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# **DAS BANAT UND DIE BANATER SCHWABEN**

**BAND 5**

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## **STADTE UND DORFER**

**BEITRÄGE ZUR SIEDLUNGSGESCHICHTE  
DER DEUTSCHEN IMBANAT**

Redaktion  
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*Für den Inhalt der Beiträge ist der jeweilige Verfasser verantwortlich.*

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**THE BANAT AND THE SWABIANS OF THE BANAT**

**Volume 5**

**CITIES, TOWNS AND VILLAGES**

**Contributions to the Settlement History  
of the Germans in the Banat**

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## Deutschstamora

The community of Deutschstamora is located in the southern Banat on the rail line from Belgrade to Temesvár and on the E94 Inter-European Highway that connects Belgrade to Temesvár and on to Bucharest. The village is in the form of a rectangle with three main streets, one travelling north and south and two transverse streets. The church stands in the centre of the village in the rectangular church square. There is a strong possibility that there was a community established here in the Middle Ages but we know with greater certainty that it was inhabited during the Roman Period because of the numerous artefacts that have been discovered such as Roman coins, clay pottery and bronze vessels. It was also occupied during the time of the mass migration of the Germanic tribes from the east who were later followed by the Slavs.

One explanation for the designation "Stamora" is in reference to a Slavic term "*sta mora*" which means a standing water mill in contrast to "*mora vitza*" which means a mill that was in operation. Another explanation, which in all probability is the correct one, is that it was named after the Slovak nobleman Josef Malenicza de Stamora who was the founder of the later German village. On January 18, 1773 the Empress Maria Theresia awarded a Patent of Nobility to the mayor of the city of Temesvár, Josef Malenicza and his great nephew Peter Malenicza who were then privileged to add "*de Stamora*" to their name. Emperor Joseph II signed a Deed of Endowment on November 9, 1782 in which Josef Malenicza and his nephew Peter acquired the Domains of Stramora, Gross-Gay, Klein-Gay and Ballad Puszta (between Gross-Gay, Maleniczafalvá and Zichydorf). It was an estate comprised of approximately 10,000 Joch (5,800 Hectares).

The origins of the Malenicza family are somehow associated with Temesvár. In his book, "The Fortress of Temesvár in the 18th Century," the author Anton Petri observed that the Malenicza family owned a house within the fortress of Temesvár in 1779 and that a representative of the family, Jossim Malenicza was the mayor of the Serbian section of the city in the years 1742-1749 and 1750-1759 and the magistrate of the fortress of Temesvár. Johann Malenicza a descendant of Peter Malenicza was the Governor of Temes County in 1861. The manor house of the Domain was built in Stamora in 1833 by Peter Malenicza. It was known locally as the "Tall House" or the "Two Storey House" and still stands to this day. The former horse stables in the courtyard were dismantled in 1928 and the bricks were used to build living quarters for the cemetery attendant. The history of this family of nobles is connected with the beginnings of the German village of Stamora.

The first inhabitants of Stamora were Slovaks (Tóth = Slovak in Hungarian) and because of that the first name of the community was Tóthstamora (Slovak Stamora). These first inhabitants were serfs who herded cattle in the open meadows and grasslands. It is difficult to determine the exact terms of their working relationship with the estate owner but we can surmise that the Slovaks leased land from their master and provided a tithe (10%) of their crops and livestock annually and were obligated to perform a specific

number of days of free labour for the nobleman both with and without the use of his team of horses or oxen.

The oldest document that mentions the community is a survey and plan of the village and its boundaries from the year 1779. According to this plan Tóthstamora consisted of 3,000 Katastral Joch of arable land and was in the possession of Peter Malenicza.

Unfortunately this document relating to the community of Stamora was lost during the Second World War after the departure of the Soviet troops. Previously it had hung in a special place in the two storey manor house. The first written evidence with regard to the arrival of German colonists is from the year 1805. These first German settlers came from the neighbouring communities of Morawitz and Zichydorf and other villages from the Banat lowlands such as Sackelhausen, Lovrin, Bogarosch and Grabatz but also from central Hungary especially from Fejér and Győr Counties. Consequently, Deutschstamora is a secondary settlement in terms of its settlers. The German settlers came in response to an invitation from the Domain owner who hoped to tap into their industriousness and willingness to work that he believed he could not expect from his Slovak tenants.

Picture  
Celebration of *Kirchweih* in 1978  
The Roman Catholic Church of Deutschstamora  
Is in the Background

Picture  
Pupils in Grades 4 to 7 and Their Teacher  
In the Deutschstamora School

No extended families settled here because the men who headed the households were the second and third sons in their family who were ineligible to inherit and who were in search of a livelihood by acquiring land in Stamora. They were the victims of an age old custom in which only the oldest son could inherit the property of the family. Their hunger to acquire land was reflective of their need to be on their own and establish a household and provide for their family because by owning land the way would be open for them to succeed and avoid life as the hired hand or one of the farm labourers of his older brother.

In both the birth and baptismal records in the years 1803 to 1804 we find the following family names of some of these early settlers: Peter, Rajer, Scheibel, Weiss, Obermayer, Feuchthaler, Kraus, Forabit, Stöckel, Hochbein, Goldschmidt, Faul, Heller, Kollmann, Pest, Schock, Jungheim, Bak, Thomas, Niedermayer, Storch, Valter, Schneider, Haslinger, Schiel, Michel, Fiak, Lakai, Faller, Vittner, Mathes, König and Müller. In 1805 the following family names appear in the church records for the first time: Caspar, Habermüller, Viegt, Klodi, Geisl, Auer, Spies, Oberle, Ortmann, Gapp, Busch, Fras, Freez, Krönert, Sängler, Klein, Meckl, Fleischhacker, Lach (Lech?) and Bernhardt. Somewhat later we run across names like: Haltenwanger, Karbach, Gatterna and Forvist.

These German Roman Catholic settlers were served by the priest and parish in Morawitz from 1802 to 1806. Stadora has church records of its own beginning in 1806. The German population at that time can be estimated to total about 700 persons. The number of German inhabitants reached its highest point in 1900 when they numbered in the neighbourhood of 1,500. On the basis of the national census conducted in 1910 there were 272 houses and 1,447 inhabitants in the community almost all of whom were German. In 1935 there were 1,250 Germans in the community and the number of houses had reached 328. Beginning at the turn of the century there is a slow but steady decline in the population which is attributable to the One-and-Two-Child-System that became more and more prevalent. The population declined and the land acquisitions of the families increased at the same time. Not including Stadora's own arable land (originally it had been 3,000 Katastral Joch but after the First World War there was a change in national boundaries and it was reduced to 2,500 Katastral Joch) the farm families in Stadora had acquired 800 Joch from Denta, 600 Joch from Klein-Gaj and several Joch from Deschan.

Initially there was an agreement between the German settlers in Stadora and the Slovak inhabitants who were being re-settled elsewhere to provide them with compensation for the loss of their school and prayer house. The German settlers paid 500 Austrian *Gulden* plus a team of oxen for them. The Slovaks settled in the surrounding villages of Butin, Klopodia and Panschowa in the Imperial and Royal Military Frontier District.

The school that had been built in 1802 consisted of only one classroom. A second classroom was added some time between 1850 and 1860 and in 1902/1903 a third classroom was added as a second storey to the school. The school also served as a prayer house until the Roman Catholic Church was erected in 1857/1858. The costs of the necessary building material and the skilled workers were paid from church funds while the village population provided labour and used their own teams and wagons to haul the building materials to the church site in the village because the stretch of railway line from Temesvár to Basiasch was not in operation until the following year (1859). The Domain owner donated the church site to the community which was traditional in most of the Banat villages. The cornerstone laying took place on November 15, 1858 following the celebration of Mass by Anton Body who was both the Dean of the District and parish priest in Zichyendorf. On October 15, 1859 on the Feast of Day of St. Theresia, the new church was consecrated by Dean Anton Body. On this occasion there were processions of Marian Maidens and parishioners from the neighbouring communities that participated in the event but the large church was not capable of accommodating everyone.

The church was built by the Master Builder, Josef Weifert of Werschetz and cost 26,405 Austrian *Gulden*. The organ was built in Arad in the workshop of Anton Dangel by his son Josef who received a gold medal at the National Exhibition in Szekésvérvár that was held in 1879. On April 1, 1886 the organ was installed in the Stadora Roman Catholic Church. The organist was Michael Gellert who was the director of the school. The *Kirchenvater* (lay head of the Parish Council) was Josef Keller, the *Richter* (mayor) was Jakob Fuhr, the assistant *Richter* was Ferdinand Wingert along with Johann Messner. The rectory was built in 1811.

All of these foregoing years were not without setbacks and reverses. Swamp fever took its toll among the first settlers. In 1831 cholera found its way into the Banat. From among the 80,000 German settlers it would claim 25,000 victims (30%) along with the plague and swamp fever. The number of victims in Deutschstamora is unknown. It was during this period that the "plague and cholera cart" was first used to take the dead to the cemetery.

Great damage was done by the floods in 1830 and 1836 whereby the major portion of the harvest was ruined. Deeper lying neighbouring Morawitza could only be reached by canoe and higher elevated Stamora was not swamped by the floodwaters as were the other villages in the vicinity. In 1838 there was an earthquake that struck in the southern Banat but it did not do any damage in Stamora. The *Kolumbatscher* flies were an annual plague both in the spring and summer that tormented whole herds of cattle and in some cases even caused their deaths.

Of great importance for Stamora in terms of its economic life and transportation alternatives were the improvements made to the old National Highway from Temesvár to Werschetz in 1853/1854 that had been of major importance as far back as the time of the Romans, during the Middle Ages and even at the time of the Turkish occupation. It continued to serve as a major artery through the area. To the right and left of the Highway there were dirt covered lanes to the nearby fields that were used by wagons. These lanes were ploughed under and integrated with the arable land after the Second World War during the collectivization of agriculture.

The construction of the railway in 1855 was one of the most important economic achievements in the Banat from Stamora's point of view. In 1855 the privileged Austrian State Railway Company that was also the proprietor of the Mining and Ironworks in Orawitza and Reschitza was granted concessions to construct a rail line from the two year old existing line from Orawitza-Basiasch to connect it with Temesvár. In the autumn of the following year the construction of the railway line was undertaken under the direction of a Prussian engineer, named Ludwig Mayer, who lived in Werschetz. On June 18, 1858 the railway line's completion was celebrated and it began to operate, whereby the two neighbouring communities of Deutschstamora and Morawitza shared a common railway station. The railway station had a loading ramp to bring freight onboard, a water tower to service the locomotives as well as the only freight yard between Werschetz and Detta where the inhabitants of the surrounding communities could load their agricultural produce and receive supplies and equipment.

At the time of the German settlement there was apparently already a horse powered grinding mill. At the end of the 19th Century Stamora had two functioning mills that were operated by Josef Hammes. One was on the western side of the village and a motor powered mill was on the eastern end of the village. The Hammes mill had a private siding attached to its operation that was connected to the railway depot and the residents of Stamora were supplied with electricity in their homes prior to the First World War by this enterprising miller. There were 47 men from Stamora who were victims of the

fighting during the First World War. The war memorial erected in front of the church in 1925 was in remembrance of our fallen countrymen.

A new era began for our community and its inhabitants following the end of the First World War. The new national border that was established without regard for the boundaries of our village ran right through it and about 500 Joch of Stamura's arable land were now on the Yugoslavian side of the border. Until the border was firmly established, Stamura was occupied by the Serbs, who on their departure took all of our agricultural equipment and machinery, along with our livestock and grain with them.

After the founding of the "German Swabian Folk Association" in Temesvár in March of 1921 to represent the interests of the Germans in the Banat, Stamura elected to form a local branch of the organization in our community. Education was now once more in German. The director of the school at the time was Hubert Donauer Sr., who had a rather noteworthy career here where he taught for thirty years. In this timeframe a great number of organizations were formed: the Men's Choral Society, the Youth Association, the Maiden's Circle, the Catholic Women's Association, the Tradesmen's Association, the Rosary Circle, and two brass bands that undergirded and strengthened the sense of community among the inhabitants on festive occasions. Almost every German inhabitant was a member of one organization or another and very much involved in their activities, projects and the fellowship they generated.

There were also very successful economic undertakings in this period, above all the co-operatives that became the backbone of the farming economy. In 1936 the Producer's Co-operative was founded in Stamura and the milk division of the operation came into existence at the same time. Milk production became profitable once again and very lucrative with fixed prices and guaranteed markets. The bulk selling of eggs and poultry at much better prices that were regulated led to a much better livelihood and emerging prosperity in the life of the village. Swine breeding developed most vigorously so that in years from 1939-1943 the farmers delivered over 100 freight car loads of fattened swine annually.

In the midst of this economic and cultural upswing that brought a level of prosperity which the German population of the Banat had never known, the Second World War broke out. As a result of the pact signed on May 13, 1943 between the government of the German Third Reich and the Romanian government all of the able bodied men of Stamura were enlisted in the German Army. Following the capitulation of Romania and their changing sides and joining the Allied Powers against Germany on August 23, 1944 a never ending Way of the Cross and suffering for the Germans of Romania began. For a community like Deutschstamura, being situated alongside the border with Yugoslavia placed it in a precarious and dangerous position.

It now became a time of anxiety and uncertainty. We had misgivings about our future after the German troops passed through Stamura in early September heading north for Temesvár. Panic became widespread throughout the village and we began to think of fleeing before the onrushing Soviet troops arrived. This was all reinforced as more and

more refugee treks from surrounding and far off communities passed through Stamura in their packed wagons while others passed by on the outskirts of the village. At first the retreating German troops encouraged us to flee and then we were ordered to leave the village and head west. The greater part of the German population of Stamura left our village on September 29, 1944 heading for Werschetz. Only a very few remained behind, mostly older people.

In Werschetz those who had fled from Stamura were accommodated in the German section of the city because their attempt at flight had been futile because the Partisans had cut off all of the escape routes. Because of a false report that a Russian officer had been shot and killed during a confrontation with some of the German civilians, the refugees from Stamura were witnesses to some gruesome crimes committed by the Partisans in response to the false allegations. On the night of October 13th/14th one hundred German men were taken to the old *knacker's yard* (the place where the bones and body parts of dead animals were disposed of) where they were forced to dig their own graves. On the morning of October 14th the men were forced to undress and were shot by the Partisans and their bodies were thrown in the mass grave that was later covered over with earth and lime. Among those who were shot were five men from Stamura.

Similar tragedies were repeated but far more often once the city of Werschetz was handed over to the Serbian Partisans by the Russians at the end of October. Only a few of the families from Stamura were somehow able to manage to escape and make their way westwards. At the beginning of November the Partisans permitted the refugees from Stamura to return home. Without exception all of our horses, wagons and their contents had to be left behind. After being held back at the border for two to three weeks the refugees were finally allowed to return to Stamura. Since they had left Stamura their houses had been plundered and badly damaged and some of the returnees could not move back into their homes because new occupants had taken over their house. On January 13, 1945 all German men aged 17 to 45 years and all women aged 18 to 32 years were dragged off to Russia to do forced labour. Of the 58 men from Stamura who were taken, seven of them died in Russia while the others were able to return home five years later.

Internally, Romania was to be transformed into a socialistic republic on the basis of the Soviet model. The private enterprise system was replaced with collectivism in a series of steps. In 1945 as a result of the Land Reform Act, the houses, the land and property of the German population were confiscated. These measures were followed by the nationalisation of all businesses and industries. On the basis of all of these measures the livelihood of the Germans had been taken away from them. Romanian colonists from all of the country moved into the confiscated houses of the Germans.

Picture  
The Brass Band (1933-1940)  
Under the Direction  
of Jakob Schilling, the Conductor



Picture  
A Family from Deutschstamora  
Deported to the Baragan

But not even now was the Way of the Cross for the Germans of Stamora about to end. Following the political falling out between Josip Broz Tito of Yugoslavia and Josef Stalin a dangerous political situation faced the Romanians who opted to side with the Russians. Romania sought to be a staunch ally of Stalin and that necessitated creating a 30 to 50 kilometre wide security zone along its border with Yugoslavia. The area in question had to be cleared and cleansed of all "undesirable and untrustworthy elements." This of course meant the Germans but now also included Romanians, Serbs and Hungarians.

In June of 1951 a long line of freight cars assembled at the railway station that Morawitz and Stamora shared. On Sunday, June 17, 1951 no one was allowed to leave the village and the next morning the families that had been notified that they would be deported began the journey to the railway station. Two families were assigned to each freight car. They had been allowed to bring the most necessary household items and clothing as well as personal effects. The household items that had to be left behind were later sent to a Commission to assess and estimate their value. No one knew where they were going and fear was written all over their faces. After many days of travel the people and their belongings were unloaded and dumped in a field under the open sky above and were informed that they were on the Baragan Steppes. Here they were to transform this worthless, drought ridden prairie into fertile arable fields and create new thriving settlements. Initially they housed themselves in earthen huts they dug out of the ground. Later the deportees built houses using clay bricks. It was only in 1955 and 1956 that the deported Swabians from the Banat eventually received permission to return to their homes in the Banat. Once back in their home villages they had to make a new beginning for themselves once again.

The death toll suffered by the inhabitants of Deutschstamora in the war, as a result of deportations to Russia and the Baragan Steppes was high. As soldiers in the Second World War, twelve men lost their lives serving in the Romanian Army and 32 of our countrymen were killed in action while in the German Army. The number of civilian deaths was also high. In the attempted flight to the West a total of 35 persons were either dragged off by the Partisans never to be heard from again or were shot or died in Tito's extermination camps. Three of our countrymen died in prison in Romania. Seven of the men deported to Russia died there as well as four who were deported to the Baragan.

As the oppression and measures taken against the Germans in Romania intensified more and more of the Swabians in the Banat saw no chance of a future for them or their children to ever be able to work and live in freedom there. The Germans of Stamora made the decision to leave and emigrated to the Republic of Germany where they would have the possibility of living as Germans in freedom and make a new life for themselves.

Hubert Donauer Sr.  
Stefan Hasenfratz

