

# 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

## SOCIETY NEWS & EVENTS

- The Bukovina Society is now on Facebook. See you there! Please contact Irmgard Hein Ellingson on Facebook or at [irmgardellingson@yahoo.com](mailto:irmgardellingson@yahoo.com) with questions.
- Your comments and newsletter contributions are welcome! Please email them to Irmgard Hein Ellingson, [irmgardellingson@yahoo.com](mailto:irmgardellingson@yahoo.com) or send them via postal mail to her at 200 Highland Drive #2, Decorah IA 52101, USA.
- Please notify the Bukovina Society of your postal and/or email address changes. Changes may be sent via the email link at our website, [www.bukovinasociety.org](http://www.bukovinasociety.org) or by postal mail to BSA, PO Box 81, Ellis, Kansas, 67637, USA.
- Note that members residing in the USA may receive newsletters either by postal mail or email. Members residing outside the USA receive newsletters by email.
- The Board of Directors of the Society conducted a regular meeting on Friday, April 10, 2015 including long range planning. The date was set to coincide with a visit by society member Gail Tremblay to the museum. Gail organized a family trip to Bukovina in May 2009 and returned to give a presentation at Bukovinafest 2009.
- The Bukovina Germans in both Americas were featured in the January 2015 issue of *Der Südostdeutsche*, the monthly newspaper of our sister organization, the

*Landsmannschaft der Buchenlanddeutschen (Bukowina) e.V.* in Augsburg, Germany. The two-page article included a history of the Bukovina Society of the Americas, photographs of the first board of directors and of our headquarters, and recognition of our organization's 25th anniversary. This editor and our board wish to express our great appreciation to the editors and publisher of *Der Südostdeutsche*!

- East European Genealogical Society (EEGS) will host a full-day and -evening seminar, "Celebrating 25 Years of Multi-Ethnic Research," in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada on Saturday, August 1, 2015. Three international authorities on eastern Europe will be featured. William "Fred" Hoffman will speak about "The How and Why of East European Place Name Changes" and "Understanding Language Variations of East European First Names." Matthew Bielawa will discuss "Analyzing Vital Records of the Austrian, Prussian, and Russian Empire," and John D. Pihach will address "Beyond Vital Records: Galician Documents of Genealogical Value from Poland and Ukraine." More information is available at <http://eegsociety.org/Seminar2015.aspx>.
- The 2015 *Eastern European Family History Conference* will be held at the Plaza Hotel in Salt Lake City on August 11-15, 2015. The annual event is hosted by the Foundation for East European Family History Studies (FEEFHS). For more, go to <http://feefhs.org/>.
- Mike Krzyzewski, the 2015 NCAA basketball winning coach at Duke University, has a unique tie to the

Bohemian Germans from Bukovina. He attended and played basketball for Archbishop (Josef) Weber High School in Chicago, a Catholic prep school for boys. Born in Fuerstenthal in the former Bukovina, the Archbishop was fluent in Polish and ministered to Polish immigrants to America being transferred here by his order, the Congregation of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ. The school was named in his honor for his service.

- The Bukovina Society welcomes our 212th life members, Ken and Diana Kohl of Ellis, Kansas.

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## 2015: A YEAR OF RECOLLECTION

Shared by Luzian Geier and Alfred Wenzel  
Translated by Irmgard Hein Ellingson

Our sister organization the *Landsmannschaft der Buchenlanddeutschen (Bukowina) e.V.* in Augsburg, Germany, will observe a number of special occasions this year:

- In January and February 2015, it was 70 years ago that the Bukovina Germans who had been settled “in the East,” i.e. in *Warthegau* / Poland, fled to the west, ahead of the advancing Soviet forces at the beginning of 1945.
- On 6 June 2015, all of the *Landsmannschaften* in Austria will hold a memorial day in the city of Wels. The *Landsmannschaften* in Germany are invited to attend this great event.
- In July 2015 it will be 60 years since the *Bezirk Schwaben* assumed the *Patenschaft*, or sponsorship, for the Bukovina Germans. The relationship continues to this day.
- September 2015 will mark 20 years that Ewald Zachmann, chairman of their board of directors, has held that office. In the 65 years of the *Landsmannschaft*, none of his predecessors held office that long. The Bukovina Society joins the *Landsmannschaft* in extending our sincere best wishes and congratulations to him and the *Landschaft*!
- In the fall of 2015, it will be 75 years since the 1940 resettlement of Germans out of Bukovina, Bessarabia, and the Dobrudja.

**We call upon all nations and people of good will to  
join in the mutual endeavor to find a way out of guilt,  
misfortune, suffering, poverty and misery which will lead  
us all to a better future.**  
from the *Charta der deutschen Heimatvertriebenen*  
(Charter of the German Expellees), 1950



**Manastirea Putna - The Putna Monastery in Bukovina**

“Manastirea putna1” by Petr Sporer - Own work. Licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons - [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Manastirea\\_putna1.jpg#/media/File:Manastirea\\_putna1.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Manastirea_putna1.jpg#/media/File:Manastirea_putna1.jpg)

### The 2015 Michael and Anna Augustine Reunion

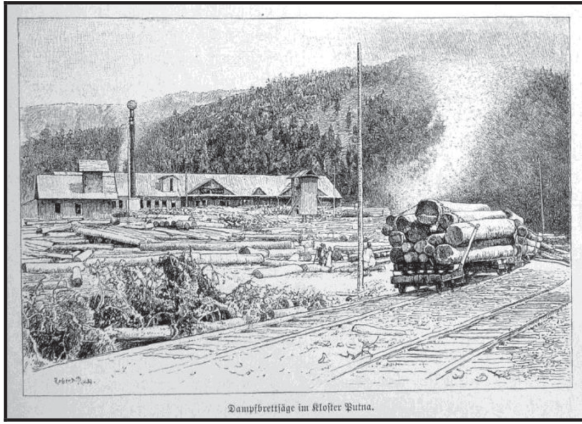
The family and descendants of Michael and Anna (nee Adelsberger) Augustine will host an all-day reunion on Sat. July 4, 2015, at the Ellis County Fairgrounds - Unrein Building in Hays, Kansas. Michael, Anna, and their oldest children emigrated from Karlsberg, now Gura Putnei, Bukovina, in 1902 (see the following article, “The Karlsberg - Putna Branch Line”). A part of their emigration story, “Solving a 100 Year Old Augustine Family Mystery,” was written by Chad Augustine and published in the Bukovina Society newsletter, Vol. 22, No. 1 (March 2012).

The reunion’s registration will begin at 10:00 a.m., and lunch will be served from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Afternoon entertainment will be an inflatable bouncer for children to jump in and bean bag toss games for all others. Mass will be heard at 4 p.m. for our Sunday obligation and supper will be at 5:30 p.m. There will be a raffle with tickets, a door prize drawing, and special gifts for the oldest male and female in attendance after the meal. Evening entertainment will be music by the Carper Family Band.

The reunion committee has scheduled a golf tournament to be held on Fri. July 3, 2015, at the Fort Hays golf course for ladies and gentlemen who would like to participate. The reunion will conclude with a Sunday morning brunch on July 5 from 9 a.m. - 11 a.m. in the Unrein Building at the Ellis County Fairgrounds.

We have been informed that our friend Michael Augustin, a long-time Bukovina researcher who lives in Leonberg near Stuttgart, Germany, and his wife Bärbel will attend the reunion. For more information, contact Daryl Augustine at 785-628-2793.

## The Karlsburg - Putna Branch Line



### Forest Industry in Putna: 1899

[http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bahnstrecke\\_Gura\\_Putnei%E2%80%93Putna#/media/File:Kloster\\_putna,\\_waldwirtschaft.jpg](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bahnstrecke_Gura_Putnei%E2%80%93Putna#/media/File:Kloster_putna,_waldwirtschaft.jpg)  
Public Domain

In 1889, Bukovina was part of Austrian territory in the Habsburg Dual Monarchy. The Dornestie - Radautz Branch Railroad of the *Gesellschaft Bukowinaer Lokalbahnen*, or the Bukovina Local Rail Company, went into operation. Some years later the rail company was taken over by the *Neuen Bukowinaer Lokalbahnen*, or the New Bukovina Local Rail Company. The latter acquired the right to continue construction in the Suczawa vally to Frassin with the stipulation that work begin immediately and be concluded by 1 July 1898. A branch from this line was built from the Karlsberg depot through the Putna River valley in the Obcina Mare mountains to Putna. The branch line and the section from Radautz to Frassin were opened together on 7 July 1898.



### Train in the Forest near Putna: 1899

[http://de.academic.ru/pictures/dewiki/75/Kloster\\_putna\\_waldwirtschaft\\_waldbahn.jpg](http://de.academic.ru/pictures/dewiki/75/Kloster_putna_waldwirtschaft_waldbahn.jpg)  
Public Domain

First and foremost, the line provided access to the forests south of Putna in the Obcina Mare mountains, where an intensive forest operation was conducted by the *Religionsfonds* of the Romanian Orthodox Church. The *Religionsfonds* administered church-owned lands to provide support for their monasteries and had its offices in the Putna monastery. At the beginning of the 20th century, a number

of *Schmalspurbahnen* had been built in the valleys above Putna. Then Bukovina became part of Romania at the end of World War I, and the rail lines were taken over by *Căile Ferate Române* (CFR), the Romanian national railroad. These were all abandoned in the 1980s, during the years of the Ceausescu dictatorship in Romania.

In 2009, it was reported that the Gura Putna (formerly Karlsberg) - Putna line had a single, non-electrified track, part of the passenger route 515 from Dornești to Nisipitu and Putna, with about five daily trains in both directions. Of significance for tourists is the access provided to the Putna monastery. It has been reported that the CFR is considering shutting-down the line or handing it over to private operators.

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## DNA: THE LIVING PAST

with contributions by Fay Jordaens  
introduced and narrated by Irmgard Hein Ellingson



### The DNA Double Helix Public Domain

*The editorial committee always appreciates reader feedback. Especially delightful were memories and thoughts shared with us by our dear friend Fay Jordaens. Her initial message -*

... I was away in Carolina when the *Bukovina Newsletter* arrived. Now that I have “settled down” - a euphemism for unpacking, washing clothes, putting away all extraneous, unnecessary packed “stuff” - I had a chance to read my mail, including your Newsletter.

“Sparkie’s” article about DNA was wonderful, even though it forced me to look up some new words - and here I am trying to hang on to all the ones that I have acquired in my life journey.

One of the best things that ever happened to me, genetically speaking, was when I was about 7 years old, and Mom took us, my brother Don and I, to Edenwold, Saskatchewan, Canada, to meet our maternal Frombach grandfather. Almost everyone in Edenwold was connected to us, either through Mom’s line, or Dad’s Schmahline. What a strange, exciting feeling to walk thru that little town with my cousin Imogene Knoblauch Seversen, while she pointed out houses,



saying things like “your Uncle Fred Mohl lives there with your Aunt Helen Schmahl,” or “You see the Post Office over there? Uncle Karl Mang’s daughter Sylvia Mang, is postmistress of Edenwold and she lives in that little white house.” Then I met my paternal grandmother for the first time when Mother came into my bedroom and said “it’s time for breakfast and I want you to meet your grandmother Schmahl, your dad’s mother!”

Being born in New York, living on an island off the Bronx, we rarely saw relatives - so this was mind blowing. We even met Mom’s horse ‘May’, who still remembered Mom, and with such horse exuberance that she tried to nuzzle Mom’s tearful face. “She remembers me, I can’t believe it - after all these years.” It totally thrilled our tearful, shy mom. I think the memory stayed with me because our Mom was a lady not given to a show of emotion and we knew nothing of “horse recognition-happiness.”

Some of the relatives we met were Sauers, Hubers, Mangs, Putzes, Hollerbaums etc., all of our DNA. And what wasn’t in that town, was in the town of Balgonie [the Wagners], or on farms nearby, or else in the city of Regina. Total DNA gift!

Our mom spoke with a Swabian dialect, and when she got together with her cousins, they would start off in English and seamlessly switch to German. Dad was born in Czernowitz, a cosmopolitan city and he did not have the same dialect.

This memory was triggered by “Sparkie’s” article.

*Fay wrote another message in which she reflected upon DNA and its implications for her “bucket list” -*

At my age [85] I recently compiled a Bucket List and began to reflect on the rather boring history of being just a Bukovinian daughter of the Austrian Hungarian Empire. It seemed so bland....so on my Bucket List I made it my #1 quest to discover what other DNA roamed around in the body that comprised a Fay Schmahl Jordaens. So I contacted Ancestry.com.

I reflected on my journey and all the wonderful help I got beginning with Richard Carruthers-Zurowski and Al Schmidt who put together most of my Pedigree Chart. This led me to multitudinous cousins like Todd Legg and marvelous help from Erich Slawski in Cologne, Germany who took my Schmahls from Bukovina to Essenheim, Germany and single handedly filled in those missing relatives. Patricia Guza took me to South America connecting some of my missing Sauer line. It was so helpful

to belong to the Bukovina Society where members shared with me the voyage of their family line. It was through information posted in the Alleum Society that I was able to write to Poland a complete the missing Knoblauch peeps.

Then there were the books written for the Bukovina Society. Probably the best understanding of the “German Emigration from Bukovina to the Americas” was written and edited by Keel and Rein. When a Putz cousin emailed me recently, I referred him to this book, which can still be purchased at the Museum and where you can read remarkable history of family migrations. Don’t be surprised if you find your family name encoded in the history of that charming book!

However, Ancestry.com gave me the most fun surprises of this journey. With just a little mailed off spittle, Ancestry.com provided me with the DNA variety for which our family longed. Yes, we are Bukovinian, but we are also 17% British, 16% Greek and Italian, Spanish, Scandinavian, Irish, Jewish and Asian - How wonderful!!

Now my question to you dear reader: do you think that if DNA testing became mandatory, there would be less hatred between races, less feeling of separation, maybe less violence on this earth?

*Fay has captured the elusive essence of a long-cherished dream: peace on earth. Could the recognition of our common origins possibly awaken us to our shared humanity? Though many, we are indeed one.*

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## THE JUNG - TAUSCHER - WEBER STORY

Introduction and conclusion by Irmgard Hein Ellingson

*The following family story was submitted by Bukovina Society member Jim Palmquist of Bellevue, Washington, USA. Based on the family’s oral tradition, it was written in about 1954 by Marian Young-Rongey, who was born in Coal Creek, Washington, on 15 April 1898. Marian was a younger sister of Jim’s maternal grandmother, Grace Jung-Macomber. Their parents, Andreas and Marie (Weber) Jung, were one of three Tauscher families who had emigrated from Bukovina and are recorded as arriving in New York on 24 June 1887. Readers will note that the German form of the surname is Jung, which has been anglicized to Young by descendants. Similarly, the first name Andrew has been anglicized from the German Andreas. Marian has literally translated the name of Schwarzhthal, the ancestral village of her family, as “Black Valley.”*

*Marian's text has been retained as she wrote it. Bear in mind that most of the article is based upon what she had been told a half-century earlier. She was not born in Bukovina; she did not experience emigration and the early days of settlement in the State of Washington. This is evidenced in certain historical problems within the text. For example, she seems to be under the impression that the family lived in Hungary and emigrated from Budapest while in fact they were documented as living in Bukovina, then part of Austria in the Habsburg Dual Monarchy. However, the rail lines in and out of Bukovina did not lead to west through the mountains to Hungary. Rather, the rail lines skirted the mountains: they went north/northwest to Galicia, then west to Austria, and finally north to Hamburg, Germany. Further, we know now the two world wars had changed the map and the world in which her Bukovina ancestors had once lived. It is uncertain what, if anything, Marian knew about any of that.*

*The Bukovina Society wishes to thank Jim Palmquist and the family for sharing Marian's account with us.*

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## THE ANDREW YOUNG (JUNG) FAMILY

Written by Marian Young-Rongey [1898-1984]

The Andrew Young family had four daughters when they left Europe; Minnie (Mary), Clara, Julia, and Grace. They were a group of families traveling together; the Ferdinand Tauschers, Bartels, Kuehnners and the Youngs [Andreas and Marie Weber-Jung]. They left Budapest, Hungary, about the year 1888. Mr. Kuehner was a cousin of Mrs. Bartel. Hungary was part of Austria at that time. After World War 1 Hungary was free, independent from Austria. They lived near the Rumanian border in a timbered country not far from a place called Black Valley.

The families traveled from Hungary to Hamburg, Germany (by train?) and then to New York by freighter instead of the passenger ship on which they already had passage to New York. The reason for this was that Ferdinand Tauscher, a brother-in-law to Mary Young (my mother), had deserted the army in Hungary while serving part of the three year tour of duty. He, of course, was afraid of being caught before getting out of Europe. There was a freighter leaving several days earlier than the passenger ship. They were lucky being able to book on it and leave in a hurry. It also cost more money which they had very little of.

They had sold most all of their belongings before leaving Hungary to help pay for the trip. They were at sea for 30 days, living somewhere down in the hold of the ship. There were rough seas and poor food. Somehow they all survived this part of the journey crowded in with many others.

From New York the group went to Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. Someone must have told them there was work in the mine fields there. They had been farmers in Hungary and hoped to find a place where land was cheap and they could work their own farms.

From Pennsylvania the group went to Kansas to work in a smelter then on to Denver, Colorado, to work in the mines again. After a time they wanted to go to Butte, Montana, to work in the mines but they had not saved enough money to buy railroad tickets for everyone. Each family paid for their own. The other men decided to buy tickets for their wives and children and then jump onto the train themselves as it left. Dad had enough money for his ticket. There was a woman who was ill and had no money for a ticket. Dad gave her his [ticket] and thought he would jump on the train with the others. The other men all got on all right but Dad didn't make it. So he watched as his family went on to Butte without him. What to do? Walk!!! He followed the train tracks. It took him about two weeks. It was a very hard, frightening walk. He met up with different Indians. They seemed friendly and he motioned with his hand to his mouth that he was hungry. They gave him food then motioned for him to lie down and sleep. He was so tired but was afraid to sleep. He managed to rest though. They met many bears along the tracks. They frightened him but didn't attack. He saw many animals and different birds but no other people except the Indians. He would go thirsty for hours at a time.

When he finally got to Butte, Dad thought that the best way to find the group would be at the railroad depot or where everyone went to get their water. He hung around one place and then the other. Finally Mother found him at the water well. He was so thin and weak. They were so happy to see each other again. In order to support her and the girls, mother had been working in a cookhouse and a boarding house. She also washed clothes for the miners.

They lived in Butte for a time. One day Dad found some rocks along a trail that looked like they had some gold and silver in them. On his way home he met a man and showed him the rocks. The man asked some questions about where they were found. Later Dad showed the rocks to some of the men in their group. They thought they should stake a claim. When they went to do so, they found out that the man Dad had met had gone right to the office and staked out a claim. Later it proved to be rich in gold and silver ore.

Later, Uncle Ferdinand Tauscher went alone to Chehalis to look things over. He wrote to Aunt and the rest of the group to come to Chehalis, that there were mills and mines to work in and that the wages were \$3 a day which was very

good at the time. But when they arrived, things were not as he had said. Dad had to go all the way to Dryad to get a job. He cut shingle bolts for \$20 a month plus room and board. All the men slept in a bunk house. Dad would work six days a week then walk home to Chehalis to spend a few hours before walking back to Dryad to start work Monday morning.

There were only 17 houses in Chehalis, a family store, post office, and meat market. Centralia had a box car for a train depot. Horses and wagons or walking were the only means of transportation and the roads quite primitive. Fred [Ferdinand], the eldest son [of Andreas and Marie], was born in Chehalis on March 25, 1889. He is buried in Cowlitz Cemetery at the Mission.

Sometime later Dad bought 80 acres at Coal Creek, which is four miles from Chehalis. He paid \$600. It was railroad land. Some of the Tauschers bought railroad land on Logan Hill. Uncle bought farmland at Jackson Prairie courthouse near the Matilda Jackson Park. The little Jackson Prairie Courthouse is still near there and being cared for.

After buying the land at Coal Creek, Dad walked out there from Dryad on Sundays and started to build a house for the family. He was an expert in splitting cedar shakes and cutting timber. He built a nice shake house. As time went on he built a barn and chicken house, planted trees, and cleared the land and farmed.

While Dad was still working at Dryad and walking home Saturday nights, he was robbed of his week's salary. It was a dark, moonless night. Someone slugged him and took his money, money which they needed badly.

He used to tell us of another experience he had in Hungary as a young man. He had gone to the marketplace some distance from where he lived and sold some lumber for cash. Walking home alone, he was picked up by some Romanians. As he sat in their wagon, they were talking to one another and didn't think he could understand their language. They planned to rob him as they drove through the woods. When the time came, he jumped off and ran into the woods and got away. He said it was dark and he was nervous and anxious until he was safely at home.

The Young family lived at Coal Creek for a number of years. Born there were Andrew, Anna, John, twins Mary (Marian) and Cecelia (Celia), and James. We all attended school at Coal Creek and later at Jackson Prairie School which was built on two acres of land given to the school district by our parents.

About the year 1907 Dad sold the Coal Creek farm and

bought a large 160 acre farm on Jackson Prairie. We moved by team and wagon and I remember us kids walked and carried a lot of things. Along the way to the Prairie place, a farmer's wife offered us lemonade. She could see that we were tired from the walking and carrying.

Those were wonderful days for all of us. [There was] lots of hard work, but good times too, with picnics, parties, baseball, horseback riding, etc. Signed, [not legible]

Post Script . . . I am adding some more . . . My mother's father drove some of his cattle to the market to be sold, which was quite a distance from his house, so he stayed the night in town. After he got home that next evening, sitting around talking, there was a rap at the door and as he opened the door, the man, a stranger, dashed in and stabbed him to death, got the money and left. He didn't harm anyone else in the house but ordered them to stay there for a while. Those were very difficult times, not much money, so sad and frightening.

One afternoon when Mother was hoeing, she spread a blanket on the ground for Minnie to play on while she was working in her vegetable garden. Minnie said "Big worm!" so mother went to see what it was and it was a snake. Mother killed it.

*What do we do with family oral tradition when it seems that the pieces don't fit together? What, if anything, can such stories tell us? The simple answer is that we retain the stories and any primary source documentation and then periodically review the material, recording any thoughts and/or questions.*

*Back in 1954, Marian felt that it was important to write down what she recalled that her parents and older siblings had told her decades earlier. These were the post-World War II and early Cold War years, when it would have been just about impossible for her to verify places and dates etc., even if she had wanted to do so. She could only write what she "knew," which was that which she had been told.*

*We cannot talk to Marian, or to those who had shared their experiences with her. Yet Jim has been able to introduce her and her words to some of us in the Bukovina Society and in turn, that has made it possible for her to be introduced to you. Across all these many years, she is sharing her memories with all of us who long for just a touch, a glimpse, of the Bukovina story.*

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## NACH ÜBERSEE / OVERSEAS EMIGRATION: A NEW BOOK RELEASE



A newly published book *Nach Übersee: Deutschsprachige Auswanderer aus dem östlichen Europa um 1900* [Overseas Emigration: German-Speaking Emigrants from Eastern Europe in about 1900]. The text includes a chapter about Bukovina German emigration as well as reference to the Bukovina Society of the Americas, its organizers and leaders, and its publications.



Many who sought their fortunes abroad at the turn of the 19th and 20th century originated from the Neumark, Bohemia, Bukovina, Galicia, the Danube River areas, Siebenbürgen [Transylvania] and from various regions of the Russian empire. Seeking to escape poverty, unemployment, land shortages, the lack of religious or political freedom in their homelands, they made their way to America, Australia,

New Zealand, South America, or Canada. The book traces their emigration histories and highlight relevant economic, cultural, and political phenomena.

The chapter titled *Auswanderung aus der Bukowina nach Übersee*, or “Emigration Abroad from Bukovina,” was written by Halrun Reinholz, a Romanian-born freelance sociologist and journalist formerly associated with the *Bukowina-Institut*. She discusses the *Bukowiner* and their respective settlement in New York City, Kansas and the western USA, Canada, and South America. She introduces researchers whose names are well-known to many of us: Dr. Sophie A. Welisch, Oren Windholz, Irmgard Hein Ellingson, Mary Lee Rose, Paul Massier, Richard Carruthers-Zurowski, Laura Hanowski, and Dr. Ayrton Gonçalves Celestino. Her summary *Fazit aund Ausblick: Bukowiner Facetten in Übersee*, or “Conclusion and Outlook: Bukovina Facets Abroad,” draws together several unique features of family history research for the descendants of the Bukovina emigrants.

The *Deutsches Kulturforum östliches Europa*, or the German Culture Forum for Eastern Europe, was founded as a non-profit organization in Potsdam in 2000. It is financed by the German Federal Government’s Commission for Cultural and Media Affairs as part of with their policy of research and presentation of German culture and history in eastern Europe.

*Nach Übersee: Deutschsprachige Auswanderer aus dem östlichen Europa um 1900* (ISBN 978-3-936168-70-9) is softbound and contains 303 pages with supplemental registers and

maps. The price is 9.80 Euros. For more information, visit the *Deutsches Kulturforum östliches Europa* at <http://www.kulturforum.info/en/>.

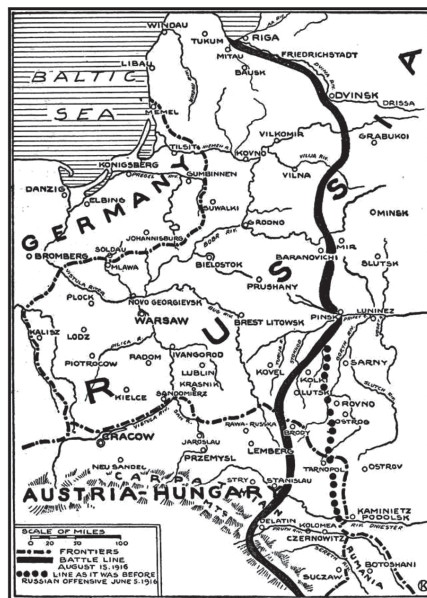


Austrian Troops in Bukovina, World War I

## WORLD WAR I: FIRST LETTER TO MOTHER

From Luzian Geier and the *Bukowina-Institut*  
Notes translated by Dr. Sophie A. Welisch

Two World War I-era letters have been shared with us by Luzian Geier of the *Bukowina-Institut*, our sister organization in Augsburg, Germany.



World War I: Eastern Front 1916-1918  
Licensed under Public Domain via Wikimedia Commons  
[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Eastern\\_Front\\_1916-8.jpg#/media/File:Eastern\\_Front\\_1916-8.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Eastern_Front_1916-8.jpg#/media/File:Eastern_Front_1916-8.jpg)

The first was written by the Bukowiner Leon Simader to his mother as he was en route to his military unit. It includes revealing passages on various topics including his willingness to fight and to die, his preparations and request for help for all future problems involving those remaining at home, as well as encouragement and comfort to parents and siblings.

BUKOVINA SOCIETY  
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The second one, which was written a little later by Artur, Leon's brother, to his parents, is very different. He had no winter coat: clothing was a problem for all the troops who sought to supply their needs through bribes. There is an update about the corporal who had stolen their *Strudel*. Although he gives examples of the daily problems that soldiers faced at the beginning of the war, he also expresses the hope of a happy outcome for his studies.

Stanislau, July 28, 1914  
Dear Mama!

*It was 10:00 p.m. when I arrived here. Finding no connecting transportation I had to wait until 6:00 a.m. to travel via Köröszmozö to Großwardein. It is now 2:00 a.m. as I am writings these lines. Until now all has been well, in that I have not yet encountered a hostile Serb or Russian. And if so, what would I do about it! I love life so much being that I am healthy and strong but not servile so that with the greatest pleasure I can face life's most challenging problems. Nothing fills me with more delight that knowing that if things do not go well, I will not leave my family entirely without provisions, since 10,000 crowns is something after all. At every station stop a large group of military inductees board the train amidst the heartfelt moaning and groaning of the wives and children, in particular among the rural population. As I boarded at the crossing I found Lavric and*

*his ladies in the train. Immediately I started a conversation with him so that I entirely forgot to give you another hearty wave. And if it exists only in thought, it is nonetheless genuine and more loving. My hope is that you remain in good spirits! Only then can I tolerate the situation, which I want to see reflected in my family. So do not wail or show despair, since right now such behavior is risky. You will now have one less worker and will have to deal judiciously with the other. So remain strong, finish what you start, and take with equanimity all that may come your way no matter the result!*

*I send kisses to all.  
Your Loni*

Notes:

- The first letter was from a possible "volunteer," a high school student in Czernowitz, on the way to his military unit after the call for general mobilization. This early enlistment of July 26, 1914 followed the declaration of war against Serbia. It involved single men drafted without exemption as well as volunteers. These men could then conclude a settlement or reimbursement for their parents or other family members. In most cases, these efforts had little or no results.
- The author of the letter is Leon Simader, nicknamed "Loni," from the hamlet of Valea Seaca near Kimpolung