

History of Freudenfeld Municipality

Bessarabischer Heimatkalender—1960

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Translated by: Allen E. Konrad

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P.O. Box 157, Rowley, IA 52329

onamission1939@gmail.com

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

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[Translation Begins]

Chronicle of the Former German-Bessarabian Community of Freudenfeld (Ackerman District)

by Karl Ziegler

In response to the request of Pastor Erwin Meyer, who is working on the German-Bessarabian Homeland Book, a brief overview of the origin and development of the aforementioned community shall be provided here. The name *Freudenfeld*, which was known and common in our ethnic group, was not familiar with the non-German population. One reason for this was that the official name has always been *Moruseni*, named after Prince Morusi, whose land ownership encompassed not only the area of Freudenfeld but also the lands of Gnadenfeld, Eigenfeld, Sabary, and others. Another reason may be that the diphthong *eu*, as it appears in the word *Freudenfeld*, is tongue-twisting for a foreigner. Apparently, the German name, which was supposed to express a cheerful, joyful mood of the inhabitants, apparently did not correspond to reality. For Freudenfeld was a lease community and became well-acquainted with economic concerns. However, one must consider where the inhabitants of this community came from. They all, as far as can be determined, originated from the German-Bessarabian mother colonies, where space became increasingly scarce for the growing generation due to rapid population growth. A balance had to be created by relocating the excess population elsewhere. Mr. Jakob Reiser, from my hometown Gnadenfeld, provides a clear insight into these issues when he reports the following from the life of his ancestors: “Since my father, born in 1837 in Teplitz, learned the shoemaking trade, he was not allocated any land by his father. Therefore, he moved to Neu-Teplitz, where he cultivated some rented land. And only when the Gnadenfeld common land was put up for sale by its owner did he join the purchasing company and acquired in this

way a land quantity of 45 *Deßjatinen* [121.5 acres / 49 hectares] as his own. So far Mr. Reiser. The fate of many of the Freudenfeld people was probably similar to that of Gottlieb Reiser. There was no more room in the home community. And now imagine someone seeks out these people and tries to win their favor. The recruiter knows the diligence, perseverance, and integrity of the German farmer and only wishes to entrust his land for cultivation to him. And who can comprehend the sudden change such a campaign causes. No wonder that the joyful mood reveals itself in the naming of a community.

The common land where Freudenfeld was established covered 2,000 *Deßjatinen* [5,400 acres / 2,180 hectares]. The owner, Kipperwasser, had purchased the land in the sixties from a certain Costake for about 12 rubles per *Deßjatine*. Costake's foster father, Naum, was childless, and thus his adopted son became the only heir of the large estate. Costake is said to have led a self-indulgent (*liederliches*) life and was forced to sell his inheritance to pay off the debts he had incurred. Naum found his final resting place in the cemetery in Moruseni. The gravestone set for him was lost in the flow of time, and soon the traces of the burial site were no longer known. Until the purchase of the aforementioned estate, Kipperwasser operated a successful schnapps tavern in Alt-Arzis. Kipperwasser's aim was not only to attract German farmers as tenants but also to bind them to the land for a long time. It was a great satisfaction for the farmers that everyone could cultivate an unlimited amount of land. Another agreement was that each tenant could construct his buildings on the assigned property (*Hofstelle*) as he pleased, provided that all buildings of a tenant leaving the village would pass into the ownership of the landowner. A no less heavy burden was that the village community assumed full economic responsibility for all its citizens. For example, if someone failed to meet his payments to the landowner, the entire population had to cover the respective payment deficit. Since the community of Freudenfeld was also frequently afflicted by poor harvests, there were especially in such times always families who could not pay the rent (about 3 rubles per *Deßjatine*) on time. And so the obligation "all for one" soon had catastrophic effects. Therefore, it is not surprising that even honest country folks, who had done nothing wrong, set off at night and in secrecy to find refuge in another German community. The rest of the land, which Kipperwasser could not lease, he cultivated himself and engaged in agriculture as well as cattle and horse breeding. His particular pride was in the horses, of which he owned a considerable herd. He often used his horses for a special type of threshing. The harvested grain was spread over an extensive area enclosed by a wooden fence. The horses were driven around in this pen until the grain was threshed. The lord of the manor was to have always been unapproachable regarding the reduction of the rent prices. When he was once again asked to reduce the rent, he is said to have expressed himself as follows: "If I have a hundred sheep, there will always be one that is going to make a mistake (*vergacktes*)."

This meant that there will always be a fool who will pay him the demanded rent price. After the death of old Kipperwasser, the entire estate went to his four children: Herschel, Nuchim, Matthis, and Sura, married Berber. Among these descendants, Freudenfeld dissolved completely except for some German families. Until our Resettlement, the two long-established families, Wilhelm Machus and Artur Schock, remained in Freudenfeld. The vacant houses were gradually occupied by non-Germans.

The municipality of Freudenfeld, which extended parallel to the Sarata Valley on the left bank of the Sarata stream, and was located 28 kilometers [17.4 miles] north of the Sarata train station, was laid out according to the model of German colonial villages. A wide, straight street with

rows of houses on both sides, and the rectangular, spacious yards, whose houses faced the street gable-first, were characteristic of this municipality. Adjacent to the houses, which were separated from the street by a 1.5 meter [4.9 feet] high wall, were the necessary outbuildings, sheds, and stables. The houses, which were 4 to 5 meters [13-16 feet] away from the street wall, were built from stones or clay and covered with thatch. To better nurture the religious life of the German community, the old Kipperwasser built for his farmers a spacious prayer house with a bell tower and a bell in the center of the village, which was about a kilometer [.6 miles] long. On the west side of the road, opposite the prayer house, stood the villa-like manor house. Freudenfeld belonged to the Klöstitz parish, from where it was served by a pastor several times a year. On the remaining Sundays and holidays, reading services took place. Two individuals from among the farmers emerged as the sexton and teacher. They were Wilhelm Hermann, who later moved to Gnadenfeld, and Christian Kienzle, who established a new home in the Caucasus.

The aforementioned heirs lived in the city of Kischinew and only occasionally visited their estates, which were managed by administrators. In 1918, the estates were plundered, with the church and manor house being burned down. It was left to the German Wehrmacht, which soon after entered Bessarabia, to punish the looters who had been reported. About four years after the plundering, the Moruseni area was divided among landless peasants according to Romanian expropriation law. Each of the heirs was left with 100 hectares [247 acres]. This land amount was given to German farmers from the surrounding area as “half farms” [*die Hälfte*]. It was now a difficult time for the owners, as the income from their land was barely enough for their livelihood. And so it often happened that the *Pertscheptia* [probably a miss-spell for *Pretscheptia*—which means “official document agreement”] seized the harvest yields until the due taxes were paid.

The members of the community from Freudenfeld, as far as could be determined, came from the following municipalities:

Kulm	Dickhoff, Daniel
	Henneberg, Immanuel
	Fischer, Christian
	Fischer, Christoph
	Schulz, Johann
Alt-Arzis	Simon, Hermann
	Hermann, Michael
	Hermann, Wilhelm
	Hermann, Christian
	Mackus, Wilhelm
	(until the very end)
	Machus, Michael
	Mackus, Immanuel
	Schock, August
	Schock, Artur
Lichtental	(until the very end)
	Weiß, Michael
	Wilhelm, Michael

Sarata	Messerschmitt, Immanuel
Paris	Konrad, Ferdinand
	Krüger, Joseph
	Pohl, Simon
Teplitz	Eberle, Christian
	Fink, Friedrich Sr.
	Fink, Friedrich Jr.
Alt-Posttal	Bohnet, Christian
Brienne	Hins, Heinrich
	Traichel, Jakob
Beresina	Mayer, Daniel
Gnadental	Hornung, ?
	Kienzle, Christian
Neu-Elft	Netzer, ?
	Heidinger, Jakob

Since the names mentioned above are taken from an oral tradition, I ask for your understanding if some details should not correspond with reality. In any case, my heartfelt thanks go to Mr. Jakob Reißer, Jakob and Johannes Weiß, my brother Otto Ziegler, and Mrs. Mathilde Irion (all from Gnadenfeld) for their energetic assistance in compiling this chronicle. Finally, I would like to share a joke from Johann Waldbauer, who owned a windmill in Freudenfeld. Once, when he wanted to grease the “king” (the axis to which the blades of the windmill were attached), he lost his balance and fell from a considerable height. When someone asked him why he did not hold on better, he cleverly replied: “*Wäh off äm Wech es, mott ouk fort.*” (Whoever is on the way must also go forward).

*Und wimmert auch einmal das Herz,
Stoß an, und laß es klingen,
Wir wissen's doch, ein rechtes Herz
Ist gar nicht umzubringen. (Storm)*

And the heart also sometimes whimpers,
Strike it, and let it ring,
We know it well, a true heart
Is hardly to be killed. --(Storm)--

[Translation Ends]