boundary for the following reasons: the colonists saw that they could not work their land in a proper manner due to the distance; therefore, they approached the high authority with petitions. So some of the colonists of the mentioned colonies moved to their own land. In the Turkish War in 1828, the colonists, especially from the colonies of Borodino, Beresina, Tarutino, Malojaroslawetz II, but mostly Malojaroslawetz I and Leipzig, were burdened with the military marching through their area and the base camps of operations.

In 1829, some colonies, particularly Alt-Arzis and Klöstitz, were rife with a contagious plague and it took away many people.

From 1829 to 1832, the Bulgarians, who moved out of Turkey, were settled on the still empty Crown Land Steppes, whom the Germans welcomed as good neighbors.

Gnadenthal Colony was founded in 1830 and, as time went by, was settled by newcomers from the Kingdom of Württemberg. In 1833, Friedenthal Colony was settled by new colonists from the Kingdom of Poland, and in 1834, Dennewitz Colony was settled by colonists from the old colonies of Bessarabia

In 1834, the Lichtenthal Colony was also founded and, gradually, settled by colonists from Sarata Colony and by new immigrants from the Kingdom of Württemberg. It was especially during this time that, in many Bessarabian German Colonies, prayer houses were built and existing school houses in part enlarged, in part replaced with new ones.

The twenty-year duty exemption of the old colonists came to an end in 1836 and from this time on the same fees were payable as those paid by the Crown farmers of this province.

Plotzk Colony was settled in 1839 by mostly new arrivals from the Kingdom of Poland, and in 1842, Hoffnungstal Colony was settled mostly by relocating colonists from the Kherson Gouvernement. All new settlements received no more support from the High Crown.

From the settlement until up to this time, the conditions of the German colonies in Bessarabia were in great disorder. Several district and village officials were often quite untidy and extravagant drunkards. They also often sat on the judge's chair—drunk, and often the punishment of the guilty part involved a fine of wine or spirits, which drinks were then brought into the court room and completely consumed. Tempted by this bad example, many colonists took up drinking, and when the community gathered to deliberate on a certain thing, often, some of them were drunk and no mature judgment could be arrived at, so much so that the best business often remained unresolved.

No thought was given to improve agriculture, morals, and the colonists started to forget about their condition and the objective of the government, that they should serve as an example for good morals and order to other people. Wastefulness, idleness, and immoral conduct was common among the German colonists and it seemed that soon all good German custom and order would go to ruin. In sorrow, several German colonists saw the sad situation and complained and mourned hopeless about it. But God, the wise ruler of all people, also watched over his children and confirmed the old saying: "When the need is at its greatest, the help is nearest."

Everything began to change in 1842. His Excellency, the Honorable Councillor of State von ---ahn, at that time President of the Welfare Committee of the colonists in southern Russia and the former Inspector, Kossowsky, aware of the evil among the colonists, introduced tremendously energetic measures for the improvement of all branches of the economy and culture among the German colonists of Bessarabia and indicated to them the point of view they should have as

colonists. Since there were still many brave colonists who for some time already had been concerned and annoyed by the prevailing evil, both officials were empowered for better success and associations were established in these years for the transport of wine, garden produce, wood and silk. In a short time, every colony not only planted forests, but fruit trees and vineyards were established, there were more farm implements and soon the entire economy of the colonists improved.

On the cutting edge at the time was Sarata Colony. There the local settler, colonist Gottlieb Veygel, served for several years as mayor and then as district mayor, very charitable in maintaining good policing order and encouraging his fellow colonists in the economy.

At this time, commerce started to liven up more in the cities and annual fairs and the products became worth more; there was a drive among the colonists an impetus for commerce and one sought out the other in all kinds of domestic economy. Most new homes were built in the colonies during the years of 1842 to 1853.

The life of the church was also shaken by the emergence of the Separatists as described on pages 9 to 11. To weaken the accusations of the Separatists, the pastors called for stronger indoctrination and virtuous change for those in the service of the church, and the church and school were in a fairly flourishing position.

In 1848, cholera affected the German Bessarabian Colonies; however, this time it did not take out as many people.

So the whole bearing of the colonists went at a good pace and most enjoyed themselves, if not all that wealthy, yet still doing quite well. There was the war between Russia and Turkey and the Western Powers in 1853 in which the colonists were taken up with compulsory labor, hauling services and other war burdens, causing everything to falter, so that at the Peace Treaty of 1856, many were totally exhausted and in need of peace.

In year 1855, cholera raged violently in some places in Bessarabia, especially in the colony of Tarutino, where some 150 people died in about 2 months. After the peace treaty, a quick recovery took place. The high price for grain and cattle was very generous for the benefit of the colonists, and although the poor colonists had no products to sell, they did have work and good earnings during the year.

Overview

The Past, Present, and Future

The reason why the local Germans left their fatherland and moved here was the overpopulation in Germany, particularly of Kingdom of Württemberg. Overpopulation usually tends to be worse than a shortage of people because there is not sufficient work and thus they are unable to provide the necessities of life for themselves. So it was mostly caring family fathers who left their homeland to find a new home and bread for themselves and their children in Russia. The hospitable invitation and attitude of the esteemed Russian Government were welcome and they

gladly undertook the arduous journey to Russia with wife and child, certainly hoping to start a new life of happiness for them in that place. The Russian Government did everything possible for the benefit of the immigrants and the colonists were not deceived in their expectation on the part of the Government.—Until now the esteemed Russian Government fulfilled all that was promised the colonists, and if some did not conform to the expectation toward the end, it had its cause in the following: the great difference which existed between Germany and the local steppe area, caused many immigrants to have a homesick for their fatherland, which hurried them along to an early grave.—Unforeseen difficulties in the cultivation of the local fields, to which many colonists could not adapt, brought some in poverty. The great diversity of the local climate, the local food, etc., which are very different in Germany, stirred up diseases among the colonists because of their negligence in what they took part in.—And if, here and there, evil-minded subordinate officials violated their duty towards the colonists, so it came about that no charges were ever brought up by the esteemed Government. If only the colonists had always humbly and gratefully received from the hand of God what they encountered, as their duty towards God calls for, much unpleasantness would have gone away by itself and they would have had been able to endure some suffering more easily.—It is indisputably very difficult take a wife and children and settle in a strange, unfamiliar country and to establish a new prosperity. But an expatriate, if he is not so young anymore, can not hope to enjoy the advantages of emigration, but must leave it mostly to his descendants. Herein, many of the first colonists made the mistake in that they wanted to harvest before they had sown. This aroused in them new regret for emigration from Germany, which incapacitated them and gradually consumed their life's work, in part to take care of their obligations and to inculcate in their children a love for their new homeland. As a result, most colonists soon forgot their nice colonist profession and the purpose for which the High Crown placed them here, their way of the life took a downward turn and headed toward a lifestyle similar to their neighboring Russians, Bulgarians and Moldavians, until the High Colonial Authorities took notice and gave new instructions to the colonists about the relationship they should have to other people.

Few of the original settlers are still living: the older generation has gone to the grave and a new generation has taken their place. But how does the new generation compare to the old generation? The current generation has the advantage over the older generation in that it is firmly anchored when it comes to the customs, language, and economic institutions, and it is used to the peculiarities of this country--the climate and the local way of life; whereas, the older generation, even though, little by little, they became familiar with all the conditions of this country, they always had a great fondness for their German Fatherland which they could never quite transfer to their local situation. However, the current generation, when it comes to morality and academic training, is far behind the older generation, particularly the immigrant colonists from the Kingdom of Württemberg. Compared to the public schools in Germany, especially in the Kingdom of Württemberg, the very poor school attendance and state of affairs in the local schools leaves much to be desired. This can be noticed in the village and district offices: If an old colonist appears in court, and there is a document which he signed, he is in a position to read it and sign it on his own, while a young colonist, most of the time, has to ask the secretary to sign it on his behalf because he himself is unable to write.

Since the Evangelical-Lutheran Confession has been set up in such a way that all religious truths need only be understood in a spiritual sense, as being directly derived from the Word of God,

while other Confessions lead those who confess them to the great truths of God by indirect means through illustrations which appeal to the senses, the scholarly approach to education is both necessary and indispensable for Lutherans. Without this approach it would not be possible for a Lutheran to know his duty toward God and people, as his religion demands it, and would not be able to be a good Christian or citizen without it. This is why the Protestant Schools of Germany are considered as being pillars of the state. If the old colonists were to be blamed for some things, they had their reason because it was often due to the miserable state of affairs; however, they were basically more honest, righteous, reasonable and well educated than the current colonists—and if the short-comings of the schools, as described on pages 12 and 13 of this document, are not cleared away and improved, then the future generation, as compared to the present, will be even more inferior in the culture; especially, since according to the regulation put in place by the top Evangelical Lutheran clergy in 1855, the present school teacher is only a "Sexton" and should not, in any way, be called a "School Teacher". In the instruction received concerning the Sextons, which was basically left out in the instruction of the youth until now, it was mandated: "Added to the management of the Office of Sexton in the villages, where there are no schools, to also teach the children in reading, catechism and writing." In this way, in the colonies, the conducting of the school by the Sextons was now considered secondary, while formerly it was the main thing, upon which the formation of a German Evangelical Lutheran Christian and his temporal and eternal welfare was based. So, for a person, especially for colonists from the Kingdom of Württemberg, who immigrated here with his big family, faced with the public education of the current situation in the German colonies, the future only looks hopeless, in that he does not have a way to teach his children through special teachers, or is in a position to teach them himself; therefore, must look forward to sinking into ignorance and crudeness.—Only the belief in God's providence, which can bring good even out of evil, can comfort a person who has this view; but especially the word of promise from the Lord Jesus: "Behold, I am with you every day until the end of the world." Matthew 28:20

Proveracopiae: Friedrich Frey

[End Translation]