

Dennewitz-1834-1984

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[Translation Begins]

Dennewitz (1834-1984)

Emil Schill

In an almost still-safe and sound world, the 550-soul community of Dennewitz was able to celebrate its 100th Anniversary in 1934. Since the founding of this former German village in Bessarabia, which was counted among the mother colonies, 150 years have now passed. On this occasion, we also want to particularly commemorate, forty-four years after the Resettlement, our former hometown and its inhabitants.

Founding of the Village

The first German settlements already existed in Bessarabia twenty years before Dennewitz was founded. In 1834, 15 families emigrated from the villages of Alt-Posttal, Kulm, and Wittenberg and settled in a broad valley ten kilometers [6.2 miles] south of Teplitz. In the following eleven years, another ten families joined them from Alt-Posttal, eleven families from Wittenberg, nine families from Kulm, and a few families from other villages, so that, by 1845, a respectable village with 60 farmyards had already been established.

The crown land, which initially belonged to Teplitz, was managed at the time of the founding of the village by a leaseholder named Hamburg (Chambur), so the first settlers named their village Hamburg. However, this place name was not approved by the government authorities. The government gave the village the name Dennewitz in memory of the victory over Napoleon at Dennewitz (Province of Brandenburg) on 6 September, 1813, where the French under Marshal Ney were completely defeated by the Prussians. On a Romanian map, as late as 1922, the name Dennewitz was still followed in parentheses by Hamburg.

Name	Village of Origin	Where Ancestors came from:
Bötke, Michael	Tarutino	Kalaschin, Polen
Brost, Michael	Alt-Posttal	Grünbach, Wü.
Döhring, Samuel	Kulm	Danischewa, Polen
Göhner, Konrad	Wittenberg	?
Herberg, Martin	Tarutino	Polen
Hehr, Adam	Alt-Posstal	Grömbach, Polen
Hermann, Gabriel	Teplitz	?
Höfel, Andreas	Wittenberg	Öschelbronn, Baden
Jeske, Georg	Kulm	?
Schill, Johann	Katzbach	Lustenau, Wü.
Schlauch, Karl	Borodino	?
Deeg, Michael	Borodino	Preußen
Tiede, Johann	Klum	Polen
Ziegler, Adam	Beresina	Preußen

Up to 1845, the following families also moved here:

Bonhet, Johann	Alt-Posttal	Wilkow, Polen
Dölker, Jakob	Wittenberg	Pfalzgrafenweiler, Wü.
Geisler, Joh. Georg	Teplitz	Hornberg, Baden
Hiller, Johann	Wittenberg	Sagorscha, Polen
Hiller, Adam	Tarutino	Sagorscha, Polen
Schmiedt, Johannes	?	München
Schmiedt, Georg	?	München
Scherrible, Joh. Jeremias	?	Sulzgrieß/Eßlingen, Wü.
Dienno, Friedrich	Teplitz	Altmontal/Molotschna
Drefs, Michael	Katzbach	Jakobowa/Südpreußen
Gutschmiedt, Christian	Paris	Preußen
Haag, David	Wittenberg	Rönneberg, Polen
Stumm, Ludwig	Wittenberg	Württemberg
Vetter, Daniel	Alt-Posttal	?
Eßlinger, Christian	Tarutino	Kleinpolitz, Polen
Freitag, Thomas	Alt-Posstal	Polen
Friedrich, Christian	Alt-Posttal	Polen
Günther, Johann	?	Smolnik, Polen
Maier, Friedrich	Wittenberg	Plonsk, Polen
Weber, Christian	Wittenberg	Neu-Freudental, Preußen
Mauch, Jakob	Alt-Posttal	Preußen

Name	Village of Origin	Where Ancestors came from:
Mauch, Peter	Alt-Posttal	Preußen
Fischer, Karl	Teplitz	?
Isak, Johann	Kulm	Blaka, Polen
Otterstätter, Philipp	Borodino	Polen
Frohmüller, Michael	Alt-Posttal	Baiersbronn, Wü.
Jeske, Andreas	Paris	Loßburg, Wü.
Rall, Georg	Wittenberg	Sontheim, Wü.
Schimke, Johann	Kulm	Preußen
Schöttle, Jakob	Alt-Posttal	?
Siegler, Johann	Alt-Posttal	Polen
Hanschke, Georg	Alt-Posttal	Pleschin, Preußen
Schöttle, Johann	Kulm	Sofienthal, Polen
Schelske, Christian	Kulm	Polen
Koth, Wilhelm	Wittenberg	Polen
Müller, Friedrich	Kulm	Schadek, Polen
Schiwe, Johann	Tarutino	Preußen
Längner, Chrstian	Kulm	Friedorf, Wü.
Längner, Johann	Kulm	Friedorf, Wü.
Schulz, Christian	Wittenberg	Bulkowo, Polen
Schulz, Karl	Kulm	?
Müller, Gottfried	Wittenberg	Polen
Seitz, Jakob	Wittenberg	Grömbach, Polen
Stickel, Friedrich	Borodino	Polen

Village Location

Dennewitz arose along the country highway, halfway between Akkerman to Galatz, 90 km [55.9 miles] from the district town of Akkerman, 16 km [9.9 miles] from the market village of Arzis, and 12 km [7.5 miles] from the parish village of Alt-Elft, in the middle of the three valleys, almost at the southern end of its fields. The land of Dennewitz bordered the fields of Plotzk and Brienne to the east, Teplitz and Alt-Elft to the north, Neu-Elft and Deleni to the west, and Glawani and Taschlik to the south. The village street stretched in two rows of houses on both sides of the valley from north to south and initially had three cross streets, of which only the middle one remained, along which the church and school faced each other. At the southern end

of the eastern row of houses, where two valleys met, an old mill chimney stood out of the valley as a landmark of the village, with a stork's nest on top, which the storks built higher year after year. The western row of houses was significantly longer than the eastern one and had a bend to the west in the lower village, which caused the street to widen and made room for three farmyards along it. Since the municipality only provided land to build on for three craftsmen at the southern end of the village, the place hardly grew. Due to extensive soil cultivation, young farmers soon noticed a shortage of land, so many folks from Dennewitz had to leave their home village. Before the Resettlement, more than half of all farmyards had already been cut in half, two young farmers had built in the gardens of the yards of their parents, and on cross streets on the side of the school, three new houses had also been built opposite the grain storage building.

Agriculture and Livestock Farming

Since the Dennewitz settlers did not receive government support from the Welfare Committee, they had a very difficult start in a steppe overgrown with meter-high grass and weeds. The settlers, who initially had only a few draft animals and rather primitive farming tools, cultivated only as much summer wheat, corn, and potatoes as they needed for their own sustenance. Plagued by crop failures and locusts, the farmers were forced to store grain reserves for bad years. The first grain store building made of wood was built in 1840, which had to be replaced after only eight years by a sturdier stone building that provided essential services until the Resettlement. Crop failures occurred in the years 1837, 1844, 1846, 1869, 1873, 1877, 1899, and 1904. Locusts appeared in the years 1836, 1847, 1848, 1855 to 1858, 1860 to 1864, 1866, and finally in the autumn of 1929, which were not completely exterminated until May of 1930.



Dennewitz 1938, Girls in Traditional Costume

In the first years, the settlers mainly focused on livestock farming, for which the steppe provided abundant fodder, so that a certain level of prosperity was already evident after 20 years. In 1853, 327 horses, 256 oxen, 340 cows, and 1,002 sheep were counted in Dennewitz. By 1934, the community had 453 horses, 405 cows, and 1,750 sheep. Livestock epidemics occurred in the years 1845, 1855, 1857, 1870, and 1877, which in some years claimed more than 150 animals. Draw wells and pond reservoirs in the valleys supplied both people and livestock with precious water. In 1873, the community had six pond reservoirs, which were leased for fishing.

The cultivated area increased only slowly. In 1895, the people of Dennewitz had only 1,453 hectares [3,590 acres] of arable land, 1,248 ha [3,083.8 acres] of hay fields, and 1,363 ha [3,368 acres] of pasture on their 4,064 ha [10,042 acres] of fieldland. By 1934, the pasture had already shrunk to 274 ha [677 acres].

The villagers achieved the greatest prosperity only after the field consolidation, which was carried out in 1913 under the direction of the municipal clerk Immanuel Radke together with a committee elected for this purpose. The committee included the following members of the community: Friedrich Brost I, Christian Döhring, David Döhring, Johann Hermann, Robert Matthies, Christoph Müller, David Tiede, Christian Schill, Johannes Schill, and Immanuel Weispfenning. During the land survey, the two municipal farms that had provided the municipality with the necessary funds since the founding of the village, enabling it to build community buildings such as the church and school and cover their maintenance costs, were divided. The farmers now had their fields in five locations and practiced an annual crop rotation with intensive soil cultivation. In addition to the traditional cereals—wheat, barley, oats, and corn—soybeans and castor beans were increasingly being cultivated over the past twelve years.

The Agrarian Reform carried out by the Romanian state in 1921 affected farmers Johann Fischer, Johann Hermann, and Heinrich Müller in Dennewitz. The purchase of the Angler cattle refreshed the livestock of the community and significantly increased the milk yield of the cows in recent years. A particularly productive piece of land was the Dennewitz vegetable garden (*Krautgarten*), which stretched north of the *Streitgarten* into the valley on a sunny south-facing slope. It was expertly tended and watered by a capable vegetable gardener—a Bulgarian and his family—so that the villagers could be supplied abundantly with tomatoes, eggplants (*Auberginen*), peppers, and cabbage (white cabbage). In Dennewitz, only the master shoemaker Daniel Walter was engaged in beekeeping; from 1924 until the Resettlement, he was still a beekeeper and maintained an average of 30 colonies.

Forestry, Viticulture, and Fruit Growing

Growing grapes (*Weinbau*) began in Dennewitz soon after the village was founded, as in 1851 the community assembly decided to abandon the old vineyards west of the lower village and instead plant new vineyards behind the old forest and above the stone quarries. By 1860, the vineyards in Dennewitz covered an area of 70 hectares [175 acres], on which 19,595 grapevines grew the finest grapes. The direct-bearing (*Direktträger*) vines were planted later.

The forest always occupied the smallest area in the Dennewitz land area. Of the old forest, which had been planted in 1860 by official order, only individual ash and acacia remained



behind the gardens west of the upper village at the time of Resettlement. About five years before we left our home village, the new forest west of the lower village was established and cultivated with a cultivator (*Hackpflug*) and a hoe as one works a vineyard.

Our *Streitgarten* was a rare bird paradise which stretched eastward behind the gardens of the lower village as a nature park up to the wide valley (*Breiten Tal*) at the southern end of the village. In the crowns of the mighty acacia, ash, alder, and willow trees, hundreds of nests were home to many rooks (*Saatkrähen*), red-footed falcons, and magpies (*Elstern*), raising their young amid deafening noise during the warm season. Below them, in bushes and shrubs, nested smaller songbirds, constantly flying back and forth with excited chirping. Unfortunately, it is not known why this magnificent park was called *Streitgarten*.

Fruit cultivation must have reached its peak in the 1860s as well, because around 1860 the villagers had 2,007 fruit trees in 64 orchards, which was on average more than 30 fruit trees in each garden. After that, the number of trees gradually declined. Shortly before the Resettlement, in 1938, the wide village street was turned into an orchard plantation (*Obstplantage*). The diligent gardeners were no longer allowed to harvest fruits from their orchards on the street.

Trade and Industry

The settlers were, in the truest sense of the word, self-sufficient when it came to food and clothing. In addition to grain and potatoes, hemp (*Hanf*) and flax (*Flachs*) were soon also cultivated. These fiber plants were processed by the women. In 1865, there were already 50 spinners and 15 weavers in Dennewitz, who increased in number by the turn of the century and mainly produced the linens and wool fabrics needed by the families during the winter months.

Craftsmanship also had a golden opportunity in Dennewitz. It was probably in the 1880s that the community made the crossroads of the upper and lower village available as building sites for craftsmen. In addition, the row of houses in the western upper village had been extended by three homesteads, and after 1925, a small craftsmen's settlement with three houses was built near the lower shepherd house. Very idyllically, in the middle of the village street in the valley in front of the church, lay the village smithy of master blacksmith Robert Jörke, from which the clanging of hammering could be heard far and wide throughout the year, even in the evenings. In recent years in Dennewitz, the self-employed craftsmen included four carpenters, three blacksmiths, three shoemakers, three saddlers, one men's tailor, and three women's dressmakers.

Among the craftsmen, only the master carpenter Christian Jörke (1882-1957) became known beyond the borders of his home village, having worked his way up to become a master builder. He designed his own building plans but had them checked by a civil engineer in Akkerman before the buildings were constructed according to them. He built residential houses, prayer houses, churches, and schools. Under his supervision, the school in Alt-Elft and the churches in Hoffnungsfeld, Alexanderfeld, and Alt-Posttal were constructed. From the Resettlement Camp

at Ettal Monastery, Mr. Jörke, in 1941, conducted castle tours at Linderhof Castle in Upper Bavaria.

In the co-op dairy, which was connected to the consumer store, the delivered milk was processed. In 1923, Adolf Tiede opened a general store that supplied the villagers with the necessary goods in addition to that of the consumer store.

The Dennewitz steam mill of the Schock brothers, which had already been equipped with modern roller mills in the 1930s, provided good flour. This milling plant also included an oil mill, where cooking oil was pressed from sunflower seeds, rapeseed (*Raps*), and mustard (*Senf*). Most of the customers of the mill came from the large Bulgarian villages of Deleni and Glawani.

In earlier years, the grain from our farmers was purchased in the village by Jewish grain merchants and had to be transported to the Arzis train station (16 km) [9.9 miles] or to the Danube port of Kilia (50 km) [31 miles]. Since 1930, dairy products as well as all types of grain have been sold through the German Economic Association in Arzis. During this time, Johann Müller was the representative of the Economic Association in Dennewitz.

The Stone Quarry

The Dennewitz stone quarries provided the most valuable building and threshing stones in the entire settlement area. They were shell limestone (*Muschelkalkstein*), distinguished by their particular hardness. In earlier years, almost all farmers, along with their sons, would go to the stone quarry after finishing their fieldwork in the autumn, where the stones were broken off from rock blocks two to three meters [6.5-9.8 feet] thick after removing the top layer of soil. For many, rock quarry work represented an additional source of income. The threshing stones are said to have been realized (*erfunden*) in the Dennewitz rock quarry by settler Karl Gutsche. The people of Dennewitz, who worked throughout the entire year, were particularly diligent, which was also confirmed by the neighboring Bulgarians, who often said: "When the people of Dennewitz have less to do, they tear down their houses and rebuild them." In the last years before the centennial celebration, a lot of construction was carried out. It is likely that our farmhouses will stand as witnesses of German craftsmanship for a long time to come.

Municipal Administration

Dennewitz belonged to the district office (to the Wolost) Arzis until 1918. The community largely retained its self-administration even after the annexation of Bessarabia to Romania. The village mayors, who were vested with extensive powers, maintained strict control until the Resettlement. The organizers of the administration were our municipal clerks. The community assembly decided on all matters of orderly coexistence in the village as well as on the construction of municipal buildings. The Pasture Association of our village, which was also managed in the municipal office, ensured a fair balance between pasture and livestock owners through a pasture fee.

After the First World War, the following mayors of Dennewitz were in office: Gottlieb Haag, Michael Freitag, Friedrich Vetter, Robert Matthies, David Döhring, Johannes Schmiedt, and Nathanael Höfel.

Church and School

Soon after the village was founded, religious services were held in spacious farmer livingrooms by farmers qualified for the task, who also taught the schoolchildren during the winter months. Due to the different origins of the settlers from Württemberg and Prussia, disagreements soon arose within the community. The first dispute was over the holidays. The people from Württemberg wanted to observe all the feast days of the Apostles, while the Prussians advocated for the three holidays after Easter, Pentecost, and Christmas. Eventually, a compromise was reached, and both the feast days of the Apostles and the three days after the major church festivals were celebrated. As early as 1836, construction began on the first school and prayer house, which could be dedicated to its purpose in 1838. Bernhard Bechtle was the first sexton-teacher. After a few years in office, he was succeeded by Eduard Reichert, followed by Friedrich Dieno.

In the years 1850 to 1870, schooling in our villages must still have been quite inadequate, because of Gottfried Schulz, the well-known German colonizer of southern Bessarabia, who attended school there as a Dennewitz boy in the second half of the previous century, it is reported that he could barely read and write (G. Enßlen). Much of this was probably due to the fact that children only attended school in the winter months and teachers changed very frequently. A somewhat more advanced education was promoted in the 1870s by the parish pastor Ludwig Zeller (1874 to 1885). He became particularly well-known for his attempt to introduce the reading book in schools. During his time, the Dennewitz church was built, whose solemn dedication he was able to carry out in 1879. It is reported by Sexton Christian Wieland that he was active in the town for twenty-two years around the turn of the century. In his time, the new school building was constructed in 1899. Other teachers who taught alongside him were Kelm, Kroll, Scheller, and Johannes Blum. After that, these followed in rapid succession:

Sexton Teachers:

Daniel Broneske
Gottlieb Hahn
Immanuel Radke
Gotthole Hohlloch
Reinhold Tschritter
Friedrich Treiber
Albert Balmer
Karl Kämmler

Teachers:

Jakob Balmer
Hermine Hahn
Hermine Hahn
Hermine Hohlloch
Hermine Hohlloch
Oskar Jörke
Oskar Jörke
Artur Ziemann

After 1925, when the state school authority also transferred Romanian teachers to the Dennewitz Elementary School (*Volksschule*), who soon became masters of the school leadership and after 1935 intensified the Romanization, the church community recognized the danger and took over the school in 1939 as the Evangelical German Elementary School under its own management. In

the last school year 1939-1940, teachers Karl Kämmler and Artur Ziemann taught 110 schoolchildren.

The Werner School, our Teacher Training Institute in Sarata, was attended at different times by 31 people from Dennewitz (*Heimatbuch Sarata*). At the two high schools (*Gymnasien*) in Tarutino, there were three boys and five girls.

Dennewitz was a purely Evangelical Lutheran parish. Only in the years 1913 to 1931 did the Bulgarian family Andrei Stoianow live at the southern end of our parish. In the first six years, the parish was served from Arzis and belonged from 1840 until the Resettlement to the Alt-Elft Parish. After the connection of our Consistory to the Evangelical Regional Church—Augsburg Confession (*Ev. Landeskirche A.B.*) in Transylvania, the parish was led by the following curators: Gottlieb Haag, David Döhring, and Johann Weispfenning.

In Dennewitz, there was only one Brotherhood Assembly—most recently at the house of their long-time leader Christian Höfel next to the school.

Cultural

As in many communities of our old homeland, the teachers in Dennewitz were also responsible for the cultural events, which were mainly held during the winter months. The sexton-teacher led the church choir in addition to his other official duties. The books of the youth library, which had existed even before the turn of the century, were also managed and lent out by the respective sexton-teacher. During the time of World War I, the books were housed in the altar room of the church to protect them from confiscation. After the war, the library was expanded with new acquisitions and managed by Johannes Schill until his departure in 1924. Thereafter, Christian Rall took over the library until the Resettlement.

The second teacher organized community evenings with amateur theater groups, which took place at the school. Before the centennial celebration, teacher Oskar Jörke founded “The Free Choir” (*Der Freie Chor*) as a singing club, which mainly practiced multi-part folk songs that could be performed for the festive celebration of the anniversary.

Our Women’s Association (*Frauenverein*), which was most recently led by Mrs. Wilhelmine Höfel, produced valuable handicrafts year after year, which were raffled off on special festive evenings. The proceeds benefited our institutions.

A string ensemble brought good cheer to family celebrations in Dennewitz. The last Dennewitz music band was founded by Eduard Müller I and was also played on the Danube ship and in the Resettler Camp Walchensee during dance evenings.

Organization and arrangement of our village folk customs—such as the raising of the May trees and the Easter egg gathering—were entirely in the hands of the Year-Group Comradeships. They also provided the players for the Dennewitz football team.

The 100th Anniversary

On 3 and 4 November, 1934, the people of Dennewitz celebrated with their relatives and friends from the villages of the *Unterland* [the lower part of Bessarabia] the festival of the hundredth anniversary of their community. “Well over 3,000 people had poured in. Dennewitz was already overcrowded on the eve of the actual celebration day. But thanks to the good preparations made by the church council, everyone was accommodated in the best possible way” (*Deutsche Zeitung Bessarabiens* K. Leibram, Jr.). The church and school had been renovated, and the entire village had cleaned up festively for the anniversary celebration.

The celebrations were opened on Saturday evening with a festive church service, led by Parish Pastor Simsont and Pastor Rivinius from Leipzig. The highlights of the celebration were the three Sunday services. At 8:00 AM, a large congregation commemorated the 1,789 deceased who had found their final resting place here over the past 100 years at the cemetery, accompanied by the music of the Teplitz brass band and the Dennewitz church choir, with speeches by pastoral candidate Tetz and Pastor Rivinius. The grand thanksgiving service was held at 10:00 AM in front of the church by Senior Pastor Daniel Haase and Pastor Winger from Sarata. The senior pastor based his sermon on the words from 1 Samuel 7:12: “Thus far the Lord has helped us.” At the end, the celebrating congregation of 3,000 people sang the hymn: “Now Thank We All Our God.” In the afternoon service, the parish pastor gave the congregation a historical review of the past 100 years with its highs and lows. The last preacher of the day, Pastor Härter from Neu-Posttal, took to the the pulpit and preached on Psalm 119. The church choir, under the direction of Sexton-teacher Friedrich Treiber, sang at all the services.

To conclude the centennial celebration, there was a banquet in the evening in the school rooms, with a welcome, several speeches, and a speech by the parish teacher Treiber. “The Free Choir,” under the direction of teacher Oskar Jörke, sang various folk songs between the speeches, thus contributing to the success of the celebration. The youth celebrated in their own way during this time with games and dancing in the empty grain store building, accompanied by music from the Dennewitz brass band. During these festivities, no one could have known that the people of Dennewitz would only remain in their home village for another six years.

Emigrations

The mother colony Dennewitz probably had the most emigrants of all the villages. Already after the first crop failure in 1837, some Dennewitz families joined an emigrant group going to Serbia. The Settler Register shows that of the 60 settler families, the following families emigrated: Gottfried Müller (1872); Christian Friedrich and Michael Frohmüller (1878); Joh. Georg Geißler (1880); Konrad Göhner (1881); Christian Gutschmidt (1884); Christian Langner, Johann Langner, Johann Schöttle, Christian Schulz and Karl Schulz (1895); Michael Deeg (1905); Michael Bätke (1912); Johann Isak, Georg Jeske, Georg Hehr, Friedrich and Christian Hiller, J. and G. Schelske, Joh. Haag, Georg and Johannes Weispfenning, among others.

Since, according to the applicable laws until 1918, farms were not allowed to be divided and only the youngest son could take over the family farm, the older sons were forced to leave their hometown. As a result, many young families were among the founders of Neu-Dennewitz and

Alexanderfeld (17 families) in the Kahul District. The fact that the community of Dennewitz became the mother of the German villages in the “Unterlande” was ensured by the well-known colonizer of southern Bessarabia, Gottfried Schulz, who was born in Dennewitz on 25 October, 1846. As a cattle trader, he acquired the necessary initial capital to later transition into the grain trade. Gottfried Schulz is said to have bought a total of 40,000 *Deßjatine* of land from Russian nobles (1 *Deßjatine* = 1.0925 hectares [or 2.7 acres]). Through his mediation, the villages of Neu-Posttal, Mannsburg, Halle, Basyrjamka, Neufall, Benkendorf, Sofiental, Pawloska, Schulzenheim, and others were established, in all of which Dennewitz folks were among the new settlers. But in Eigenheim, Gnadenfeld, Andrejewka, Neu-Alexandrowka, Ketrossy, and other communities, Dennewitz folks could also be found as capable farmers. We should not forget that among the many fellow-countrymen who emigrated to the USA and Canada after 1874, several Dennewitz families were also included.

The Resettlement

The occupation of Bessarabia by the Russians in June of 1940 made the people of Dennewitz willing to leave their homeland. After the German-Soviet Resettlement Agreement was announced, preparations were made to leave the home village. On 6 October, a farewell service was held at the cemetery. The men of the community had to stay behind in their village for another two weeks, after the women and children had set out on the long journey up the Danube from Kilia, in order to take in the groups traveling through who had to spend the night in Dennewitz.



Dennewitz 1968, Former Church

As the last of the settlement area, they left their home village on 20 October, 1940. The bells rang as the treck left the village behind. From the hig ground west of the village, many cast one last glance at the homeland valley, and it was gone forever. In the Galatz Transit Camp, the resettlers said goodbye to their last horses, which were handed over to a Romanian artillery regiment. The stretch from Galatz [Romanian harbor town] to Semlin [town in Serbia] was covered on a Danube Steamship. After a two-day stay in the Semlin Camp, the railway took us

through Austria to Wolfratshausen near Munich. Initially, the men were accommodated for 14 days in the Exercitia House on Rottmannshöhe and in the Hotel Rosengarten in Assenhaus on Lake Starnberg. After that, they went to the Camps with their family members in Kochel on the See, Urfeld, Walchensee, and Einsiedel on Lake Walchensee and in the Ettal Monastery. While the women of the resettlers took care of meals in the kitchen, the men worked in the sawmill, on reinforcing the shore of Lake Walchensee, and on road construction. Their sons were drafted into the Waffen-SS, and the teachers taught their children in the Camp school.

In the autumn of 1941, our military initiated a settling in the Wartheland that took place on Polish farms in the districts of Lentschütz, Kutno, and Warthbrücken. Hardly had the settlers put the farms in order when they were successively drafted into the Wehrmacht and finally into the *Volkssturm* [last ditch effort by Nazi government to draft young boys and old men into active military service toward the end of World War II]. At the time of the Resettlement, the village of Dennewitz had 554 inhabitants. The war claimed 43 victims, and 29 people died during the Flight or were deported.

Due to the Flight in January of 1945, the former residents of the village of Dennewitz became very dispersed. Many found a new home in the Brandenburg area, others returned to their native Württemberg, and some are now settled in Lower Saxony. In the German Democratic Republic [East Germany], most of our countrymen are today working as LPG farmers¹, and in the Federal Republic as industrial workers.

Dennewitz Today

After our Resettlement, many former German villages received different names. Dennewitz is called *Pfjamaja balka* today, which roughly means “Straight Valley.” According to a report by a countryman who visited his home village in 1976, the town is said to have changed a lot as well. The village is now three times as large as it used to be. On the east and west sides of the village, behind the gardens, new rows of houses have been built; even in the garden of Voßler, where the windmill stood, there are now new buildings.

The bell tower at the school has disappeared, and the church is also without a steeple and today serves as a club room. There is a shop in the administrative building. The grain store building and all the stables on our former farmyards have been demolished. In the area where the upper shepherd’s house used to stand, there are stables belonging to the collective farm (*Kolchoswirtschaft*). In the village, it is said that all uneven areas have been leveled, including the hills behind the east side of the lower village, where the old stone quarries were, which have been flattened. Two dams in the Streitgarten Valley and near the lower shepherd house have created reservoirs. The village now has electric lighting and a water supply.

Because the church steeple and also the bell tower at the school were dismantled and all the stables on the farms were torn down, the original characteristic appearance of our former home village has completely changed. It is no longer our former Dennewitz, where we were allowed

¹ [LPG = Landwirtschaftliche Produktionsgenossenschaft = Agricultural Production Cooperative—a large agricultural enterprise in former East Germany modeled after the Soviet collectivization which meant a full integration of agriculture into the state planning, management, and accounting system. Source: https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Landwirtschaftliche_Produktionsgenossenschaft]

to live as Germans until Resettlement; it has become Pjoramaja balka, a village where today Soviet people live, to whom we wish all the best.

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- c. Christian Rall: *Dennewitz heute* (Bericht im Mitteilungsblatt, 2. Dezember 1976)
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- d. Friedrich Jörke: *Ansiedler-Verzeichnis des Dorfes Dennewitz* (Bundesarchiv Koblenz)
- d. Friedrich Jörke: Settlers' Directory of the Village of Dennewitz (Federal Archives Koblenz)
- e. Karl Liebram, jun.: *Dennewitzer Jahrhundertfeier 1834-1934* (Bericht in der DZB N. 90, 1934)
- e. Karl Liebram, Jr.: Dennewitz Centennial Celebration 1834-1934 (Report in DZB No. 90, 1934)
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- f. Richard Baumgärtner: Gottfried Schulz—A Bessarabian German Pioneer (Heimatkalender 1978)
- g. Gottlob Enßlen: *Bessarabische Gutsbesitzer=Kolonisten* (Heimatkalender 1957)
- g. Gottlob Enßlen: Bessarabian Landowners-Colonists (Homeland Calendar 1957)
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- h. Gottlob Enßlen: August Schulz (Homeland Calendar 1959)

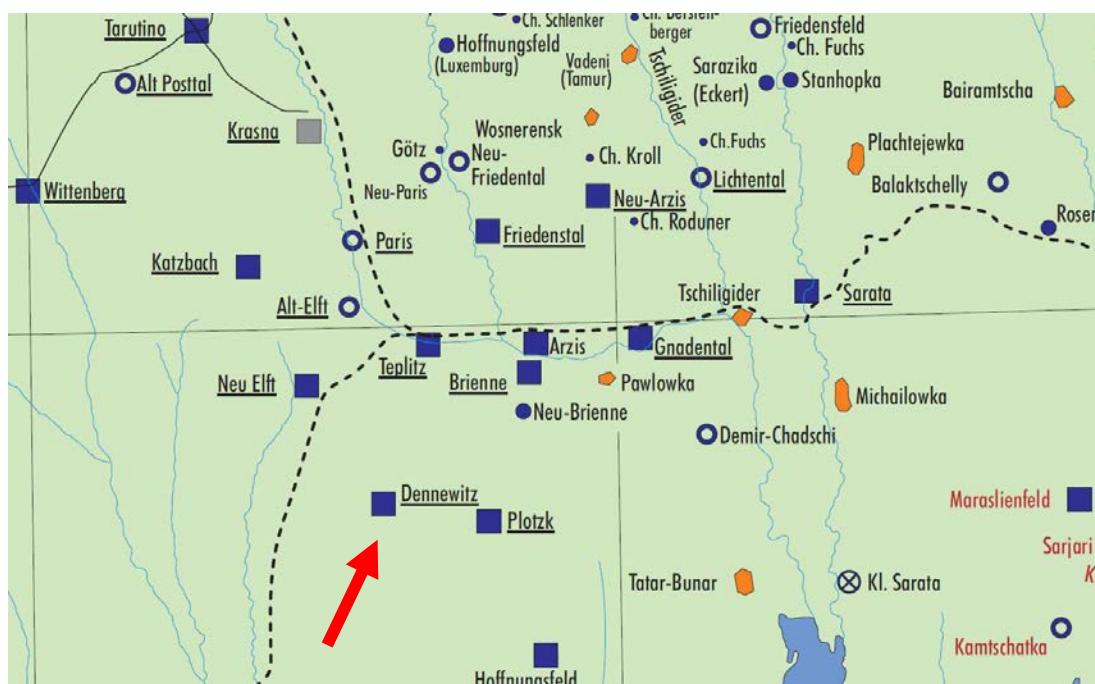
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[Translation Ends]



[Stumpp Map of Bessarabia reworked by Rolf Jethon—not in original document]