



Rosa, Our Four-legged Friend

By Eduard Mack

Translated by Ted Weisenburger

[Editors' note: The book Erinnerungen an die deutschen Kolonien des Großliebentaler Rayons bei Odessa by Eduard Mack, originally from the village of Alexanderhilf, offers an insightful look into life in the Grossliebental colonies. It begins with the founding and settlement times, to life aspects such as church, school, work, customs, and more. It also includes information on repression times, persecution, and banishment during and after World War II, and into the situation of the former German colonies fifty years after the war. Below is an excerpt from this book.]

In the book Eduard Mack writes about his four-legged friend, Rosa, their loyal sheepherding dog who accompanied and watched over them the entire difficult emigration road.

The Journey

- 29 Jun 1944 Emigration from Alexanderhilf.
- 29 Jun 1944 Arrived in Grenshausen, Kreis Konin, Warthegau.
- 21 Jan 1945 Evacuation to Germany.
- 23 Jan 1945 Evacuees arrive in Potsdam.
- 25 Jun 1945 Departure of women and children from Potsdam to Russia. They arrived 15 Aug 1945 in Tadschikistan.
- Jun 1945 Departure of the first transport of women and children from Brandenburg to Koni, Russia, on the Ice Sea.
- 17 Jul 1945 Departure of the first transport of women and children (who had stayed behind in Poland) from Grenshausen to Russia. They arrived on 20 Aug 1945, in Kazakhstan (Akjubinsk, Kustanai. etc.).
- Oct 1945 Departure of the second transport of women and children from Brandenburg to Russia. They arrived in December 1945 in Koni, USSR, on the Ice Sea.

Rosa knew every single resident of their village, Alexanderhilf, but beware if anyone else came near their group. By growling she immediately let everyone know that there was a stranger in the area. Often she warned them about attackers and thieves as they traveled through foreign lands, protecting their last possessions and property. And how touchingly she cared for the Mack's four-year-old daughter, Elvira.

Rosa was the only dog that made the entire trip by their side from Alexanderhilf through Bessarabia, Romania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Poland, and Germany.

When the Mack family arrived in Potsdam they were quartered by a very nice lady, who took care of them as well as Rosa. But since food was no longer sufficient for the people, the Mack family had to give away their dog. Many local farmers wanted to keep Rosa, and with heavy hearts they gave her away because they wished a better life for her. It was very difficult for them to separate from Rosa, especially their little daughter, even though the farmer promised to take good care of her and to send her to them again in better times.

But at the next bombing Rosa tore her rope, ran to the Mack family, and pressed herself tightly to Elvira. The new owner took control of Rosa, but again she returned to the

Rosa

Mack family. After that they never again gave Rosa away. No matter how wretched and poor it got for them, Rosa was always part of their family.

Eduard Mack writes, "I think many people from Alexanderhilf can remember Rosa. Therefore it was very painful for us when she suddenly disappeared from the train in the night during our transport from Germany to Russia in June, 1945, and we never learned what really happened to her. She was very close to our family and also all of our fellow countrymen liked her very much."



Eduard Mack also writes about his trip back to Alexanderhilf 50 years later (1994-1995) and the major changes to the village. Below is a synopsis of some of these changes. For a more detailed report go to www.blackseagr.org/pdfs/alexanderhilf-1994-95.pdf.

- All big farmhouses, which earlier had reeds on the roofs, now have slate roofs.
- Eckler, Krim, and Hungarian streets remain almost the same.
- Ivan Sadoy (son of Gregory Sadoy), is the only resident of the former Alexanderhilf who still lives there.
- Most of the mud houses in the village had not been occupied since the departure 1944 and were torn down because they only had one room. The clay roofs were not maintained and they cracked and broke down.
- All wells in the village were filled in because water is supplied by a pump station that pumps eight cubic liters per minute.
- All streets in the village are now asphalt and approximately six to eight meters wide.
- The cemetery is still in the old location. In 1994 the stone wall of the cemetery from the garden in the east was replaced with a concrete slab fence.
- Most of the graves of our deceased ancestors are no longer recognizable and are impossible to find.
- The biggest change to Alexanderhilf was the little stream, Barboy, which was given a new direction. The streambed was too shallow, which caused it to flood every spring. Therefore, a canal, 16 to 18 meters wide and 6 to 8 meters deep, was dug, beginning at the Neuburg border, straight through the stream in the direction of Judendamn and from there direct through the Unergässler Garten back to the forest stream.

Eduard Mack immigrated to the Warthegau in 1944. He was then drafted into the German army and in May 1945, he came into Russian captivity and was sentenced to 10 years in a labor camp. After his release in December 1954, he returned to his family who was resettled in Dusti, Tajikistan. He worked there until 1984 as chief accountant for the postal service after finishing accounting courses and further training. Then the Mack family moved to Krasnaja Poljana by Sotshi at the Black Sea (Russia). In 1990, Eduard Mack went with his family to Germany and settled in Ravensburg, Baden-Württemberg.

Ted Weisenburger was born and raised in North Dakota and he's been a county judge in Benson and Walsh counties. He's taken his skills abroad by teaching in Ethiopia (also in Phoenix), and has served as a U.S. investigator in Berlin. He has 10 children (eight adopted) plus has also been a foster parent.