

The Germans in Dobrudscha (Part 7)

The book listed below, containing 248 pages of information, is being translated chapter by chapter and posted as each chapter is completed. Part 1 gives you a summary of each of the 15 chapters in the “Contents” section. The words in the [square brackets] are those of the translator and are not found in the original text.

Translator: Allen E. Konrad
24 May, 2017

The Germans in Dobrudscha

**along with a contribution
to the history of the German
migration in Eastern Europe**

**by
Paul Traeger**

**With 73 illustrations in the text and tables
Stuttgart 1922
Foreign and Home Publishing Company
(*Ausland und Heimat Verlags=Aktiengesellschaft*)**

7.

Emergence of Daughter Colonies 1893-1917

Even though immigration from Russia stopped, the emergence of new German settlements in Dobrudscha certainly did not end. A whole number of others have been established in the following years until the most recent time. But their founders no longer came from across the Danube River. They are themselves daughter colonies of the German folks in Dobrudscha villages, either from the younger, landless generations in older settlements or brought about by the above-described unfavorable circumstances in some of the younger ones, when the farmers were forced out by the hopelessness of their situation, by excessive increase of the lease demands or by the intrusion of Romanian veterans. These new colonies bring no new color to the image of the Germanness of the ethnic composition of Dobrudscha. They are the same families that we have already met.

From the old neighboring colonies of Atmagea and Ciucurova, over 20 young families left in 1892 to search for land in the south because their home villages could no longer make any land available for them. They spent the first year in **Ghiventia** without achieving their objective here. In the following years, they obtained residences which were ruined and abandoned by war in the Turkish village of **Mamuzln**, 10 km [6.2 miles] northwest of the Cara Omer train station. This is the only settlement of this last period which has progressed satisfactorily and has offered its founders a home that has been offered to them as their own property. Since these folks were almost all already born in Dobrudscha, the precondition of the Romanian Land Regulation was fulfilled, and they were immediately given land, 25 hectares [49.4 acres] per family, with a

period of 30 years to pay for it. Later arrivals only got 5 hectares [12.4 acres]. The area has good soil, only water is difficult to find, so there is only one well in the village. In addition to growing cereal grains, a lot of livestock is also being raised. Almost all live in a good economic situation. In 1906, the small community built a beautiful, massive church and their school was taught by several teachers from Germany. Like Atmagea and Ciucurova, it is a Platt colony and only a few Swabian families have joined the Kashubians.



Church in Mamuzlu

Apart from 7 Romanians who bought the yards of the Germans who emigrated to Dakota, the village is a purely German with 43 families of 219 souls.

All other settlements have in common that in them none of the land seeking German farmers succeeded in obtaining their own estate and ground. In one way or another, their situation is maybe not all that bad, but overall it is on the decline, uncertain and hopeless. And more than one presents an unfortunate image of poverty and decay.

Sofular, located 9 km [5.6 miles] south of Cobadin, is a poor German village. It was still a Turkish village when the first Germans came here in 1893. They had previously lived in Cogeala, Ebechioi and other settlements, several of them also came from Bessarabia. 11 pitiful mud-plastered, straw-roofed houses are located on the street, usually in bad condition. The lowly prayer house is of the same kind. There is nothing of the comfortable culture of the older colonies. A little off from the street you can see two stately estate houses. They belong to two brothers, German sons of a colonist from Cobadin, each of whom has acquired 400 hectares [988 acres] of property. However, none of the other Germans have any land, only 4 families have their own farmyards. They have rented a little for themselves and are also working on the estate as day laborers. Including the two estate owners, there are 12 families with 57 souls; 10 families have sought a more pleasant opportunity in North America and Argentina. There are also 5 Romanian families in the village.

Mangeapunar was once a thriving, purely German village which sprang up in 1895 on the coast of the Black Sea, a quarter of an hour south of Tuzla. As already mentioned, 29 of the 1890-1891 immigrant families settled here, who had founded the Catholic colony of Balala and gave it up because the veterans were forced upon them and the land promised to them was withheld. Here too, they were not offered their own sod. But nevertheless, due to long-term agreements, they seemed to secure the future for a decade.



Church in Mangeapunar

Mangeapunar is an instructive example of how changeable the fortunes of a large part of the new immigrants were and how influential Romanian men were allowed to play with them in spite of all the legal titles that had been documented. They had received a 20 year lease from the

landowner, Minister Emil Costinescu, for the over 7,000 hectares [17,297 acres] comprehensive estate. At the end of this period, the village, i.e. the houses and farmyards, should remain in their possession, even if the contract would not be renewed or the estate came into the possession of others. They then set up their proud street in the usual way and built houses with solid walls and roofs, like no one had seen before in the area. Gradually, there were 48. A stately, massive church has been towering over it since 1901. After about 10 years, Costinescu handed over the estate to his sons-in-law, who soon caused difficulties and demanded a modification of the agreement. Dreading a lawsuit, the farmers allowed themselves to be bullied and gave in. A new contract was concluded around 1906. They got the whole estate against a substantially higher lease (22 lei per hectare) for another 8 years. Naturally, they counted on an extension after its expiration. But it did not turn out that way. The diligent Germans had faithfully fulfilled their obligations, but when the time was up, the landlords leased the land, in their stead, to a big Romanian leaser, who did not want to manage it himself, but now wanted to lease it to the farmers. No more for cash rent, but for half of the crop (*Halbscheid*) and in exchange for work performance. Most of them took the difficult decision to abandon their beautiful farmyards and to move on. Of more than 50 families, only 16 stayed behind. 28 went to Dakota or Argentina, the small remnant scattered.

Such a village deprived of its inhabitants has something moving and at the same time shocking. The wide street, shaded by huge trees, still shows how much love and hope was put into setting it up. But behind the street walls you can see modern ruins, totally deserted farmyards and deteriorating buildings in an excessive growth of greenery. Romanians have also settled into some of them, or the one leasing has taken them for his own use.

When the estate had come under German administration after our occupation of Dobrudscha, some of its earlier inhabitants came back and the number of families grew again to 34 with 181 souls. Before their immigration into Dobrudscha, most of them lived in Katharinenthal, Landau and other colonies of the Kherson *Gouvernement*. Here too a whole number of family surnames can be found which are in Keller's older colonist lists. They came afterwards with few exceptions from localities of the Rhenish Palatinate, and it can be considered as an indication that the once farming oriented, belonging together families have also preserved even closer cohesion after generations. Apart from those already introduced in Malcoci and Caramurat (Paul, Martin, Dillmann, Hirsch, Marthaler, Götz, and others), we find here the names: Keller (represented in the colonies of Sulz, Rastatt and Speyer and coming from Bindersbach and Neupfotz in the Rhenish Palatinate and from Obersteinbach in Alsace), Weber (Colonies Sulz, Munich, from Albersweiler and Kandel, Rhenish Palatinate and Hechingen, Baden), Hatzenbühler (Karlsruhe Colony from Knittelsheim, Rhenish Palatinate), Daum (Landau Colony from Herzheim, Rhineland.), Braun (Colonies Munich and Karlsruhe from Kördt, Rhineland and Offenbach), Heintz (Karlsruhe Colony from Leimersheim, Rhineland), Hörner (Colonies Speyer and Katharinenthal from Kuhardt, Rhineland or Kirchhart), Riedinger (Landau Colony from Kandel, Rhineland).

An even sadder impression of deterioration and devastation is given by the Lutheran settlement of **Klein-Mangeapunar**, located 10 minutes further south, close to the Black Sea. It was established in 1897, mainly by families from the dissolved Osmancea Colony and had developed into a beautiful purely German small village of about 25 families. Then came another interim



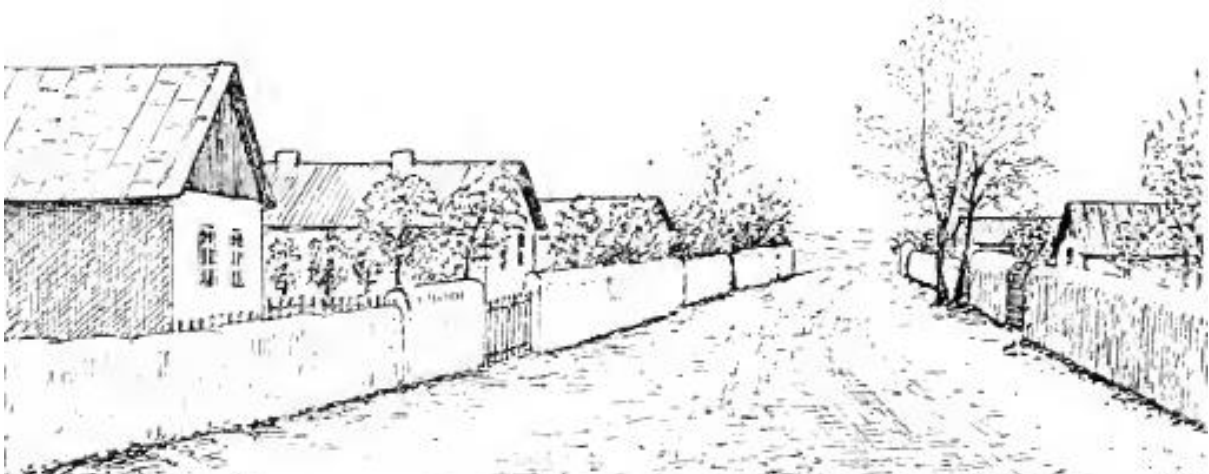
Dilapidated German Farm Buildings and Walls in Klein-Mangeapunar

leaser who ratcheted up the lease so high that nothing was left and the farmers were impoverished. Most left, 2 to America, others back to Russia. Today, to the right and left of the grassy street are orphaned farmyards. I found only 4 families with 27 souls still present. The children are growing up without any school since there are also no Romanians here.

The rest of the Catholic 9 colonists of Balala, who did not go to Mangeapunar with the other about one dozen families in 1895, established a small colony in **Chiragi**, which, however, came to an end after 12 years. Most of them emigrated to America, the others dispersed into other villages. Only a German mill owner is still there.

At the end of the century, some families from Cogeala moved to **Mamaia**. There are currently 3 present with 16 souls, including 2 by the name of Weber from the Kherson colony of Sulz, according to the baptismal certificate, originating from Althausen on the Rhine.

In 1901, the larger part of the Osmancea abandoned families settled in the Tartar village of **Alacap**, 4 km [2.5 miles] north of the Murfartlar railway station. Here they created their own



German Street in Alacap

street and had a German teacher before the war. They are predominantly Swabians, most of them came from the Bessarabian colony of Alt-Elft. They have leased land from the government, but at least they have their own house and the 2,000 square meter [21,520 square feet] enclosed farmyard. Earlier, there were 30 families. Some emigrated to Canada and Dakota, 2 to Germany to the area of Graudenz. Besides the 45 Tatar, 15 Romanian and 5 Bulgarian families, there are now still 20 Germans with 116 souls.¹

Landless families from the older Catholic colonies of Malcoci and Culelia, also from Caramurat, settled in **Techirghiol**, on an inlet lake by the same name, separated from the Black Sea by a strip of land, and known for its great healing power mud lake (*Schlammsee*). These folks first came in 1907. They live a little ways from the lake, without their own street, scattered among Tatars and most still in houses bought from the Romanians or Tatars. With short-term contracts of 2 to 3 years, they have leased land from an estate leaser. They only own the house and the farmyard. A modest house was prepared as a prayer hall, German schooling is completely lacking. There are 16 families with 97 souls.

In 1909, the 13 Catholic families who had immigrated in 1891 from the Kherson *Gouvernement* (Katharinenthal, Landau, Rastatt) and settled in Osmanfaca, moved to **Palaz Mare**, 7 km [4.3 miles] north of Constanta, immediately by Lake Siut Ghiol,. In addition, colonists came from Caramurat and Culelia and several families, who had been looking in vain for a permanent home in Chiragi, Caramaurat and Mangeapunar. Most of them live together on their new and a little away from the village street with exceedingly decorated, friendly little houses. Economically, things did not go so good. At first, they rented for half of the crop, which, as far as possible, seems to have taken advantage of the Romanian landowner. This led to a lawsuit that lasted for



Prayer House in Techirghiol

¹ Some of these small German nests are often, even in Dobrudscha itself, quite unknown as if abandoned and unnoticed, to mention as an example, Margot Staub-Zehner, who in the *Hauskalender des Deutschen Volksbildungereins* (1910, Bukarest, S. 81/71) dedicates a long essay to the "Wundersee" and also describes the village with its Tatar houses, without the German compatriots apparently hearing or being given notice of anything about the colony. The presence of the small Catholic community seems to have remained unknown to Bishop Netzhammer, who also describes the lake.

two years before the war and was decided in their favor in the first stage of proceedings. The settlement numbers 25 families with 147 souls. The Winterhalt family gives Silesia, Türk Heidelberg as its German home.

Since 1911, colonists who were previously in Sarighiol have leased land from the government near the railway station **Bratianu**, not far from Constanta. Currently, there are 4 families with 19 souls.

Despite the long time that has elapsed since leaving the Russian home villages, many of these landless farmers are still in flux (*im Fluß*) today, always ready to wander further whenever information about free land presents itself to them. What we could often observe after the Russo-Turkish War and after the Crimean War is that the immigrant Germans moved into abandoned Turkish and Tartar villages and in them established German communities, which repeated itself in a similar manner during this war. After the war, most of the former inhabitants, relatives of the Russian sect of the Skopty, fled from **Doumai**, about 20 minutes south of Mangalia. In March 1917, German farmers made their homes in those vacant farmyards and leased land from our military authorities. They came from the Kherson *Gouvernement* (Worms, Rohrbach) and were eventually on the estate of a German-Austrian in Emerlik, in the southern most part which only fell to the Romanian part of Dobrudscha in 1913. At first, there were only 3 families, on my second visit in the autumn there were already 6 with 27 souls, and others were expected. Presumably, the change of the situation has disturbed its further development, otherwise the little Skopty village would very soon have become a German one.

As in Constanta, a number of Germans, since the end of the 1860s, had also found themselves at the other terminus of the railway line, in **Cernavoda**. They belonged to commercial, technical and commercial professions and were mostly called into the country for railway and bridge construction and by the Danube Commerce. One of the first was a train machinist from Insterburg. From Germany itself, only one family from Berlin and one from the Lower Rhine seem to have come. The others were from Vienna and Hungary, a German-Swiss and a Transylvanian-Saxon: 8 families with 36 souls. The children of these immigrants are more urban in character, in stark contrast to the rural, many marrying Romanians.

Here and there one finds Germans in other Danube places, like in Rasova, Harsova, Ciobanu, Garliciu, Docuzaci and Ostrov.

But also from the rural settlements, the German element has spread to numerous localities scattered all over the country. In some, there are only isolated persons, in others one or more families who have created a home in a completely foreign environment. In most cases it was an economic entrepreneurial spirit that led to the separation from the village of the homeland. Above all, the German farmers took possession, to a large extent, of the mill industry of the country. Among the places listed below are at least a dozen in which the relevant German family has built or acquired the steam mill or a water mill in the area. So in the northern part of the country, which was a Bulgarian operating area during the war, the following list cannot be claimed to be complete. Starting from the north, Germans still live in: La Trei Mori (1 Family of 6 Persons), Babadag (1 Family of 6 Persons), Baspunar (3 Persons), Jurilofka (3), Ramnicu de Jos (3 Families), Ciuciuc-Chieri (a couple of Families), Terzichioi (2 Persons), Caranasuf (1

Person), Satischioi-Roman (3 Persons), Caracoium (1 Person), Canara (3 Persons), Murfartlar (2 Families of 10 Persons), Hasi-Duluc (1 Family), Biulbiul Mic (1 Person), Pestera (7 Persons), Cuzgun (2 Persons), Adamklisi (2 Persons), Bezirk Dobromir (9 Persons), Cherim-Cuius (3 Persons), Caciamak (1 Family of 8 Persons), Topraisar (2 Families of 10 Persons), Tuzla (1 Family of 6 Persons), Ghiuvenlia (1 Family of 7 Persons), Cavaclar (1 Person), Chiragi (2 Persons), Canlicicur (1 Person), Cara Omer (1 Family), Cerchezchioi (5 Persons).

The last mentioned places are already close at the border, which separated Romania and Bulgaria until 1913. The uncertainties, due to the lack of established conditions of property ownership, which did not allow for a restful settling down especially for the last immigrants, contributed toward the migration of the German farmers who began their migration in the Russian steppe, continued always further south, ignoring the border and crossing it, leading to the establishment of colonies also there.

=====