



# The Bukovina Society of the Americas NEWSLETTER

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

Vol. 19, No. 1 March 2009

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Membership Dues:  
Lifetime \$150.00  
Annual \$15.00



## BUKOVINAFEST 2009

The evening of September 17th will be the start of our Bukovinafest, followed by a day of programs and presentations at the Society headquarters. Enclosed with this *Newsletter* is a program and reservation flyer. Saturday, September 19th will begin the annual two-day Oktoberfest featuring German food, entertainment and demonstrations. Information about the latter is available at: [www.midwestdeutschefest.com](http://www.midwestdeutschefest.com).

- The Society welcomes our newest life members, #179, Robin Schoenthaler (Arlington, MA) and #180, Wayne Neuburger (Salem, OR).
- The editorial staff welcomes articles relating to the Bukovina experience as well as notices of new publications, meetings and other matters of interest to subscribers

## PEOPLE AND EVENTS

- In a linguistic study in *Yearbook of German-American Studies* (vol. 42, 2007) the author, Alfred Wildfeuer (Regensburg, Germany), compares the variations of the German-Bohemian dialect in Transcarpathia (Ukraine) with that spoken by interviewees in Ellis, Kansas whose forebears had immigrated from German-Bohemian villages in Bukovina before World War I. As the title *Von der Multilingualität zur Monolingualität* (From Multilingualism to Monolingualism) suggests, Wildfeuer anticipates the extinction of the German-Bohemian dialect in the diasporas within two or three decades and urges that a serious effort be made to preserve it in printed form and on audiocassettes.
- Society board member Steve Parke has traveled, researched and written extensively on his dual heritage, Bukovina German and Czech. His latest work was published in the December 2008 issue of *Nase Rodina* (Our Family), the quarterly publication of the Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International. Titled "The Voda Road People: The Trego County Kansas Czechs," this comprehensive study discusses the Czech immigrants who lived in close proximity to the Bukovina Germans and interacted with them on both the social and economic levels.

## PAULA TIEFENTHALER CELEBRATES 90th BIRTHDAY

by Irmgard Hein Ellingson (Grafton, IA)

An article in the December 2008 issue of *Der Südostdeutsche* (Augsburg) reported that Dr. Paula Tiefenthaler, the former presiding officer of the *Landsmannschaft der Buchenlanddeutschen* (Regional Association of Bukovina Germans), recently celebrated her 90th birthday at the St. Anna Home in Munich, Germany.

She was greatly surprised and delighted when Dr. Kurt Rein, representing the *Landesverband Bayern* (Regional Chapter in Bavaria) and *Der Stammtisch* (group of regulars) in Munich, as well as Ms. Ute Frank, the *Landesvorsitzende in Bayern* (Chairperson of the Regional Chapter in Bavaria) came to present her with a bouquet of flowers and greetings.

Paula Tiefenthaler was the first woman to head one of Germany's twenty regional associations of expellees and refugees from Eastern Europe in the years following World War II. She has devoted her extensive career to the promotion of justice, peace, and human rights for those relocated from the Bukovina homeland during World War II and for those who continued to live there.

In the process of writing my first book, *The Bukovina Germans in Kansas: A 200-Year History of the Lutheran Swabians*,

published in 1987, I had contacted Dr. Paula Tiefenthaler as well as Irma Bornemann of the *Kaindl-Archiv* for historical information and resources. They, in turn, introduced me to Dr. Sophie Welisch in Congers, New York.

After my book was published, Paul Polansky obtained a copy. He wrote to me and to Oren Windholz to inquire about his Schneller relatives who had settled in Kansas. I invited Paul to meet me in Kansas and arranged for him to speak to Bukovina descendants at a forum held in St. Mary's School in Ellis. Paul convinced Oren, his wife Pat, and me to attend the 40th annual meeting of the *Landmannschaft der Buchenlanddeutschen* in Augsburg, West Germany and encouraged us to consider the establishment of a Bukovina German organization based in Ellis. The latter took place on December 11, 1988, in Ellis.

Oren, his wife Pat, and I traveled to Europe to visit Paul in May 1989. We attended the annual meeting of the *Landmannschaft* and its affiliate the *Kaindl-Gesellschaft* and met Dr. Tiefenthaler and Mrs. Bornemann. In addition we became acquainted with the newly established *Bukowina-Institut* and its directors, Dr. Johannes Hampel and Dr. Ortfried Kotzian. All have been sincerely interested and generous in their support of the ongoing work of the Bukovina Society of the Americas. A few months later, on July 19-22, 1989, Dr. Tiefenthaler extend congratulations and greetings to the Bukovina Society at its first meeting held in the Ellis High School auditorium. Mrs. Bornemann attended the convention as a special guest and speaker.

The Bukovina Society of the Americas joins in congratulating Dr. Tiefenthaler upon the occasion of her 90th birthday. We thank her for her unique example of leadership in the service of the Bukovina community around the world.

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## OBITUARIES

Gisela Staab, age 86, Ellis, Kansas died Thursday, November 27, 2008. Born on May 6, 1922 in Bukovina to Johann and Anna (Kuffner) Fuchs, she immigrated to Ellis from her home village of Poiana Micului, the ancestral home of many early Ellis immigrants. Gisela attended many Bukovina Society events and was proud to be introduced as one of the few of its members born in the Bukovina homeland.

On December 12, 2008 Roy Aust Kerth, the son of immigrant parents from Illischestie who had settled in Ellis and Trego counties, Kansas, passed on at the age of 79. Roy was a speaker at some of the Society's early conventions and inspired many to collect and compile their family histories, particularly by sharing the database he kept on his computer.



The Society mourns the passing of Raymond F. Haneke, 86, retired Ellis businessman, former mayor, and charter member of the Bukovina Society of the Americas. Funeral services for Ray



Ray Haneke

were conducted December 20, 2008 at Ellis United Methodist Church with military honors by the Ellis VFW followed by internment at in Mount Hope Cemetery in Ellis. Ray was born on July 23, 1922, north of Ellis to Walter and Eva (Sauer) Haneke. Eva, born 17 October 1894 to Johann and Barbara (Rumpel) Sauer in Illischestie, Bukovina, immigrated to Ellis, Kansas, with her parents and siblings in 1902. Ray and his wife Ethel were active supporters of the Society of which Ray served as a Board member.



Ralph Burns Jr. died Saturday December 27, 2008 at Hays Medical Center at age 55. Historical interests were for him a high priority as witnessed by his membership in historical organizations and his service on the Board of Directors of the Bukovina Society.

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## IN SEARCH OF GERMAN FOOTPRINTS IN BUKOVINA'S CEMETERIES

by Michael Augustin (Leonberg/Stuttgart, Germany)

*Continuation of articles in the December 2008 issue of the Newsletter in which Michael Augustin and Peter Grunikiwicz describe various aspects of their September 27 – October 9, 2008 trip to Bukovina. Place names are given in their current Romanian spelling.*

Aside from our work in the Suceava archive, already discussed in the previous issue of the *Newsletter*, our visit to cemeteries in southern Bukovina had been one of the objectives of our 2008 trip. The first short visit to the monastery of Voroneț (one of the world-famous Moldavian monasteries with exquisitely beautiful frescoes on their outer walls in the proximity of our boarding house in Gura Humorului) confirmed that cemeteries and their tombstones are not only characteristic of an historic era and its religious communities but also manifest regional traits. Precisely here, where we did not pursue genealogical objectives, the cemeteries in Bukovina revealed distinct characteristics: very closely placed gravesites, no identifiable layout, relatively tall monuments, and apparently no obliteration of the graves after a predetermined period as, for example, is the practice in Germany. Contrary to the example in the Bohemian Forest (in the Czech Republic), we saw no evidence of a systematic destruction of German monuments and cemeteries. In isolated instances, however, we did come upon minimal acts of desecration. Our guide explained that unless the family repairs such damages, the gravesite would be considered abandoned property and might be acquired by another.

The first burial ground we visited was the German cemetery of the former mining community of Iacobeni. After several

inquiries we found an entry to the southwest accessible only on foot and across privately-owned property far above an iron ore railroad loading station. It is obviously not currently in use and today serves partially as pasturage. A number of the very old monuments have disappeared, fallen over, or are badly overgrown with weeds. Only a few of the graves with Romanian inscriptions have more recent dates and are being tended. A perilous situation arose as I approached a six-foot monument tilted on a slope. No sooner did I touch it than it toppled over (fortunately not in my direction), fell to the ground, and broke into three pieces. Had I been in the path of its trajectory, I would have had to jump away quickly or not now be able to write these lines. The names, which we found, were overwhelmingly German although none of them were familiar to us.

The situation in Gura Humorului was entirely different. Here, too, the graveyard lies along the upper limits of the town. Nonetheless, it is level, much larger, and still in use, primarily the section at the right rear of the entrance. The graves with German names are mainly in the left quadrant behind a small chapel. Here we found the last resting places of members of the families of Altmann, Brandl, Braun, Klostermann, Kübeck, Schaffhauser and Wel(l)isch, to name but a few. They are laid out with insufficient space between them, and except for the main road there are no paths. Considering their age, the sites are in good condition, *i.e.*, neither dilapidated nor vandalized.

In the former Swabian community of Ilișești we visited the very beautiful and perfectly maintained Lutheran church dating from 1901, which, however, has served as an Orthodox house of worship for a number of years. Although an Orthodox church built in the style of the Moldavian monasteries stands in the vicinity, it was badly in need of repair. Rather than undertaking its restoration the Orthodox community simply appropriated the former Lutheran church for its own purposes. Now a materially Protestant exterior offers an interesting contrast to the spiritual Orthodox style of the interior. From a friendly and eager Romanian worker at a construction site directly bordering the church we learned by gestures that no further traces of the German cemetery exist.

Two days later, on Sunday, we ventured on to the cemeteries of Marginea, Rădăuți, Voevodessa (Fürstenthal), and Volovăț. The weather was so bad that despite our umbrella we were so thoroughly drenched after fifteen minutes that we limited our stay in the outdoors to a minimum. The Rădăuți cemetery appeared to be about as large as the one in Gura Humorului. In any event it is still in use and divided by a railroad track. Here we found a number of gravestones with the German names of Kisslinger, Mirwald, Oberhoffner, Pscheidt, Schnell and others.

Since my ancestor, Johann Augustin, was among the first settlers in Voevodessa and many of his descendants from this village and neighboring areas are interred here, its burial site was of great interest to me. Encircled by hedges and bushes, it can only be reached by crossing an overgrown path and is on generally level land. Today under a lone fir tree a small number

of Gaschler family graves can still be identified. On the periphery of the cemetery we saw a few newer graves but because of the bad weather, we did not examine them further. These graves are tended by the family of the 74-year-old Josefa Zaremba (née Gaschler). It was her son who at great personal expense had the old Voevodessa church restored to pristine condition, for which we paid him a visit and expressed our admiration and our thanks.

Marginea lies about 9 kilometers west of Rădăuți en route to the Suceavița monastery. Extending to Voevodessa, it was the nearest settlement area for people who in the course of time could not find adequate living space in Voevodessa. The expansive and level cemetery serves as a resting place for the more than 10,000 inhabitants of Marginea. To our surprise we found no graves with German names during our short roundabout.

The cemetery of Volovăț together with the old church in the style of the Moldavian monasteries presents an impressive ensemble. Noteworthy are the Orthodox gravesites with three richly ornamented stone crosses on a stone pedestal. Our short cemetery trip ended with a search for Peter's great-grandfather, Karl Paul Grunikiewicz. Any additional exploration on that day lay beyond our energy level. We plan, however, someday to resume our search, time and weather permitting.

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## THE SIGHTS AND SOUNDS OF BUKOVINA

by Peter Grunikiewicz (Büsnau/Stuttgart, Germany)

Our trip to Bukovina, the land of our forebears, seemed the fulfillment of a life's dream. Thanks to Roland Loy, our guide, chauffeur and translator, we were able not only to tour northern Bukovina, albeit briefly, but also to meet distant relatives and traverse the villages, fields and graves of our antecedents. The sights, smells and sounds of Bukovina, its landscape, music, foods, the chatter of old and young alike, and its Byzantine church architecture transported us to a world we had heretofore only experienced vicariously through the media, and



*Moldowitza Monastery*

of course, through contacts with Bukovinians in the diaspora. In the following narrative I shall attempt to share with the reader the most meaningful aspects of the trip I undertook with Michael Augustin to “the land between Orient and Occident” once called Bukovina and now partitioned between the Ukraine and Romania.

Our first stop after we had crossed the Romanian border was Rona de Jos near Sighet in the district of Maramoros where at about 8:00 p.m. we checked into a small boarding house. Pressed for time, we could only capture limited impressions of its impressive landscape. Here it would have been interesting to visit the “merry cemetery” of Serpanta, “merry” because of the humorous inscriptions on its tombstones.

We needed no alarm clock to awaken us the next morning. The increasingly louder resonance of auto traffic intermingled with the pounding of horses’ hooves on the pavement brought with it the realization that a new day had dawned. After a hearty breakfast and with fresh fruit from our hosts as snacks on our journey, we continued on our way. The relatively short distance from Sighet to Gura Humorului took longer than we had anticipated due to the many construction sites along the way. Nonetheless, thanks to Roland’s driving skills, we arrived at our destination at about 2:00 p.m. En route we stopped at the Prislop Pass for a short rest and tried to catch our first glimpse of Bukovina. Unfortunately a dense fog had settled over the area. Nonetheless, the street sign “Cârlibaba” told us that we were headed in the right direction.

Visibility had improved by the time we reached Cârlibaba and Iacobeni, so that we could take pictures. After several inquiries we were able to find the German cemetery in Iacobeni, which lies on high ground and can only be reached on foot. The graves are slowly sinking leading to the expectation that the cemetery will ultimately revert to pasture.

In Gura Humorului we were greeted by our hosts, Viorica and Vasile Corelaru, where we found very well-maintained accommodations. After the preliminaries we departed for nearby Voroneț for a get-acquainted meal at which all possible Bukovinian grill specialties were on the menu.

Since evening had not yet descended we still had time to tour the Voroneț monastery, one of about thirty churches and monasteries constructed between 1487-1504 throughout Bukovina and Moldavia under Stephen the Great. Recognized by the United Nations as ‘wonders of the world,’ the monasteries of Arbore, Humor, Moldovița, Putna, Sucevița, and Voroneț have the unique feature of frescoes painted on their outside walls. Although occasionally restored, the paintings have stood up remarkably well over the centuries. Each monastery can be identified by a dominant color: in Voroneț it is the color blue.

The next morning we first visited the weekly outdoor market on the outskirts of Gura Humorului where we had an excellent opportunity to experience the Bukovina scene. The picturesque market presents a view, which one has not seen in central

Europe for decades. Aside from feed, salt, horses, hogs, and other animals, one also sees wooden bowls, harnesses, and fur caps for sale. Returning to downtown Gura Humorului, we stopped at an indoor-outdoor marketplace wherein the temptingly displayed vegetables, fruits and cheeses in the market hall looked especially appetizing.

Our fellow traveler Mitzi Bursan and I paid a brief visit to the barber, which was possible without knowledge of Romanian. Thanks to Mitzi and Roland we had no problems with language during our entire visit. The older people who still speak German are few and far between. Although some members of the younger generation know English, we found only a small number. It is decidedly helpful to be accompanied by someone with fluency in Romanian when visiting Bukovina.

We then proceeded to the renovated Catholic church on Gura Humorului’s main street where we saw a black tablet inscribed with the name “Emperor Francis Joseph I” reminiscent of Bukovina’s Austrian period. It was here that Roland had served as an altar boy in his youth. We then visited the cemetery. In Gura Humorului, a town of about 15,000 people, we encountered much construction in progress as well as traffic-congested streets. Of all the buildings we saw, the old town hall gleaming in Habsburg yellow is perhaps the most compelling. Taking advantage of the nice weather and in order to work up an appetite for dinner, we walked on a bit further to the mountain called *Gündl*.

To our right and left we saw men and women mowing hay with their scythes. Below us the Humor River meandered along and we could view the town in its entirety. Above the Humor River lies Gura Humorului’s Jewish cemetery with the Christian burial ground located in another part of the town. Upon our return to the Corelaru boarding house we passed the *Brünnl*, i.e., a well (German: *Brunnen*), which provides water all year round.

On Wednesday morning we were picked up by a four-wheel drive vehicle. It would have been impossible for a normal motor vehicle to convey us to the Rarau, not the highest but nonetheless the most famous mountain in Bukovina, which has been immortalized by numerous myths and legends. Even during our visit the weather was such that we would not have been surprised to see the eighteenth century semi-legendary thief Dobuș around the next curve of the road or path. In this out-of-the-way and sparsely populated section of Bukovina one can well understand that Bukovina is a paradise for hunter and fisherman alike.

En route to the Moldovița monastery we made a stopover at Jadova. One of my distant relatives, the author Dragos Vicol, has a summerhouse there. Today this house contains a small museum. Unfortunately no one was at home.

At Moldovița we were expected for lunch, which our host Vasile had arranged for us. Since this day was an Eastern Orthodox Church holiday, no meat was served, which did not detract from the meal in any way. The monastery also takes in



Sister Tatjana, Peter Grunikiewicz and tour guide Roland Loy.

tourists. Sister Tatiana, who had studied in Regensburg and speaks excellent German, provided a very detailed guided tour of the monastery, the dominant color of which is yellow.

The next day the four-wheel drive vehicle again picked us up. Our good host Vasile had organized a day at a *stâna* (mountain pasture with facilities for processing dairy products typical of the Romanian Carpathians) for us. Above Frasin we had a marvelous view of the entire valley. With the best vitals and ample *tzuika* (a traditional Romanian alcoholic beverage usually made from plums) we could only reaffirm that God is good.

A visit to Suceava and research in its archival collection was on Friday's program. At noon we looked up Codrin Grunicevici, one of my distant relatives, who invited us to spend the afternoon with him in Ilișești. It was about twenty years ago that we last saw each other and now vowed to maintain future contact.

After our Saturday trip to sunny Czernowitz, Sunday greeted us with torrents of rain. And this was precisely the day we had set aside to fulfill one of our more important objectives: visits to Arbora, Cacica, Clit, Marginea, Rădăuți, Solca, Voevodeasa, and Volovăț, the villages of our forebears.

In Rădăuți, famous in the Austrian era for its stud farm, we met Eduard Mohr, the presiding officer of the German Forum. Among other services, the German Forum provides material assistance to Germans in Bukovina. The visit to the cemetery which followed, as well as the stroll through the streets of Rădăuți, proved to be short given the poor weather conditions.

The rain seemed to follow us to Voevodeasa, Marginea and Volovăț. In Voevodeasa we had a memorable experience. After we stopped at a house to ask for directions, the gentleman who answered the door invited us in and treated us royally. The warmth in the room and the warmth in his heart fared us well, a sentiment also reflected during a visit with his mother. Such hospitality as extended to us by the Zaremba family is no longer

customary in central Europe. Nor are Mr. Zaremba's attributes limited to hospitality. We were impressed to learn that it was he who at his own expense oversaw the restoration of the Catholic church, which had fallen into a state of disrepair after the exodus of the Germans in 1940.

The day ended with a short photo stop in Solca and a longer pause in Cacica. With so many beautiful churches in Bukovina, Cacica remains the spiritual center for the Catholic population. Until relatively recent times thousands of pilgrims walked, some barefooted, from their villages to Cacica on August 15, the Feast Day of the Assumption. Cacica is also known for its saline springs, which to this day continue to provide the region with its salt needs.

Before our departure on Tuesday we made some purchases at the Gura Humorului market. In addition we received numerous gifts from our hosts including painted eggs, an embroidered tablecloth, *tzuika*, and other foods. Generously provisioned by Viorica and Vasile, we packed our auto to the brim and set off for home at about noon. In Rona de Jos we stayed in the same boarding house as on our first night in Romania.

The weather the next morning boded ill with a dense fog making it difficult to make time on the road. But the good streets and clear skies over Hungary permitted us to compensate for time lost. Again the sun shone over Budapest and accompanied us to our return to Ulm.

Our trip lasted for ten days during which we saw and experienced more than we could ever have anticipated. But it has become evident to us that it will take many more ten-day visits just to pursue our genealogical objectives. For nature lovers and for people interested in cultural matters Bukovina remains a meaningful tourist attraction to which must be added the memorable experiences in the realm of human relations.

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## ACROSS THE YEARS: REFLECTIONS OF A BYGONE ERA

by Erwine Haering née Pilsner (Stony Point, NY)

Little could my parents, Karl Pilsner and Anna Maria Schafaczek, anticipate what lay ahead when in late November 1940 they packed their portable belongings in anticipation of a transfer to Germany and of a more secure existence. Assuredly they reminisced about the centennial celebration of the founding of their village of Bori a mere five years earlier. This event, featured in the July 23, 1935 issue of the *Czernowitzer deutsche Tagespost* and printed below, also occasioned the publication the same year of a thirty-two page booklet, *Die Besiedelung von Bori* by Alfred Klug. After four generations of laboring in field and forest, my parents and indeed all of Bori's villagers undoubtedly departed with a heavy heart, abandoning their farm animals and homesteads, which had provided a dependable livelihood as well as the sanctuary of hearth and home. In addition Germany was at war and at best, conditions

were unsettled. And little did they know that on May 13, 1945, five days after the official end of World War II, my father would die from his war wounds in the former military hospital in Rostock, East Prussia, while we, his family, would become destitute refugees eking out a marginal existence in Austria.

At the time of the resettlement I was six years old and at an age when packing and traveling was new and adventurous. My parents, brother Heinrich and I left Gurahumora by train destined for Austria. Both sets of my grandparents (Pilsner/Hellinger and Schafaczek/Lang) however, evacuated Bori with horse and wagon, eventually expecting to resume their agricultural activities in their new locations. The Germans from



Family of Karl Pilsner in front of their home in Bori (1940).

Soviet-occupied north Bukovina, all of whom were evacuated by rail, could only take 50 kilograms of baggage and 35 kilograms of carry-on luggage per person, while those from southern Bukovina under Romanian administration had fewer restrictions on luggage and mode of exodus.

The recollections of the first six years of my life are probably as sketchy as those of any adult my age. What comes through strongly of my Bori years is the familial and community cohesion and cooperation best evidenced in activities such as threshing, the making prune butter (*Powilla*), quilting, and stripping feathers for pillows. In her free time my mother would sit at her loom in the room off the summer kitchen and weave such items as wall hangings and rugs. Family life was very intimate with both sets of my grandparents and other relatives only a short distance from our homestead.

The German Bohemian village of Bori, which according to the 1930 census had only 305 inhabitants, had no stores nor did it have its own church. For these services the villagers had to go to the nearby town of Gurahumora. Bori did, however, have a wayside chapel where passers-by would stop to meditate before resuming their tasks. With almost the entire community being interrelated, it is not surprising that crime was virtually unknown, with the occasional theft of a few apples from another's orchard perhaps the worst social infraction.

This all came to an end in November 1940 when the Bukovina Germans immigrated en masse to Germany. Before leaving south Bukovina their property was assessed by a joint German and Romanian commission with the assurance that the resettlers would be compensated for their losses in Germany. But before permanent resettlement could take place, we first spent several months in temporary transition camps throughout German-occupied territory. It was in Trofaiach, District of Leoben in Styria, Austria, that my father was sworn in as a German citizen on May 31, 1941. Soon thereafter he was inducted into the *Wehrmacht* and sent to the eastern front. My mother, Heinrich and I were eventually settled in Saybusch, Upper Silesia, along with a number of our fellow Bukovinians (the families of Karl Tanda and Emil Pilsner come to mind in addition to which our grandparents lived in neighboring towns.) While in Saybusch I recall seeing my father on only two occasions when he was on military furlough.

The two-room house to which we had been assigned was empty upon our arrival, the previous Polish owners having been evacuated and sent I know not where. As if taking over another's home under such circumstances was not discomforting enough, we now had to contend with the antagonism of the remaining Polish population who saw us as interlopers. A strong partisan underground had emerged, which in many subtle ways intimidated the newly resettled Germans. I still recall the fear evoked by their impalement of animals on fences or bloody animal skins left as a symbol of resistance. Sometime during early 1944 an armed and uniformed German guard was quartered in our house for the security of the community.

We tried to make the best of it with my mother carrying the burden of animal husbandry and gardening with the assistance of a Polish girl for domestic chores. I attended the elementary school, which was, or so it seemed, to be quite a distance from my home. The classes were large and instruction lacked structure and continuity perhaps because of the disruptive population shifts. But before we could get truly settled and acclimated to our new environment in Upper Silesia, we were again on the move, this time in flight of the advancing Soviet armies.

The Christmas tree still standing and during an especially cold winter in early January 1945, my mother, brother and I, along with many hundreds of people from neighboring towns, sought to escape to the west. With about twenty other people we managed to find space (standing room only) in a tarp-covered panel truck. It was so cold that people huddled together for a bit of warmth. At night we stopped at designated locations where we were provisioned with food and overnight accommodations. After several weeks en route we finally arrived in Peuerbach, Upper Austria where we were assigned to a private home. Here we found a cordial reception, which, however, proved to be temporary. For the duration of our time in Peuerbach we, along with twelve-to-fourteen other refugee families, were relocated to a large newly constructed but yet incomplete three-story building.

Shortly after our arrival in Peuerbach I had the good fortune of meeting Riki Mayrhuber, a girl my age who lived in the neighborhood. Riki and her family extended many kindnesses to us and were always ready to lend a helping hand. Although more than fifty years have passed since my days in Peuerbach, Riki and I have remained in contact. Our positive experience with the Mayrhuber family is but one example of the aid that came our way, seemingly from nowhere, in our darkest days.

At age eleven I understandably had the same response as the adults when the American armed forces entered our town. It was one of relief that we were not under the Soviets and that after six grueling years the war was finally over. The American troops seemed especially friendly to the children, and it was from them that I was introduced to oranges, chocolate and chewing gum. In addition we had relatives who had immigrated to the United States after World War I and who had always communicated positive comments about their life abroad. I still recall our delight when we received packages of food and clothing from them.

In Peuerbach I attended middle school (*Hauptschule*) where the curriculum included three years of English. Little did I know that this experience would someday stand me in good stead. After graduation in 1949 I was fortunate enough to get a position as an apprentice with a local dressmaker. But now again, we found ourselves at a crossroad.

All this time my mother had heard nothing from or about my father and had made numerous inquiries about him, all in vain. Fearing the worst, she accepted the generous invitation of her sister, Emily Thonges née Schafaczek of Manhattan, NY, to sponsor our immigration to the United States. It was presumed that should my father return from a POW camp, he would then join us.

I still recall the excitement I felt as we traveled by rail to Salzburg, overnighed in a Parisian hotel, and continued on to Cherbourg the next morning. But it was the ocean crossing on the exalted SS *Queen Elizabeth*, which left an indelible impression on my soul: the elegance, the food, the entertainment. Then, too, there was the anticipation: what awaited us in America, the land of "unlimited possibilities"?

On June 29, 1950 after five days at sea, we finally arrived at New York Harbor, where we were greeted first by the majestic Statue of Liberty and then by my aunt and uncle, Emily and Louis Thonges who met us at the pier. Our first three days in America were spent at their apartment on East 85th Street, right in the heart of Manhattan's German section. Subsequently we met other members of the family including my uncle, Raimund Shafarzek/Schafaczek and his wife Isabella née Neumayer, who owned a farm in Roscoe, New York. To our delight we were invited to spend the summer with them, where we got to know our cousins Mary Ann and Louis Thonges and Bernard, Anna and Lisa Shafarzek. It was in Roscoe that my mother and I had our first work experiences in America: my

mother as a domestic and I as a chambermaid in a local boarding house.

In the fall it was back to Manhattan. Coming from a rural area, I was awed by the high rise buildings, the congested streets, the subways, and the many motorized vehicles coming and going in all directions. Fearing that I would get lost, I dared not venture beyond the block on which I lived. But necessity soon demanded an expansion of my geographic environment. The time had come for my brother and me to enroll in school and for my mother to obtain permanent employment. Again a relative came to our assistance: Anna Hilgarth née Braun who worked in a firm making aircraft instruments and vials for medical labs, recommended my mother for a job, and she was forthwith employed as a glass blower.

The sights and sounds of New York City were experiences in themselves. I fondly recall my first Christmas when my Aunt Emily took us to see the Christmas tree in Rockefeller Center, the floorshow at Radio City Music Hall and afterwards to Horn & Hardart Automat for lunch. Here, after inserting a nickel in a slot one could withdraw a food item of choice. All in all it was a wonderful treat. While much has changed in New York City during these past sixty years, the Radio City Christmas show has been enconced as a national tradition regularly attended by young and old alike.

While the above landmarks have maintained continuity, the price of transportation, rent and food between then and now show no similarity. After two years of living with Aunt Emily and her family, we moved into our own three-room apartment on East 81st Street and 2nd Avenue. I was able to get a job in the accounting department of a drafting supply company and finished high school in the evening, graduating from Mabel Dean Bacon Vocational High School in Manhattan in 1953.

For recreation the young crowd often patronized the shops, nightclubs and the German movie theater in Yorkville, New York's German section. There were also sporting events at one of which I was introduced to Herbert Haering, born in Frittlingen, Germany, who in 1961 walked me down the aisle. Other events followed: the birth of our son Paul in 1964, the purchase of a home in Stony Point, NY, job and career changes, Paul's marriage to Lisa Ruggiero in 1992, the birth of our grandchildren, Matthew and Michelle, and finally retirement with such part-time activities as volunteer work in church and civic associations.

Unfortunately my brother found adjustment to our new circumstances difficult, bringing much sadness and heartbreak to the family, especially to our mother. My mother, on the other hand, proved to be a true survivor. She had a positive attitude, always remained fully employed, and even after retirement was able to maintain her economic independence and stay in her apartment on East 81st Street until her passing in 2006.

As a tribute to those whom we encountered on our way and who helped us on our journey through life, I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude. Oh, and yes: I am also grateful for the time and opportunity I now have to delve a bit further into my Bukovinian cultural heritage!

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## CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION IN BORI (1935)

Original publication: "Festtage in Bori: 100 Jahre deutschböhmisches Siedlung Bori," *Czernowitzer deutsche Tagespost*, trans. Sophie A. Welisch, July 23, 1935, pp. 3-4.

July 14 was for Bori a very special day of celebration. The entire village was adorned with flags. Triumphal arches with German and Romanian inscriptions greeted the guests. Although the weather appeared threatening, the previously determined program was maintained. In a long column the festive procession began its march from Gurahumora at about 9:00 a.m. in order to participate in the open air mass in Bori. In the vanguard came the military band, then the happy youth with their pennants and banners, the representatives of the other clubs followed by some 500 young boys and girls, and finally the men and women. A festively decorated altar had been constructed, whose cross, visible from afar, loomed large against the distant horizon. Vicar General Grabowski himself, assisted by numerous other priests, celebrated the Pontifical Mass. With earnestness and emotion the assembled group of 3000 participated in the religious ceremonies. After the Gospel, Deacon Schüttler delivered the homily. He stressed that genuine, robust German ethnic identity can only prosper on the foundation of a Christian worldview. German ethnicity without religion is neo-paganism. Faithful to the practices and traditions of their fathers, the Boriers for one hundred years have always remained steadfast and lived according to their ancestral Catholic religion while at the same time also remaining true to their German customs and language. The speaker concluded with an appeal to all to hold fast to the good old traditions, unaffected by the atheistic rumblings of the new era.

Deeply moving were the well-rehearsed songs of the Catholic German youth clubs accompanied by the military band directed with great skill by Captain Apostolescu. For his generous scoring of the songs as well as for his personally conducting the music we extended to him our heartfelt appreciation!

A modest luncheon after mass brought together all the festival deputies and guests for several hours of song and serious discussion in Mr. Günthner's house, appropriately decorated for the occasion.

Festivities and a garden party followed in the afternoon. After an introductory song, Mayor Paicu rose to the podium and in warm words commemorated the first settlers who migrated from

Bohemia to Bukovina one hundred years ago and here created fruitful arable land from virgin forest. Thanks to their labor and the hospitality of the Romanian population, their second homeland in Bori soon became attractive and cozy. Between the German and Romanian people, he continued, may there always exist the fullest harmony for the wellbeing of the country.

Right Reverend Sonntag of Augustendorf delivered the ceremonial address. Deeply moved, he described the lot of the immigrants, their many cares and struggles, deprivations and disappointments, illness and death which some already experienced en route before the thirty families, after a long and difficult journey, physically and materially spent, arrived in Bukovina in the spring of 1835. On July 1, 1835 they signed a contract with the Solka Ministry of Economics and by October 16, 1835 were already in possession of 122 yokes of fields and forest on the mountain slope: Bori. Under difficult circumstances and threatened by wild animals, they cultivated the land with plow and spade by the sweat of their brow in order to leave it as a legacy to their children. But the most precious legacy, which they passed on, is the loyalty to our faith and to our German ethnicity. It remains the sacred obligation of their descendants to defend these priceless holy traditions.

Thereupon Senator Cosmiuc ascended the podium. He congratulated the Bori residents as a senator in the name of the government. In well-considered words he paid respect to the hard lot of the German-Bohemian colonists, who, from a wilderness, created the cultural environment we now enjoy. We are indebted to these gallant men, and we demonstrate this appreciation by completing the task they have begun. But the impetus for it resides in loyalty to faith, fatherland and ethnic group.

Guests from Germany and a group from Staffelstein in Bohemia extended heartfelt greetings from Bavaria and the Bohemian Forest. A choral recitation, "Our Homeland—Our Church," recited by the youth clubs of Gurahumora and Bori, was well received.

After completion of the official portion of the program, Reverend Mück rose to speak. He thanked all those participating in the celebrations—guests from far and near but especially the representatives of the Romanian administration—with the assurance that our Catholic German people will always remain loyal to God, king, and fatherland. The unofficial portion of the program consisted of songs, poems, folk dances, games, theatrical productions, raffles, telling of jokes and other entertainments. The merry gathering of the numerous guests did not break up until after midnight.