

# German Literature in Bessarabia 14—Martin Weiß

Source: *Deutscher Volkskalender für Bessarabien – 1935*  
Tarutino

Press and Printed by *Deutschen Zeitung Bessarabiens*  
Page 147-148

Translated by: Allen E. Konrad  
P.O. Box 157 Rowley IA 52329  
<onamission1939@gmail.com>  
March, 2023

Source Location: <http://bit.ly/21v8lWY>  
Under 1935 click — <urn:nbn:de:bvb:355-ubr13931-9>  
Open Thumbnail & scroll for specific pages

=====

To have a better understanding of the following translation, it would serve you well if you were able to view German Literature in Bessarabia 01—Introduction.

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

=====

[Translation Begins]

## Martin Weiß

Martin Weiß already belongs to the older generation. However, he must not be missing in this compilation of new German writings in Bessarabia, since he is the first to use the history of the German colonies as a writer in the time we have dealt with and to publish a chronicle of his home community Alt-Posttal as early as 1923. Martin Weiß was born in 1874 in Alt-Posttal, was a pupil of the Werner School and then, for 36 years, teacher and sexton in various communities of Bessarabia, Kherson and the Don Regions. Today, he lives in retirement in Alt-Posttal. In addition to his chronicle, he has written a large series of essays and stories, which have appeared in our *Kalender* and newspapers and bear witness to his literary activity. We follow with a very short, introductory section from the Alt-Posttal Chronicle.

### From “Cause of Emigration from Germany.”

100 years ago...Foreign oppressors, the German hereditary enemy, lived wildly in the German country. The Kingdom of Württemberg was particularly hard hit by the enemies. Everyone groaned under the heavy burden of debt caused by the high taxes of the greedy conquerors. Young people were forced to go to war with the enemy and give blood and life for the enemies. Yes, it was a very sad and difficult time in the old fatherland. Then suddenly came the good

news from distant, unknown Russia, that every hard-working fellow countryman could establish a new home there and find a good way forward. An imperial Russian manifesto called on German farmers in Germany to emigrate to Russia, especially to Bessarabia, since after the Russo-Turkish War (1806-1812) it had passed to Russia in the Peace Treaty of Bucharest of 12 May, 1812. Endless steppes, overgrown with tall grass and weeds, inhabited by wild animals, treeless, water-poor, deserted wastelands awaited the industrious hands of the immigrants. Each immigrant should receive 60 *Deßjatinen* [162 acres / 65.4 hectares] of land, advance on money, a pair of oxen, a wagon, a harrow, building materials and exemption from military service “forever”. Such privileges even had an attractive effect on all the oppressed in the old fatherland. Many picked up the walking stick. Belongings were loaded onto two-wheeled carts, pulled by a dog or by the owner himself. After many unspeakable efforts, adventures and hardships, the emigrants reached the destination of their journey: Bessarabia. Others had emigrated in 1804 and 1805 to Poland, the then Duchy of Warsaw, and had settled there in the primeval forests. But they did not like it there, and even after 10 years in Poland, they moved to Bessarabia on the same call of the Russian emperor. The sparse population of Bessarabia at that time consisted of Tatars and other nomadic people, who did not feel comfortable under the new Russian rule and therefore gladly made room for the new arrivals and moved to the Turkish Dobrudscha, where they felt better with their kind. Our ancestors spent the first winter after their arrival in the Moldovan villages of the Bender District, where they also got to know the “Mamaliga”. Arriving in the new home in Bessarabia, they immediately started to build houses. At first, they were just miserable earth huts. The Russian government supported the people with building materials, money and food, but the settlers were often cheated out of support by unscrupulous Russian officials. Most of the Russian officials had sticky fingers on which the money got stuck, and by the time the money got to the settler, it had melted down a lot. The first thing the new settlers sowed were tears. Everyone had to struggle with need and misery, some immediately went back, but those who could not return had to stay here. But because the implements were extremely bad, that flour was often delivered, which was moldy green and yellow, full of worms and formed together in a ball in the sacks, that one either had to throw it away or beat it up with an axe and sift it in order to be able to use it, and that the promised 5 kopecks (*Assignate* 1½ Kop. Silver) [assignat = paper money issued by French revolutionary government] were not paid at all, this has of course not been noted in the Advance Documents. As a result of the unfamiliar climate and the poor food, there arose cold fever, typhus and smallpox, which produced great mortality among the people, so that whole families died out. Thereby, general lack of profitability by working. 12 kopecks was a very good daily wage for a capable worker in the harvest, but otherwise only 6 kopecks.

[Translation Ends]