

The Village of Jarek

By Inge Morgenthaler (nee Schmidt)

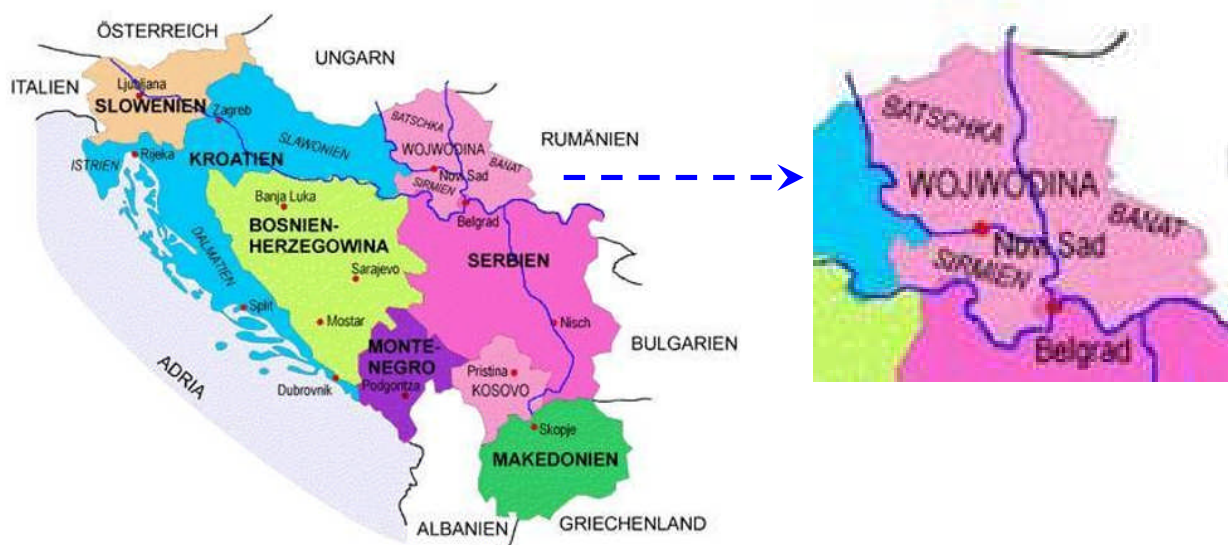
Translated by Eleonore Oreskovich

In 1787 Jarek was founded by 80 Lutheran families with about 300 persons as the last of 9 settlements in the Backa under the rule of Josef II. Backa is part of present-day Serbia. During the third and last so-called Swabian migration (1782-1786) the settlers mainly came from Southern Germany, from Hessen, the Palatinate, the Upper Palatinate, the Alsace, Baden und Wuerttemberg.

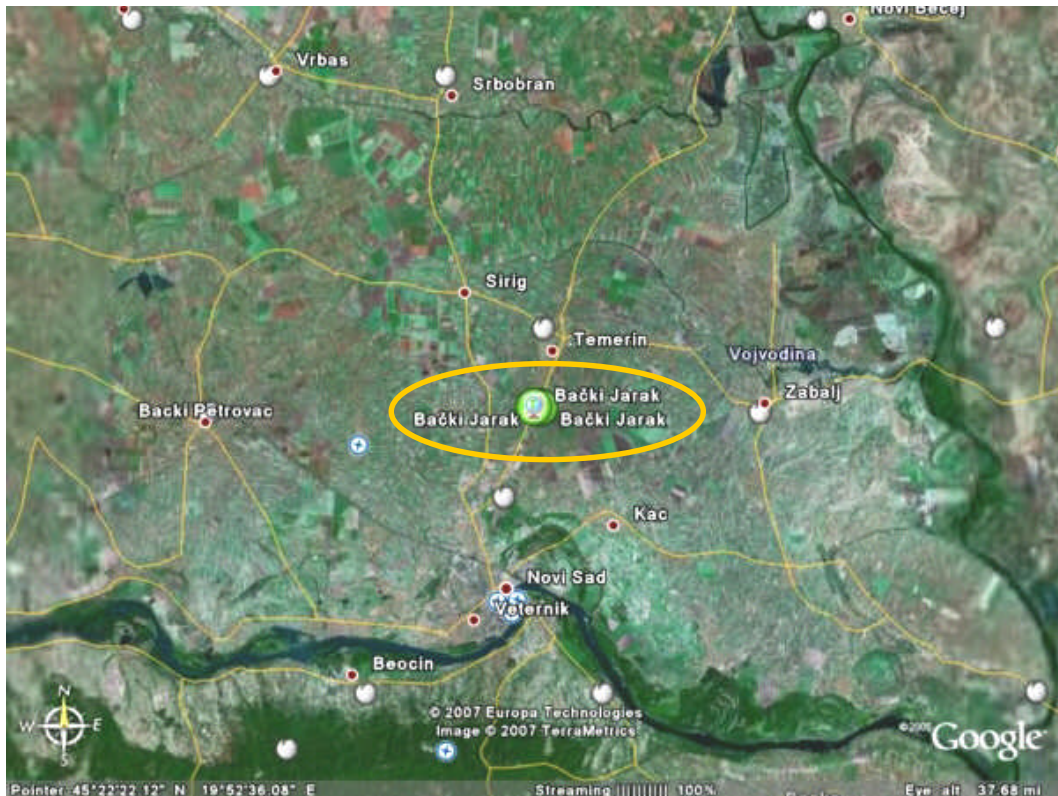
In the territories devastated by the Ottomans during the so-called "Wars against the Turks", which were situated in the southeast of the Austria-Hungarian Empire, Josef II continued the settlement begun by his grandfather Charles VI and his mother Maria Theresia. During the first and second Swabian migration none but Catholic settlers had been called to the country. During the third Swabian migration from 1882 on Lutheran and reformist colonists were also allowed to set off for Hungary.

In the preceding months canvassers had proclaimed the conditions of Josef's settlement patent everywhere in the South German regions struck by continuous wars and recruited settlers. However, not everybody was taken, the aspirants were required to possess a sum of 300 to 1 000 guildens, before they were given a passport and allowed to emigrate.

From Ulm or Ratisbon they sailed to Vienna on "Ulm Boxes" or "Kelheim Ferryboats". That part of the voyage had to be financed by them. From Vienna the voyage was paid for by the public treasury.



Picture 1 - Map of the former Yugoslavia and now Serbia with the Vojvodina (in the year 2006).



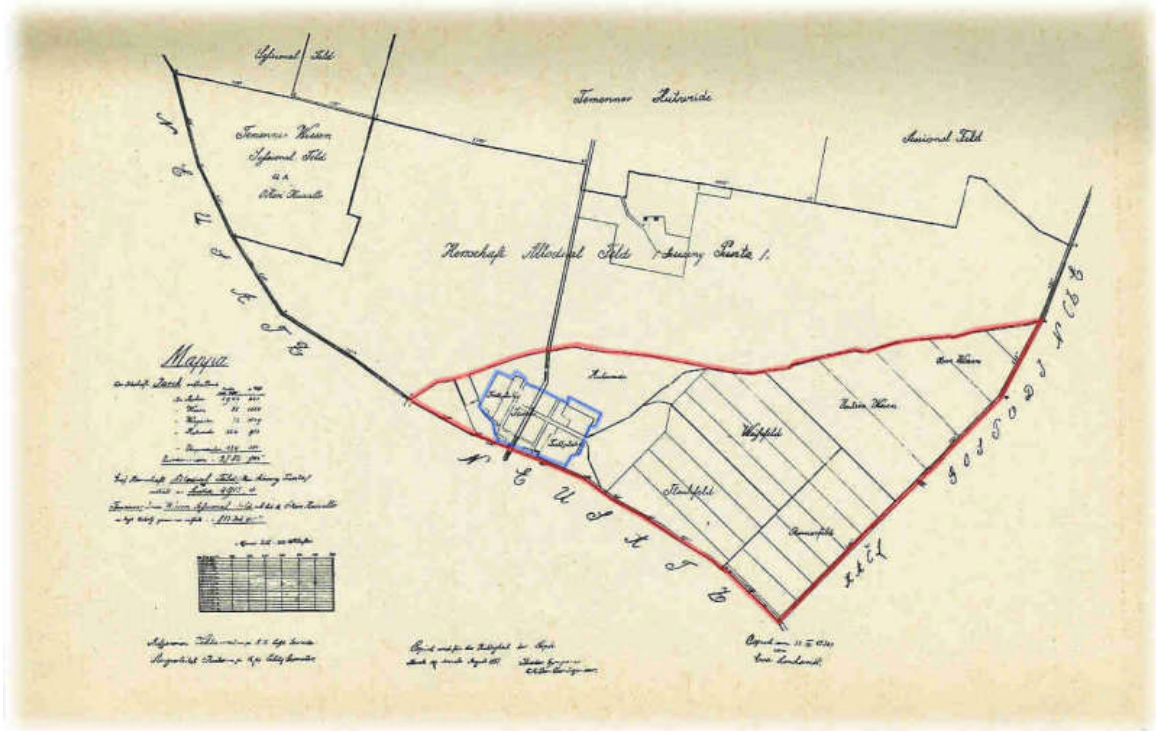
Picture 2 - Aerial view of present-day Bački Jarak Community of Temerin, Serbia.

In the patent of settlement all the items to be accorded to each colonist family were exactly listed. In comparison with his mother and his grandfather Josef II was very tolerant and generous.

So in the spring of 1887 300 Lutherans of the Augsburg denomination came from Ruma to Jarek, 15 kilometres north of Novi Sad (Neusatz), where they started building their houses. Their marches comprised about 1 800 yokes of field on a territory owned by the imperial chamber of the court. In a "Urbarial Contract" written out by the chamber of the court, which each pater familias had to sign, the rights and duties were exactly defined. In the beginning the villagers were free farmers who were not obliged to deliver the tenth and perform statute labour (robot).

In 1796 Earl Nikolaus of Szechenji bought the territory for 80 000 guldens, and the villagers were subjected to patrimonial rule.

The territory formed a triangle, which was limited by the Novi Sad territory in the south, but in the north and the east by the small and the big Roman entrenchments. The fact that the village bordered on the Novi Sad territory impeded the enlargement.



Picture 3 - The Jarek territory (Hotter) at the time of settlement (small triangle).

According to the plans of the imperial "Kameral" engineer Josef Kiss, who had arranged all the settlements founded under Josef's rule in the same way, the village resembled a chessboard with three longitudinal lanes from the northeast to the south-west and one transverse lane. The central and broadest of the three lanes was the main lane. At Jarek it was about 14 "klafters" wide (1 Vienna klafter is 1.89 meters), and the major road from Novi Sad to Stari Becej ran over it. Its parallels were the Water Lane in the west and the Hospital Lane in the east, which were about 11 "klafters" wide. The Cross Lane divided the village into two parts. In the beginning there were no farm sites in it.

Along the three lanes 96 farm-house sites for the 80 families were measured, each of which was 15 "klafters" wide and 50 "klafters" deep. In the Hospital Lane 4 sites remained free, and in the Main Lane 12.

The free sites in the centre of the village were for the public buildings, the church, the school, the community centre, the vicar's house and the manorial inn.

On the edge of the village, next to the gardens of the Hospital and the Water Lane were the threshing sites. The pasture reached from the edge of the village to the borderline in the north.

Moreover each farmer got 1/2 or 1/4 "session" of fields to be cultivated with winter or summer crops and suitable pastures in addition the seeds had to be paid for.

"The workmen got 50 guldens for the purchase of their tools". (Johann Einmann, see loco cit. P. 12)

At that time 1/2 "session" was 12 yokes of field, 4 yokes of meadow, 4 yokes of pasture and 1 yoke for the farmhouse and garden. 1/4 "session" amounted to 13 yokes of land. Each settler got a colonist's house (Link to: [Housing construction at Jarek](#)) consisting of stamped loam and covered with reed or straw.



Picture 4 - Street plan of Jarek at the time of settlement in 1787(loc.cit.p.15).

What did the village look like? With their gables the houses directly adjoined a paved sidewalk of the lane, behind which there was a wide green belt with lime, chestnut and later mulberry trees. Between the green belt and the lane there was a ditch.

The main lane was a major road and correspondingly wide .The Hospital and the Water Lane were arranged in the same way, but the lanes and green belts were less wide. Here the ditch was in the middle of the green belt.



Picture 5 - Photograph of the Main lane in 2006.

The enlargement of the village

Until 1820 the population steadily grew because of the high birth rates and the fact that colonists from other villages and latecomers from South Germany moved there, so that Earl Szechenji as the owner of the estate decided on an enlargement of the village.

He had an additional traverse lane, the New Lane, built. Of course the farmhouse sites were smaller here. However, the owners were also endowed with an "Urbarial Contract" by the earl and got a piece of pasturage, too. But at the same time the first settlers moved to surrounding Serbian villages e.g. Katsch (Kac) and Gospodnjinci, who were to be followed by many others.

In spite of these measures the farmhouse sites were not all sufficient for the growing population. For this reason the former cholera graveyard, which had been used as an orchard in the meantime, was also divided into 8 farmhouse sites and sold in the same year. Four months later 18 sites were created in the place of the former "ground holes".

In spite of the exodus mentioned above the population had grown to about 1000 persons until 1822, when the construction of a new church was determined on. It was to replace the old prayer house of 1791, which had become much too small in the meantime. The church was constructed in late Baroque style and consecrated on the Sunday after Gallus in October 1823. In 1946 it was blown up by partisans.

The next important event in the village was the first great fire in 1834, which destroyed the houses in New Lane. The whole lane burnt down, for the houses with reed-covered roofs burnt like tinder.

But the great catastrophe in the village happened in 1848, the year of the revolution, when the Hungarian rebels under Louis Kossuth wanted to separate from Austria. A confrontation arose, which lasted almost two years. In its course Jarek was set on fire and on August 31 it burnt down completely.

Only the outside walls of the church were left. As the whole harvest was burnt, too, the inhabitants of Jarek were as poor as beggars now and fled to the villages of Kleinker, Torschau, Werbas and Schowe in panic. No sooner than two years after the so-called "run away" they returned and started rebuilding their totally destroyed village.

Little is known about the construction method of the new houses. However each family had to take up a public loan between 80 and 200 guildens from the public treasury. What is known is that the debt could not be paid off until the fixed date. For this reason all the inhabitants had to vouch for the debt and sign a common promissory note in 1863.

If you consider that after their return in 1850 all the inhabitants had to start at zero and had immense debts, it is astonishing that in 1860 already the village had to be enlarged again. Our ancestors' spirit of enterprise and courage were indeed admirable. The threshing areas bordering on the gardens of the Hospital Lane were divided, and the Oxen lane was created which was later called Elizabeth Lane.

In 1881 again there was not enough room in the village, and now the threshing areas bordering on the on the Water Lane were divided and the Rudolf Lane created named after Crown Prince Rudolf.

Though young people had left again and again, there was still not enough room for the villagers, and in 1885 the greatest number of villagers in the history of Jarek moved to the new filial community of Budisava (Waldneudorf, Tiszakalmanfalva).

The village had slowly become wealthy, so that in 1903 people decided to replace the old community centre, which had been built in the style of a longitudinal house after the great fire by an impressive and beautiful building.

It was constructed in the form of a U and is situated at the crossing of the Main Lane and the Cross Lane opposite the square where formerly the church had been erected. The construction order was given to Anton Diener. In 1904 it was presented to the community. Its costs were 12 540 crowns. Besides the vicar's house, which had also been built by Anton Diener in 1899, this house is the only public building which is still left at Jarek.



Picture 6 - Community Centre built by Anton Diener in 1904.



Picture 7 - The new vicar's house built by Anton Diener in 1899.

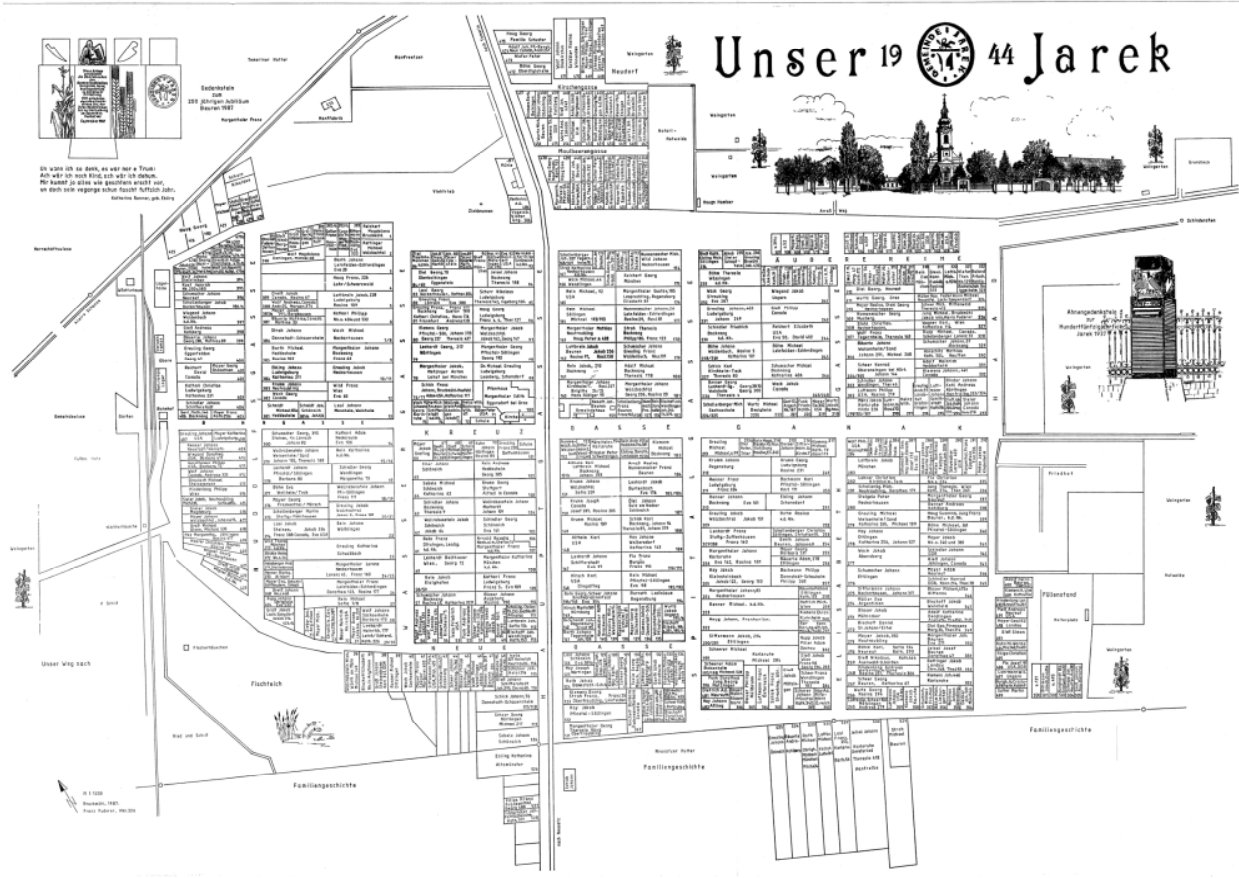
The last great enlargement of the village was made in 1907 in the place of the vicar's pasturage. At the exit of the village towards Temerin the "New Village" was created with two lanes on the right side, the Mulberry Lane and the Cherry Lane.

In the course of time various school buildings were erected in the existing village which were named after the teachers giving lessons there, the Heinz School, the Wild School and the Bloser School. Today none of them is left any more.

In 1921 the "new mill" was finished, which had been built by the Traffic Society. It is situated at the exit of the village towards Temerin on the left hand side. Today it houses a fodder plant.

In 1937 the Hemp Society erected a hemp factory near the rails, which went into production in the same year.

Street plan of *Jarek* (in the year 1944)



Picture 8 - Street plan of Jarek in 1944 (not oriented) drawn by Franz Fuderer (+). (Northern direction is into the left side above.)

This street plan of Jarek from 1944 showing greater in a new window.

**(For showing exactly the lanes and properties:
Please "scroll" accordingly horizontally and vertically "direction"
or use optionally**

**the "zoom-function" of your "internet-browsers"
to change the "size of the exposition" !)**

look at page 10

In the years between 1821 and 1931 2414 persons moved away from Jarek to surrounding villages, the USA, Canada, Argentine etc. At the time of the flight in 1944 there were about 2000 inhabitants.

Added together, there were about 4 400 persons. From 1805 to 1937 (when the first "Heimatbuch" with the statistics was edited) there were 8845 births at Jarek.

On the assumption that there had been 300 settlers, the inhabitants had almost become thirty times as many.

In the year of settlement the villagers were given 1800 yokes of land (1 yoke is 0.578 hectare.) In the flight year the approximately 2000 inhabitants possessed over 9400 yokes round the village and in the bordering areas and 103 tenant's farms (called Sallasch).

Probably Jarek was the village in Batschka which had the highest population growth and also the greatest exodus. This may have been due to the fact that the real estate was very small and the village area could not be enlarged any more.

Bački Jarak in the year 2006

From 1944 to 1946 there was a so-called detention camp at Jarek, which in reality was an extermination camp ([*Link to: Internment Camp Jarek*](#)), where more than 17,000 Danube Swabians were interned and had to vegetate. More than 6, 400 of them died in a cruel and inhuman way and were buried in mass graves. After the camp had been closed down, 'meritorious partisans' were given the empty houses, part of whose descendants still live there.

Many of the old houses have been pulled down, too, and been replaced by two new ones.

In the three oldest lanes there are still some of the beautiful stuccoed farm houses, in the Rudolf- and the Elisabeth Lane there are only a few left. ([*Link to: Housing construction at Jarek*](#)) In the large gardens between the big lanes there are new streets with nice new houses.

After the latest Balkans War a lot of Serbians from the war territories arrived and settled there. In the meantime the population has grown to over 8 000. Today Backi Jarak belongs to Temerin. A beautiful Orthodox church was built, a large new gymnasium and also a big school financed by the European Community. In the place where formerly the Lutheran church was situated, there is a supermarket today. The village has taken on a completely different look, and in a few years time nothing will remind visitors of the fact any more that Jarek once was one of the most beautiful villages in Batschka. ([*Link to: Housing construction at Jarek*](#))

(Source: Schmidt, J. et al: *Batschki Jarak-Jarek, Werbas 1937*)
