



The Bukovina Society of the Americas NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 81, Ellis, KS 67637-0081 USA

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Membership Dues:
Lifetime \$150.00
Genealogy \$25.00
Annual \$15.00

SOCIETY NEWS & EVENTS

- John Aust Losee transcribed the handwritten memoirs of his mother Rosa Marie (Aust) Losee after she passed away in 2015. Unfortunately she died before she could finish her story, but it is now available at the museum as published and donated by John. He added many more notes and historical photos for fellow Society members.
- Welcome new Life members David & Sidney (Zerfas) Sproul of Wichita, KS. Sidney is the daughter of founding board member Bernie Zerfas tracing their ancestral roots back to Illischesti with ties to the Armbruster and Schoenthaler families.
- Judi Kingry, Ronald Glas and Sharon Shultz have upgraded their annual memberships to Life Members. This feature on the website allows for the current annual dues to be applied to the Life status.
- Clint Meyers of Vancouver donated two books published in Canada. CANADA - SASKATCHEWAN - EDENWOLD - CHURCH HISTORY St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church 1890 - 1990; [book]; 1990; 138 pp. Translation of early history and church records from 1890 - 1927. Edited and translated by Richard Horden. CANADA - SASKATCHEWAN - EDENWOLD - HISTORY Where Aspens Whisper - Edenwald; [book]; 1981; 326 pp.
- Bukovina cooking articles will continue in subsequent issues.
- **ANNUAL MEETING.** The annual meeting of the Bukovina Society of the Americas, Inc. a Kansas non-profit corporation will be conducted on Thursday, July 11, 2019. Elections to the board of directors and a financial report will be made as well as ordinary business of the Society.
- **SOCIETY WEBSITE.** Each quarter the Webmaster Doug Reckmann updates the What's New page on the website, as shown here. There has been significant new content added in the past year and two new GEDCOMS thanks to John Aust Losee and Joy Stevens.
- 2019 - Summer Update
14 New Members added since March
74 Active Users of the Genealogy Database
Family Reunion Pull-Down Menu Added
What's New? Action Bar is Added
Recipes added to Culture Menu
Jewish links added
Travel Reports updated
Eisenau and Stulpikany Articles added
Radmacher Tree add to Genealogy Database
- **SASKATCHEWAN GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY**
Congratulations to the SGS, Regina, celebrating their 50th anniversary. Our Society has a long relationship with them and twice sent delegations to Regina for conventions. We have many members from Canada and appreciate their support. Laura Hanowski represented Canada on our international advisors board. The Prince Albert Branch of the SGS is hosting the Society's biannual conference April 17-19, 2020 in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. The organizers are seeking speakers for its theme "2020 Vision: Seeking Ancestors Using DNA and Digital Tools." SGS Website: <http://www.saskgenealogy.com> Email: saskgenealogy@sasktel.net

LONG LOST AUST RELATIVES – REUNITED THROUGH DNA TESTING

By: John Aust Losee - Jalosee@yahoo.com



Emmy Lou Thomas nee: Emma Marie Aust

This story is good enough that it could've been turned into a commercial for Ancestry. When I first took my Ancestry DNA test in December 2015, I had no reason to believe it would lead me to finding my grandfather's long lost half-sister and her family, but it did! Here's the story.

On June 26, 1886, the ship Werra, which had left Bremen, Germany a little over a week earlier, docked in NYC. On board were my great grandfather Jacob ("Jake") Ast (1862-1913 - son of Jacob Ast and his wife Katharina Wendling), his first wife Regina (Sabolka) (1860-1892), and their one-year old son Franz ("Frank") (1885-1940), who had traveled to Bremen from Illischestie, Bukovina, Austria, intent on emigrating to the United States in search of a better life. Jake's older

brother Philipp (1855-1888), his wife Henrietta (Koenig), and their two eldest children, as well as members of other families, had traveled along with them from Illischestie, to the US. Upon arrival in the new world, the group set out immediately for Ellis County, Kansas, where they all initially settled.

There, in June 1887, Jake and Regina had another baby – a girl they named Emma Marie.

Sometime in the next two to three years, Jake and Regina decided to push on further west. Taking their children, they traveled to, and settled in, Pe Ell, Lewis County, Washington. Many other Bukovinians, including Jake's younger sister Elizabeth (1868-1936) and her first husband John Roos (1860-1898), also ended up living in Lewis County as well.

In October 1890, Jake and Regina had another daughter Ella, and in January 1892, they had a third daughter Minnie. Tragically, in December of 1892, Regina was crushed to death against the wall of a stall, by a frightened horse that reared. Jake was left with four small children, one less than a year old, to raise on his own.

On January 14, 1893, Jake married again, to my great grandmother Margaretta Koerber (1876-1920). Their union added 8 more children to the family, including my grandfather William John ("Bill") Aust (1897-1956). It should be noted that due to how people pronounced their name, so that it sounded like a donkey, rather than "Ascht" as it had been pronounced in the old country, our branch of the Ast family (Jake's family, his parents, and male siblings and their families) all changed their name from Ast to Aust sometime in the 1890's.

Around 1905, for reasons we do not know, Jake and Maggie, and their children returned to Ellis County, Kansas to live. By then, Frank was on his own, and Emma who was 18 moved on her own to Seattle, where she worked as a secretary. And, that was the last anyone in the family heard from Emma! A few years later Jake and Maggie returned to Lewis County, and lived there a couple more years. In 1913, they again returned to Ellis County. Two weeks later, Jake had a massive stroke on the street in Hays, and passed away. Maggie and her children who were still at home, remained in Ellis, County.

Of Jake and Regina's four children, Frank married Ida Nancy Black, and they remained in Chehalis, where they had five children: Melvin Leonard, Ella Kathleen, Warren Leroy, Frances Ida, and Lee Edmond. Frank passed away in 1940. His sister Ella passed away in 1910. Their sister Minnie married Dobbin Irwin and moved to Klamath Falls, Oregon. They had a daughter Marguerite, and then divorced. Minnie remarried to Clifford Arthur Ray. She passed away in 1950. And as I say, nobody heard from their sister Emma again.

Of Jake and Maggie's eight children, Ernest, Henrietta, and

twins Minna Louisa and Jacob Ludwig had all passed away by 1912. Rose was married four times, the last time to Howard Sullivan. They lived in Reno, Nevada. Rose had no children. She died in 1986. Ida married Alonzo Bert Corbet. They lived in Medford, Oregon, and had no children. Ida passed away in 1976. Margaret Elizabeth married Jacob Lloyd Ellis. They lived in various places (lastly Great Bend) in Kansas, and had six sons and two daughters: Harold Lester, Francis Marion, Ernest Curtis, Lloyd William, Leslie Gene, Larry Jay, Julia, and Elizabeth. Of those children, only Les is still living. Margaret Elizabeth passed away in 1981. And finally, my grandfather William John "Bill" Aust enlisted in the army on February 5, 1917 at Fort Logan, CO. After a while, he was stationed in Germany, just after World War I, as part of the army of occupation. There he met and married my grandmother Anna Maria Weiler, a girl born in Niedermendig (now known as Mendig), the little town he was stationed in the Rhineland near Coblenz. They had one daughter, my mother Rosa Maria ("Rose Marie") Aust, who was born on January 18, 1922, while they were still living in Niedermendig. A few months after her birth, they moved to the States, setting in Schenectady, New York, where an army buddy of my grandfather told him he could find work. Our family has remained in Schenectady since then. My mother married Irving Harold Losee in 1959, and they had me, their only child, John Aust Losee the following year. I have one son, Christopher Adam Losee, who was born in 1992.

I became interested in genealogy when I was still a teenager. In 1990, my mother and I joined the Bukovina Society, after having discovered our Bukovinian roots. We even attended that year's meeting of the Society in Hays! We thoroughly enjoyed meeting many cousins, making new friends, and seeing where my grandfather grew up! I hope to make a return visit soon!

Fast forward now to 2015. DNA testing had become popular by then, so I got a test from Ancestry, hoping to corroborate my lineage, as I had researched it. When the results came back, I was happy to find that my research had been correct. I was able to confirm through DNA connections to various cousins, who I tied to further back a few generations, that my ancestry as I knew it was correct!

What I hadn't been prepared for though, was the vast number of DNA matches I would find! Well, I started going through all of them, and trying to figure out, by the information shared by each, how I connected to all of them. I was able to easily figure out some, but others - I had no idea about!

One such possible third cousin had no information attached yet, but in her profile, I found a clue - one I wasn't expecting. It said "...Searching for birth and early life information of Emma M. Aust also known as Emmy Lou Thomas." When I first saw this - I thought "Oh another Aust connection." Then, I started thinking about it - could it possibly be my

grandfather's half-sister Emma, who nobody had ever heard from during the last 100+ years??? So, I contacted Bettye, the person whose DNA I was matched with, and told her my story, and she wrote back and told me what she knew.

Bettye's grandmother Emmy Lou Aust had lived in Seattle for several years. Finally, she married Samuel John Maris in 1920. They had a son, Samuel Maris, Jr. the following year. Unfortunately, Emmy Lou and her husband were divorced a few years later. Happily not long afterward, Emmy Lou met and married the love of her life, Leon Ellsworth Thomas. Although they had no children of their own, Leon adopted Samuel jr., and raised him as his own. As a testament of how good their relationship was Samuel jr. changed his name to James Jolley ("Jim") Thomas. Along the way, the family moved to Santa Cruz, California. Leon passed away there in 1962, and Emmy Lou passed there 20 years later. In 1944, Jim married Lois Littlejohn. They had two daughters, Cristie and Bettye, both of whom are now married with children of their own.

After some conversing back and forth, Bettye and I determined that her grandmother Emma M. Aust (more recently known as "Emmy Lou Thomas") was in fact, my grandfather's missing half-sister Emma Marie Aust! Finally, Emma had been found, and Bettye had found her grandmother's family! This is something that most likely never would've happened without DNA testing!

Since connecting, Bettye has introduced me to her sister Cristie, and we've all been corresponding since. All of us are working yet on digging deeper into our Aust family heritage. One of our current projects is trying to locate any relatives of Emma's sister (and my grandfather's half-sister) - Minnie (Aust) Irwin Ray (1892-1950), who I mentioned above.

And, this coming September (2019), Bettye and her husband will be visiting Boston, for a vacation. Since it's only a few hours drive from my home, I, and possibly my son too, are going to drive over and finally meet them face to face - a true mini Aust family Reunion! If only our grandparents were still alive and could join us! I think after all these years, they would really appreciate that their grandchildren have re-connected the family!

SOME HISTORY OF POJANA MIKULI

By: Anni and Klaus Häusler

A few years ago, I think it was in 2000, we got the offer to buy a house in Poiana Micului not far away from the church. The pastor at this time, Mr. Cazimir Kotylewicz, wanted to settle nuns there and also to create a meeting point for the youth of the village to keep them away from the street life. After

long negotiations, the house finally was purchased by the München and Freising Catholic Archdioceses and provided to the bishop of Jasi. It didn't take long we got anonymous mail from Poiana Micului with the content, that the money, achieved by selling the house does not belong to the church, but should be split off to the Polish Catholic population of the village as a compensation. A letter by Pastor Mr. Kotylewicz pointed the same direction; that Anni organized the purchase to calm her conscience regarding the action of the Deutsch Wehrmacht in WWII. He also had the opinion that the money was not entitled to the Bishopric Jasi but to the parish in Poiana Micului.

To now get clarity about the events we were looking for possibilities to find out what actually happened in Poiana Micului on May 1st, 1944. After a long search and contacting different services of the Deutsche Bundeswehr, we found out that there is an archive of the Deutsche Wehrmacht im 2. Weltkrieg in Freiburg. Every citizen, who can prove an eligibility interest, also researchers and scientists get insight of the stored documents after a previous registration and reservation. At this point I want to remark that all employees of this service have been very accommodating and friendly. We were also permitted to take pictures of all documents and maps during our visit to the Archiv der Deutschen Wehrmacht im 2. Weltkrieg in Freiburg.

To limit the amount of files, we decided in advance of our visit to request only documents for a few days before May 1st, 1944 and 2 weeks after. Already at the very beginning of our visit we were told that only documents of the high command of the army might exist. The probability to find documents about events off side the major front lines seemed to be pretty low. To focus in the area we have been interested in, the employee brought a huge map out of the archive. It was early in the morning and not all seats for research have been occupied yet. Due to that, we could spread this map over some tables and look for the village Poiana Micului. We found it and, in fact, with happy eyes we saw a short front line indicated around our village together with the names of the units stationed there. Equipped with this knowledge, the employee went back to the archive to look for available documents. Meanwhile we took place at our reserved seats. After a while the employee came back with two large bunches of files on his cart. Each of us took one stack of files and began to read. Many documents were written in Romanian language and together with a German translation. Often the same events have been documented by different service points so that the situation can be clear. At this time, German and Romanian mountain troops fought side by side against Russian troops. The commander of these units was a Romanian Colonel named Constantintscu. At this point of time, he was subordinated to Major General Welker. From the report of the day of April 30th, 1944 one can read, that on April 29th, 1944 a deployed spying squad hit a stronger hostile spying squad 2km southeast of Poiana Merului (which is little northeast of Poiana Micului) and has been split off.

Two of the soldiers did not come back. The same report of the day read that on April 29th, 1944 an implementation of evacuation of the district Manastirea Humorului (east of the river Humor) until April 30th, 1944 through the Romanian Gendarmerie has been commanded. At the same time, a 100 man strong company was put in a march from Fromosul heading to Poiana Micului. In the representation of the events of April 30th, 1944 we found the remark that "weaker enemy forces penetrated into Poiana Micului (21 km northeast Campulung) shall be pushed back with a shock squad action by the group Bandelow. (Rgt.1029 Großdeutschland)" In the representation of events of May 1st, 1944 the middle corps section is mentioned. In the middle corps section an enterprise was successfully finished against enemy forces in Poiana Micului. The place was cleaned from the enemy and was evacuated in agreement with the Romanian administration authorities." To this it is stated in the report of the day of the 8th army. "19:25 o'clock in section B Poiana Micului was cleared from the enemy and the place evacuated with the Romanian authorities. Backup let south of Poiana Micului." At the representation of the events under point morning messages is to read: "7:35 o'clock reports warrant officer Group Bandelow on request of the corps chief: The action against the enemy in Poiana Micului was finished as scheduled. The place was cleaned from the enemy and the evacuation of the civilian population with Romanian authorities." A message of the day on May 5th, 1944 read: "Group Bandelow 17:40 o'clock. At 5 o'clock a.m. in section group Ernst a shock squad (1:16) was sent from Ciurnarna to evacuate and burn down the houses in Poiana Micului." In the morning message of May 7th, 1944 is fixed. "Group Bandelow 3:55 o'clock orientation of the situation: the with message of the day of May 5th, 1944 scheduled shock squad to Poiana Micului evacuated the village and struck on fire 20 houses."

So far the facts resulting from documents in the archive: Here is to notice, that the evacuation of the population of Poiana Micului is reported on May 1st and May 5th 1944, but the evacuation and the burning down of the houses only at May 5th. It is not likely that the village was evacuated twice within such a short period of time. For us there are some variants thinkable:

- a.) The action of May 5th was reported delayed
- b.) At the action on May 1st the burning of the houses was forgotten to report.
- c.) The place was evacuated on May 1st, but the houses were burned down later at May 5th.
- d.) At May 5th, there is talk of the village Poiana Merului. Maybe a mix up by names, because no fights/front lines are drawn in the map there, just a question mark.

The time witnesses, e.g. Albert Swantar always named May 1st as the day the village was destroyed. We think that the fight against the partisans took time, the evacuation of the population and to burn down the houses also took time. We suspect that the fights took at least a day and the evacuation

plus burning down the houses another one. Maybe the consultation with the Romanian authorities lasts another day. For us the variants c. and d. are more likely even having in mind the statement of the time witnesses stays. Something speaks for that with Poiana Micului and Poiana Merului, the same place is meant, since the village was about 8 km long. Certainly the time witnesses have been present by the evacuation, but at the time when the houses were burned, they should have already left the place. Probably, a look into the Romanian archives could bring clarity if corresponding documents are preserved.

Note: Anni's Story will follow in the next edition of the Newsletter.

ERBERTS GATHER TO CELEBRATE OUR ROOTS

By: Deanna King

The Erbert families were some of the earliest pioneers from Bukovina, Austria to settle in Ellis County, Kansas in the late 1880's. The Erberts hailed from Pojana Mikuli, Bukovina. Bukovina was a crown land of the Austrian Empire, so the families became Austrian citizens. When land opportunities beckoned, they made the long journey to America. They traveled by foot and cart to the railroad station, took the train to a seaport in Germany, boarded a ship to America, and once in America boarded the train for Ellis, Kansas. Opportunity disguised as hard work awaited them. They accepted whatever challenges they faced and with faith in God and hard work they prospered.

Over the years, their children and grandchildren scattered and many lost touch with one another. With the aid of the Bukovina Society and a Facebook page titled Erbert R us, Erbert ancestors began to connect and share pictures and stories. This led to an impromptu gathering in Ellis from April 27-30, 2019. Most of us who attended were either a grandchild, great-grandchild, or great-great-grandchild of the original pioneer brothers Joseph Erbert II and Rudolph Erbert. Two of Joseph's children, Englebert and Pauline, were represented and four of Rudolph's children, Herman, Frank, Rudolph R., and Bertha were represented. The gathering started at the Bukovina Society headquarters in the historic Congregational Church. We gathered in this welcoming space surrounded by artifacts of the Bukovina settlers. Our family was well represented here. Oren Windholz shared with us the prayer book dated 1713 of Philip Erbert the earliest Erbert ancestor known to us. We were all touched to see the faded German handwriting in the front and to ponder how important it has been to all who used it and have treasured it. We then toured sites of interest including Rudolph's lovely home in Ellis dating to about 1915 and his original farm

site some 5 miles north of Ellis. Although the original farm home was destroyed by a tornado in 1974, we were able to visit with the current owner and enjoy the beauty of the land. On Sunday we attended mass at St. Mary's Church. The magnificence of this church cannot adequately be described in words. It was central to our ancestors' lives and still inspires awe. The Rudolph Erbert family contributed greatly to its building and furnishings. Other tours included the sites of the Erbert Hotel, Herman Erbert's garage/beer parlor, the infamous Hillside Pavilion (a.k.a. Rat's Slide), and Albertine (Erbert) and Cap Henderson's home, a former black smith shop, one of the oldest, if not the oldest, buildings in Ellis.

We Erbert descendants proved to be a lively, fun group. We gathered in large and small groups always sharing laughter and family anecdotes and pictures. We all feel fortunate to be a part of this large extended family! We are all passionate about learning more about our heritage and sharing it with future generations.



Back Row L-R: Juliet Honas, Carl Hurst, Dan Erbert, Deanna King, Jane Zook, Jackie Murphy, Alex Begler, Jackie Burden, Michelle Aamold, and Erle Nielsen
Front Row L-R: Guy Windholz, Stephanie Hurst, Joe Erbert, Oren Windholz and Sandra Erickson

GOODCHUCK VISIT TO MUSEUM

By: Joy Stevens

On May 2, 2019 my Mother, Judith Duran, my older brother Tom Grey and I visited Ellis, KS. We had the privilege to meet with Oren and Guy Windholz and Joe Erbert, Bukovina Society museum volunteers. My family and I were finally able to see where my Great Great Grandparents Michael and Dora Goodchuck lived. I have been researching the Goodchuck family for over 30 years and I was so excited to finally make my way to Ellis. The Bukovina Society Museum allowed me to see first hand some of the items that my Ancestors used in their daily life. It is filled with photos of various families

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from the community. I am happy to say I can now add the Goodchuck family to the museum Wall of Photos. Guy, Oren and Joe had a wealth of information on the Erbert side of our family, which helped to fill in some of the blanks I have had in my research. Guy had numerous photos of the Erbert family that I had never seen before and it really helped to put a face to the name.

I feel our Ancestors paved the way for us in the New World and it is our duty to pass down the family history, especially our traditions, to the younger generation so they will understand what our Ancestors went through to make this a better life for us. I am so glad that The Bukovina Society of the Americas keeps that history and traditions alive and well for us all. While in Ellis I found the house that my Great Great Grandmother Dora Goodchuck lived and was able to drive by and see it. Even though my visit was short one, I was able to gain more information and understanding of my ancestors. The visit has inspired me to want to travel to Pojana Mikuli in the former Bukovina, and see more of the family history.



Judy Duran with daughter Joy Stevens and Tom Grey from Owasso, OK. Descendants of the family of Michael and Dora Goodchuck