

Albota Village Report

Source: DAI Microfilm T-81; Roll 316; Group 1035;
Item VOMI 923; Frames 2446580-2446583

Translated by: Allen E. Konrad
P.O. Box 157 Rowley IA 52329
<onamission1939@gmail.com>
December, 2021

[Note: Documents like this one were compiled by officials in preparation for the evacuation of the ethnic Germans from Bessarabia. Keep that in mind as you encounter comments on racial or political concerns, they may reflect the ideology of the National Socialist Peoples Party. Any comments in square brackets in the document are those of the translator.]

=====
[Translation Begins]

Location: Albota

Local District: Al-I.

Village Report
as of 25 June, 1940.

1. **Location and General:** Albota municipality is located in Kahul District, Bessarabia Province. It is the parish village of the Albota Parish. The seat of the parish pastor, has a church, a 7-class elementary school and is the seat of a local leadership. Politically, Albota forms a political municipality (communa) with Unter-Albota, Nuștal and two non-German villages. The mayor (*primar*) is a German. The seat of the same is in Albota (*primaria*).

2. **Inhabitants:** On 25 June of this year, Albota had a population of 949 souls. They consist of the following:

German	Romanian	Bulgarian	Jews	Turkic	Russian
873	25	19	19	4	9

The German population is made up of 150 whole families, 6 widowers, 47 widows. 204 compulsory education children.

Since the settlement in 1880, the population has been as follows:

1880	290 Souls	1915	646 Souls
1885	424 Souls	1920	712 Souls
1890	532 Souls	1925	711 Souls
1895	615 Souls	1930	797 Souls
1900	750 Souls	1935	868 Souls
1905	748 Souls	1940	873 Souls

3. **Professional Groups:** Albota is a farming village. Of all the families, 117 are farming families. 38 widows have land. They either work it themselves, allow someone else to sow half of it, or lease it. There are 2 widowers with land. A total of 159 farming families.

The rest of the families are made up of the following:

Blacksmith	11 Families
Wagon-maker	07 Families
Cobbler	03 Families
Laborer	03 Families
Carpenter	02 Families
Teacher	02 Families
Locksmith	01 Family
Leather worker	01 Family
Pastor	01 Family
Merchant	01 Family
Herder	01 Family

This means that of the 117 farming families, 33 families have other professions. Only 15 craftsmen families or families of other professions do not own any land. In addition to the trades, some also do farming.

4. **Place of Origin:** The people of Albota are about 97% Württemberg Swabians, the rest are from Bavaria and Baden.

The language is pure Swabian, almost exactly as the colonists spoke it at the time of the settlement of Bessarabia. A small sample: “Where are you going?” (*Wo goosch na?*) — “To check on my in-law because it seems, I believe, that he is not so well.” (*Z’schtubat zu moim Gegaschaähr, era seib doch, glaab e, net ganz gsond.*) — “I have also heard that, he overstrained himself yesterday.” (*Des hao i aao scho gheart, ear häb sich geschtert ibrlupft.*)

Some 35 foreign words from Russian and Romanian have been adopted, for example, *Bopschoi* meaning corn/maize, *Harbii* meaning rack-wagon, and so forth.

5. **Community Awareness:** The community awareness of the village can be described as good in the past. Today you can almost say the opposite. Today there is little feeling for the national good. Social institutions that exist: a prayer house, a church (dedicated in 1938), construction costs about 1½ million lei, a rectory, two teachers’ living quarters and four community buildings. A community store was started in 1932. There are no other cooperative institutions.
6. **Year of Immigration:** Albota is a daughter colony of Wittenberg. Overcrowding and lack of land gave rise to the founding of a new village. 43 men bought the estate of Donat

Schlenger in 1880. The “nobleman” came from Alsace-Lorraine and was a French subject.

7. **Commerce Situation:** Albota is located 23 km [14.2 mi] from the district capital Kahul. 14 km [8.7 mi] from the Taraklia railway station. The roads there are natural paths without maintenance and care. The traffic on them is done by wagons.

In addition to its own small vegetable market and cattle market, the markets of Ceadär-Lunga (horses, wagons), Tarutino (wagons), Taraklia (horses), Kahul (commodities) are made use of.

8. **General Landscape:** Albota lies towards the west in the steppe which is already somewhat hilly, on the border of the formerly forested Bessarabia. It is located in a deep valley through which a stream (Albota formerly Acbota) meanders. The location is beautiful, and the upper village is divided into two halves by a ridge. The two elongated hills in the east and west are partly planted with vineyards, partly cattle pastures. In a side valley, 3 km [1.9 mi] east of the village, there was a 25-hectare [61.7 acre] oak forest at the time of the foundation. It fell victim almost completely to the war years and subsequent shortage of wood.
9. **Soil Type:** The soil is black earth of 30-40 cm [11.8-15.7 in] thickness. Underneath follows a 4-5 m [13-16 feet] thick layer of clay and deep sand. The field top soil is very fertile, so not much manure is added. The horse manure, which is not used for fuel, is hauled to the field, but is then handled so carelessly that it brings little benefit.
- 10, **Tillage and Main Crops:** Arable farming consists of three-field farming. Winter grains (winter wheat, rye, winter barley), summer grains (summer wheat, barley, oats) and maize/corn are alternated.

Cutting of hay was never really considered because the cattle pasture always gave enough fodder. Today the pasture is totally ruined. This is due to the fact that in most cases far too many cattle are driven on it and in other sections the pasture is not maintained in any way.

In recent decades, a lot of emphasis has been placed on maize/corn farming.

If the weather is favorable in autumn, deep plowing is carried out (with the single or two plow schare depth of up to 30 cm [11.8 in]). Afterwards, the winter wheat is drilled in; in the spring, the corn is “planted” (*gedippelt*) with the corn planter.

In addition to agriculture, viticulture has always been practiced. When phylloxera (*Reblaus*) completely destroyed the vineyards before the World War, the self bearing (*Direkträger*) appeared (here they are called “Saiber”). Today, only self-bearing are planted. The wine from it is bad, therefore also very cheap (5 lei per kg).

11. **Livestock Breeding and Stocking:** Here one breeds a light, little endurance horse, next to it is also kept a tough, but unassuming horse (Unter-Albota).

As for cows, the Hungarian blue cattle are kept (which are mixed with all imaginable breeds). It is unassuming and can cope with the steppe and its volatile climate.

Figures for livestock count for some of the following years:

1892	217 horses	677 horned cattle	
1911	191 horses	626 horned cattle	
1913	244 horses	853 horned cattle	
1920	162 horses	604 horned cattle	
1939	347 horses	688 horned cattle	1,770 sheep

Only the grazing horses are included in the number of horses, probably $\frac{1}{4}$ are still kept in the farmyards.

12. **Land Ownership:** At the time of its founding, Albota had 2,005 *deßjatinen* (2,200 ha/5,436 acres) [using 1 hectare = 2.471 acres]. Each farmyard measured 50 *deßjatinen* [54.5 ha/135 acres]. Inheritance law has been given little consideration in the last 3 decades. The land was distributed equally among all the sons. The girls usually got a part of it as well.

Since its foundation, the people of Albota bought 900 hectares [2,224 acres] of land, so that Albota now owns 3,100 hectares [7,660 acres].

While originally 40 farmers owned 40 farms at 50 *deßjatinen* each, that is 54,700 ha [135,163 acres--??], now have:

31 farmers	no land
40 farmers	01-06 ha [2.5-14.8 acres]
16 farmers	07-10 ha [17.3-24.7 acres]
55 farmers	11-20 ha [27.2-49.4 acres]
22 farmers	21-30 ha [51.9-74.1 acres]
20 farmers	31-50 ha [76.6-123.5 acres]
09 farmers	51 and above [126 acres and above]

One can see from this the strong division of the individual farm economies, despite emigration over the years.

The following figures have been recorded:

1900-1910	43 families with 281 persons
1911-1937	27 families with 133 persons

13. **Church Life:** Albota formed a parish with these villages: Sofijewka, Alexanderfeld, Alexandrowka, Eichendorf, Baimaklia, Balaban, Neu-Dennewitz, Unter-Albota and Nusstall. It is served by a pastor. All Germans are of the Evangelical Lutheran confession. The municipality of Albota is taken care of by a sexton (*Küster*). The inhabitants are very religious. In addition to the usual Sunday worship services, the Hour Brethren (*Stundenbrüder*) also hold special prayer hours in a farmhouse. There are 2 assemblies.
14. **School:** With the relocation, the school was also brought to life. It was housed in the prayer house (the former “manor house”). Until 1922, the school was a church school, at which time it was nationalized. Until then, there was usually a teacher who was paid by the community. Now the Romanian state hired Romanian teachers. For the first few years, the German language was still allowed. In 1933, only 6 German subjects were allowed. In 1936, not a word of German was allowed. The school suffered unspeakably as a result.

Teachers were:	German	Romanians
1923	2	-
1928	2	1
1931	3	2
1935	2	3
1939	1	4

In October of 1939, after much effort, the school returned to the church.

Some figures that illustrate the growth in the number of students:

1892	60 pupils
1922	145 pupils
1932	150 pupils
1940	204 pupils

15. **Way of Life and Character:** The inhabitant of Albota is characterized by a very simple way of life. 10 years ago, there was no “fashion dress” (*Modekleigung*), “self-spun, self-made—is the best peasant costume,” as it was called at the time.

The characteristic food is *Knöpfele* [pasta boiled in water] and pork. A lot of wine is drunk with it.

When it comes to work, the Albota person is probably unsurpassable. In the morning before daylight until night he is focused on his work. Domestic servants (except for a few day laborers during the greatest time of work) are rare here.

He is stubbornly attached to the traditional. He accepts new things, even after years of influence, only with difficulty. In recent years, there has been little appreciation for the national good and community consciousness. Self-interestedly, everyone is only

concerned about himself. Apart from a brass choir, there are no cultural institutions. There are 13 registered members in the Movement (*Bewegung*) [National Socialism].

Racially, Albota is still fine. There is only one mixed marriage with a child.

Out of 40 school children there are: 13 blue-eyed and blond students
14 mixed students
13 dark students

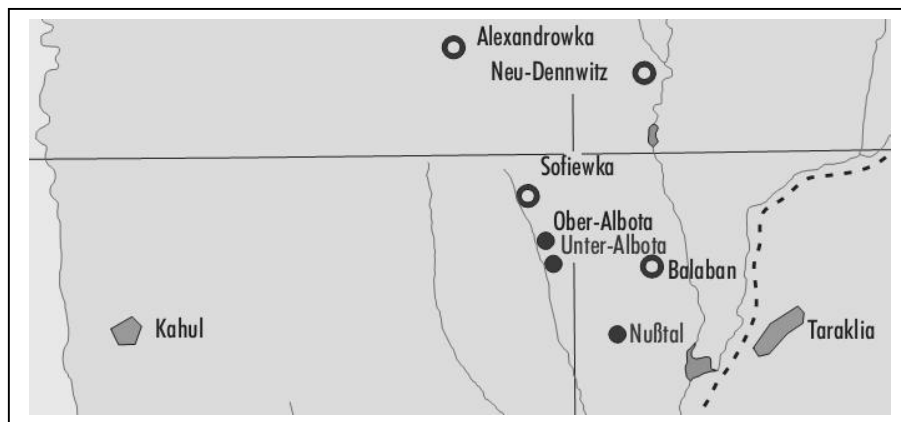
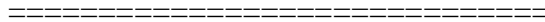
Due to changing marriages, a lot of strong inbreeding took place. Despite this, the joy of birth is still quite great. As proof, some numbers of living children:

Marriages with children	
13	5
14	6
04	7
10	8
03	9
02	10

The special advantages of the Albota people are: their industriousness, their stability, their frugality and, last but not least, their piety. The many children bear witness to vitality.

- 16. Trusted people of the village community: Emanuel Heller, Otto Schäfer, Johannes Stuber.
- 17. Conclusion: In order to bring success to Albota, special attention must be paid to the youth.

[Translation Ends]



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