

# Chronicle of Annowka Community

Source: *Deutscher Volkskalender für Bessarabien – 1934*  
Tarutino

Press and Printed by *Deutschen Zeitung Bessarabiens*  
Pages 73-80

Translated by: Allen E. Konrad  
June, 2015

Internet Location: [urn:nbn:de:bvb:355-ubr14089-4](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:bvb:355-ubr14089-4)

[Note: Comments in square brackets are those of the translator.]

=====  
[Translation Begins]

## **Chronicle of Annowka Community On the Occasion of Their 25 Years of Existence** Written by Sexton-Teacher Robert Brenner

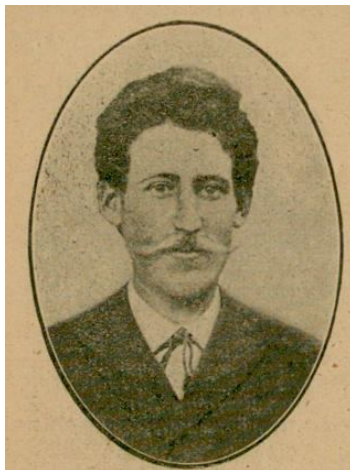
1934 is a point in time when the Annowka community can and must review the 25 years of its existence. Turbulent times swept over them, often mixed with joy and suffering. Therefore, every member of the community, who contributed and continues to contribute by sowing “joy” and holding back “suffering” in his small homeland, has the right to be proud of the last 25 years of his community where they created an ideal garden out of the emptiness of the barren, treeless Bessarabian steppes. However, if one celebrates the present, advocating a solemn promise for the future, the past must be considered because it is the rock upon which everything must be built. This is the reason that prompted me to search in the old archives and records for the origin and development of our community. May the old German industriousness and the old German confidence which are the landmark of this story also be the pillars of our German life now and in the future.

Annowka received its name in honor of the Countess Anna Gagarina Sturdza, who once owned 20,000 dessiatine [1 dessiatine = 2.7 acres/1.09 hectares] of land in this area. The Countess spent most of the time during the year in France, where she emigrated to after her separation from her husband, an ophthalmologist in Manzâr, Bendery District. For her stays in Manzâr, she set up a summer residence. These buildings, which bear witness to the art and beauty of the past, are today partly derelict and some used by an agriculture school which was established after the war.

25 years ago, the Countess, who was at that time in France, put her land up for sale through her General Agent Kasimir Ant. Krscherkowsky. This person was a permanent resident in Odessa, where he not only managed a glass factory, which produced the delicate mirror, but also other estates which also belonged to the Countess in the surrounding area of Odessa. He had almost never paid much attention to the Bessarabian estate; here he had his under managers to whom he gave an entirely free hand and who were responsible for the collection and delivery of the lease.

The administrator of the land which was subsequently purchased by the community was Johann Fieß, a settler from Sarata, who performed the duties of that office from 1901 to 1909. This man, since he was familiar as general manager of the marketing of the land, gave personal attention to the German colonist villages, glad to be relieved of the often life-threatening situations of this position. Soon, farmers, interested in buying, showed up from various colonies. Because most of them came from Gnadental Colony, Annowka can be rightly considered their daughter community. The buyers chose from among their number a committee consisting of Johann Fieß, Jakob Bantel I, August Adolf I, and Gotthilf Schimke, who negotiated with the general manager and completed a deal on 10 January, 1909 to purchase 2,000 dessiatine. Negotiations lasted almost two years, during which time the buyers had already occupied the land and also worked it.

The first settlers settled here in the year 1908, specifically—from Gnadental: Jakob Bantel I, Adam Schnaithmann, Karl and Michael Deiß, Gottfried and Karl Föhl, Christian Oßwald and Karl Baumann; from Eigenfeld: the Brienne settlers August and Daniel Adolf, as well as the Kulm settlers Gotthilf Schimke; from Brienne: Georg Volz and Gottlieb Häußer; from Sarata: Johann Fieß, who was here already as a manager, Matthäus Brenner; from Eigenheim: Christian



Johann Fieß  
Property Administrator for  
Countess Sturza

Sauer; from Gnadenfeld: the Paris settler Ferdinand Sprenger; from Borodino: Jacob Schneck; from Kulm: Johann Hiller; from Arzis: Karl Gutknecht; from Alt-Elft: Daniel Heier. The following also participated in this land purchase, but only settled in Annowka later on, or not at all—from Gnadental: Johann Bantel, handed over his land to his resident son Jakob; Gottfried Biehlmayer, handed over his portion to his sons Friedrich and Gottfried; Johann and Emanuel Deiß, still owning land here today, but are residing in Gnadental; Andreas Bantel handed over his land to his resident son Albert; Elisabetha Hermann handed over her portion to her resident son Friedrich; Jakob Krug sold his share to Friedrich and Jakob Hermann, the latter residing in Gnadental; Friedrich Baumann handed over his part to his resident son Karl; Daniel Hermann handed over his land to his resident sons Immanuel and Reinhold; Tobias Silcher handed over his portion to his resident son Albert; from Sarata: Jakob Fieß sold his part to Chr. Gäßler, who came here in 1921 from

Lichtental; Friedrich Knauer, who did not move here, had his expropriated land passed on to his heirs Eduard Mietke from here and Karoline Brenner, wife of Reinhold Brenner of the local settler Matth. Brenner; from Borodino: Valentin Weibert sold his land to Gotthilf Schimke; from Lichtental: Gottlieb Schreiber handed over his part to his daughter Joanna, wife of the local settler John Schneck; from Plotzk: Johann Brenner, who did not move here and sold his land; from Paris: Jakob Kehrer handed his land over to his daughters Barbara, wife of local settler Heinrich Gerber, and Maria, wife of resident Heinrich Wirth; from Neu-Elft: Jakob Schulz.

The first sowing on the newly purchased land took place in the spring of 1908. Of course, it was a difficult beginning. Spring was still pretty cold and there was insufficient accommodation available for man and horse. A stable from reeds was set up for the horses. The people, during the time of the lease, found shelter only in existing, wretched mud huts where one simply had to

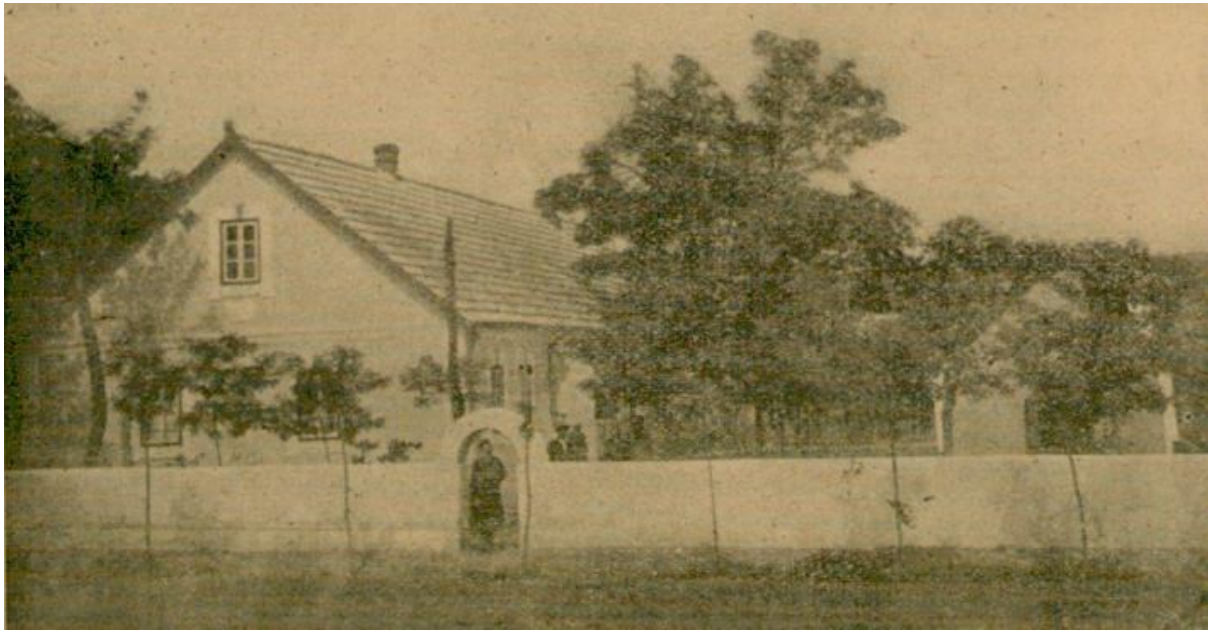
sleep on the dirt floor covered with straw. Several days of food was brought along from the house into which the family relocated only after the time of threshing. The construction of houses started immediately after the harvest and, later, the whole family was able to resettle on the newly acquired land. The mud huts that existed during the lease time slowly disappeared. Today, there is only one left which belonged to former manager Johann Fieß, which in the lease time also served as a house of prayer, because Fieß was, at the same time, the sexton of the tenants. Replacing these old huts were lovely stone houses. The sawn stones could be bought quite cheap either at Petropawlowka, 6 km to the south, or at Faraonowka, 15 km to the southeast; the lumber was obtained from Bendery which was 50 km away, and, finally, roofing tiles were delivered from the Necker factory in Tiraspol. At the same time, stone wells, as a rule not deeper than three *Faden* [1 faden (Austrian) = ca. 6 feet], were also put in by the houses. It is remarkable that the wells of the eastern side of the village had good drinking water while the west side of the village had no drinking water.

Our village is situated in a valley that stretches from north to south. The two rows of houses lie at the foot of the two hills and are separated from each other by an 80 *Faden* wide road. There is a moat in the middle of this street on whose banks orchards have been established over the years. In the spring, the trench sometimes swells so that the water overflows the banks and floods the gardens, often obstructing the traffic between the two rows of houses for days. It remains in the future to decide to make a change as this ditch must of necessity be made deeper and wider. These floods are a risk to the whole community, the swamps and puddles are a focus for many infectious diseases such as dengue fever and influenza, of which mainly the children are threatened. In 1913 and 1914, these diseases were really raging among the world of the children, where almost all children fell victim to them.



A House from the Lease Era

Our community is also called “Manscha-Erling.” The reason for this is because the original owners of the Annowka land actually were Manscha and Erling, relatives of the Countess Sturdza. They had some 4,000 dessiatine of land which, because they had no children upon their death, was inherited by the Countess. This was first leased to a certain J. Reng from Akkerman. Around the year 1900, 2,000 dessiatine of this land was sold to Moldavian half-share farmers (*Halbbauern*). So it was that our Moldavian neighboring community of Manscha was founded in this year. The remaining 2,000 dessiatine was first leased to G. Schulz from Seimeny; later to a Pole from Bendery, who, because he could not come up with the amount of money agreed



Modern Farmyard of Owner Joh. Schulz

upon, let the land again return to the Countess before the end of the lease period. G. Schulz, as well as the Pole, had the already mentioned Johann Fieß as administrator. Just these 2,000 dessiatine, which the Countess had inherited from her two relatives Mancha and Erling, were purchased by the founders of the town of Annovna and later divided into 40 “farmyards” (*Wirtschaften*) and 13 “allotments” (*Losungen*). The village bore the name Annental at first, but later was changed to Annowka by the Russian authorities. The reason for this action on the part of the Russian authorities was the following: when the division of the land took place, there was a dispute among the members of the community about of the 13 allotments which led them to turn to the Russian authorities, who did a very amazing thing for a newly founded German community with a proper German name by ordering that this village was henceforth to be called “Annowka”. But the dispute over the 13 allotments was settled by the colonists themselves so that essentially the dispute which gave us the name Annowka, the 13 allotments are still known up to today as “dispute pieces” (*Streitstückla*). In addition to the names of Annental, Manscha-Erling, and Annowka, our community also received from the Romanian authorities a new naming which was “Aninoasă. The latter is now the official name.

After the village Annowka was founded in this way in 1909, the next step was to provide the newly established community with an administration. A village elder (*Dorfältester*) was elected. He was responsible for the community assets, for church and school, and had to collect the salaries for and pay the pastors, teachers and shepherds, and, finally, represent the town in the Russian administrative subdivision (*Wolost*). The first village elder was Jakob Bantel I, one of the oldest men of the village, who even today still has a lot of interest for the community. The first community work to be carried out was the construction of a sexton residence in 1910.



Prayer House and Sexton Residence

Initially, a room was set aside in this building for worship services because the prayer house established among the old lease houses had already become dilapidated. From the fact that the two rooms of sexton's residence, which were used for the services, did not quite meet the requirements, a second major task grew out of the community: the building a prayer house. To this end, a planning committee was selected in 1912, which consisted of Christian Hermann and Gottfried Föhl (died 1932), who immediately set about their task with great zeal for this purpose in 1912. Our prayer house was already dedicated in 1913 by Pastor Peters. The funds to construct were quite independently raised by the community, with the exception of 300 rubles which Countess Sturdza had contributed. With these 300 rubles and a grant from the community treasury, Johann Fieß and Adam Schnaithmann bought our two bells, a big one weighing 8 *Pud* 10 *Pfund* [1 *Pud* = 36 lbs/16.38kg—1 *Pfund* = 1.1 pounds]; the smaller one 5 *Pud*. After this, a private teacher was able to be hired, resolving one of the most important vital questions of the newly founded community.

So the community experienced many a year of good fortune and satisfaction with the help of God, yet there were many who could not make a go of it in their new situation. They in turn sold their land and tried to find their fortunes elsewhere. In the following years, the following left: Karl Gutknecht, D. Heier, Ferd. Sprenger, Jos. Quast, G. Volz, Chr.. Sauer, Karl Deiß, Aug. Adolf, Immanuel Adolf, Wilh. Föhl and Immanuel Siewert. However, of these, Karl Deiß again returned to Annowka; he first emigrated from here to Neu-Nikolajewka, from there he moved on into the Cherson [north northeast of Odessa], where, during the time of the revolution, he lost his possessions and goods, and so, by the darkness of night and in the fog, he fled Russia and

reached Alisowka safely with his family, from where he again returned to Annowka. Here we also have to point out immigrants such as: Christian Hermann from Freudenfeld, Daniel Maier, Philipp Kämpf and David Siewert from the Neu-Odessa lease community next to Wolontirowka, and Immanuel Schnaithmann from Gnadental.

Up to the present day, the main activity of Annowka settlers is agriculture, which brought quite a prosperity to the village as a result of the good black soil and due to the diligence and endurance of the owner, which also allowed more and more the modernization of the working methods. So, here today, there are already 3 tractors, namely, two "Fordson" that belong to settlers Baumann and Appelt and an "Oil Pull" which is owned by Gotthilf Schimke. Nevertheless, as land ownership is becoming increasingly scarce, our Germans understand that through continued leasing they can sow a considerable amount of acreage annually. Besides the farming operations, there are also some craftsmen. We already have 1 blacksmith, 1 shoemaker, 3 carpenters, 1 cooper, 1 tailor and some butchers in our village. Especially known because of his good work is master carpenter Heinrich Gerber, who, for example, by himself, manufactured and sold 40 cleaning mills last year.

To be mentioned, when it comes to industrial companies, are the two roof tiles factories of Karl Baumann and Otto and Berthold Fieß, as well as our mill. The mill was built and also installed



Mill of Appelt Brothers

by August Adolf and Georg Volz. Volz later sold his share to Daniel Adolf. Then the mill and equipment (three pairs of stones with traction engine drive) went to Jews in Wolontireowka, which was then purchased from them in 1920 by Neu-Posttal settler Julius Appelt, who modernized the mill (4½ "Buhler" steel rollers, 1 pair of stones, 1 cleaning machine, 1 horizontal sifter valued at 130,000 lei, a "Buston" motor of 100 horse power valued at 900,000 lei, an electric generator and electric lights). In 1933, Mr. Julius Appelt handed the mill over to his sons, Albert and Frederick.

The desire in our community was alive at an early stage to bring to life a community store which would no longer be dependent upon itinerant Jewish merchants; in addition, it was almost impossible to drive for every little thing to the market town of Wolontirowka, which was 8 km away. This desire could only be realized in 1926. One of the most ardent champions of our community store, which today already has 64 registered members, was Gotthilf Schimke, who

served as president for three years, from 1926 to 1929, which office as president was held after him by the following community members: Friedrich Gerber (1929-1932), Christian Gabriel (1932-1922), and Emil Fieß (1933-to date). It was the only store in the area up to 1933. At that time, some members split off and founded a co-operative store, so that today there are two stores in Annowka, which, on the one hand, is certainly to be welcomed since the honest competition is always healthy, but, on the other hand, there is much to be regretted if one is familiar with the separation story and all the quarreling.

From 1925-1932, we did not have our own village administration as we then belonged to a large commune (*Großkommune*) consisting of several communities. In 1932, the community succeeded, after many rejections, to become its own independent commune. Our current mayor (*Primar*), Gottfried Biehlmayer, earned special merit in this struggle. The elders of our community from its founding until today were as follows: (1) Jakob Bantel I, (2) Gottlieb Schimke, (3) Christian Hermann, (4) Johann Fieß, (5) Matth. Brenner, (6) Friedrich Hermann, (7) Christian Hermann, (8) Adam Schnaithmann who died in 1932, (9) August Adolf, (10) Gottlieb Hahn, (11) Karl Baumann, and (12) Gottfried Biehlmayer. Since 1927, the year our Bessarabian Evangelical Lutheran Church was connected to the Lutheran Church of the Augsburg Confession in Siebenbürgen [Transylvania]. our community, every three years, chooses an administrator for the congregation (church curator). This office has been held (*bekleideten*) by Karl Dieß, from 1927-1930, and by Emil Fieß, from 1930 until today.

Up until 1927, the Annowka congregation belonged to the Klöstitz Parish and was served by Pastors Peters and Wolleydt. Since 1927, our village belongs to the Eigenfeld Parish and has from that point in time up to today been served by Pastor Rudolf Hornung. All parishioners, with the exception of two Baptist families, belong to the Evangelical Lutheran Church and are very religious; good church attendance as well as active participation is due to the brethren meetings (*Brüderversammlungen*) conducted by Karl Deiß and Christian Hermann.

The school was housed in the prayer hall until 1923 and only as the same became too small for the ever increasing number of children and as the compulsory education age was extended by the Romanian Government to age 16, its original purpose was converted into the community



Sexton-Teacher  
Robert Brenner  
Author of this History

building for midwifery, which it is up to the present day. Two teachers work in our school, of which one is paid by the state and the other one, who is at the same time also sexton, is salaried by the community (*Gemeinde*). In the last year, we had 82 students in 5 grades (*Klassen*). Following are the teachers, who were also sextons, who worked here: Albert Krause (1907-1908); G. Weingärtner (1908-1910); E. Schlenker (1910-1911); G. Walter (1911-1912); Jos. Flemmer (1912-1914); H. Jauch (1914-1916); Fr. Maier (1916-1917); Albert Pippus (1917-1918); Heinrich Jauch (1918-1920); Friedrich Scheuffele (1920-1924); Artur Grade (1924-1926); Emil Hommel (1926-1929), and Robert Brenner (1929-to present). The second teacher position was also paid for by the community up until 1924. The position was held by: E. Neumann (1920-1921); Otto Hermann (1921-1922), and Joh. Jauch (1922-1924). We had only three teachers that were employed and

salaried by the state, namely: Friedrich Scheuffele (1924-1931), Otto Tiede (1931-1932), and Ignat Bragarenko (1932-1933). So far not too much importance has been placed on higher education in Annowka. Just one university graduate has emerged from our village, this is the well-known fighter for our Bessarabian Germanness, Doctor G. Hahn. Currently, 4 Annowka students are attending secondary schools and two the Boys Secondary School in Tarutino and two others at the Werner School in Sarata. The thirst for knowledge is still very active with us which becomes evident in the fact that quite a few newspapers are read in our relatively small village: 20 copies of "*Deutsche Zeitung Bessarabiens*", 2 copies of the Swabian *Merkurs*, 30 copies of *Christenboten*, and 25 copies of *Der Lichter der Heimat*.

Also two important community institutions are thought of here: the first one, a dairy farm under the direction of the community store, which allows the people of Annowka to ensure a good common market for the dairy products; and the second one, the one established in 1929, the pasture co-operative "Dunărea", which consists of 200.95 hectares [1 hectare = 2.47 acres] of pasture and 7 breeding bulls (three of them are of the Angler [German Red] breed). However, this pastureland can support only 323 cattle, so, for the rest, pastureland has to be leased. Today's president of the pasture co-operative is Fr. Biehlmayer; before him it was Gotthilf Schimke.

At the founding of Annowka in 1909, there were 177 souls. 356 children were born during the past 25 years and 138 deaths took place in this same period of time. Today, there are 81 families living in the village of Annowka, totally 395 souls.

With this last information I have arrived at the end of my history of the community of Annowka, which, after these 25 years of brave German fellow countrymen, has now become a dear and precious homeland. Evidently, it has stood under the blessing of God during the last quarter of a century, and let us hope that it also continues this way, and a gracious destiny protect and preserve us from all evil. May every community member in the future be firm and faithful to his Evangelical Lutheran faith, to his Church and his people, with vigor always ready to preserve and promote the interests of the community as well as those of all our people. May the words of our great German poet Schiller serve as a supreme guiding principle: "We want to be a unique people of brethren!" And so here is my wish for the 25th anniversary, which I call out to all from Annowka: "Brothers, hold out the hand to the confederation (*Bunde*)."

[End of Translation]