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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
Elke Hoffmann
Peter-Dietmar Leber
Walter Wolf

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**HERAUSGEGEBEN VON DER
LANDSMANNSCHAFT DER BANATER SCHWABEN**

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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Morawitza

The history of the community goes back to the beginning of the 14th Century. There was a Catholic settlement in 1333-1335 named "Mora" and also called "Mura". In 1717 Morawa was identified as part of the Werschetz District and had thirty houses.

Morawitza was originally the name of the creek that flows by the village. The Slavic "Moravic" is the short form of "Morava" (Mor = water). The residents of the community called their village "Morawitz". Morawitz appears on the official map of 1761 and is classified as a community inhabited by "old believers." [Editor's note: The Patriarchs of the Russian Orthodox Church noticed some discrepancies had developed over the years between the Russian and Greek rites and texts of the Orthodox Church. They introduced reforms to the Russian church in 1652 and 1666 to bring the two branches into alignment. There was a substantial backlash over reforms we would consider trivial today. The Old Believers in Russia, who refused to adopt the changes, were persecuted and sometimes even executed.]

At the beginning of 1785 the first 158 German families were settled here among the Serbs and Romanians. They came from already existing communities in the Banat lowlands where they had been quartered while their houses were being built. During the Turkish War (1787-1790) when the Turks crossed the Danube at Pantschowa and poured into the southern Banat the German population fled to the north while the Romanians remained behind in the village. After the Emperor assembled his troops at Detta and retook Pantschowa the refugees returned home to their damaged and plundered houses.

In 1790 the State Administration in Temesvár made the decision to resettle the Romanian inhabitants of Morawitza in the community of Radovantz that was renamed Deschanfálva (Deschan Village). The German population remained in Morawitza and were left free to live and work in peace. Their untroubled work was only disturbed by natural catastrophes. The Morawitz Creek often caused flooding and in 1813 the flood waters were so high and dangerous that travel to Werschetz was done by canoe. In 1836 a cholera epidemic broke out and there were 106 victims. The community of Morawitza was raised to the status of a market town. In this timeframe a military garrison was established here and a cavalry squadron was stationed in the community. In 1853 the highway leading from Temesvár to Werschetz was paved with gravel and the construction of a railway line from Temesvár to Werschetz began in 1855 that was opened to traffic on July 18, 1858 following a festive celebration.

This was followed by a period of cultural and economic advances that were only disturbed by natural catastrophes like the great flood of 1872 and the cholera epidemic of 1879 that accounted for 78 victims this time.

The years of settlement in Mirowitza spanned the years from 1784 to 1820 during which time 544 persons were settled here. The settlers came from the Saar, Trier, Lorraine and Swabia. Morawitza was a state owned and government operated Domain.

In Morawitza the dialect spoken was Rhine-Franconian (Palatinate) in character and there were elements of Bavarian in it as well.

History of the Parish

In 1776 a small church was erected for the Orthodox Romanians which was handed over to the German Catholics after the Romanians were resettled in Deschanfálva (1790). In 1902 there were 1,702 Roman Catholic inhabitants and the church had become far too small for them. In the years 1910 and 1911 a new church was built and was consecrated by Bishop Glattfelder. The parish was established in 1785 and the parish records were initiated at that time. In the passing of years the following served as resident priests in Morawitza: the Franciscan monk, Kasimir Sturm (1785-1803), Georg E. Schmidt (1803-1819), Emmerich Josa (1819-1833), Josef Kilian (1833-1885), Johann Mingesz (1885-1892), Karl Pfeifauf (1893-1907), Dr. Josef Babinsky (1907-1911), Nikolaus R□mer (1911-1941), Peter Pazman (1941-1942), Johann Lux (1941-1942), Johann Benz (1942-1943), Dean Stefan Balogh (1943-1980), Father Csik, Dean Ladislaus Galgoniak, Stefan Ackermann (1963-1978) and Otto Hübner (1979-1985).

Picture
The Catholic Church in Morawitza
Built in 1911-1912

Picture
Mount Cavalry and the Chapel
In the Cemetery

The first cemetery following the settlement was laid out on the piece of land between house number 32 and 33 (in the direction of Gherman). After the cemetery was closed the community erected a new cemetery on a small incline and slope in the direction of Deutschstamora. The inhabitants of Morawitza were always proud of Mount Calvary overlooking the cemetery. Between 1828-1830, the Calvary chapel was built to honour the sufferings of Christ and dedicated to St. Emmerich. In 1875 the chapel was restored. Today both the chapel and the church that were restored by the remaining Germans left in Morawitza in 1991/1992 are now both in very poor condition. The upkeep of the cemetery can also no longer be maintained. Nor is there a resident priest. And the priest who serves numerous congregations in the area is not German. Worship is in the Romanian language and the vast majority of the Catholics are Romanian.

A war memorial for the men who fell in the First World War (1914-1918) was erected in 1937 as a group effort on the part of the youth. In 1993 the Martin Franzen family had a memorial tablet attached to it in honour of the fallen in the Second World War.

Schools

From the list of pupils and teachers in Morawitza it can be determined that the first year of instruction occurred in 1787. At first the school had one class and later there were two

classes: one for the "little readers" and the other for the "older readers." From the information we have from the first years, only reading and writing were taught along with religious education. It was only later that the children also learned arithmetic in which special attention was paid to the four basic fundamentals (Adding, Subtracting, Multiplying and Dividing). The language of instruction was German. Extracts from reports on the number of pupils reveal: in 1787 there were 103, in 1820 there were 182, in 1850 there were 237 and in 1888 there were 303. Eventually the four classes in this primary school were expanded to a seven grade community school. This school was government financed. Statistics on the number of pupils in following years is missing.

From 1867 to the end of the First World War in 1918 the people of Morawitza were exposed to Magyarization as was also the case throughout the Banat. In the schools and public life the Hungarian language was always in the foreground. After the First World War at first the language of instruction was German once again. In 1925 the Romanian state took over the schools and the Romanianization of education began. At the end of the 1930s a Romanian teacher took over the directorship of the school. The major subjects were taught in Romanian. No more teaching was done in German. This situation would last until 1944.

In September 1944 almost the entire population of the community fled at the approach of the Soviet troops and returned home again in the summer of 1945. German was taught as a foreign language in the first four grades and the other subjects were all taught in Romanian. The massive emigration of the Germans to the Republic of Germany resulted in the decrease in the number of German pupils so that today no German instruction is given in Morawitza.

In the first years the following teachers taught in Morawitza: the Headmasters were Anton Fest, Josef Schneider, Johann Philipp Mayer, Alois Mayer and Leopold Zeitler. The assistant teachers in the early period were: Johann Schambre, Ludwig Tisch, Ladislaus and Caesar Besser, Johann Schütz, Michael Weber, August Weber, August Watz, Berta Tonas, Julius Bitto and Felix Grünwald. During the interwar years, the following taught in Morawitza: Christoph Horvath, Franz Karlik, Andreas Kernweiss, Peter Papp, Viorica Eckert, Juliane Becker, Käthe Hutterer, Theresia Klein, Mr. Zappe, Mr. Seebald, Guido Schati, Peter Becker and Jakob Neumann. Following the Second World War the following teachers taught in Morawitza: Peter Juhn, Anni Klein, Hilde Blau, Elfriede Moos, Katharina Fuhri. Ever since 1990 there have been no German pupils or teachers in Morawitza.

The 20th Century

Morawitza experienced both an economic and cultural upswing at the beginning of the 20th Century that remained in place up to the First World War. There was a noticeable energetic community spirit and organizational life. A Hunt and Rifle Club was founded, a fire brigade was established, and a choral society and brass band all came into existence at that time. An agricultural association, credit union, savings bank and a steam powered mill were all founded or established.

In the interwar years the economic upswing continued. A produce co-operative was founded that resulted in very remunerative benefits for the farmers in jointly marketing their grain, livestock and milk production. People had more money in their pockets to enable them to purchase new agricultural machinery and equipment. New houses were built; there were eight grocery and general stores; three taverns; a lumber yard; five threshing machines; and the first tractors put in an appearance; seeding and mowing machines were purchased. Dr. Johann Stollmayer (1891-1968) and his wife Dr. Jolanda née Lampel (1898-1972) set up practice in our prosperous and flourishing community that was linked to the railway network. There was also a pharmacist, Julius Hentschell (1876-1951) and a dentist, Michael Organasch (1920-1999).

In the First World War Morawitza suffered the loss of 78 men and in the Second World War there were 26 war dead who served in the Romanian Army and 25 men who had been in units of the German Army. There were also civilians who lost their lives during these threatening and uncertain times. Heinrich Awender (born in 1882) a printer, publisher, owner of a publishing company and a member of parliament was shot and killed by a Romanian border patrol near Altbeba on February 8, 1948 in an attempt to leave the country. The following were shot by Russian soldiers: Johann Genswein (06.06.1914-20.04.1945) and Josef Escher (02.04.1905-22.08.1947) lost their lives in Seligenstadt while doing reparations work; Dominik Erhardt (13.12.1904-07.09.1949) was shot by Romanian soldiers in Morawitza; and during the deportation to the Baragan (1951-1956) ten of our countrymen perished there.

Flight, Deportation, Dispossession

On September 11, 1944 our countrymen fled with the retreating German armed forces and headed west. Of Morawitza's actual population of 1,500 only 72 chose to remain behind in the village. The journey began with horse and wagon while some went on foot and on trains across Yugoslavia, through Hungary to Austria. It was here in Austria where a portion of the refugees fell into the hands of the Russians. After the end of the war about one half of those who had fled returned home only to find their homes occupied by strangers and had to find shelter elsewhere. They had to earn their living as labourers working for the Romanian, Serb and Hungarian colonists. As the years went by the situation changed because many of the colonists left and the German families moved back into their homes that had been abandoned. In the first years after the confiscation of their agricultural land some of our countrymen found work in the factories of the nearby cities and then later they worked for the collective farm in Morawitza. Many of the youth moved with their families to Temesvár, Reschitza and Detta where they found housing and work and the younger children could attend German schools there.

Picture
The War Memorial Erected in 1937
Containing the Names of Those
Who Died in the First World War

Resettlement:

At the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s several families desired to be reunited with their family members and were allowed to leave for the Republic of Germany. Later others would follow right up until the time of the overthrow of the government in 1989. How many families were able to emigrate by paying a "liberation fee" in German Marks is not known. After 1990 there were 210 persons from Morawitza who arrived in Germany as "late" settlers and in the following years 74 more followed them.

The Morawitza HOG assembled an index file of the whereabouts of our former countrymen in 1999. The following were identified in terms of where they were living. There were 483 persons in Germany, 37 persons in Austria, 2 in France, 6 in America, 4 in Canada and 4 in Brazil. While in Romania there were 28 in Morawitza, 6 in Detta, 17 in Temesvár and 10 in other communities in the Banat.

Founding of the HOG

The first *Treffen* (reunion) of the former inhabitants of Morawitza occurred in 1979 in Airing that our countrymen Josef Stollmayer and Jakob Franzen organized. At the second *Treffen* on May 1st and 2nd in 1981 the Morawitza HOG was founded and Josef Stollmayer was elected the president. Later presidents of the HOG were Mathias Oppermann elected in 1987 followed by Jakob Franzen in 1993 and then after 1998 our countryman Gustav Kunz.

Gustav Kunz