

## OLBENDORF

*A Village Description According to Richard Matzel and Kurt Erber and Summarized by the late Adolf Sternagel* (Edited by Manfred Dloczik and Paul Zebe, and Translated by Paul Zebe)

### Introduction

In the eastern corner of Kreis Strehlen on the Kreis road from Strehlen to Grottkau is the farming village of Olbendorf. Originally on the site stood the Slavic settlement of Gnoya. In 1284, the village was mentioned in old parish registers or other records for the first time.

Formerly, the locality was divided into three communities: Upper, Middle and Lower Olbendorf; it also included Grünheide and Gutschen.

### The Kreis Road

Coming east from the community of Lorensberg on the Kreis road leads us through the colony of Grünheide. On the right lies the manor, which was one of the estates that belonged to the Grafs von Franken-Sierstorpf, whose residence was in Giersdorf, Kreis Grottkau, at the manor house at Zülzhof. Their Grünheide property was managed in conjunction with the manor Krain.

Before you reach the first farm buildings of the estate, on the right side a dirt road leads towards the sheep pond. Here arises the Olbenbach [a local stream] after which the village of Olbendorf is named. It flows from west to east through the village. Only in the lower village [the eastern part of the village] does it turn north and flow by Kleinöls into the Ohle River, which up later joins the Oder River in Breslau.

The names of the inhabitants of the manor who were employed there as workers and employees are the families Sambale, Günther, Schuster, and formerly Max Hampel (circa 1939 and 1945-46).

On the left side of the road lie the farmsteads of Robert Müller, the Paschkes, and Karl and Georg Reichelt.

Between the houses of Paschke and Reichelt, the way to Ober-Ecke and Krain splits off from the Kreis road. About 500 meters distant on the right is the Kiefernberg (height about 212 meters) [the local high spot]. On the right at the front edge of the forested hill stood a large stone tablet in commemoration of Friedrich the Great. Here, he is said to have had his staff quarters and to have at times directed the Battle of Mollwitz (10 April 1741).

On the east side of Reichelt's garden, a path leads towards the north that ends at the Scholz-mill, near the sand pits in vicinity of the way to Marienau. The mill owner was Karl Scholz and his family.

From Grünheide further in the direction of Olbendorf lies on the left side of the road the houses of the families Haddenhorst, Klopsch, with barber König and Karl Caske. About 300 meters towards the village, a field railway crossed the road. This railway linked the manors Mittelhof and Grünheide. After that, a path on the right side of the road led into the woods to the vicinity of the sheep pond.

Here lay what was called the "Keller ober Grabeswall" [the cellar above the grave's wall]. It was an old entrenchment from German times that was a protected nature site. Next towards the village come the first houses of Olbendorf. Left of the road is the retiree house formerly inhabited by Karl Völkel, opposite lies the farmstead of Karl Grieger, who engaged in general farming.

Then follows on the right side of the road the farmsteads of Karl Arndt and Paul Schmiedel, later Bruno Jüttner, all general farmers.

The next farmstead on the right side of the road belonged to Max Pietsch. From here, a pathway to the left leads north from the road to the Scholz-mill and then to Marienau. The signpost pointing left by the wayside shows that Marienau is 5 km. distant.

Another pathway, which was an extension of and parallel to the Kreis road, passes behind the farms and connects the fields with those possessing them. This pathway runs almost to the end of the village; in the lower village, it was called "the Kircheweg" ["the church path"]. By Hellwig's inn, it leads back to the Kreis road.

At the Pitsch farmstead, the Kreis road makes a small bow to the right. After about 100 meters, a pathway branches off to the right into the nearby forest and leads to the plantations and old sand pits.

On the left side of the Kreis road, are the farmsteads of Urner (formerly), Kuwitzky, Gladisch, Stiller, and the farm of Paul Kammler.

On the right side of the road is the "Lang Haus" [Long House]; it was the community center and served the poor families as accommodation.

Turning right at the "Mittelhoferweg" leads past the swimming pool and on to the Jäschkittler path and opens at the Mittelhof to the pathway network of that manor.

On the main road on the right is the tenement of Hermann Scholz, inhabited by the Schrottke family, earlier by the Prause family.

On the left side of the road is the Scholz-Bartsch farmstead, then the farm of Robert Erber, with subsequent owners, Rohrich, Hieltscher, and Ernst Fro?. This is followed by the farm and studstation of Reinhold Pförtner, later Kurt Schwarzer. In the retiree house lived Mrs. Raven with her daughter Else.

On the right side in the meadow area is the "Erlebörndel," noted for its very ferruginous water, which comes from the Olbenbach. They say: "He who has drunk from this Börndel, will return to it again and again."

After the Pförtner-Schwarzer farm follows the Herzog farmstead, managed before by two sisters, Berta and Selma.

On the right side of the road is now the grocery and saddleworks of Otto Schwarzueck. In the neighboring house lived to the cemetery caretaker Karl Gabel and his wife.

Then on the right side of the road follow the farmsteads of Paul Unfried, farmer and drainage foreman, also Richard Müller, the mayor of the town. On the left side of the road lie the farms of Paul Heckert, Fritz Holdt, and Alfred Kammler, with a retiree house in which lived in the family Schoefer.

Now begins on the left side of the road the possessions of the Grafs Königsmarck, pond, Pa? manor house, and estate. Also on the property are the ruins two old castles(?). By the pond flows the Olbenbach.

Before Pätzold's butcher shop, a bicycle and footpath leads to the right in a southerly direction over the Hunsstraße [Hun's alley], by the "Werder," and through a linden tree lane. In addition to the Pätzold butcher shop is the bakery of Julius Vogt, and then on the right side follows the rectory garden and the rectory of Pastor Karl Henze with some outbuildings.

Before rectory garden, the Olbenbach is built over, and there stands the war memorial for 1914/18 with the names of the 48 soldiers from the community of Olbendorf who fell during the First World War. After that is a small way across the bridge over the Olbenbach to the sports field, the Protestant Church, and the cemetery. The height of the church tower is 30 meters.

By the manor and starting at the pond, a pathway in a northerly direction leads toward the communities of Ochsenbüschel and Marienau. This pathway was planted earlier on both sides with fruit trees.

On the manor, there was the constable's house with the following officials: Gaenus, Ulitze, Dloczik. In the back house lived Lotte and Helli Ilse Scholz, and in the former estate smith's place, the Blut family lived. Here at the entrance to the manor house earlier stood a fountain; it supplied good drinking water via a line that went from the Mittelhof to far and surrounding houses and farms, until 1926, when the municipal water system was built.

The forecourt to the war memorial is partially offset by Fritz Pförtner's inn.

Along the Olbenbach runs the "Tammel," a cycling and footpath.

Right at the entrance to the Tammel on the left always hung the poster case with announcements of weddings.

Continuing east, to the left is the farm of Artur Erber (formerly of Fritz Erber). On the right side is the house of Hermann Lucius; earlier the post office was here; the manager was Paul Hellmann.

Then follow the gardens and tenements of Artur Erber. Tenants were the Böhm, Wierer, and John families; and in the front house lived the Sagan family.

Continuing toward Grottkau, on the left of the Kreis road is the farm of Max Erber, formerly Reinhold Erber. Here begins the road, through the Mittelhof to Giersdorf. Before the farm is a signpost indicating that it was 8 km. to the city of Grottkau, 19 km. to the city of Strehlen, and 6 km. to the village of Giersdorf.

Located further east on the right side of the road is the house of the local registrar (later Alfred Kammler) and community clerk, Scherz with daughter Else. Opposite, on the left side of the road, is the largest farm in the town, that of Otto Winkler, later of Konrad Winkler. Otto Winkler was also earlier the community's leader.

In addition to a large orchard, on the left, a field pathway leads through the fields in a northerly direction to the border with Marienau. At the beginning of the path to the right, is the village jail for holding those guilty of minor offenses. Nearby is the farmstead of Hermann Schäfer; he was a professional roofer, basket maker, and had a repair shop for bicycles.

On the right side of the road lies the farm of Gustav Pfeiffer (a widower whose wife was a Kastellsky). On the left side of the road follows the farm of Richard Matzel, formerly Karl Matzel, previously a chief administrator. To the left of the entrance to the farm stands a retiree house with an adjoining orchard.

Here, in front of the doorway, the Tammel leads back to the Kreis road. Next on the right side of the road is the farmstead of Reinhold Reichert with an adjoining garden. The family dealt in fruit and farmed.

On the left side of the road is the house of Ernst Hofmann; he was a professional mason.

Then follows the Böhm smithy, the proprietor of which was the master blacksmith, Ernst Böhm.

On the right side of the road, by the bridge over the Olbenbach is the farmstead of Karl Geisler, (formerly Nimtzeck). He farmed, and was also the roadway caretaker and sexton. Directly on the street is the house of the Paul Geppert family; Paul was a professional mason.

On the left side of the road was the home of the Emil Schäfer family (professional roofers and basket weavers). On the right side follows the house of the shoemaker Karl Jäkel; later it was the retiree house of Karl Pförtner.

On the left side of the road was the farm of Reinhold Marz (formerly Michalsky). On the right side was the farm of Karl Pförtner, later it became his son Richard's. After that, the wheelwright shop of Fritz Basler follows. Opposite was the farm of Karl Paschky.

Next on the left side of the road are the houses of Scherz, whose tenants were later Wiemer and Mischke, and then on the same side follow the homes of Oskar Exner and Hermann Adam. The last was the roadway caretaker in the lower village.

Opposite was the entrance to the dairy, which was headed by Berthold Sendler. The dairy produced 1200 to 1400 liters of milk daily. Milk was also processed into butter and cheese at the dairy. The dairy sold its products in the industrial cities of Upper Silesia. On the right side of the road followed the farmstead of Marta Geike and on the opposite side of the road was the farmstead of Karl Peter; he was a wheelwright.

Then, on the same side followed the beautiful detached house of the master builder Gustav Scholz (during the war, the Guß family).

On the right side of the road was the lower village's pond, through which the Olbenbach flowed, and with this water a watermill was operated. The owner of the mill was Karl Hofmann.

Across the pond in a northerly direction were the tenements of Konrad Winkler that housed the families of Schindler and Hermann Scholz, who ran a carpenter shop here in the former smithy of the Hankses.

Following that was the detached house of Paul Exner. His neighbor was the farm of Max Korn.

In a retiree house lived the master carpenter Fritz Knorn and then on the same side of the road followed the farm of Reinhold Srauß, later Mellich Otto.

In the neighboring house lived the Brudix family, then the dentist Kern.

Then came the farm of Gustav Schoefer with Frieda Kittlaus.

On the southern side of the pond were the houses of the following: Fritz Teichmann with his mother, Fritz Peter (blacksmith), Fritz Knorn Jr., Horst Winkler and Materne, August Heisig, Max Schiebel, Janke Bernhard (weaving loom), the Mischke family, and Kurt and Anna Schiebel, earlier a grocery store. Then, on the same side, the farm of Richard Schloßer, Gustav-Peter Otto Kretschmer, Karl Peter, Gustav Knorn, (carpenter), Jos. and Richard Brueckner (in a detached house).

Between the farms of Gustav and Erich Schoefer (later Jungemann) and the house of Richard Schiebel and Federhölzner, a dirt road led back to the Kreis road. On the right side of the road was a retiree house inhabited by Reinhold Strauss. In between, a driveway led over a bridge on the Olbenbach to the farm of Richard Schloßer.

Right across the road from Richard Schiebel was the inn of Richard Fieber, (formerly Hansel). Fieber was a former forester.

Heading east, on the left side of the road was the Catholic school building (later a non-denominational kindergarten and formerly the home of teacher Gelse).

Thereafter, followed the farmstead of Peter Max, (formerly a brickworks).

On the right side of the road was the grocery store of Ida Holdt. In the back was a small Tammel that led along the Olbenbach before finally rejoining the Kreis road. The Olbenbach flows under the Kreis road and later turns north toward Bankau, Klein Oels.

On the right side of the road follows the farm of Karl Winkler and Georg (Zebe-Winkler).

On the left side of the road was the farmstead of Robert Peter (a general farmer); in the next house lived the family of Ernst Stanke.

On the right side of the road next to Karl Winkler were Korta(?) Winkler, Paul Pfortner, Jr., and the Berend family.

On the road, was the little weighing house (the community scales).

On the right side of the road, a field path led to the fields of the surrounding countryside. On the left side of the road was the Gritzner smithy. The son, Max, was a master electrician who set-up the entire electrical network in the area.

Next on the right side of the road after the Gritzner smithy were the farmstead of Fritz Peter Brunnen (Peter Ziehbrunnen), the house of Werner and Anna Sieber, the farm of Karl Winkler (Mountain Winkler), and the farmyards of Gerhard Pohl and August Kottas (whose Frau was Selma Batscheck).

On the left side of the road was the house formerly of Gustav Scholz followed by the garden and house of Franz Weiß (Ulbrich Exner), then the farm of Richard Peter.

On the right side of the road was the farm of Karl Schloßer, later son Max and Albert Schönberg. On the left side of the road follows the inn of Reinhard and Helene Hellwig. Here ends the Kirchweg, a dirt road, at the Kreis road. Left in the direction of the fields were the farms of Wilh. Kodalle and Richard Reimann. Next on the left side of the road in the direction of Grottkau were the farmyards of Alois Höhne and Paul Marschall, and in the last house lived the master tailor, Franz Frania.

On the right side of the road were the farms of Alfons Winkler (Gelse Winkler), Josef Winkler (Ignaz Winkler), Paul Winkler (Milk Winkler), Paul Pförtner, and Paul Winkler (Müller Winkler), who was the owner of the former windmill at the Marienau, Lichtenberg, Leupusch, Grottkau crossroads.

The last farm on the right side of the road belonged to Fritz Stosch.

### **The "Mittelhoferweg," The Road to Giersdorf**

Approximately in the middle of the village, in the vicinity of the farm of Max Erber begins the Mittelhoferweg, or the road to Giersdorf.

On the right side of the road are the tenements of Artur Erber (formerly of Fritz Erber). In these houses were the John family, the Wierer family, and the master shoemaker Gustav Böhm. In the front building on the Olbenbach, the Sagan family lived. There was also a fruit and vegetable garden. The whole area used to be called "the Hahnrei."

On the left side of the road is the house of the Trautmann family; he was formerly a police officer. An earlier tenant was Mrs. Fichtner, and later Ida Hauptfleisch with family. On the south side of the house, Karl Lucius had his grocery store. In addition, he was a shoemaker.

The pathways on both sides of the Olbenbach here were called the Tammel.

Here was a bridge over the Olbenbach, and then immediately to the left stood the firehouse.

On the left thereafter was a wide foot and cycling path to the neighboring houses. On the right was the stately home of the families of the teachers Ulber and Supply.

Left on the road in the house of Alfred Becker was a post office, along with a savings and loan; he even ran a joiners shop. His father, William Becker, earlier had also a grocery store in the house. In addition, in the neighborhood, on the right side of the Olbenbach stood the house of master tailor Bauer. By the house was a small wooden bridge over the Olbenbach for pedestrians only. This was followed on the right of the Olbenbach by the Heinrichs' houses, including the former farmstead of Karl Rinke, a master butcher. Other tenants were the Rzany family, and in the adjacent building, Anna Paschky and Mrs. Kynast with Tochter.

Continuing towards Mittelhof, on the left side of the road stood the house of Mrs. Schramm; earlier it was also the residence of Mrs. Theuser.

To the right between the gardens, inn, and butcher shop of Hermann Baumgart was a wide path to the athletic field, cemetery, and church. At the entrance to the cemetery was the former old schoolhouse. There lived the

Lipinsky family. Mr. Lipinsky was a gravedigger, church servant, and night watchman; also in the past he had had a small tailoring shop. His wife was a midwife.

Opposite was the Protestant elementary school with outbuildings, and then the school garden. At the school, teacher Adolf Sternagel and family lived.

On the way to Mittelhof, about 50 meters further south on the road, turn right into the Hunsgaße and to the left a trail leads through the fields, through the Tannertwinkel, and lower forest to Zülzhof.

At this crossroads lies the house of Mrs. Hampel and son Paul. Next to it was the home of William Sauer. On the right side was the small transformer station house.

About 30 meters further to the left along the Hunsgaße stood the house of Mrs. Stosch, whose tenants were Mrs. Anna Mischke and daughter.

On the right side of the road lie the orchards of Hermann Baumgart and the rectory garden.

Continuing in a westerly direction is the farmstead of Scholz-Jäkel with retiree house, then the houses of Georg Hanke with smithy, Hirsch, temporarily Materne, and the last farmstead belonged to Frau Hübner, Jarosch. The latter ran an egg and poultry trade while also practicing some general farming.

The trail continues through the forest to the Ganßtein and Henkefichte, crosses the way to Töpfer at the Kreuzeiche, and then goes on to the community of Jäschkittel, about 4 km. distant.

From the house of the Mrs. Hampel, the road now continues in southerly direction through Mittelhof and then on to Gutschen and Giersdorf. The distance to the community of Giersdorf is about 6 km.

In the region before Mittelhof, there are fields on the right and left of the road called the "Werder." They were once wetlands, which were later drained and converted into fertile farmland.

Continuing in a southerly direction is the house of the butcher and cattle dealer, Franz Reimann, on the left side of the road. This is followed by the garden and house of the professional mason, August Heisig, and the farmstead of Gustav Rodenstock, who engaged in general farming.

On the left side of the road lie the meadows of Max and Artur Erber, which are separated by the millstream.

In the middle of the meadow on the right lies the house of the mason and musician, Fritz Bernd; formerly, the house belonged to the Lucius family.

From a lane of linden trees originates a foot and cycling path, that goes behind the Bernd house, through the fields, crossing the Hunsgaße, and ending at the Pätzold butcher shop on the pond at the Kreis road.

Next, in the direction of Mittelhof, follows on the right side a driveway to the lane of linden trees and protection.

A bicycle path goes in a southerly direction through Mittelhof, and then leads past the farmsteads of Schnoy and Weiß. In the neighboring house to the Schnoy family, Robert Mischke lived. Then on the right side of the path is the home of Karl Runschke.

The path then continues to the houses of estate manager Hahn and forester Hofmann, passing through Mittelhof.

To the left of the forestry building is a great sawmill, which belongs to the manor.

At about 800 Morgen, the manor and knight's estate Mittelhof is the largest estate of the Grafs von Franken-Sierstorpff.

The manor's courtyard is like a proud castle on a hill south of Olbendorf, with the farm buildings organized in a square.

At the four cardinal points of the compass, paths led to the individual fields belonging to the manor.

In the manor to the left on the easterly side was the housing for those who worked here. In front of these buildings was once a small pond where ducks and geese cavorted on the water. There also was a fountain, which supplied the manor with drinking water.

On the southern and western side stood the outbuildings, barns and stables, and in front of those in rank and file, were the wagons and machines necessary for the cultivation and management of the fields and the woods.

From the linden tree lane originated a footpath paved with bricks leading directly into the estate. In winter, this path served us children as a sled run. We would fly on our sleds down the hill until well into the linden tree lane.

Also from here originated another footpath that led half right in direction to the Mittelhof pond and watermill. The owners of the mill were the Otto Stosch family. The father was Hermann Stosch, who was, in addition, a professional meat inspector.

From the western gate of the manor, a path led between the pond and the watermill and directly into the forest to the waterworks. The same initially leads from the forest left to a dam by the pond near which a field railway was built.

This railway linked the manor Mittelhof with the manor Grünheide and served to transport a variety of agricultural goods.

From Stosch's mill, a path ran parallel to the field railway. It went to the right and crossed the way to Jäschkittel by the swimming pool, and ran to the "Langen Haus," in front of the Paul Kammler farm, and on to the Kreis road.

About 200 meters from the Stosch mill was the fountain of the defroster for the waterworks. From here, the whole village is filled with the delicious wetness. The waterlines were installed in 1926.

On the right side of the path, just before the waterworks, is a hunter or the old forester's lodge. There lived the family of Paul Janke. He was responsible for the maintenance of the waterworks.

Somewhere near this lodge and the way to Jäschkittel was a ditch at the forest's edge. This originated at the time of the 1st Silesian War, specifically during the 1741 Battle of Mollwitz. Here, minor skirmishes between the Prussians and Austrians took place. The combat units that dug in here were Croats in Austrian service, so the ditch was called the "Croats' gift."

From the manor Mittelhof, the main road continues through the southern gate toward the Küchenberg and on to Gutschen and Giersdorf.

On the left side of the road is the great steam brick kiln. It supplied the town and the surrounding area with bricks and roof tiles.

Over the roofs of the manor buildings proudly stood a 60-meter high chimney of brick. At the forest edge lies the house of brick master, Ernst Stiller.

Next, on the left side of the road at the edge of the forest, the last house belonged Mrs. Stosch; Mrs. Ida Rodenstock lived there, as well.

Now the road as it approaches Küchenberg begins to rise. The highest point is 223 meters above sea level. From here, in clear weather, you could see the city Brieg, which was about 20 km. distant, as the crow flies.

On the right side of the road in the direction Gutschen, some 100 meters off to the side, we can admire in the forest a two-legged pine under government nature protection. Here, at a man's height, two trunks have merged to form a single tree.

The road continues out of the woods through the fields to Gutschen. Formerly, magnificent cherry trees stood on both sides of the road, and these trees in all the years brought bounteous returns. However, in the severe winter weather of February 1929, the trees succumbed to the exceptional cold. Many trees on other cherry tree-lined roads also suffered from the cold then. At that time in Neisse, Oberschlesien, the lowest temperature was recorded as minus 42 degrees.

The distance from Gutschen to Neisse as the crow flies is 25 about km.

The distance from the edge of the forest to Gutschen was about 1 km.

The village was actually much larger in earlier days and had extended to the edge of the Olbendorf forest. In addition to a manor, in earlier times there was also a brewery. By surveying the ground, evidence of a castle can still be found.

Around 1540, Gutschen, also called Guschendorf, was known as a small village between Olbendorf and Giersdorf, Kreis Grottkau. At that time, it became part of the village of Mittel-Olbendorf.

The first farmstead in Gutschen on the right side of the road belonged to the Pilz family. Left on the main road was a driveway that led to the farmsteads and homes of the Seidel, Brünner, Lehnasch, and Treudler families.

Opposite the house Max and Ida Pilz was the inn, which was formerly owned by the Stache family.

Now the road bends to the left, and after 200 to 300 meters, it leads back to the right and down to the village of Giersdorf, where the first houses are found on both sides of the road.

From the road just past Gutschen, the manor house and residence of the Graf Franken-Sierstorpf at Zülzhof can be seen. It was about 2 km. distant.

Special mention should be made to the electrification and supply of the village with lighting and electric power in the years 1920-21.