

# History of Halle Municipality

Source: DAI Microfilm T-81; Roll 316; Group 1035;  
Item VOMI 923; Frames 2446774-2446780

Translated by: Allen E. Konrad  
P.O. Box 157 Rowley IA 52329  
<onamission1939@gmail.com>  
January, 2022

[Note: As the people of Bessarabia were preparing to be evacuated in 1940, communities were called upon to write a brief history of their villages. This is one of those reports. No convertible rate for the Romanian lei was found, so left without US\$ equivalent. Comments in square brackets in the document are those of the translator.]

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[Translation Begins]

## **History of Halle Municipality Akkerman District, Bessarabia**

Halle is a pretty Bessarabian village, where you can see that its inhabitants are wealthy people. It is located 2 kilometers [1.2 miles] west of the Alkalia River Valley. The distance from Halle to the district town of Akkerman is 25 km [15.5 miles]. The nearest post office and railway station "Kantemir" near Mannsburg is 6 km [3.7 miles] from Halle. The distance of the village Halle from the neighboring villages is the following: In the west—Eigengut Schimke 6 km [3.7 miles] and Bairamtscha 10 km [6.2 miles] (our market town), in the southeast—Kantemir and Mannsburg 4 km [2.5 miles], in the southwest—Romanowka 8 km [4.9 miles], in the south—Marasli—a Russian village 3 km [1.9 miles], in the east—the Russian village Manaschi 2 km [1.2 miles] and in the northwest—Alexandrowka 10 km [6.2 miles]. The history of our village is closely related to the name of Mr. Gottfried Schulz from Neu-Posttal, a Dennewitz colonist. He was a real steppe son, of medium stature, strong and healthy. There were no obstacles for him. What he had once set out to do, he did. He could sometimes be terribly rough (*saugrob*) when necessary, but he also had a heart for the plight of the poor. As a true son of the steppes, bound by blood and soil, he knew well that our German-Bessarabian people will only exist in the future if they enlarge their land stock. Therefore, his main goal was to enlarge the German-Bessarabian land. Thanks to his entrepreneurial spirit and perseverance, daughter colonies emerged: Romanowka, Eigengut Schimke, Halle and many others.

Countess Aline Olga Lena Tolstoy had 5,694 *Dessjatin* of land west of the Alkalia River Valley. Because she married an English lord, she lost her right to this 5,694 *Dessjatin* and was thus forced to sell it. She was given the freedom by the Russian government to sell the land to farmers or to the Farmer's Bank in Odessa. Because she herself was in London, she commissioned her administrator Gilius with the sale. Through the mediation and urging of Mr.

Gottfried Schulz from Neu-Postal, German and Russian farmers bought the 5,694 *Dessjatin* in 1892, namely:

1. Halle—1,614 *Dessjatin* [4,357.8 acres / 1,759.26 hectares]
2. Romanovka—1,442 *Dessj.* [3,893.4 acres / 1,571.78 hectares]
3. Eigengut Schimke—500 *Dessj.* [1,350 acres / 545 hectares]
4. Miron Arnautow—100 *Dessj.* [270 acres / 109 hectares]
5. Jakow Arnautow—100 *Dessj.* [270 acres / 109 hectares]
6. Kovalenko—100 *Dessj.* [270 acres / 109 hectares]
7. Mrs. Gilius—1,858 *Dessj.* [5,016.6 acres; / 2,025.22 hectares]

The Halle (Alisowka) land was bought by farmers from various villages.

From Plotzk:	Michael Schötle—100 <i>Dessj</i>	[270 acres / 109 hectares]
	Immanuel Witt—100 <i>Dessj.</i>	[270 a / 109 ha]
	Johann Wild—100 <i>Dessj</i>	[270 a / 109 ha]
	Karl Wilske—50 <i>Dessj.</i>	[135 a / 54.5 ha]
From Teplitz:	Erhard Müller—200 <i>Dessj.</i>	[540 a / 218 ha]
From Alt-Arzis:	Michael Rasch—100 <i>Dessj.</i>	[270 a / 109 ha]
From Schabo:	Adolf Kurz—100 <i>Dessj.</i>	[270 a / 109 ha]
From Neu-Posttal:	Gottfried Schulz—114 <i>Dessj</i>	[307.8 a / 124.26 ha]
	Friedrich Brost—100 <i>Dessj</i>	[270 a / 109 ha]
	Gottlieb Müller—100 <i>Dessj</i>	[270 a / 109 ha]
	Gotthilf Eckert—75 <i>Dessj</i>	[202.5 a / 81.75 ha]
	Jakob Kern—25 <i>Dessj</i>	[67.5 a / 27.25 ha]
	August Herberg—50 <i>Dessj.</i>	[135 a / 54.5 ha]
From Gnadental:	Wilhelm Häuser—25 <i>Dessj</i>	[67.5 a / 27.25 ha]
	Wilhelm Häuser II—25 <i>Dessj</i>	[67.5 a / 54.5 ha]
From Eigenheim:	Rosine Fechner—50 <i>Dessj.</i>	[135 a / 54.5 ha]
From Tschemtschelli:	Samuel Bohnet—50 <i>Dessj.</i>	[135 a / 54.5 ha]
From Alt-Posttal:	Friedrich Vetter—100 <i>Dessj.</i>	[270 a / 109 ha]
From Mannsburg:	Michael Hinz—50 <i>Dessj</i>	[135 a / 54.5 ha]
	Jakob Rivinius 50 <i>Dessj</i>	[135 a / 54.5 ha]
	Daniel Bartel—25 <i>Dessj</i>	[67.5 a / 27.25 ha]
	Daniel Ritz—25 <i>Dessj.</i>	[67.5 a / 27.25 ha]

The above-mentioned buyers determined the place of the village in the autumn of 1894. Some wanted it to be located in the second small valley of the Alkalia River Valley, others wanted it to be in the first valley. It was voted on and the result was that the village was settled in the first valley. Because the small valley stretches approximately from the northwest to the southeast, the courtyards were also been laid out accordingly. On 50 *Dessjatin* [135 a / 54.5 ha] each, a courtyard was measured 2 *Faden* [140 feet / 42 meters] wide and 99.5 *Faden* [696.5 feet / 208.9 meters] long for the 32 courtyards. After the courtyard had been measured, they were distributed by lottery as follows:

01. Immanuel Witt	03. Erhard Müller
02. Adolf Kurz	04. Samuel Bohnet

- |                                    |                             |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 05. Gottfried Schulz               | 19. Gotthilf Eckert         |
| 06. Friedrich Vetter               | 20. Gottlieb Müller         |
| 07. Johann Wild                    | 21. Friedrich Brost         |
| 08. Johannes Schöttle              | 22. Erhard Müller           |
| 09. Immanuel Witt                  | 23. Michael Rasch           |
| 10. Michael Rasch                  | 24. Gottlieb Müller         |
| 11. Jakob Rivinius                 | 25. Adolf Kurz              |
| 12. Johann Wild                    | 26. August Herberg          |
| 13. Michael Schöttle               | 27. Michael Hinz            |
| 14. Erhard Müller                  | 28. Rosine Fechner          |
| 15. Gotthilf Eckert and Jakob Kern | 29. Friedrich Vetter        |
| 16. Daniel Bartel and Daniel Ritz  | 30. Karl Wilske             |
| 17. Erhard Müller                  | 31. Wilhelm Hauser I and II |
| 18. Gottfried Schulz               | 32. Friedrich Brost         |

Before the lottery, it was determined that courtyard #1 would be on the northeast side.

Not all of the buyers settled, so they are not the founders of the village. The actual founders (settlers) of the village of Halle are: Immanuel Witt, Nathanael Witt, sons of the buyer Immanuel Witt I; Gottfried Schulz II; Gotthilf Eckert; August Herberg; Georg Keller; Samuel Bohnet; Friedrich Vetter; Johannes Schöttle; Johann Wild; Daniel Ritz; Johann Güldner; Johann Hinz; Nathanael Wilske; Johannes Schlauch; Andreas Frömmerich; Johannes Höfel; Christian Siewert and Immanuel Ritz.

The Alisowka (Halle) settlers did not have to struggle with hardship and death like their ancestors who came here partly from Germany, partly from Poland and founded our mother colonies, because they were already the generation that had the bread, but it was not so easy for them to create a flourishing village on a barren steppe in a short time. In the autumn of 1894, the winter seeds were planted. It was not so easy to be away from the familiar circle of the family for days, even weeks away and even to spend the night here where there was no house, no tree. In the spring of 1895, the settlers came with their belongings to the place they had chosen as their new home. Work began immediately. In addition to the field work, the construction of the new home and the stables for the cattle was also started. Gottfried Schulz II built the first home with stables. In the same spring, Johannes Schöttle, Samuel Bohnet, Johann Wild, Gotthilf Eckert, Friedrich Vetter, Adolf Kurz and Michael Rasch were also building. Drinking water was also provided in good time. Gottfried Schulz the Second had the first well dug as early as the autumn of 1894—10 *Faden* [70 feet; 21 meters] deep. In the spring of 1895, Gotthilf Eckert had the second well dug and the community had the third well dug in the middle of the village. Thus, people and cattle were now supplied with drinking water. But the water was not enough to build, everyone got water from Manasche—2 km [1.2 miles], the stones were gotten from Kuleveca—15 km [9.3 miles], Bairamtscha—10 km [6.2 miles], and other places. The roof tiles (*Marseiller*) were obtained from the district town of Akkerman—25 km [15.5 miles]. Some work was initially done together. In this way, for example, pigs, lambs and cows were butchered. Once by this person and then by the other. Men and women helped. Afterwards, the meat and the sausage were distributed. During this time, they sang and made jokes. The harvest

was also done together, one after the other. It was always quite delightful, So one was closely connected to the other. Joy and sorrow were shared.

The debt on the land weighed heavily on the community members. They had to pay off the debt in 20 years. The *Dessjatine* [acre / hectare] was calculated at 103 rubles [In 1850, 1 ruble banco = 20¢, so ca. \$20.60]. 10% interest had to be paid for the sum of the debt. Since the Farmer's Bank at Odessa charged only 4% interest, the entire debt was transferred to the Odessa Farmer's Bank. Since interest rates were lower, the municipality saved 2,000 rubles [ca. \$400]. With this, the school and the prayer house were built in 1898. The school was finished that autumn and so also served as a prayer house. Two rooms were set up for a teacher's residence. In 1904, the prayer house was completed, and two bells were ordered by Mr. Deeg from Riga [Latvia] in 1905. They arrived late in the year. A bell frame was immediately set up in front of the prayer house. After finishing the bell frame, the prayer house and bell frame were dedicated by Pastor Jörgens—from Eigenheim. In the autumn of 1905, the organ was also ordered from Riga. It is a small pneumatic organ and cost 1,350 rubles [ca \$270] with delivery. The organ was set up by organ builder Fliedner from Saxony. The teacher's residence was built in 1908. It consists of 4 rooms, kitchen and shed (*Schoppen*). In the same year, the necessary stables were also added to the residence. After the annexation of Bessarabia to Romania, the church was separated from village affairs. Therefore, in 1926, the town hall (*Primaria*) with mayor's residence and shed was built. The shed was modified in 1936 as a clubhouse. This premise served the youth. Here they came together on Sunday afternoon and evening and entertained themselves with singing, games and dancing.

The inhabitants of Halle are mostly farmers. In addition to agriculture, they also deal with cattle breeding and viticulture. The first vineyards were planted in 1895 on the west side of the village just above the farms with grafted (*veredelten*) vines. In 1913, the same were destroyed by phylloxera [an insect pest]. In 1917, wild direct bearing (*Direkträger*) were planted, which still exist today.

Fruit growing also began in 1910. The orchards were located at the southern end of the village. Unfortunately, they came to an end as early as 1916. Firstly, the soil was to blame and secondly, the management.

Cattle breeding and viticulture were nice side income for the farmer. In recent years, Mr. August Schulz has also carried out reasonable chicken farming, which has been particularly profitable.

Halle was a thriving community until the World War. Of great influence on the prosperity of the community was the district town of Akkerman. All the grain of southern Bessarabia was transported from Akkerman to Odessa. Since Halle is only 25 km [15.5 miles] from Akkerman, our farmers always obtained prices better than the more distant communities. In addition, the harvest was always good. As long as Halle has stood, a single total crop failure is to be indicated, namely in 1899. The same had not experienced any particular economic losses. The expropriation of the land by the Romanian government in 1919 had a profound impact on the economic life of our community. The following farmers had land expropriated at that time:

Gottfried Schulz	245 <i>Dessjatin</i> 1,120 <i>qu Faden</i> [661.5 acres & 7,840 sq. feet / 267 hectares & 112 sq. meters]
August Herbert	91 <i>Dessjatin</i> 1,054 <i>qu Faden</i> [245.7 acres & 737.8 sq. feet / 99.2 hectares & 2,213.4 sq. meters]
Johannes Schöttle	3 <i>Dessjatin</i> 489 <i>qu Faden</i> [8.1 acres & 342.3 sq. feet / 3.27 hectares & 1,026.9 sq. meters]

Furthermore, price fluctuations had a very devastating effect on economic life. For example, in 1923, the grain rose to an enormous height: a *pud* [36 pounds; 16.38 kilograms] of wheat cost 200 lei, a *pud* of barley and oats up to 160 lei. Due to these high prices, the farmer got too much of a capitalist spirit. Enormous sums of 50% and more were borrowed. In the autumn of 1923, the price of grain fell fivefold. This was due, firstly, to the record harvest and secondly to the Romanian government. Instead of the government taking measures, the matter was quietly left to the Jews lending money at an exorbitant interest rate (*Wuchern*). So the farmer of Halle fell into debt and had to pay up to this day.

### Church

All residents of Halle are of the Evangelical Lutheran confession. All of them have held on to their faith to this day. Sects found no ground /or/ gained no footing. There were only the Hour People (*Stundenleute*) who strictly adhered to the Evangelical Lutheran faith, but, outside of the worship service, they still gathered around the Word of the Lord. To this day, they have always been the best churchgoers. They also thought a lot about a strictly moral life. Until 1898, the worship services were held in the house of Mr. Gottfried Schulz II. Because there were no bells until 1905, the flag was hung up half an hour before the start of the worship service. Sexton service was provided in the first year by the farmer Samuel Bohnet, he was also at the same time municipal mayor and always acted according to the principle: community takes precedence over self-interest. The community was served by: Pastor Hess (1896-1898), Pastor Jörgens (1898), Peters from Klöstitz, Pastor W. Meier (1918-1920), Schön (1920-1922), R. Meier (1922-1926), Albert Kern (1926-1939) and Pastor Albert Schlenker (1939 until today).

Serving as sextons:

Samuel Bohnet (1895-1896), Johann Kison (1896-1897), Georg Keller (1898-1906), Georg Osswald (1906-1911), Alexander Schreiber (1911-1915), Arnold Winger (1915-1916), Johannes Eichelberg (1917-1921), Friedrich Grade (1921-1928), Richard Baumgärtner—teacher (1928-1930), Alwin Schreiber—teacher (1930-1934), Emil Rüb—teacher (1934-1935), Alwin Schreiber—teacher (1925-1938), Emil Osswald (1938-1939), Alwin Schreiber—teacher (until today). Until after the World War, the sextons were also at the same time teacher and clerk (*Schreiber*).

The village and ecclesiastical communities were regulated by the mayors (*Schulzen*) until the end of the World War. Mayors were:

Daniel Ritz (1895-1898), Samuel Bohnet (1898-1902), Johann Güldner (1902-1905), Gottfried Schulz (1905-1908), Johannes Schöttle (1908-1911), Gottfried Schulz (1911-1914), August

Herberg (1914-1917), Gottfried Schulz (1917-1920), Johann Fischer (1920-1923), Emmanuel Ritz (1923-1926). From 1923 onwards, the village community was separated from the parish. From this point on, the mayors (*Schultheisse*) were called primars (*Primaren*) and the administrators of the parish were called curators.

Serving as primars were: Im. Ritz (1923-1926), August Schulz (1926-1929), Emil Keller (1929-1932). In 1932, the office of *Primarie* passed to the neighboring village of Manaschi.

Serving as curators were: Im. Ritz (1923-1926), August Schulz (1926-1929), Emil Keller (1929-1932), Reinhold Bohnet (1930-1936), David Herberg (1936-1939), Johann Schlenker (1939 up to today).

### School

The inhabitants of Halle thought a great deal about the good education of the children from the foundation to the present. That is why the school attendance was always good. In the beginning, of course, the teachers worked according to the old curriculum: religion, arithmetic, reading and writing. Teacher Georg Keller did farming work in addition to the teaching profession. It often happened that he gave an assignment for the students and then drove to his field. You can imagine how the students worked. Change in school life in Halle was created by teacher Georg Osswald. The same has already taught subjects such as: local history, natural history and others. Later, the program was prescribed by the state. The most modern school was set up under the direction of teacher Alwin Schreiber. He took up his position in 1930. At that time, the school was still desolate and empty. That which teacher Osswand started was destroyed again in the course of the war. For example, teacher Osswald had founded a German and Russian library of about 400 volumes. The same was lost in the war. Under the direction of teacher Schreiber, a school pharmacy, a school store, a school museum and a student library were set up. Serving as teachers were: Johann Kison (1896-1897), Georg Keller (1898-1906), Georg Osswald (1906-1911), Alexander Schreiber (1911-1915), Arnold Winger (1915-1916), Johannes Eichelberg (1917-1921), Friedrich Grade (1921-1928), Richard Baumgärtner (1928-1930) and Alwin Schreiber (from 1930 up to today).

In 1940, Halle counted a number of souls of 243 and 68 families. It should be mentioned that in Halle the one-child system (*Einkindersistem*) took root strongly. Change in this regard created the stimulus [for smaller numbers].

Halle, 10 May, 1940

Alwin Schreiber

[Translation Ends]

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