

## Paris, Bessarabia – Part 3b

*Paris in Bessarabien:*  
*Chronik der Gemeinden Paris und Neu-Paris in Bessarabien,*  
Arthur Suckut, self-published, 1986, 321 pages.

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Information in square brackets [ ] is that provided by the translator. This book has 321 pages of information. So as to not overload a digitized copy of this book, the translation will be made in parts. The translation below is from pages 112-163 of Arthur Suckut's book. Whenever reference is made to something that can be found in Appendix 2,3, and 4, these are located in Paris, Bessarabia—Part 1. Appendix 5,6, and 9 are located in Paris, Bessarabia—Part 2.

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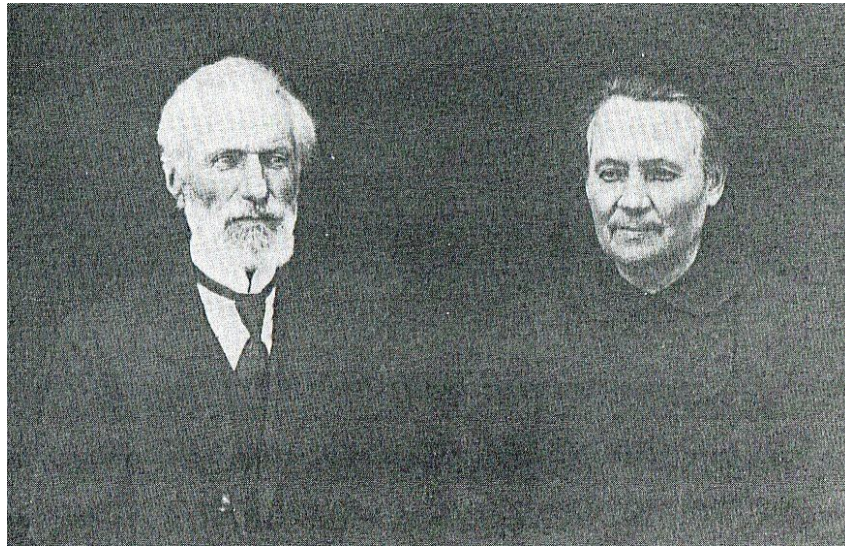
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Christian Weiß and his wife Theresie née Siewert

As noted elsewhere, they were also long-standing presidents of the Fellowship Movement; Ottomar Eichelberg again after 1945, Eduard Suckut his deputy. By virtue of their office, they were also members of the Synod in Tarutino, of which Friedrich Heer and Johannes Eichelberg also were. Suckut and Eichelberg have decisively influenced, directed and made an impression on decades of the Fellowship Association at home and after the war. Eternity will reveal what they were allowed to do in the name of Jesus in their congregation, for the blessing of many.

Likewise, we had unforgettable clerks/notaries in the community, whom we cannot thank enough for their knowledge, their performance, their commitment, such as Mr. Ruck, Bechtle, Erdmann, Höllwarth, Kaul all the way up to Michael Borck, the only person of Paris origin! For a long time our elders spoke of these gentlemen with pride and reverence. Then also the many and good “justices of the peace” (*Friedensrichter*) who ensured order and peace in the village community! And foremost the many teachers who taught us not only reading, writing and other good things, but who were also culturally and economically active. An account of Johannes Eichelberg is given elsewhere. Johannes Keller and Emil Heer founded the *Association “Leuchtturm”* in 1933 and managed it for a long time; both founded and led the *Brass Band* in 1934, until Otto Reppnach was able to take over in 1936. Both teachers were also active in the Cooperative Association, as well as teacher Albert Eckert, especially teacher Immanuel Steudle, for many years accountant and buyer for the Cooperative Association. He also worked as an auditor in the “German Business Association” (*Deutschen Wirtschaftsverband*) and, as part of his work, gave lectures here and there on questions about the economy and soil cultivation at major events in the municipalities. Albert Eckert was also the founder of the “*Comrade Fellowship*” (*Kameradschaft*) and its director until October of 1940.

We owe a great deal to our teachers! They also started with fruit improvement and wine improvement, they have a decisive role in matters of cattle breeding (all animal species) and have started with it themselves. Johannes Keller has not only brought new breeds to his new building—in chicken farming—but he has even introduced an “egg-counting method,” with great

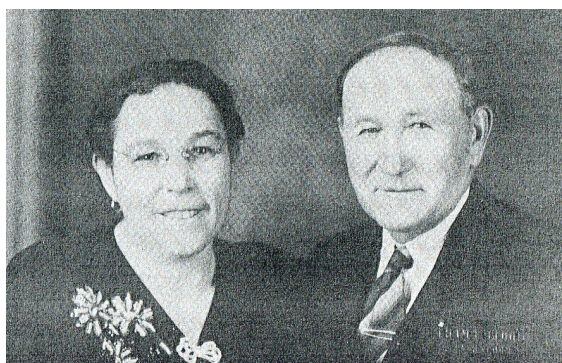
success, so also Albert Eckert. Yes, we owe a great deal of thanks and recognition to all of them, to the ones mentioned here and to the many unnamed. The fact that they were “at home” in this way in Paris, they have repeatedly confirmed, whether still back home, whenever someone helped them in building a house or something else, whether later in the time of Resettlement or even after the war, after the flight. Here some people were grateful if they could be certified by former villagers (officials, and others) as to what he was in Paris and did besides that. And those who got into difficulties because of their time in the “Third Reich” sought advice from Eduard Suckut and, if necessary, a certificate—which was valid, which was recognized!

So much in a few words the “praises” (*Laudatio*) on deserving personalities of our former homeland. I apologize when it is no longer possible, when maybe some names have not been mentioned, “that it did not interest us!”

For more names of “prominent people” see appendix #6.

## Migration and Emigration

The “limited size” (*Enge*) of the village, as already described several times, but also the economic and political conditions brought with it that many people of Paris no longer saw any possibilities and left the village. Particularly vulnerable times, such as years of war or persistent emergency years, usually led to large numbers of emigrations to America (North and South America). Unfortunately, of the drawn-up lists, which were still created in 1938/39 in the old homeland, only the “supplement” was located for our community; the main list with most of the other people in the course of decades can no longer be found. The small “supplement” is



Robert Klein and wife Katharina née Kelm, moved to Canada in 1929 (also his brother Tobias with family went with him at the same time)



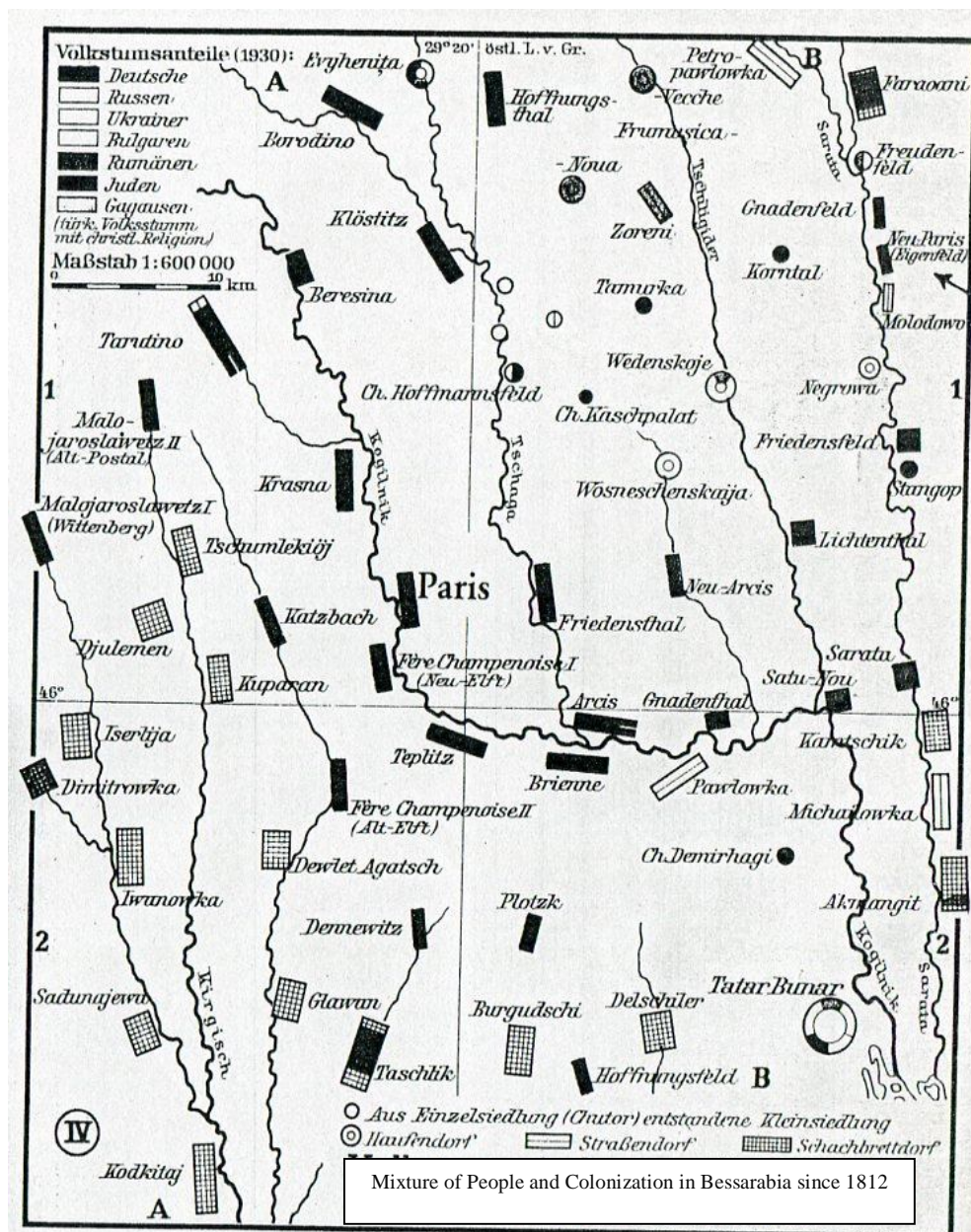
Children of Robert and Katharina Klein (from left to right): Albert, Irma, Ernst, Hugo

included in the appendix. No longer able to be established, numbers and names migrated to other villages, that is, to new established places, of which most of them are also people from Paris. If one reads the short descriptions of some municipalities in our homeland calendars, both those from back home and in those published here after 1945, one can find enough examples, whether these are individual or several families; further traces then go again from these municipalities to other new established places, also to the Dobrudscha and even further. Even our generation knows about such emigrations to Alexanderfeld, Kaschpalat, Mannsburg and

other places in the immediate and further redevelopment of our home village. For example, I was told that on Pentecost of 1927, when the church tower clock and the war memorial were dedicated in Paris, a whole train car full of “Kaschuben”—as the Swabians call us—had travelled to Paris from Mannsburg and the surrounding area (Alisowka, Schimke-Gut, and other places). They had two special characteristics in themselves: on the one hand, they sang a lot (that is the way people of Paris do it!) and of course they only spoke Kaschübisch—these are strangers among the Germans in Bessarabia! What our dialect meant to us and what value was to us, more of it later.

## The Leased Community of Neu-Paris

This is not our daughter community which was created in 1910. Between 1860 and 1880, many people of Paris (their names are no longer known) had settled on *leased land near Nadeshta*.



The municipality of *Eigenfeld* (1880) and *Gnadenfeld* (1881), which was later founded there, previously had the name Neu-Paris, which is clearly shown by the attached map. A fellow-countryman sent me an excerpt which he found in the *Bessarabischen Kalender 1932*. On pages 70 and 71, W. Schöch, then a sexton-teacher of Eigenfeld, explained in his brief description of the municipality, among other things: at this point, where today Eigenfeld is located, a small village was laid out under the name Neu-Paris. The tenants lived rather sparsely, for the most part in miserable earth huts...The people of Neu-Paris were culturally and materially very neglected. They loved work less, and more so the wine. When they founded Eigenfeld, they had a “school teacher,” by the name of Walker from Friedenstal (in the sixties they had their own Paris teacher, a Peter König, who then moved to Tarutino in 1885—author’s note). After the people of Neu-Paris had lost all rights in 1880 (they could not buy the land because of their poverty—author’s note), they grabbed hold of the walking stick and went out into the world in all directions... This Neu-Paris ceased to exist. Only the Gabert, Ring, Schulz, Siewert families gradually found their way back to the mother community. Teacher Peter König did not come back. Other names have disappeared “without trace.”

## **Founding of our Daughter Colony Neu-Paris**

After the first Neu-Paris ceased to exist, our people were looking for other possibilities. It was agreed in the mother community to look for new settlement possibilities either in their own village or in the Schager Valley. That was 1909-10. There would have been space in the village, and in some higher places side roads had already been built; but the risk of flooding by the Kogältnik was repeated again and again, so that one could not decide to establish new farmyards on the free clover sections at both ends of the village. A few years later, after the railway construction in 1913-1915, this possibility was available; the dam, which was several meters high, was like a strong barrier between the village and the river and did not allow the flooding to enter the village, or very little by the built-in outlets, which were supposed to allow the outflow of the Old Kogältnik, which was cut off from the main river by the dam.

## **Surveying of the Farmyards in the Schager Valley**

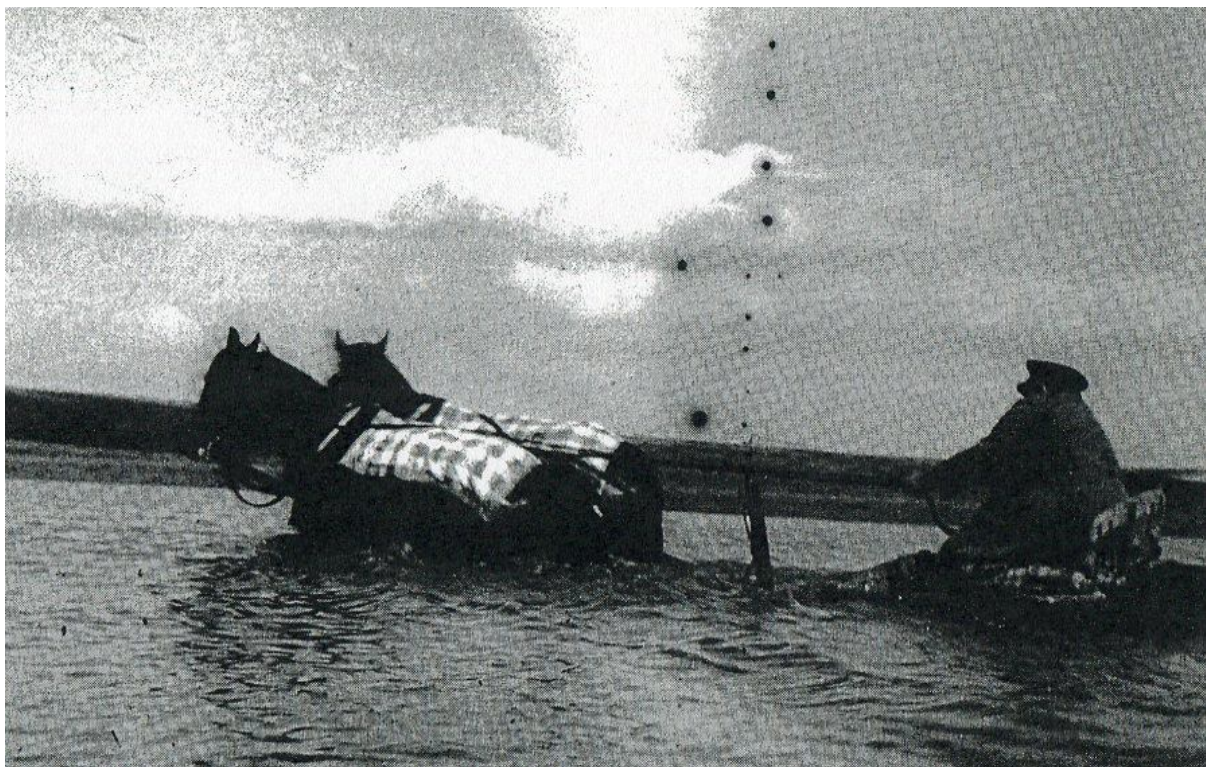
Every whole farmyard in the Mother Village should once again have a whole farmyard in the planned Neu-Paris; half a yard have half a yard, and so forth. The farmyards were laid out about 1 km [0.6 mile] from the Schag River, toward the hills to prevent flooding. There was only one road in a north-south direction, about 5 km [3 miles] north of Friedenstal and about 15 km [9 miles] south of Klöstitz; both places were also located in the Schager Valley (one also pronounced it Schaga or Tschag).

It was planned that only sons of the people of Paris would settle in the new part of the town. But this did not last long, because the people of Paris hesitated to go into this “wilderness,” where until then there were only meadows, pastures and many and tall weeds. Robbers and wolves had their hiding places here and in adjoining ravines. So it came to pass that people from other communities were allowed to come, often those who were related to people of Paris through marriage. They came from Teplitz, Katzbach, Beresina, Friedenstal and elsewhere. The first settler, however, was a genuine person from Paris, *Johannes Kühn I*. He was no longer alive at

the time of the Resettlement, on his farmyard stands the name of his wife Katharina Kühn, at the upper part of Alexander König. This Kühn was alone in this wilderness for a few years from 1910, surrounded by wind and weather, far and wide no human being. He could talk about how in winter the wolves howled around his farmyard, especially at night, and only disappeared when it had become daylight. How he lived in fear! He and his family, but also all the animals, were in well-barricaded rooms and stables, no one dared to get out, often for days! What joy and happiness when others moved in some time later. Even today, people get goose bumps when they remember how he told them about his experiences!

## Village Layout

In the entire layout, Neu-Paris was planned to be smaller than the mother village. The street was about 2 km [1.3 miles] long (1940), about 35-40m [115-131 feet] wide. The farmyards were also smaller. The length was just under 130m [426 feet], the width 34m [112 feet], which was a whole yard, a half yard in width accordingly; length always remained the same.



At The Kogälnik during floods in September 1938—something like this happened more often!

If you add twice the length of a yard (130m x2=260m) and the width of the continuous road with 40m, this results in a total width of the village of 300m [984 feet]. There were also three pairs of storks in the village at the time of the Resettlement, one each on the school roof, with Immanuel Franz and Johannes Ring; here in the past even several on a straw stack in the backyard. The length of the municipality in 1940 was exactly 2,000m=2km [6,560 feet=1.3 miles]. At the time of the Resettlement in October of 1940, 120 farmsteads were built in Neu-Paris, including the schoolhouse and the prayer house. The municipal square opposite the school (see area plan of

Neu-Paris) was intended for a future town hall, eventually also municipal shops, and so forth. However, this never happened. There were still 40 vacant, undeveloped farmyards. All the farmyards together 160—after 30 years since its founding already quite respectable!

The distance to the Schar River was just over 1,000m [3,280 feet], half of which—located beyond the river—all already fielded; half of what was planned for the village was pasture land. Pasture land was also located at both ends of the village, at least 1-2km [0.6-1.2 miles] each. In the direction of the “Pariser Berg,” where the good vineyards were on the southern sunny slope, to the upper part the cemetery and farmland, it was about 500m [1,640 feet] to the steeper ascent. Behind the cemetery, a still young forest layout had already been started. The way from the village to the cemetery was also planted on both sides with young trees, mostly acacias; in between were planted berry bushes and flowers. Every school child had “his” section that he had to take care of, which happened with great joy and devotion. Everyone wanted to do well.

## **Development of the Young Community**

### **a) The Life of the Church**

Like the mother church, the “daughter” also belonged to the Alt-Elft Parish. The pastor visited six to seven times a year, otherwise the sexton-teacher (*Küsterlehrer*) at that time conducted the worship service (*Gottesdienst*). If this was not possible, the elected church councilors, the “Brethren” among them, were allowed to hold the reading service. As far as is known, these were Heinrich Frieske, Johannes Reinhardt and Benjamin Schäfer. The pastor stayed with them when he visited the congregation, unless he stayed with the sexton-teacher, who had his apartment in the prayer house and schoolhouse. However, the pastor also made home visits to other people. In order to attend the confirmation classes, the students—like those of Paris—had to go to Alt-Elft, where they were all taught together by the pastor for three to four weeks. However, they were not confirmed with those of Paris, but together with those being confirmed from Alt-Elft. The “children's teaching” (*Kinderlehre*), the post-school instruction up to the age of 18, was carried out in Neu-Paris by the sexton-teachers and the church councils. The pastor very rarely came to the remote small congregation for weddings or other ecclesiastical acts. The residents had to go either to the mother community of Paris or even to the parish of Alt-Elft. In general, this “daughter” was subordinated to or attached to the “mother” in all areas, because all official functions in the young community were, so to speak, only “deputy delegation” of the mother community.

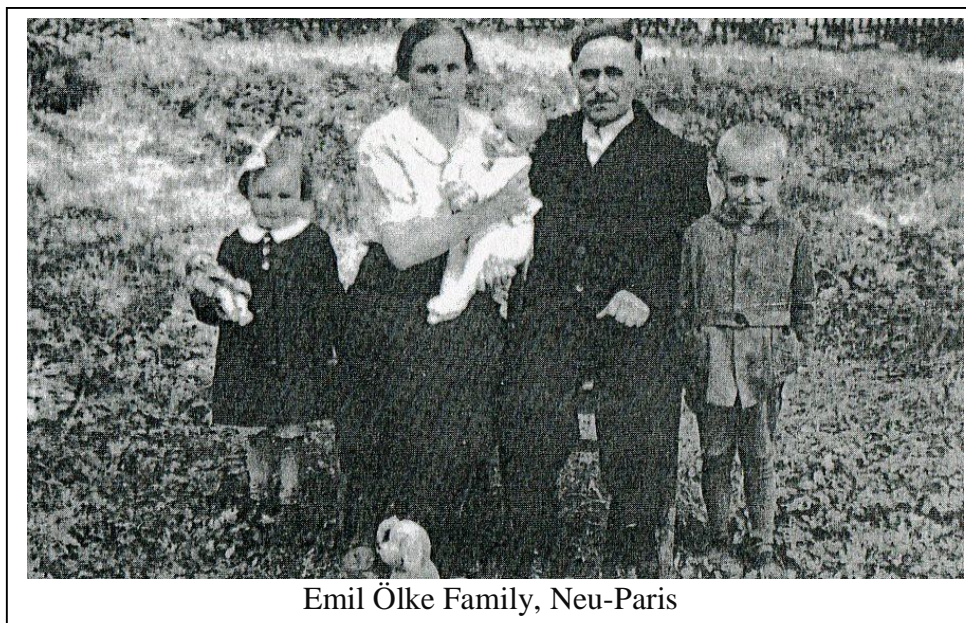
### **b) The Life of the School**

As everywhere and at all times of our colonist days in Bessarabia, church and school were one unit. To put it in a picture of speech: the church was the “mother,” the school her “daughter.” Our schools were almost always—with several years of exceptions when we had to be “state schools”—church schools. In the first decades, it was “house schools,” back and forth in the houses where things were going best; or divided into Upper village and Lower village. The first lessons were given by colonists themselves, those who could read and write. In the early years, teaching aids and learning aids were hymns, catechism and, above all, the Bible, which the old folks had brought with them from their former homeland. They read together, learned a lot by



heart, and through a lot of singing they learned the songs by heart, because not all could have their own books. It was only after decades that the first trained teachers came, usually from the “Werner School” in Sarata.

The municipal council in Paris had already considered it in 1923 and decided to build a schoolhouse and a prayer house in Neu-Paris for the increasingly numerous settlers and their children. But it first got started in 1926. They continued to build bit by bit, as they had the means to do it. It was not until *4 November, 1928* that Pastor Simsonst *dedicated* the finished house. The house was divided in the middle by a hallway. In the upper section toward the village there were two classrooms and the sexton-teacher’s residence; the lower section for the prayer hall, separated for women and men—as in all of Bessarabia—ten rows of benches each. Up to 400 people could be accommodated. On a small elevation were a table and a reading lectern. A pulpit was not installed until 1938 by the carpenter Gottlieb König from Alt-Paris.



The house had a total length of about 30 meters [98 feet] and about 10 meters [32 feet] wide. It was diagonal to the street. It had wooden floors throughout, laid by the carpenters Samuel Ölke, his son Jakob, Heinrich Frieske and Johann Fano. A few years later, a bell tower with a bell was put up in front of the house. In the back schoolyard were municipal buildings for warehouse, fire brigade, equipment, stables for breeding animals and shepherd's house.

According to some in the know and the few documents found, the following information can be obtained: in 1930, there were already 259 inhabitants; in 1933, already 330; 1936=444, and at the time of the Resettlement in October of 1940, already 500 inhabitants, only Germans. In other words, a steady upward trend due to ongoing influx and very strong birth rates.

Unfortunately, the number of pupils is not recorded anywhere; it is believed that there were about 100 pupils in 1940.

The first recollected teachers/sexton-teachers in the community were:

1926 to Nov. 1927	Daniel Thimm from Neu-Arzis
1927-1929	Theodor Schaible from Klöstitz
1929-1931	Wilhelm Eckert from Sarata
1932-1940	Emil Eckert from Sarata
1935-1938	Reinhold Wegenast from Beresina
1938-1940	Tobias Wildermuth from Lichtental

For a brief time in the 1930s, a Romanian teacher, Popesku, also worked at the Neu-Paris School.

There was no kindergarten in the village; as is common in our country, the older children themselves have taken care of the little ones and thus relieved their mothers. From a church-school point of view, it remains to be noted that the first “house worship services” took place with John and Martin König.

Gustav Reinhardt, Alfred Ölke and others have compiled and names of “official persons” for village administration, church and school: Johannes Ring (de grout Ring), Johannes König, Christlieb Pfahl, Eduard Stelter, Jakob Bölke, Johannes Pöd, Heinrich Frieske, Johannes Kühn, Johannes Reinhardt and others.

When the foundation stone was laid in 1926, a box was also buried, which contained documents, papers, dates and numbers, names and money from that time.

For the male youth, the “*Premilitari*” (pre-military training) existed from the age of 18 until he was called up to the military. To do this, the young men did not have to go to Alt-Paris, but to Friedenstal, because the village, which was only 5 kilometers [3 miles] away, was closer and could be reached more quickly. For mustering—we called it “casting lots” (*Losung*)—they joined those from Friedenstal and went to Arzis, while those from Paris had to go to Klöstitz.

### **c) Economic development**

All the land of the new municipality was land belonging to the mother municipality. Between 1910 and 1912, some of the people of Alt-Paris joined forces and bought 1,500 hectares [3,706 acres] of land on the Hoffmannsteppe to the north of the village and on the so-called “Schreibersteppe” on the other side of the Schag River. Unfortunately, all this did not go so well, in that the citizens could no longer pay, a lot of land was lost again, not least due to the Russian Liquidation Laws of February and December 1915. Neu-Paris was left with only 780 hectares [1,927 acres] of land.

Due to the energy of the people, the Consumer Association “*Lumina*” was founded already in 1936, with shop and dairy, there were 30 registered members. The shop was located at the place of Otto Jaßmann, the dairy at Immanuel Beck. Groundup grain (*Schrot*) was provided by two windmills in the village, one by Friedrich Frieske and one by Wilhelm Salo, who also worked as a hunter and was in the transport business. The milk was delivered to Friedenstal.

The municipality also had its necessary craftsmen and dealers, such as butchers, blacksmiths, shoemakers, carpenters and wagon-makers, fork-makers and basket makers, also tailors for men's

and women's clothing. What was not consumed in their own village was taken to the nearest markets. The only cooper (*Küfer*), a son of Samuel Ölke, moved on to Borodino. The official messenger was Andreas Quart, and there was also a children's music school under Friedrich Wenzlaff.

Two men, one from the Upper village and one from the Lower village had to take turns to keep night watch. In the period of Romanian administration, especially in the thirties, Neu-Paris was renamed and had various names in the official language: Decebal, Paris-Nou or Parisul-Nou, Post Klöstitz.

#### **d) Other Information about Neu-Paris**

The brothers Eduard and Gotthilf Bölke traded a lot and kept providing good breeding animals, horses, cows, and others.

There were also two “Brethren Fellowships” (*Brüdergemeinschaften*), one each in the Upper and Lower village, one led by Eduard Broneske, the other by Samuel Buchholz.

Accidents to point out are that several times lightening struck, twice at the Otto Ölke place, and on another occasion two horses were killed in front of his wagon while travelling, and once three cows. There were also floods from time to time. In order to be able to cross the Schag better, a wooden bridge was built in the mid-thirties, as a connection to Neu-Friedenstal, to Kaschpalat and further on. In some places, “dams” were laid out in the riverbed; these were piles of stones and other rubble (bricks, and so forth) in order to raise the riverbed in a suitable place so that one could pass through there also in water over to the *Schreibersteppe*. These embankments were also used for the damming up of water during the dry seasons and for the depositing of hemp and flax in the water, for softening and better processing afterwards. In addition to sheep wool, these two products were the raw materials from which our women made their fabrics and their further processing. There was always the saying about our women: “Self-spun, self-made, is the nicest farmer garb!”

In the school, there were also culture: amateur theatricals and a library with more than 200 volumes. To begin with, a rather imposing number!

Flour and oil were obtained on the markets or in some neighboring communities. This “second” Neu-Paris had stability and growth and enjoyed prestige and trust all around, it was a young, aspiring community.

Of course, there were also some hardships in this young community, as in others. It too has been plagued by crop failures, years of hardship and famine, floods, snowstorms and the like.

In the *Dakota Freier Press* (DFP) “newspaper correspondents” from the Bessarabia communities have written several times a year about special events in their communities. So we also find a lot about Neu-Paris in it. In 1929, Samuel Sukkut asks his emigrated cousins August Suckut and Wilhelm Sippert for a “call card” (*Rufkarte*) so that he can emigrate, at their expense, with his family (eight children) who are in great need. Here (Neu-Paris) the need is indescribably great, there is hunger, illness and death. It has never been known whether his request was met and fulfilled. Samuel Ölke made the same request to his brother Adam to buy him a “call card” over

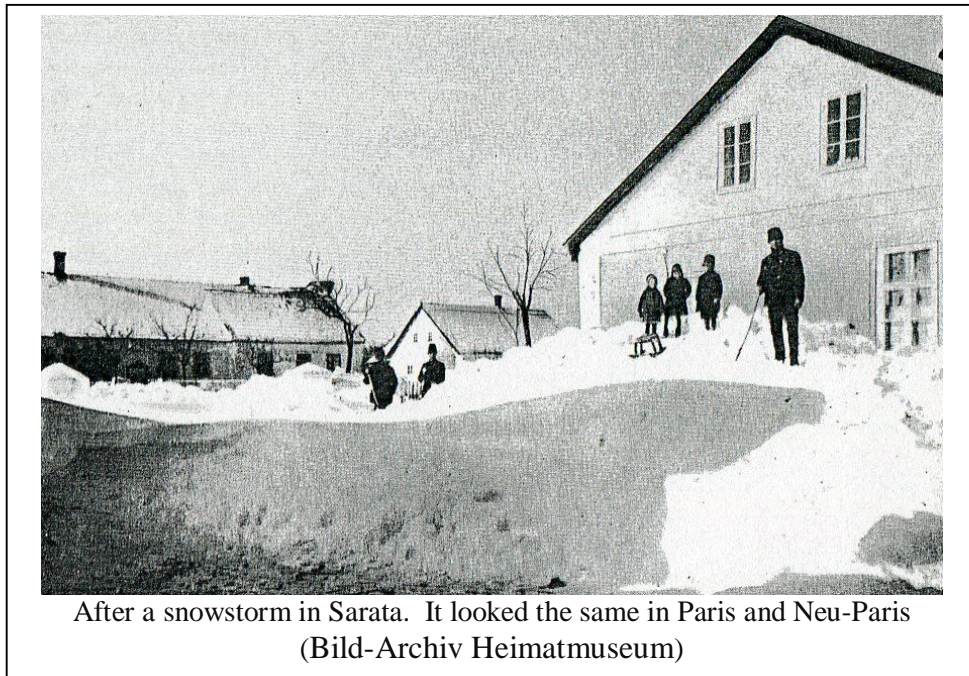
there and let him come there. But even that was not fulfilled. It is presumed that many of the requests and desires during the international economic crises came to nothing. Although many emigrated from our homeland at that time, mainly to North America and South America, many failed to follow the same path to a better future.

A Mr. Rudolf Pfeiffer, who was in Neu-Paris for several years (doing what job?), has often reported on what is happening in the community. A report of 10. February, 1931 is briefly outlined here: Since 18/19 January it has been snowing constantly until recently, along with a strong snowstorm with high drifts (as one hears, in many other communities as well). With us, many farmyards are almost completely snow-bound. Neighborhoods organize, who shovel each other free. Some families are trapped for over three days, this also applies to the animals in the stables. There is also a lack of supplies for daily provision. Now they shovel free yard after yard so that people can get out to buy things and to feed the animals, and so forth. Settler Gottlieb Salo suffered an heart attack under this distress, he died at the age of 73. Words cannot describe the need!

As far as we know, the following families or individuals emigrated between 1924 and 1936:

1924—Gotthilf Sturm	1 Person (single)	to Canada
1926—Eduard Beierle	4 Persons	to Brazil
1927—Rosina Sturm	3 Persons (widow)	to Canada
1927—Gottlieb Sturm	2 Persons	to Canada
1928—Reinhold Wittchen	4 Persons	to Brazil (wrote often!)
1929—Christlieb Pfahl	6 Persons	to Canada
1929—Johannes Radies	6 Persons	to Canada
1936—Gottfried Broneske	6 Persons	to Dobrudscha

A list of those who resettled in 1940, the fallen and missing 1940-1945 as well as the area map can be found in the appendix.



## **Eigengut Schimke and Kaschpalat**

Both communities were “pure” Paris colonies in their founding years. Again, it was people who were moving forward, for whom Paris had become too confined, who were looking for land and opportunities for development, like many others in the course of our history. For the mother community, this was always a “blood-letting” (*Aderlaß*), in part quite painful, because in many cases those who had a lot of energy and enterprising spirit moved away. Could a person blame them for this?

The already mentioned Gottlieb Schimke, who worked from 1883-1893 as a high school teacher in Paris, as well as a very energetic farmer and businessman, had made a lot of money and wanted to move away in order to make some changes. He owned the yard between the rich David König (Andreas) and Johannes Pfahl. In his time, it was still a whole farm, not as now indicated in the local map (Eduard Draht and Daniel Krüger (heir-*Erben*). The people of Paris did not want to let this good and honorable man go and promised him help. He did not quite trust it and left at night quietly and secretly. He left a note in the courtyard on which a very meaningful verse was written (he was a gifted man, a poet, a teacher; so in the founding years of “Schimke-Gut” he himself worked as a sexton-teacher—author’s note.), who had a lot to say to the people of Paris and somehow became “notorious” (*ruchbar*) throughout the country:

Here is where I was, here is where I will not come again;  
Here is where I pooped—here it stinks so very much!

Would not he, and his people of Paris, deserve a better farewell? This language had nevertheless been understood by the “leaders” of the community.

### **a) Eigengut Schimke**

It was founded in 1895 by the already mentioned Paris colonist Gottlieb Schimke, who set out and tried a new beginning not far from Mannsburg, where many people of Paris had already settled since 1862. In order not to remain alone, he drew his relatives to him: Schimke, Fano, Klein, Krauß; and a Wagner family who were not from Paris. Until the very end, the Paris Platt [dialect] was predominant. One of the founder's sons later returned to the mother community, it was Eduard Schimke and his family. Around 1938, he moved again, but I do not know where to. The small but economically healthy place had several names. More about this is described in great detail in “*The Municipality of Schimke-Weiler*” (*Die Gemeinde Schimke-Weiler*) by Guide Fano, also one who came from Paris, today a teacher in Kirchheim/Teck.

On page 141 of the above-mentioned book he lists "Schimker" names, which in turn went on “the journey” and above all constructed mills:

in Bairamtscha, Akkerman District:	Wilhelm and Otto Klein and a partner;
in Jaroslawka, Akkerman District:	Wilhelm and Otto Klein and a partner;
in Wolontirowka, Akkerman District:	Wilhelm and Otto Klein and a partner;
in Zaritscheanka, Akkerman District:	Rudolf Schimke, Gustav Klein, Reinhold Fano, Simon Fano and O. Blum

in Oloneschti, Tighina District:

Alfred Klein and a Keller

So we see that the Paris enterprising spirit has been effective and successful in distant places!



Four generations together (1943) from Schimkegut and Paris:  
Krauß - Pfahl - Ziebart

## **b) Kaschpalat**

In 1911, it was two from Paris who made the start here. One of them being Wilhelm Schimke, a son of Gottlieb Schimke. He bought 500 *Dessjatinen* [1,350 acres] of land, along with the other who had bought as much. That person was Theodor Beck, a son of “Old Beck.” He had been charged with “Sunday desecration” (*Sonntagesschändung*) (he negotiated with Bulgarians on the sale of reeds); He was incensed by it, he sold his farmyard (Gottfried Weiß is living there now) and sold his land and went to Kaschpalat. Over time, many from Paris followed because there was still a lot of cheap land to buy. Some also came from other communities, but at the time of the Resettlement, just over half of the inhabitants were of “Paris blood.”

Example after example could also be made (as has already been mentioned in part), but let us leave it at that. There should be only small clues, like a kernel of seed, which may inspire some to follow the seed that has germinated and be permitted to harvest it. Mosaic stones are enough, sought after is the master for making a finished picture out of it. If you should enjoy something like this, I would be glad to assist.

## **c) A Traveler of a Special Kind**

My most loyal colleague in the things pertaining to “Neu-Paris,” Alfred Ölke in Langenau near Ulm, writes in a letter dated 11 August, 1985 about the gift of a book that he had received for his 65<sup>th</sup> birthday, very interesting and informative. The book is called “East German Destiny on the Black Sea” (*Ostdeutsches Schicksal am Schwarzen Meer*) by Dr. Johannes Florian Müller. It deals with the life of the Dobrudscha-Germans. In it, it is reported, of an Adam Kühn, who had lived in Paris (Bess.) until 1843, then went on a journey, together with many others (names unknown), until he, after five (!) moves, finally remained in Admandscha, Dobrudscha, in 1848. He had many and high offices in the areas, most recently mayor in Admandscha. He died at the

age of 93, leaving behind 11 children, 50 grandchildren and 250 great-grandchildren. Truly, he was not only a “restless man,” he was also a rich and blessed man, and that into old age.

In the *Heimatkalender 1985*, Hugo Häfner mentions this strange man and writes there that he was born in 1809 in Posen, moved with his parents to Bessarabia in 1814 and lived in Paris until 1843. He then went on a journey until 1861; in the same year Adam Kühn told a clergyman, “Pastor, I know our people; I am also of the emigrants; once emigration gets to you, there is no stopping; and if they had to take off their shirts in order to get rid of it, they would have to do it and leave without a shirt—but to be on the way they must” (page 57/58). Yes, so are, so were the people of Paris! Nevertheless—as it says in an old church book—many emigrants repeatedly returned to their home village, especially when their children had reached the confirmation age or had simply been taken by homesickness, as a verse so aptly puts it (poet unknown): “Homesickness is a great pain, it pierces every heart; and with all great and small, it is homesickness for being back home!”

#### **d) Vanished and Died Out Surnames**

According to the still legible names in the *Family Book Paris 1891*, which contains entries up to 1938, I have been able to find more than 60 surnames that have emigrated, vanished or died out over the decades, for example, in severe years of need. The entries are often indistinct and incomplete; as far as I could copy them, they should be listed in Appendix #4, without claiming to be accurate or complete. The local information given there—often generally none at all—as well as the annual figures, must also be marked with many question marks. But for all the gaps, one or the other can find “traces of his past” and continue to investigate it. Seen in this way, this list can still pay off.

### **Life and Behavior in the Village Community**

Far from the German motherland, surrounded by a dozen different foreign people, sometimes subject to this, sometimes to that administration, one only knows what it means to be allowed to have a home in one's own fatherland. Our young generation today can hardly understand this any more; the one who himself has experienced life in the foreign place through all the “changes of history” and “lived through” them, has a different “view” for the often complicated “relationships” of life.

This “experience” brought us together, whether poor or rich, whether educated or just a simple farmer, craftsman or worker: in the same community of destiny, one was dependent on the other, one needed each other and helped each other wherever it was necessary, however it was possible. This is especially true in times of need, such as crop failures and associated hunger, often long-lasting illnesses, bitter poverty. There was the Bible's measure of permanence and action, when the pastors spoke an open word, the “Brethren,” as the assembly of people were called, set a standard and an example. Some sold fields and grains or other things to help the poor with the proceeds. Others loaded their wagons full of grain, food, clothing, and so forth, and visited the poor, one after the other, and helped them in their respective needs. The foreigners living among us were included!

Often there were fires caused by lightning or self-igniting, especially with the many cane-thatched roofs (by flying sparks from the chimney). The affected families, their belongings, their animals were housed in the neighborhood or with relatives, and with combined forces their house and barns were rebuilt, animals were made available again or young animals were given. Seed cultivation and harvesting was provided in community work—so that one could still sing and praise with each other and thank God for all preservation. Sick people were regularly visited, attended to and cared for, where need was for a “guest in the house.” They comforted each other, prayed together and for each other, and sang hymns. There was open talk of death with young and old, and in the extended family, as was customary with us, everyone witnessed it. No one was excluded here; you took each other “until death do you depart!”

There were no kindergartens with us yet. But the children were always in the care of the widows, the grandparents, the older children. On the big farmyards you could safely come up with all sorts of games. Catching games and hide-and-seek games were popular, but also ball games and others. In the long winter days, you came together, occupied with constructive hobbies, knitted and crocheted things for the little ones and the like, in order to pass them on again as gifts. It was an everlasting “chain of mercy” that left none out. The older women also did a lot of things for the Gustav-Adolf-Society or for the “Alexander-Asylum” in Sarata, where the gifts were sent every year after Thanksgiving Sunday. All else that could be listed here! For example, if the poor, in the long and hard winters, had nothing left to heat or to feed their animals, then the rich farmers—inspired by the example of the “Brethren”—allowed them to come and get from them what they needed. During the most important time for working, these people helped them out and showed themselves to be grateful. This topic could fill volumes on its own. I know of farmers who left the poor whole fields during the harvest season, who then harvested them and used them for themselves, whether it was grain or maize. They were often also given horses, machines and wagons! This was not only the case in Paris, it was like that elsewhere. This was the “characteristic of our ethnic community!” However, I would like to stress that this community, this with each other and for each other was not “social behavior;” that is for sure! But the word “social” was an unknown foreign word for us. Our doing and letting, mutual acceptance, helping and carrying had its “very old reason” in the teaching of the Bible, as it stood in the Catechism, as we learned it at home and in school, as it was preached in the “Meetings” and in the worship service—that was and remained the standard and guideline of life on the steppe! The Ten Commandments were our highest law, were our “Basic Law!” Some people today may shake their heads or show a lack of understanding about it, we have lived well with it, that has preserved us in the struggle of survival. It is no exaggeration—today we want to live like this again!—, when we say in retrospect, gratefully say: this was still a safe and sound world!

Of course, there was also much neglect, much to blame. We acknowledge that. But where it was recognized, they bowed together, repented, and asked for mutual forgiveness. From this arose new partnership, new trust, blessing and good for all. These “footprints of the fathers” still extend to the present day! Our children and grandchildren would be well advised to take up these footsteps, to walk in them, and to act according to the “manner of the fathers”—how much more beautiful and richer would our time be, the people of today and tomorrow. I am sure that the generation of fathers who are still alive will pray for this and hope and believe that not everything will be lost from the scattered “seed-kernel.” If this book, as simple and modest as it



is, can bear witness to it and pass on the legacy of the fathers, then it was worth completing this rather imperfect work.



Group of Women in the Fashion of around 1912

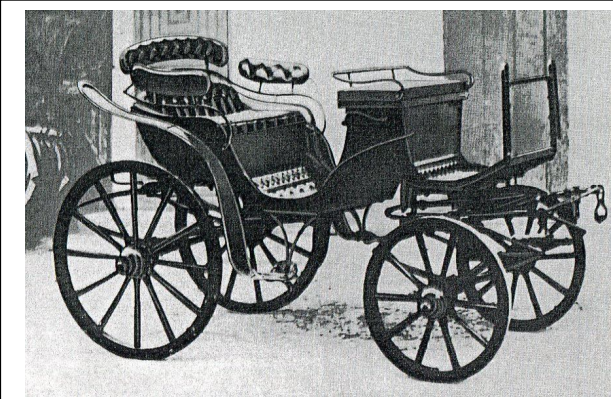
## **The Farmer's Life in an Annual Cycle**

Here it is not to list all the work that had to be done in the course of a year, which can be read better and in greater detail elsewhere (see the remarks of Hugo Häfner in *Heimatkalender 1968*, pp. 71-82—Farmer's Yearly Cycle) than I can represent it. The person at his work, in his spare time, down there on the steppe, is to be introduced here briefly, men as well as women.

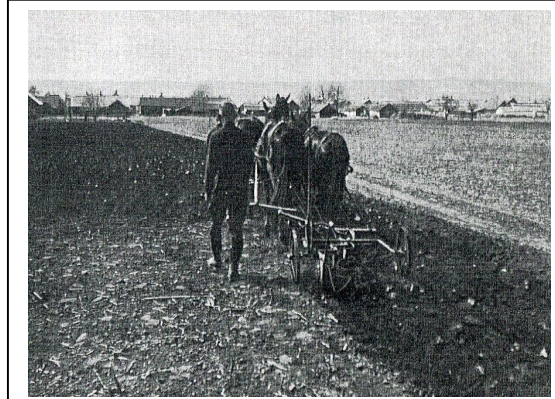
The rule was that the man had to run the farming. The sons also had to learn and assist in the work as soon as possible, and to do so at school age; agriculture was part of our school subject.

From early spring to late autumn, it was a very hard working time, whether it was plowing or sowing, the hoeing time for corn and in the vineyards, or the long and difficult time of harvesting and threshing, weeks in extreme heat, from 3-4 o'clock in the morning when driving out and picking up the grain, back home on the threshing ground until around 10 o'clock in the evening. All this required a great deal of effort from everyone. In the cold autumn days in October and November, when the weather still allowed, after corn and grape harvesting, there was plowing and the winter grains to be sown. Then finally came the "quiet" time of rest for humans and animals. A person took care of the animals at home, repaired wagons, equipment, horse harnesses, and so forth. What you could not do yourself was brought to the craftsman. It often

happened that the already grown sons went to the craftsman in “training” in order to learn the most necessary things for their own needs. One once went to this one, sometimes to that craftsman, so that one could help himself over the years.



Bessarabia Spring Wagon (*Britschka*) ( Bild-Archiv Heimatmuseum)



Farmer Plowing near the Village—Steppe, as far as the eye can see (Bild-Archiv Heimatmuseum)

Now you had time for social life, games, entertainment, good food and relaxation—which was desperately needed after the long hours of working! We did not get to take a vacation. And if you sat together like that, one might read from a newspaper and then it was discussed, then you also sang some old and beautiful folk songs in between, a very favorite one for us was “I am content all year round...”

*Ich bin das ganze Jahr vergenügt;  
im Frühling wird das Feld gepflügt;  
da steigt die Lerche hoch empor  
und singt ihr frohes Lied mir vor.*

I am content all year round;  
in spring the field is plowed;  
here the lark rises aloft  
and sings her glad song to me.

*Und kommt die liebe Sommerzeit,  
wie hoch ist da mein Herz erfreut,  
wenn ich vor meinem Acker steh  
und soviel tausend Ähren seh!*

And comes the delightful summer time,  
how greatly is my heart gladdened,  
when I stand before my field  
and see so many thousand ears!

*Im Herbst schau ich die Bäume an,  
schau Äpfel, Birnen, Pflaumen dran.  
Und sind sie reif, so schüttl' ich sie,  
so lohnet Gott des Menschen Müh!*

In the autumn I look at the trees,  
see apples, pears, plums on them.  
And if they are ripe, I shake them,  
so God rewards the labor of humans!

*Und kommt die kalte Winterszeit,  
da ist mein Häuschen überschneit,  
das ganze Feld ist kreideweiß  
und auf der Erde nichts als Eis.*

And comes the cold winter season,  
there my little house is covered in snow,  
the whole field is white as chalk  
and on the ground nothing but ice.

*So geht's jahraus, jahrein mit mir,  
ich danke meinem Gott dafür  
und habe immer frohen Mut  
und denke: Gott macht alles gut.*

Year out, year in, it goes like this for me,  
I thank my God for it  
and am always cheerful  
and think: God does everything good.

This comprises our entire “annual cycle.” And when you were really in a singing mood, there were still many songs that were different depending on your age. The boys, who were together in the adjoining room or in a neighbor's house, sang “their” songs, which were more steeped in “youth and love.” But one thing they liked to sing together, whether young, old, male or female, was a symbolic song of the steppe farmer, this song from the country: “How beautiful is rural life...”:

*Wie schön ist das ländliche Leben!  
Mein Häuschen auf gründer Flur,  
von schattigen Bäumen umgeben,  
mir lächelt die schöne Natur.*

How beautiful is rural life!  
My little house on the green meadow,  
surrounded by shady trees,  
I am smiling at the beautiful nature.

*Im Schatten der grünenden Bäume,  
da sitz ich so gerne allein,  
da wiegen mich goldene Träume  
der schönen Vergangenheit ein.*

In the shade of the green trees,  
where I like to sit alone,  
there golden dreams gently rock me  
of the beautiful past.

*Was nützen dem Reichen die Schlösser,  
dem König die Krone, das Geld?  
Ich lebe als Landmann viel besser  
und bau mir mein Häuschen aufs Feld.*

What good are the locks for the rich,  
the king the crown, the money?  
I live much better as a countryman  
and build my little house on the field.

There one felt free, relieved of all effort, misery and care of everyday life, there one was in dreams in the his “own” paradise! Moreover, these songs were sung throughout the year, wherever people met, at home, in front of the house or on the bench against the wall, on the street or even in the field, “on the steppe”: one paused, walked or stood together and sang songs, cheerful and serious, thanked and praised in many voices! What wonderful times were those down there on the Black Sea shore—I am unable to find fitting words to get it right!

What was true for men and boys was also true for women, mothers and daughters. They were more in the task of “housework and farmyard work,” from the kitchen service to the care of the animals, such as milking the cows, feeding all the poultry. But they had the great and beautiful task of ensuring “self-sufficiency” in all areas of life: all food such as baking, cooking, preserving, handling things properly during the time of butchering, and so forth. They made from the raw material of our homeland, such as wool, hemp, flax, *Liescht*, corn leaves, and so forth, simply everything in independent work and self-manufacturing, which was used in the house, yard and farm, even clothes, blankets, dowry, bedside carpets and, and, and...How proud the men were of their wives and daughters, what all they accomplished with simple means and devices! And how gladly a father (grandfather) carried his child or grandchild in the “*Placht*,” a homemade colorful blanket! Some people in Germany have still done this—with pride and in the old memory of back home. And when the women were together, then began the conversations, they exchanged experiences. Child-rearing came up and also personal things, also joy and suffering. And as the men sang, so the women could do it no less, well, even better! But when everyone sang together, it was always a first-rate musical treat. You have yet to find something like that today and here! If you want to get to know and sing our former homeland songs and folk songs, the book by Friedrich Fiechtner *Ich bin das ganze Jahr vergnügt*—

Songbook of the Bessarabia Germans, is highly recommended. It is available at the Local History Museum in Stuttgart, price approx. 15, --DM.

In a beautiful contribution, Mrs. Rosa Winter née Metz has placed a lasting monument to women and their work in our old homeland (*Heimatkalender 1956*, p. 35-40). Such mothers and daughters, such women are in demand everywhere again today! Probably every man, every house, every family that is dealing with such women, that is more than just a partner—that is a pearl, a gift!

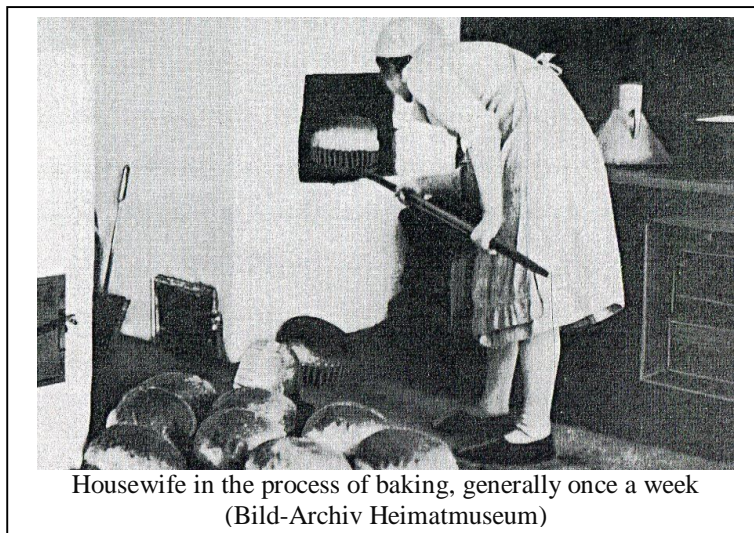
## **The German Housewife in the Old Homeland**

The life of a German woman in Bessarabia, as she led it up to the Resettlement, cannot be compared in any way with that of a woman and mother here in the Federal Republic, nor with the life of a rural woman here. We who live in a highly industrialized or technological country know that this also involves agriculture. So when we talk about the work of the German woman in Bessarabia, we have “to think way back.”

A family in Bessarabia still had a patriarchal character. Often two and three generations lived on a farmyard. So the problem of the loneliness of the elderly did not yet exist. The family or families were largely “self-sufficient” in terms of food, but also in the production of consumer goods.

I have deliberately preceded this brief characterization of a farmyard in order to show how broadly the scope of the duties of a German woman in Bessarabia played out.

The day for a woman in Bessarabia began very early. Although, when the rooster crowed in the barn, she was allowed to turn once more to the other side [in the bed], that is if the bread dough did not have to be kneaded. There was no baker in the village. It was also the pride of every housewife to bake a good bread. I remember my first bread bakery. All night I slept restlessly, fearing I would not wake up in time to knead the bread dough. And afterwards I was sweating with anxiety whether the bread would even turn out good.



One should not ignore the cowherd walking through the village with his whip cracking. That meant hurrying with the milking of the cows...And should it happen to you that you were not yet finished and had to “drive out” the cows yourself, then one was ashamed, because this was certainly not a good reputation for a young woman. Yes, and in the morning after breakfast the “parade of lamps” had to be gathered. There they were all lined up; starting with the thick-bellied round burner lamps, to the mirrored wall lamps to the sooted barn lantern. All had to be made shining clean, so that they could give off a good light. Who still thinks of this effort today, if a rotary switch (*Drehschalter*) is already too cumbersome for you and you replace it with a toggle switch (*Kippschalter*), which then switches on the light even with the slightest contact.

Of course, the large vegetable garden, shrub garden and orchard by the house should not be forgotten. It had to be taken care of besides the other work, because in the spring the rearing of the whole feathered flock was put in the forefront: chicks, goslings and ducklings. You always had to be wary of the hawk. Sometimes by chance—a curious hen—went into the neighborhood with all her chicks. It also happened that a thunderstorm filled the otherwise empty stream, and the whole collection of ducks and geese ended up in the next Moldova village, where they marched through the village, cackling loudly. Who brought them home? No question! Of course, the housewife and the smaller children; for the others were all out “on the steppe.” Then came the enormous commotion of noisy wrigglers among the big brood of baby chicks—the “Bessarabian incubator.”

Pentecost—the whole village was in festive garb. All the houses were freshly whitewashed. But even before that, the housewife had already whitened all the rooms with lime (and that happened every year). The tapestry of the walls was also intermittent.

The summer kitchen—yes, that was a relief for the housewife. In the summer, life takes place mainly in the summer kitchen (which was separated from the living quarters) and outside in the yard. I remember that the sons—in our personal case, the journeymen—slept outside in the yard at night, but they had folding beds that were folded up in the shed during the day. So the housewife's bed-making was eliminated. It happened that one of the young people, blessed with a particularly deep sleep, was surrounded by some prank of the ability of chicks who “lovingly licked” his feet and face, to his not little fright, woke up located in the middle of the street in his folding bed.

With our refined type of heating material, some people will remember our “briquettes.” Well, the “briquettes” of Bessarabia were the dried and cut “manure”; it “held” the heat (*Glut*). Once it had become scarce—well, the woman of Bessarabia knew how to help herself. She quickly made a few “cow manure patties,” which were soon dried in the sun and ready for use. The smell when burning? A person was used to it. —When I returned home after years of absence from Bessarabia and inhaled the smell of the manure fire for the first time, I knew, “Now I am back home again.”

What the whole big family needed to wear, from the underclothes to the Sunday dress, was sewn by the woman of Bessarabia herself and often only on a hand-operated sewing machine. She also sewed the work clothes for the men herself. Excluded was the Sunday suit, which, if available, was sewn by the village tailor. In earlier years, the men wore the “Russian shirts” on

Sunday, with the collar and the side closure embroidered with cross stitching, which meant an additional job for the housewife. But if the man is to be specially attired, he would wear a “*Manischka*” over his shirt.

Yes, the woman of Bessarabia was a seamstress and “fashion designer” in one person; because neither “*Burda-Fashions*” nor “*Brigitte-Fashions*” were available to her. Of course, it could happen that the “young generation,” as far as fashion was concerned, already had their own personal opinions. I was about four years old. My mother found it very beautiful and “modern,” when the white tops of the shorts looked out from under the pants. I disagreed and, when I was out of sight, pulled my pants up again.

Also, the straw hats! Each housewife wove straw hats in the farmyard for the men for the hot days in the harvest and threshing time. Now, that was an art in itself that first needed to be practiced. So it could happen to a young woman that the edge of her first model had rather “undulating ripples.” A loving spouse, of course, overlooked this!

The summer and autumn, which was associated with a lot of effort and work by way of the grain harvest, the threshing, the grape harvest, the bringing in and “removing the leaves” of the corn, and so forth, was also a hard time of work for the woman of Bessarabia. During this time, she was unable to get to many other urgent tasks, especially since the attention to provisions, that is, the preserving of food for the winter took a lot of time. Well, what was it like then with the “preserving?” At that time it was still like with Columbus, who took some barrels of sauerkraut with him on his second big trip and had good experiences with it. During the winter season, a barrel of sauerkraut belonged in a Bessarabia cellar, a barrel of cucumbers and *Harbusen* (watermelons), pickled peppers (*Paprikke*), pickled sheep cheese and the like.



Removing the corn leaves (*Popscho*)—the people helped each other  
(Bild-Archiv Heimatmuseum)

The geese (20 and more) butchered in the fall also belonged to the winter supply. All these activities were carried out under the direction of the housewife. Do not forget the pigs that were butchered.

Many of the German Bessarabian housewives had learned from the Bulgarian women to breed silkworms. Of course, being able to make silk even irritated every woman, but before that could even take place, the unprovoked hunger of the greedy caterpillars had to be satisfied, which caused the housewife some trouble.

Every day of the week was filled with work for the woman of Bessarabia, and when Saturday finally came, then the little urchins had to be scrubbed and bathed. —Bathroom—? Who had such a thing! A wooden bucket also took care of it. And if the owner of a bath-tub has already forgotten this, just look at the Wilhelm-Busch album, there you can still reflect upon the “wooden bucket description” (*Holzkübel-Idyll*).

Yes, and then came the well-deserved day of rest, Sunday. Although the housewife was not allowed to put the “threads” out of her hand, however, she did not have to hold them so tight. Yes, she took her time, after going to church in the morning (alternating with the maid) to take the youngest to the “*Placht*” in the afternoon and go “visiting” (*Gascht*) in the village, that is if she did not have guests herself. She even took time to sit leisurely with her neighbor on the “little yard bench” in the evening and enjoy the dusk.

Winter was also the easier part of the year for the woman in Bessarabia, even though she had her hands full, because now all the work had to be done, which had not been done in the spring, summer and fall. Sacks full of sheep's wool stood there, which had to be pulled and spun. Buy stockings? —No, it was not that simple! The whole family had to be “drawn in.” Most of the time, the housewife could not do it on her own. An “Aunt Rieke” (*Rieke-Bas*) or “Aunt Christina” (*Chrischten-Bas*) had to help. The pride of a Bessarabian housewife was the beautiful colorful self-woven woolly covers (*Wollplachten*), which found their use, besides as a bed cover (*Bettdecke*) also very important for carrying the infants. “Baby buggies” (*Kinderwagen*) were rarely the “fashion” in the villages of Bessarabia. Some people who today have thick carpets lying on the floor will not remember the Bessarabian “Persians” (*Perser*) which the housewife also made herself on the loom in the form of “rag coverings” (*Lumpenplachten*). A trunk full of towels, linen cloths and sacks, the latter made of hemp, completed her skills. Not to be forgotten are the many, often artfully and with a lot of imagination made utensils from corn leaves, to begin with the egg basket, the purse (*Einholtasche*), even to the doormat and many other things. These things were also produced under the direction of the housewife.

Today, when I look around my modern household, which is equipped with many technical amenities, I wonder: how the housewife of Bessarabia manage without water from the “wall” (pipe/tap)? Every bucket of water had to be drawn from the well. One imagines the laundry day of a woman of Bessarabia! She herself also made the soap she needed. For the most part, once a year. There was the laundry soap, the everyday soap and the “luxuriant soap” (*Reichseife*) The latter was cooked with an addition of rose petals. For us, it had a wonderful fragrance. However, it was also only allowed to be used for Sundays. By the way, such a Bessarabia

“laundry day” was a good sweat cure for the housewife. This also had its good side; the housewife in Bessarabia did not need a “sauna” to get rid of her “pounds.”

Bear in mind that the families in Bessarabia generally had many children. Families with 7, 8 and 10 children were not uncommon. This means that the Bessarabia woman gave birth to a child every other year for the first 15 to 18 years, in addition to all her other duties! This also means that in these years she had to cope with an additional burden with the education of her children. At that time, one did not have the problem of how one would want to or “should” educate one’s children, that is. one did not have the “agony” (*Qual*) of deciding between authoritarian and anti-authoritarian education. On the whole, it was still quite straightforward. A small “marginal note”: One of our neighbors was not supersensitive in the choice of her rocking songs; she sat there, immersed in her knitting stocking, moved the cradle runner with her foot and sang her “little one” (*Poppelle*) to sleep with the song: “All people must die.” —Well, the infant has nevertheless developed magnificently and has not had any complications (*Komplexe*).

After all that has been said, one might get the impression that life in Bessarabia was a rather hectic thing. It was not exactly like that. And this must be emphasized in particular. In contrast to our hectic life of today, despite our many technical things to make life easier, in all their work and worries there still was nevertheless a pleasant calm. It was often observed that the women sang at work, had conversations with their children (even children in Bessarabia could be “inexhaustible” at a certain age when they had all kinds of questions) or, in the “twilight hour,” put their hands in their lap and told their children what it used to be like.



Young girls from the age-group of 1920-1923, taken about 1934



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