



# The Bukovina Society of the Americas NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 81, Ellis, KS 67637 USA

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Membership Dues:  
Lifetime \$150.00  
Annual \$15.00

## PEOPLE AND EVENTS

- **ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE:** The annual meeting of the Bukovina Society of the Americas, a Kansas not for profit corporation, will be held at the Society headquarters in Ellis, Kansas on Monday, August 29, 2011 at 4:00 p.m. Election of board members for expired terms and regular business of the corporation will be conducted. Paid lifetime and annual members are eligible to vote and may request agenda topics for consideration.
- Welcome to our newest life members # 196, Pawel Feigel, Swietokrzyskie, Poland, #197 Robert Janak, Beaumont, Texas, #198 Dean Neuburger, Northfield MN, and #199 Barb and Pete Schmitt, Burnsville MN.
- Fred Sendek read the article in the *Newsletter* by Regina Schroecker describing the firebombing of Dresden in 1945. Through the Society database he was able to trace a cousin, Hilde Renner Kunzelmann who perished in the fire along with her two children Kurt and Ingeborg.
- Society Vice President O. M. Windholz serves as the voice of the Ellis County Historical Society with a weekly series of short historical stories called *When History Walked the Streets* on two Hays radio stations, KAYS and KHAZ.
- Klaus Irion, Manchester, England, emailed the Society expressing his gratitude for help from Irmgard Ellingson and Werner Zoglauer. He was able to produce a copy of the birth certificate of his great grandfather, "which was lost for three generations!"
- Shirley (Massier) Kroeger, past board member and tireless worker for the Society died April 7th. She was organist at St. John Lutheran Church, the home church

of our Swabian Bukovina Germans, for over 40 years. The Society extends sympathy to her husband Erwin "Shorty" and the family.



## DONATION OF SHAWL TO SOCIETY

By: Joe Erbert

Last fall, Don and Addie Dietrich of Kansas City, MO stopped at the Bukovina Society museum. As a volunteer on call to operate the museum, I met them for an hour tour and extended visit. They promptly joined the Society. In April of 2011, the couple informed me of their move from their "roomy house" to a condominium. In the process of divesting themselves of belongings, they decided to donate an old shawl to the Society museum. Don's aunt, Viola Nora Hattie Dietrich, daughter of Ernest David and Clara Huber Dietrich, had given them the shawl. Viola's grandmother, Elizabeth Knieling Huber brought the shawl from her Illischestie, Bukovina home around 1892. Thanks to the great grandson of the pioneering Mrs. Huber, Donald Avon Dietrich, for this most generous donation.

## JOHANN AUGUSTIN'S BIRTHPLACE IN THE BOHEMIAN FOREST LOCALIZED

By: Michael Augustin

*This article considers how after over ten years of more or less intensive search the birthplace of Johann Augustin (1770-1839)*

before his immigration to Bukovina could clearly be ascertained by two fellow researchers from Germany and the United States. On the basis of the church records from the archive in Pilsen posted on the Internet the accuracy of this addendum will be traced step by step.

Thanks to the preparatory work of other genealogists and readily available sources the history and expansion of the Bukovina branch of Augustin family is virtually complete. This includes the principal immigration areas in the United States and Canada as well as for Germany, where almost all Bukovina Germans were resettled in 1940 as well as a rather good depiction of their further growth based on personal contacts. With the conclusion of this phase of the project our next goal was to determine the precise geographic origins of our family before the Bukovina immigration.

The earliest known direct forebear of my paternal line had until now been Johann Augustin (\*1770), the great grandfather of my great grandfather. All Augustins with roots in Bohemia are his descendants. According to various sources he, together with his wife, Anna (\*1769) and his three sons, Mathias (\*1789), Josef (\*1798) and Laurenz (\*1801) immigrated to Bukovina from the Bohemian Forest in or about 1803. (Birth dates had sometimes been calculated from a person's age at death.) Johann met the qualifications for participation in one of the projects advanced by Joseph II (the son and co-regent of Maria Theresia)—or as we would say today—recruited for the economic promotion program along with other specialists as lumberers for the newly-founded glassworks in the likewise newly established forest settlement of Fürstenthal in southern Bukovina in today's Romania. Since the names Johann and Anna were frequently used in the Bohemian Forest, it appeared at first that a direct search for these two people would bring limited results. The task might all the more easily be approached by the birth registration of the two sons with the relatively less common names of Mathias and Laurenz. The problem was ultimately resolved by Gertrud "Traudl" Siewi (nee Rankel) from Tiefenbach in Bavaria and Douglas "Doug" Reckmann from Portland, Oregon.

Early in the search the renowned homeland and family researcher for the Bohemian Forest, Günter Burkon from Olching near Munich, indicated that the geographic distribution of our patronymic pointed to the origin of our family in a territory southwest of the town of Neuern (Nyrsko) in the district of Klattau (Klatovy). This lies in the same latitude as Eschlkam about 10 km. from the German-Czech border in the Bohemian Forest. Johann's birthplace could only have been the community of Hammern (Hamry na Šumavě) some 10 km. south of Neuern. Hammern was one of the eight Royal Independent Jurisdictions (*Künischen Freigerich-*

*te*) and at that time belonged to the Deschenitz (Dešenice) Estate. Until the establishment of its own parish, the church registries for Hammern were partly maintained in Deschenitz. In early 1980 Hammern was incorporated into Neuern. While its population stood at almost 1400 before the 1945 expulsion of the Germans, only a little over 100 people reside there today. During my first visit to Hammern in the fall of 2010 I noted that this locality is not the typical compact settlement but more or less a network of individual houses and farmsteads extending close to ten kilometers. Rather detailed information about this community may be found on the Internet in WIKIPEDIA using the catchword 'Hamry' as well as on the English Internet site about Hammern: (<http://www.sumava.net/hamry/english-info.asp>).

From the birth registrations of his children (see below) one can conclude that before his immigration Johann had worked at various glassworks some of which belonged to the parish of Seewiesen (Javorna). As the crow flies Seewiesen lies about 10 km east of Hammern.

The success of Traudl and Doug was made possible above all because the various Czech archives, among them also those located in Pilsen (Plzen) and covering large sections of the Bohemian Forest, had already begun posting entries on the Internet under [www.actapublica.eu](http://www.actapublica.eu). Initial registration and navigation on this Internet site are not that simple since the menus and links are only partially available in German. In addition there is neither a catalog nor an index for these materials. But once these first hurdles have been surmounted, one finds an almost immeasurable and ever increasing reservoir of church records.

After registration one must opt for the Pilsen Archive and confirm by clicking on 'abbilden' (important!). If one enters 'Javorna (KT) 02' under signature, then one can access the requested picture file (in this case a total of 188 pages), for which one uses the icon of a magnifying glass to the immediate right. On page (*Snimek*) 68 on the right hand side in the third entry from the bottom one discovers that on August 20, 1801 in the foremost Schmauserhütte No. 116 a Lorenz Augustin was born, the son of Johann Augustin and his wife Anna Maria, daughter of Jakob Bauer and Anna Maria. Any lingering doubts that we were dealing with the correct Johann Augustin were dispelled when later under the same signature on page 56 (last entry on the left side) one finds that the same couple parented a son baptized Josef born on May 1, 1798 in Schürerhütte. Here one can also read that Johann was the son of Michl (Michael) Augustin and Margarethe Baumgartner (in). Josef's mother was Anna Maria Bauer (in), daughter of Jakob Bauer and Maria Jakob (in).

The case of the third son Mathias is somewhat more complicated. On page 46 (same signature, right side, second entry from top) there is reference to the birth of a son Mathias on November 7, 1795 in Hinter-Schmausenhütte No. 113. Page 46 of the death records for Fürstenthal for the years 1843-1889 however clearly indicate that Mathias Augustin died on May 19, 1865 at the age of 76. This would indicate that he had been born six years earlier, namely in 1789. The entries in the death registry are written so neatly and legibly that one might conclude they had been copied from another document. If in the poorly written original a zero looked like a six, then Mathias would have died at age seventy, which again would coincide with the original birth entry. Various indicators as for example the age difference between Mathias (\*1789 rather than 1795) and his first wife Marianne Pankratz (\*1798), the age of the parents at the time of Johann's birth (\*1770) and Anna (\*1769), and the time lapse between the birth of Mathias and his brother Josef (\*1798) support this assumption

Ultimately Traudl and Doug also found the birth date of Johann Augustin entered under the signature 'Desenice 03' on page 338 indicating that he was born in Hammern on May 3, 1770, the son of Michael Augustin and his wife Margaretha.

This summarizes the results of the research carried out thus far on the exact origin of the Augustin family in the Bohemian Forest. Since genealogy is a study without beginning and without end, the door remains open for future research endeavors.



*The descendants of Bukovina immigrant Josef Irion with their cousin Aura Lee Furgason. From the left, Jose Oliveira Irion, Joao Eduardo Oliveira Irion, Carmen Regina Oliveira Irion, Vera Maria Irion Almeida, Santa Terezinha Irion Dalcol, Catarina Irene Irion Gutterres, Aura Lee Furgason, Paulo Oliveira Irion, and Rosa Suzana Oliveira Irion.*

## MY LONG LOST IRION COUSINS

By: Aura Lee (Irion) Furgason

Once upon a time in the faraway village of Illischestie, Bukovina, there lived one Jacob Irion, his wife Karolina (Kipper) Irion, and their seven or eight sons. In 1888 two of their sons, Josef Irion on age 24, and Wilhelm Irion age 22, sought a new life in South America. They were passengers on the ship Valparaiso that landed safely on December 17, 1888. For over 100 years their trail ended with that arrival in South America. Back in Illischestie, Bukovina, a younger brother, Michael Irion, hung around for 11 years before he, too, took to the sea. His destination was Ellis, Kansas. Michael was 27 and his pregnant wife, Katherine (Fries) Irion was 19 when they stepped onto the ship H. H. Meier at Bremen, Germany, on June 2, 1899. They were processed through Ellis, Island on Arrival June 16th, 1899 and traveled by train to Ellis, Kansas where they were welcomed by Katherine's parents, Frank and Teresia (Werb) Fries, who had earlier emigrated.

Those of us in North America lost the trail of Josef and Wilhelm in South America but Michael and Katherine's story was known to this day with five generations present and accounted for. Michael and Katherine farmed north of Ellis in the area known as the Irion Hills. They raised six children on that farm, one of them my father, Jake Irion. They are both buried in the St. John's Lutheran Church graveyard, Ellis, Kansas.

Through the years the South American brothers were mentioned. There was curiosity in the Irion family about what might have become of them. We came to agree with the musician, Iris DeMent, who sings, "I think I'll just let the mystery be." At one of the Ellis Bukovinafests in the late 1990s I approached Prof. Ayrton Celestino, who founded the Bukovina Organization in Brazil, with our mystery. It was he who did the research and found Josef and Wilhelm's travel papers, however, nothing more was found about their later lives, until January 2010, that is.

I answered my telephone in Lincoln, Nebraska, one afternoon to hear, "This is Klaus Irion. Are you an Irion?" "Am I ever" I responded and proud of it, too. Where have you been?" It turns out that Josef Irion begat Jose Irion, who begat Paulo Irion, who begat Klaus Irion--all of this in Brazil and now Klaus was making this phone call.

Klaus said he was planning an All-Irion Party in Porto Alegre, Rio Grande Do Sul, Brazil, for April 24, 2010 and I was invited. So naturally I set off on a 3-hop, 20-hour and 6,000-mile trip to Brazil, alone. At the party over 70 Irions

were in full party mode, giving me welcoming kisses on both cheeks, dancing and playing music.

Since that glorious event, the Brazil Irion family genealogist and I have exchanged photos, dates and stories. The Irion tribe is united again, most of us living happily ever after. My Grandpa Michael Irion had six children and today my living cousins have followed along through this whole fairy tale.



*Klaus Irion and Aura Lee Furgason on arrival at Porto Alegre Airport in Brazil. Klaus planned the reunion from his home in Manchester, England. Aura Lee and two of her grandchildren will be visiting Klaus in England in July of 2011.*

How did Klaus Irion find Aura Lee (Irion) Furgason anyway? He found the Bukovina Society of the Americas on the Internet. From there he made contact with Irmgard Ellingson, wife of former pastor at St. John's Lutheran Church in Ellis. Irmgard is the author of *The Bukovina Germans in Kansas: A 200-Year History of the Lutheran Swabians*. To Klaus she offered something like, "Your name is Irion? I know where there is an Irion you can call and here is her number."

You can see that much had to fall into place for this 100-year delayed reunion to occur. The Bukovina Society had to exist and internet access had to be available. Prof Ayrtton Celestino had to visit Kansas at the same time. And my annual Christmas letter contact with Irmgard had to be current. Most importantly, her thorough research and remarkable memory for family connections had to function on the spot. And it all happened.



*Family photo taken in Suczawa, Bukovina circa 1890. The only persons identified are seated from the left, Michael Irion, Catherine (Fries) Irion, and Karolina (Kipper) Irion. Assistance to the editors in identifying the others would be appreciated, presumably other children of Jacob and Karolina Irion.*

## HELPFUL HISTORY

By: Fay Jordaens

Recently, my cousin Jan and I were discussing some of the Bukovina's history as it pertained to the immigration of our Sauer, Schmahl, and Knoblauch family members and I asked her if she had the book *German Emigration from Bukovina to the Americas*. When she said no, I started scanning pages and e-mailing them to her. This was so unsatisfactory because the entire charming book is still available from the Bukovina Society and contains so much more information about our history, much more than my few scans could provide.

For instance, it contains a section, written by Richard Carruthers, about the settlement of Bukovina Germans in the Edenwold, Canada community where our family settled. Richard also wrote about the surrounding towns, which flourished when the Edenwold farmland overflowed with new homesteaders. My cousin Jan and I are related to almost all the early family members of that village where our grandfathers broke virgin land and where they lived among their Bukovinian relatives and neighbors from the old country, speaking the German dialect of the former homeland.

It was in this book that I found my Schoenthaler, Huber and Sauer relatives who settled in Kansas, while their cousins began new lives in Saskatchewan, Canada.

There is documentation by historian Irmgard Ellingson on the Swabian Lutherans in Kansas, and Mary Lee Rose chronicles the settlements of Bukovinians in the State of Washington. I found the names of my relatives in this section, i.e. Boehmer, Keller, Radmacher, Knieling and others. Paul Massier wrote about the immigration of Germans who came from Bukovina and settled in Texas and Illinois. An immigration wave to Brazil was also documented.

I heartily recommend this history book, with its maps, pictures, graphs, and oral histories filling 300 pages. If you order the book from the Bukovina Society, you too can own this helpful piece of our history – and I can stop scanning pages!  
(\$18.25 US funds to address above or online at:  
[www.bukovinasociety.org/store.html](http://www.bukovinasociety.org/store.html)

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## ARGENTINE CONNECTION

By: O. M. Windholz

The emigration routes of the two ethnic German groups of my ancestry in Western Kansas, the Volga Germans and the

Bukovina Germans, continue to reveal remarkably similar patterns. Both groups settled in Eastern lands far from their homes in Germany or the Bohemian Forest at the invitation of rulers who wanted to populate and develop vast areas of wilderness. Pioneering families settled the Russian Volga River region from their homeland of Germany while families from Germany and Austria established their future in the Bukovina Crown land of Austria. After several generations in these new lands, many of the ethnic Germans began looking at another resettlement for the many reasons we have gleaned from our history.

The Bohemian German village of my Great Grandparents in Bukovina, Pojana Mikuli, saw two colonies depart, seeking a new life. The first colonists chose Ellis, Kansas, some 10 years after the Volga Germans arrived in Ellis County. Their numbers were small in comparison to the Volga Germans. The second group to depart chose Rio Negro/Mafra, Brazil, joining ethnic Germans in a country which also included Volga Germans.

In 1994, five years after the founding of the Bukovina Society of the Americas, our colleagues in Augsburg put me in touch with Ayrton Goncalves Celestino. He is a lawyer and professor who helped organize a similar Bukovina Society in Brazil. His list of settlers read like a roster from Ellis, a few of them certainly cousins among the Baumgartner, Fuchs, Hones, Lang, Neuburger, Reitmeyer, Seidl and Schuster families in Ellis. We established a great relationship, which resulted in meeting Celestino in Ellis County twice and once in Canada. Representatives of the Bukovina Society also attended a festival in Brazil in 2001.

Some nine years ago, I was contacted through email by a cousin, Carlos Lohrmann, in Argentina. He was descended from the Windholz ancestor who settled along the Volga River in Russia. Although many ethnic Germans emigrated directly to Argentina, this Windholz family originally settled in Brazil before relocating with other families to Argentina. Our continued correspondence led to a Windholz reunion in Hays in September of 2010 at which Carlos and his father Adolfo enjoyed our Oktoberfest and meeting hundreds of cousins.

A recent discovery was a remarkable coincidence of events relating to my dual German heritage. I received an email from a member of the Bukovina Society from Los Angeles who apologized that her first language was Spanish and our subject of discussion was touring the former Bukovina. In the process of getting acquainted, Zita Watzlawik informed me her father was born in Bukovina and emigrated directly to Argentina in 1924, following his parents and siblings

whose move was in 1912. He listed his nationality as German and was “deeply rooted in German traditions.” She recalls her father carrying her to the German Club for entertainment in Buenos Aires.

I immediately emailed cousin Carlos Lohrmann and Zita to inquire if they would like to be placed in contact with each other. Carlos said that in all his genealogy and history work, this was the first he had learned of Bukovina Germans in Argentina. As the two of them compared backgrounds, they found both families lived fairly close to each other, but had never met. Zita has spent many years researching her family and will be presenting two papers at a reunion in Buenos Aires in July of this year, which will hopefully result in a book. Good immigration and naturalization records are available in Buenos Aires. Population data list Germans without identification to their origin. Her findings from scholars and historians indicate today there are two million Volga Germans, 600,000 with origins in Germany and 400,000 of Mennonite and Swiss origin. Her next project is to establish the number from Bukovina. Her family alone accounts for about 100 descendants. Zita said there were different opinions within her family on their roots. Some said Germany, some said Austria and some said Romania. We know all three are accurate, just different time periods.

Carlos and Zita plan to working together on projects and will fortunately be able to meet in July.



*Johans (Juan) Watzlawik and his wife Petrona (Petronila) Tolkan are pictured above in photos taken in Bukovina. They had five children, Albina Lola, Maria, Anton, Julius, and Ludwig, all of them born in Augustendorf, Bukovina.*

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