

# Founding of Daughter Colony Neu-Brienne

*Bessarabischer Heimatkalender—1960*

W. Rumpelstin, Buchdruckerei und Zeitungsverlag K.G.

[Book Printing and Newspaper Publishing Limited]

Burgdorf, Hannover/Germany

Pages 65-69

Translated by: Allen E. Konrad

July, 2025

P.O. Box 157, Rowley, IA 52329

onamission1939@gmail.com

Note: Information within [brackets] are comments by the translator.

=====

[Translation Begins]

## **One of the Most Important Prerequisites for the Founding of the Daughter Colony New Brienne.**

by Christian Herrmann

For the growth and flourishing of the entire plant world and also for all living beings, such as humans as well as animals, water has an extraordinary importance. One can probably say that its sudden disappearance would result in the death of all life on this earth. We remember some prolonged dry periods in our former homeland, when, for example, in the year 1899, in some villages not only streams and ponds but also wells were threatened to run dry, cracks formed in the ground, and all plants withered, transforming the once lush meadows and fields of grain into barren areas. The lamenting bellowing of the returning herds of cattle echoed in the muggy, dust-filled summer air, driven by hunger, but even more so by thirst.

Water, one of the original elements, can have two devastating effects: first, when it is lacking—water scarcity; and second, when it rushes away, taking everything with it and destroying it—flooding. It is hard to say which of these two emergencies has greater consequences. It was, of course, self-evident that our forefathers, when founding the mother colonies, as well as their descendants when establishing new settlements, primarily took the water issue into consideration. People preferred to endure various difficulties regarding field cultivation rather than neglect this issue and risk facing a potential water shortage or flooding.

The issue of water supply was also a reason why the founding of the daughter colony Neu-Brienne did not come about until over a hundred years later, despite the urgent need for improvement regarding the cultivation of the farmland, as the entire area of arable land stretched over nine kilometers [5.6 miles] on the south side of the village. Furthermore, there was a significant difficulty in that this land was located above the hill—similar to a plateau—and not only had seed grain and all farming tools to be carried up the hill every morning, but also a barrel filled with water, which was an enormous burden for the poor horses. — But also for the health of the people, this climbing on the cold spring morning often had an unfavorable effect, as the

body was often drenched in sweat from the strenuous ascent and due to sitting in the wagon, a too rapid cooling occurred, which has deeply affected the health of many farmers.

The construction of the animal well (about forty meters [131.2 feet] deep) must be seen as a significant achievement of the then community, as it at least provided a watering facility for the grazing livestock; however, such deep wells could not be established for agricultural purposes, where fetching had to be done using horse power. It should not go unmentioned that an accident occurred during the construction of the said animal well, the effects of which did not remain without consequences for the community.

Three wells had to be dug before it was finally accomplished. The first one proved to be crooked and had to be filled in again. The second shaft was successful, and they had already begun with the masonry; however, the wooden formwork was too weak, it could not withstand the pressure of the earth and collapsed. The falling earth masses buried a worker, a Russian, who was working at the bottom of the shaft. A lesson was learned from this, and the third attempt was successful.

One could indeed point to the municipality of Plotzk, where almost every farmer owned a deep well with horse operation. However, this consisted of large farmers, for whom it did not matter whether they had to pay for one more laborer and keep one more horse or not. In contrast, small farmers, of which Brienne had always had a large number, could not afford this. The *Pomanabrunnen* (Memory Well) established on the road to Ismail was only eight to nine meters [26.2—29.5 feet] deep and could also be operated with a bucket, as was customary there at the time. But this was located too far back on the steppe and was indeed a great benefit for market drivers and travelers, but not for the Brienne farmers. These farmers had resigned themselves to the poor state of water supply in the fields and had accepted what seemed unavoidable.

Someone once said that every era brings forth the men destined to solve the pressing problems of the time. This is true both in grand world events and in the happenings within small community circles. At the beginning of the 1890s, a little boy was born in the community of Brienne, who was no different from other children. However, already in his childhood, a significant difference between him and his peers became apparent in many respects. The thoroughness with which he used to examine something, and his perseverance, which he displayed despite his delicate build, could astonish many adults. His comrades therefore only called him Hans Sucher [Johnny Searcher], and he kept this name as well—his real name was August Krause.

Like all farmer children back then, he was already integrated into the work process as a little guy (*Knirps*). The Brienne land resembled a high plateau with some basin-like depressions where thorn bushes grew in certain places. The old people believed that the thorns were proof that the water was not deep in those spots. Little Hans Sucher had heard about this too, and he thought about it; for on one of his father's plots of land, there was a depression where thorns also grew.

During the harvest season, little Hans Sucher was what was known as a machine rider, and every time they came across thorns while mowing, his vivid imagination would suggest to him that due to the trampling of the horses and the machine running, suddenly the water would burst forth from under the thorns and flood the entire lowland. He was so overpowered by this thought that he unintentionally called out to his horses: "Don't you think so? That would be very right for

you!” However, he had neglected to urge the horses on, and already the voice of his father could be heard: “Move forward, so that the machine’s knife does not stop or break!”



Cannon Hill near Brienne

The harvest season passed every time, the thorns kept growing, and in Hans Sucher’s imagination, the supposed water trickled and splashed under the thorns there—however, he had made a firm decision to later come back here to look for water or to build a well.

Through attending the Werner School, the Teacher Training Institution of the time, this idea of our Hans Sucher fell far into the background, and the subsequent teaching profession did not let it resurface soon. However, he comforted himself with the proverb: “To postpone is not to abandon!”

“Time and circumstances determine a man,” said a wise man. As a result of an inflammation of his vocal cords, Hans Sucher was forced to give up his teaching career and he turned to farming. It was probably not coincidence, but a specific fortune that the plot of land with the thorn bush fell to him from his father. When he first re-entered it, the experiences of his childhood were awakened, and the decision he made back then to dig a well here was now about to become a reality. However, our Hans Sucher kept the plan to himself, so as not to expose himself to the ridicule of the people, since such an undertaking would have been referred to by many as a crazy idea.

For a long time, he thought about how he might approach it in order to inconspicuously discover the presence of water at the designated location. He struggled with planning and calculating over this question for several years.

His effort was not in vain either. He had managed to construct a pipe (*Stoßrohr*)<sup>1</sup> over this time that, although it still had some flaws, significantly simplified and accelerated the search for water.

On an autumn day—there was just a short break in work—Hans Sucher went out to the plot of land with the thorns to thoroughly test his *Stoßrohr*. A joyful feeling overcame him when he arrived there. He was just about to set the *Stoßrohr* when a biblical image appeared to him in his mind: he saw the cloud of Israel gathered around Moses with his raised staff, who was about to strike the rock at God's command so that it would provide water for the thirsty people. Involuntarily, his hands folded together and he prayed: "Dear God, who knows everything, show me the place where I can find water for humans and animals!"

He then began to work with the *Stoßrohr*, the weight of which was a bit too heavy for one person. This circumstance also led to a small mishap for Hans Sucher. After some successful blows, due to an awkward grip, the thumb of his right hand got caught in the slot of the *Stoßrohr* and was pinched by its end. The pipe fell to the ground, dragging our Hans Sucher down with it. Now he lay there helpless, his right hand bound to the pipe. With delight, he would have revealed his secret now if only someone had come and helped him free his thumb. He would not have cared about any possible mockery. But there was no one to be seen for miles around, and he was reliant on his skill and strength. With all his might, he finally managed to reach the spade with his left hand. With clumsy blows, he now struck the bung (*Stöpfel*) for so long until it loosened and freed his thumb.

He had had enough for that day and went home early. His wife was pleased about his early return. This apparently was also the only time that our Hans Sucher returned from the field on time; besides searching for water, he was also busy with many other improvement plans in agriculture. In this field, he was always striving to increase the soil's productivity by introducing new agricultural tools and applying new processing methods.



Harvest Time—[Grain Mowing Machine]

---

<sup>1</sup> [A *Stoßrohr* was a pipe within a pipe. The outside one fills with air when raised. The passage is then blocked and the pipe thrust downward, forcing the air onto the inside pipe. The pressure created forces the inside pipe to thrust downward and penetrate the soil in small increments.]

He kept silent about the little mishap with his *Stoßrohr*, but the thought of whether he would succeed in finding water constantly pursued him. The next day, he went out to the same piece of land again, but he took his hired hand with him, who was supposed to plow it for the upcoming spring. Actually, he was more concerned about having someone nearby in case something extraordinary happened during his work. He had confided his secret to this person. While the hired hand was plowing, Hans Sucher struggled with his *Stoßrohr*. He was so absorbed in his work that he did not notice the approach of a person and looked up startled at the greeting. But when he saw his brother before him, he was happy—he knew about his secret plan, and with united forces they started to work. Blow after blow was struck, and with each stroke the pipe penetrated about ten to fifteen centimeters [3.9—5.9 inches] deeper into the ground. Gradually, the earth became moister, and after a subsequent strong blow, an unexpectedly strange inarticulate sound emerged from the hole, resembling the gurgling of a jug when it is emptied.

The sound was not unfamiliar to the two brothers and it triggered a joyful echo in them: “Water, water!” This joyful cry reached the ears of the hired man who was plowing nearby, and he joined in the joyful call: “Woda, Woda!” Hans Sucher was not prepared for such a quick success; otherwise, he would have had an appropriate vessel ready with a cord for scooping. However, he knew how to manage: Using all the objects available to him that were suitable for scooping water from a narrow hole, he managed to create a primitive scoop and was able to gradually fill his wine bottle with the newly discovered water. He was happy about the success of his efforts and thought to himself: “Who seeks, he finds!” Later that same evening, Hans Sucher went to the town hall with the filled bottle to report his successful work to the municipal administration. Having found good drinking water at a depth of five meters [16.4 feet] in the vast steppe filled him with joy and pride. The cheerful event was also noted with satisfaction by them, but that was all that came of it; a communal project did not materialize, as the site was somewhat inconvenient. The further development was left to Hans Sucher and his friends, but the project he initiated and led gained general recognition, and the well was used by farmers to the extent possible.

Shortly thereafter, the community also built a well near the Pomana Well, which only partially solved the water issue. According to our Hans Sucher, wells should be established just over the hill on the first or second tier (plots of land); only then would it be possible to conveniently access the well water from any point on the vast expanse of land. This thought no longer rested easy with him. He contacted the two shepherd officials (*Hirtenschulzen*) Friedrich Lang and Gustav Richter, and after several consultations, they agreed to first determine the depth of the water table just over the hill, and then they would see how to proceed. Hans Sucher informed his brother about this, and now a weeks-long search action began, which was crowned with a pleasant success: at a depth of eight to ten meters [26.2—32.8 feet], water was present everywhere on the first and second land lot sections. This was a pleasant discovery, but the question of funding for the construction of the wells is a special chapter.

Yes, where to get the money from? This is what they were now racking their brains about. The proposal of the community secretary Radke found general approval. He pointed out the Warehouse Funds (*Magazingeld*) lying idle in the district town of Akkerman, which could be put to good use—well, that was easy to say, but not so easy to do. The community viewed it as a matter of course that Hans Sucher had to take charge of resolving the money issue for the

planned wells. They justified this view with the saying: “The one who says A must also say O!” or, in a more colloquial expression: “The horse that pulls the cart with all its strength must be driven even harder to get to the destination faster.”

Nevertheless, although Hans Sucher was used in various capacities, he agreed to take on the release of the Warehouse Funds for the above purpose. He was aware that he had taken on a difficult task, but he had not anticipated that it would be burdened with so many difficulties. How many trips he had to make to the district town, how many bowings (*Bücklinge*) he had to perform before the stone finally started to roll.

He was sent from Pontius to Pilate, but our Hans Sucher did not give up, well aware that a constant dripping wears away the stone. Thanks to his persistence and skillful approach, he managed to obtain the Warehouse Funds for the construction of wells in the field. These were also set up in the designated spots, and so creating the provision for the establishment of the new settlement Neu-Brienne.

[Translation Ends]