



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

- The annual meeting of the Bukovina Society was held on Thursday, July 11th at 4:00 p.m. at the Society headquarters in Ellis, KS. Minutes and financial reports were presented and approved. Election of board members for expiring terms were: Van Massirer, Norma Lang, Eileen Goetz and Oren Windholz. A presentation was made on the new website with expanded genealogy databases which is drawing new members. Following the meeting, the board of directors met to elect officers, as follows: Oren Windholz, President, Martha McClelland, Vice President, Shirley Kuppetz, Secretary and Guy Windholz, Treasurer.
- Herr Luzian Geier, publisher of Der Südostdeutsche informed us that Eduard Mohr, who has been a resource for travel and assistance for researchers in the former Bukovina, celebrated his 80th birthday. Despite recent health issues he continues to assist visitors. Werner Zoglauer made a special connection with him in Radautz during the Bukovina Tour of 1996, sponsored by the Bukovina Institute for English speaking members of the Society.
- Welcome to our newest life members Angela Stante, Viktor Pordzik and Dietmar Theiss.
- The Bukovina Society is part of a tourism committee that has published a new brochure and is featured with the two other museums in Ellis. The boyhood home of Walter P. Chrysler, founder of the Chrysler automotive corporation is well preserved. The history of the Union Pacific Rail Road is presented. The full color publication will be on display for free at many Kansas locations catering to travelers. Contact the Society if you wish to have a copy.

WEBSITE AND MUSEUM

The revised website has generated a new paid member base, in part due to the genealogy data bases of surnames. The GEDCOM contributors have generously given the results of their time and talent for this enhancement. The following is provided by Doug Reckmann the Society volunteer Webmaster.

Augustin, 51,476 people
 Hack, 10,320 people
 Losee, 20,039 people
 Radmacher, 16,691 people
 Reckmann, 86,106 people
 Slawski, 3,515 people

- All of these trees contain the contributor's own personal family trees.
- Augustin's tree has some 40,000+ Bohemians.
- Hack's tree has some 7,000+ Bukovina and Galician people.
- Losee's tree has some 15,000+ Protestants mostly from Illischestie.
- Radmacher's tree has some 12,000+ Protestant people also mostly from Illischestie. The Losee and Radmacher trees share people.
- Reckmann's tree has some 75,000+ Bohemian, Galician, and Bukovina people.
- Slawski's tree has mostly Galician/Bukovina people.

WHAT'S NEW link on the website

2019 - Fall

- 16 New, Renewing or Lifetime BSA Members added since June
- 94 Active Users of the Genealogy Database
- Hack and Slawski Trees added to Genealogy Database

The other exciting result of the new website is the interest in visiting the Society headquarters and museum. Some recent guests who responded to the offer to open the facility and give tours:

- Brandon Hines, Director of the Hays library visited with his two children as a result of an earlier visit by Jeremy Gill, coordinator of the library Kansas Room. One of them asked, “Do you have any sea shells?” There being none, she asked, “Would you like one?” After clutching it throughout the tour, she gave it up. The family lives in Ellis and when driving by she points out that her shell is in the museum.
- Marilyn Rupp-Kroeger paid a first-time visit to the Bukovina Society museum on Memorial Day with husband Steve Kroeger. Steve was surprised to see the photo of his grandfather on the photo archive boards. Adolph Kroeger at such a young age, having only seen more recent ones taken in the 60’s. Also in the mix of the family gallery of photos, he was treated to one that had his great-grand parents, Frederick and Johanna Werb-Kroeger.
- Janet (Weber) and Chick Gagnon, life members of the Society, paid a special visit to Ellis and were welcomed by board members Joe Erbert and Norma Lang at the Society museum. With Janet and Chick, who make their home in Fairfax, VA was their son Steven and wife Jennifer from Satellite Beach, FL son Greg from Potomac, MD, Mike and wife Pam Johnson with grandson Nicholas, Aurora, CO. Janet and family enjoyed a visit with her sister Ella Dechant, Hays.
- Dr. Larry Grieshaber and his wife stopped at the museum during their travel home to St. Louis, with an overnight stay in Ellis. He related, “I found the Bukovina Society when I was doing some family research. My maternal grandfather died when I was five years old so my memories of him are thin. He loved the mountains of his native Austria and at the time of his death had moved to the mountains of northern Idaho. However, he spent most of his adult life in the Sublette area where he farmed many acres. He mainly planted wheat, (of course) but I found a WWII newspaper article in a local paper in which he said he was going to try planting some soybeans because they would be in demand during the war. He had an unusual surname, so I started looking at passenger ship manifests to see if I could find a record of his crossing. Since his pronunciation of his surname didn’t match the spelling, I started looking for variant spellings. I found something that I think is a match. I believe that he was a passenger on a ship out of Bremen in 1919. His hometown was listed as Radautz I started doing some research on Bukovina and that led me to the Bukovina Society which I found online.”
- Sue Schlichting wrote: “Thanks for making time to let

me in to the museum. You have lots of interesting things on display. Let me know when you’re planning to have it open this fall and I’ll come and spend a little more time looking around. The website is full of great things to take a look at in the meantime. If there are projects that I can help with, I’d be glad to volunteer. My time is a little more flexible in the fall/winter. Enjoying learning more through the books I bought. They will be helpful in my research project.”

MEA CASA, VOSTRA CASA – MY HOME, YOUR HOME

By: Kath (Plach) Garofali

My father came to Australia with his sister in 1949 as a Displaced Person. He had told us many stories about growing up in what was then the Romanian town of Czernowitz and his rare holiday visits to see his father’s family in Solka; the beauty of the Carpathians where dogs had to sleep in raised kennels during the winter to avoid marauding wolves, the abundant fruit and nut trees in their garden in the springtime, the green, tree lined streets, large family gatherings, the cellar full of tasty, home-made preserves and smoked sausages. When the family left Czernowitz in 1940, soon after the start of the war, my father was only thirteen years old and he never imagined that it would be more than fifty years before he would see his hometown again.

During the mid 1990’s, my father made his first return visit to Czernowitz with his aunt from Warsaw. Their flight was one hour late when it landed in Lvov, which meant that the last bus to Czernowitz was already jammed pack full with people and luggage. The doors were already closed and the bus was madly revving its engine, spewing out black exhaust fumes. When my father’s aunt explained to the bus conductor that my father had travelled all the way from Australia to see their hometown after so many years, the driver was ordered to open the doors. Two old ‘Babcias’ (grandmothers) were instructed to haul them aboard and they made the long ‘upright’ journey home, with their shared luggage sitting on my father’s shoulder, held up by the door.

The following day, my father found himself walking along his old street; ‘Jeremia Movila’, after more than a fifty year hiatus. The neighbours’ houses had all been demolished and it took him a while to find his bearings. They passed an old corner store, and the site where the Ukrainian butcher once had his shop. As they walked a little further my father saw his house; it was the only original one still standing! It had waited patiently for his return, mostly unchanged apart from the house number and a new metal gate.

It was on this beautiful spring day that my father and his aunt introduced themselves to the family who now resided in the house and on hearing that they had come to see their 'home' again, were promptly invited in. The Romanian owner, Octavian, led my father through to a small, wooden bench in the garden and instructed him to sit, facing the orchard that my grandparents had planted. He told my father to feel at home, and to breathe in the 'air' of his childhood. A firm friendship began and my father continued to correspond with the family who had welcomed him back to his childhood home.

When my father telephoned us in Australia on his return to Warsaw, he told us how wonderful the journey had been. He couldn't believe that he could still speak Ukrainian and Romanian even though he hadn't spoken those languages for many, many years. Each time he tried to tell us that his house was the only one still standing, he 'lost' his English.

Although we had visited our relatives in Poland and Austria over the years, it had always been a dream of mine to travel to my father's homeland. My husband and I decided that it would be a wonderful 80th birthday tribute to take my father 'home' again. In 2007, we made the journey with our two sons and my father's 88 year-old uncle, accompanied by his son, both from Warsaw. They were persuaded to join us at the last moment. My father's uncle hadn't returned to his hometown for sixty-five years.

Four generations of our family landed late in the afternoon on a very icy runway in Lvov and were whisked away in a hired mini bus by our two drivers: 'Andre and Andre,' for the six-hour trek to Czernowitz. We were in high spirits as we watched the beautiful, snow covered countryside slide past. A great cheer went up when our drivers announced we were approaching Czernowitz. The 'two Andres' deposited us safely in the Hotel Cheremosh late at night and after joining us for a quick meal at our insistence, they sped off for the return trip to Lvov.

It was hard to contain our excitement as we stepped outside onto the snow-covered ground the next morning. It was absolutely freezing but we were greeted with sunshine and deep blue skies. We caught taxis in to the city, and sat wide-eyed, trying to take in the sights and sounds of Czernowitz. We began our tour with the university and 'enjoyed' a rather bone jarring and drafty tram ride into the city. The tram stopped in front of the theatre, a graceful 'old lady' who sat grandly presiding over the theatre square. The surrounding buildings displayed their beautifully painted frescoes. It was hard to believe that we were treading the same cobbled streets that my grandparents and great grandparents had done before us. My father and his uncle pointed out various streets to us, showing us where they used to walk to their school each day. We saw the school, the railway station, the Town Hall situated by the Ring Platz (central square) and walked along the former

'Herrn Gasse', a cobbled pedestrian-only street where the spirits of our past walked beside us.

My father's uncle directed us a short distance away from the city centre to where we found ourselves standing in front of two properties on Gerber Gasse. The rather dilapidated dusky pink house with icicles hanging from its eaves had been built by his parents, my father's grandparents. The original views from the garden over the River Prut had now been obscured by newer buildings. My grandmother was the first child of ten siblings to be born in this house and my father's uncle was the second last. The block of units that my father's grandparents had also built, sometime during the late thirties, still stood next door. My father and his uncle stood arm in arm together for a photo, slightly dazed and with watery eyes. It had been many, many years since they had stood on that land together. On learning that my father was bringing his family to Czernowitz in 2007, Octavian insisted that we all come to 'our' family home for a meal. We only agreed to his kind offer on the condition that we took his family for a dinner during our short stay. The following afternoon, with great anticipation, we sped along the tree-lined street to the house where my father, his brother and two sisters were all born. My father's mother was given the land as a wedding gift by her parents and a family home was promptly built. The very same house that we were about to visit. My father's uncle had also enjoyed many family gatherings in this house with my grandmother; his oldest sister.

My father's taxi had overtaken us and turned into the driveway. Our taxi pulled up in front of the square house with the red painted, gabled tin roof. It was no longer whitewashed as it had been when my father lived there, but a pale mustard colour. Snow weighed down the lilac bushes in the front garden and covered the ground. We clambered over each other to get out of our taxi, to find Octavian outside the entry door, hugging and kissing my father. We were also welcomed with the same enthusiasm before receiving a traditional Romanian welcome. Octavian produced a crusty loaf of bread still hot from the oven, wrapped in a new linen cloth. He held out a small container of coarsely ground salt. We were each instructed to break off a piece of bread and to sprinkle it with the salt. This was to be consumed before crossing the threshold. The cloth and the salt container were later given to my father as a memento of our visit.

Knowing that the light outside would soon fade, my father pointed out what used to be the boundaries of their property; where the old orchard was and some of the trees that were still standing forlornly in the snow. He showed me where his grandparents' fields were that had run alongside the garden, where the pigsty and stable had been, and the old walnut tree that he had loved to climb with his brother. My grandfather had planted a tree for each of his children when they were born. My father was the only child to outlive his tree and to return to see his family home.

As we were shuffled into the entry foyer, we exchanged our shoes for the traditional ‘pappuchis’ (house slippers) to be worn indoors. I tried to take in everything around me; the creaky parquet floors, the heavy wooden doors, the intricate glass panels of the closed in verandah, and the ‘smell’ of the house. My father pointed out the old wood stoked fireplaces (Kachelofen) with the one central chimney that his parents had installed; only the tiles had been replaced. I ran my hands along the surface, trying to ‘feel’ the past.

What a feast we were greeted with that night! When the first course of ‘Mamaliga’ was brought to the table, a traditional Romanian dish of boiled polenta topped with sour cream, grated branza cheese and crackly pork fat, we were all euphoric. Each delicious course was preceded by a vodka toast. After dessert, Octavian’s grandson was asked to play the Romanian national anthem on his violin. Octavian, who was seated between my father and his uncle, linked arms with them and they proudly sang the anthem that they had not sung for a very long time. There was not one dry eye at the table. With emotions high, when my father tried to translate the words for us, his English again seemed to have ‘disappeared’.

Gifts were exchanged later that evening, and we thanked our hosts for their wonderful hospitality. As we prepared to leave, Octavian made a small speech telling us what an honour it was to have us in their home and then gathered us in his huge arms and said, “Mea Casa, Vostra Casa”. My home, your home. We felt so fortunate to have shared this once in a lifetime opportunity, four generations of our family together in this house that had awaited our return; new memories blended with the past, a home still filled with love and laughter.

Note: the author has plans to submit installments on the early life of the Czernowitz emigrants to Australia.



Photo caption: From left: Great Uncle Dr. Antonius Mraczek, present homeowner Octavian Voronca and my father Carol Plach.

ANNA `S STORY AS TOLD BY HER DURING WW2

(Continuation from last Newsletter)

Anna was born in Ratibor/Oberschlesien, which is now a part of Poland in 1942 and escaped together with her parents from the Russians to the Steiermark in Austria. Mrs. Zöchling, for whom they already worked for before the family was sent to Schlesien, offered them when they left, that they can come back at any time. After the families Reitmajer and Hartinger arrived at her, Mrs. Zöchling had a problem. The authorities put her into jail for 3 month, because she had butchered a pig for her restaurant without permission. Therefore the families had no support anymore. The city mayor at this time, Mr. Kottleitner was a communist and told the Russians that they are strangers and shall go back where they came from. After that the Russian commander told them they need to go back to Romania. In this transport a Lady from Yugoslavia together with her 2 children was with them. Arrived there (at Yugoslavia) the train was stopped, the Lady with her children had to leave the train and all were shut beside a forest. From this incident, the Russian leader of the transport was shocked and he had fear that similar (things) might happen to us. After crossing the Romanian border he let us go and did not bring us to Russia. He asked for valuables and disappeared. All across Romania, the both families arrived at Gura Humorului and tried again to move to the village Poiana Micului. They got again land to build a house, because the place was burned down.

Translation of what Anna wrote in spring of 2018 in Romanian language to the family Rozalia Svantar in Poiana Micului. It should be a correction of the information of the Second World War, during that the village Poiana Micului was burned down on May 1st, 1944:

“ Mr. Pastor Cazimir Kotylewicz from Poiana Micului wrote to me several years ago, that I would help the village and the people of the place due to the doings of the German military. The village was burned down on May 1st, 1944 and there were different stories. I answered to Mr. Pastor that I was born during the war in Poland. The military airplanes fought above our heads and when one fighter crashed, a tree in our garden got hit and a big part of a tree just missed us. I know the stories about the partisans. The Polish population did help us and were in trouble, that no bad things might happen to us. My mother said that the Polish people, even with their difficult situation, have been always good to us. The military did allocate us a farm to manage and the son of the former owner, Teofil, was allowed to help us. This property was very shabby and with the help of the German military the courtyards were rebuilt very nicely and the owners were very happy about this. Also, a girl from the neighborhood,

Stefka, was allowed to help my mother. These two later wrote to my mother in Germany so she shall send a confirmation that they worked for her in Poland. Through that they got a small pension from the Federal Republic of Germany. By the burning down of the village Poiana Micului a lot of different stories are spread. I wanted to find out the truth and sent an application to the archive of the Wehrmacht im 2. Weltkrieg, and so I was able to learn what happened to the village on May 1st, 1944. I found at the Romanian army a colonel with name Constantinescu who also decided for the German military. The Germans never fought alone but always together with Romanians, who decided what have to be done. The report that I read was written by a colonel Constantinescu in Romanian language. He writes that an officer and a companion did not return from an exploration and therefore he decided to burn down the village, since he guessed that both are not living anymore. I have read that they went together with the Germans through the village and informed everyone to leave their houses, because they will be burned down. So, Albert told me the story the same way by my last visit in Poiana Micului. He still remembers to everything. At 7:35 o'clock on May 1st, 1944, so they wrote in the report, the village became cleaned from the bandits. The employees at the archive in Freiburg have told, that maybe in the Romanian archives is more documented of what happened at this time. A war is something terrible and the simple human being is suffering, because an individual does not has a worth at our world. The residents of Poiana Micului themselves reported after the war, that a Svantar Matche, who lived in the side valley Stoineaşa, killed the officer and his companion and dug them into a pile of dung. So I think he is the guilty one for the burning down of the houses. Later he immigrated to Poland. They (the residents) have also told, that the people, when they brought out the dung in the hills, found rests of bones. I also read, that the Russians always knew where the Romanian and German troops have been. That is why the hits. Also, about the place Plesa much is written. For us it was very interesting what the military reported every day. I write this information to you, because I know that there are persons in the village who are not informed correctly of what happened at this time. Someone had stolen the plaque of a memory of the German population, sanctified with a big celebration by the bishop of Jasi, shortly after the festival. I think that there are still some young people who noticed something of the narratives of their parents about the disaster in this time of war. Lots believe what they hear and don't look for the truth. If I only think to what my family suffered in the time between 1940 till 1945 until Russian military brought them from Aflenz / Steiermark / back to Romania, is unimaginable. It is not to believe, that especially in this region of the Steiermark, now some Polish persons from Poiana Micului found a job as forest workers and want to stay there. Additionally I want tell that a Polish woman brought milk each day in Poiana Micului that we have something to eat in 1945. Also, from the place Manastirea Humorului an old man, Gherghe, who knew us from earlier days, brought us a sack of potatoes and flour that we will not starve. My family

never forgot that and later, when we were in Germany since 1961, we always sent them something. “

That was shortly the message to the family Rozalia Svanter. Her husband Albert was a relative to my stepfather Franz Zimmermann.

GSCHDONAS, GALREI, ZITTER (JELLIED MEAT)

By: Pat Windholz

This favorite was a special treat for Christmas. In early times, hog butchering was done in the cold months for lack of refrigeration except for ice cellars. The least choice cuts were made into sausage and liverwurst right away.

1 large onion
2 - 3 pigs feet
2 - 3 pork shanks
2 tbs. salt
1 tbs. pepper
1 garlic clove
1 bay leaf
2 whole allspice
3 caps white or cider vinegar

Boil all the above in 3 quarts of water (except the vinegar) until the meat is tender. Remove meat from hot liquid. When cool enough to handle, debone and shred into small cuts. Place meat in one or more pans. Strain the liquid, discarding the bone and non-meat products, add the vinegar and add more salt and pepper to taste. Bring the broth to a boil and pour over the meat until well covered. Remaining broth, if any, makes good soup. Refrigerate until set. Cut into squares and serve.

The refrigerated dish will last a long time, being sealed on top with the (white colored) fat that can be scraped off as needed. Lightly cover to store but do not seal tightly. If using a wrap, poke toothpick holes in it.

FORD

By: Dr. William Keel

It was Henry Ford, not Kaiser Bill, who was responsible for the decline of the distinctive German dialects spoken by immigrants and their descendants in five Kansas and Missouri settlements during the 20th century.

BUKOVINA SOCIETY

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That has been University of Kansas researcher William Keel's thesis for the decades he has studied and documented these nonstandard-German speakers. You couldn't keep their youngsters down on the farm after Ford's automobile came to the isolated agricultural settlements that had been established in the mid-19th century.

It was that, far more than any anti-German sentiment in the aftermath of World War I, that led to the decline of these linguistically distinctive communities, Keel says, and so he argues in a chapter of a book published last year, "Contemporary Language Contacts in the Context of Migration" (Winter publishing, Heidelberg, Germany). The exception to the rule is the increasing population of speakers of Pennsylvania German in Kansas: Old Order Amish. They shun the automobile and remain in rural isolation.

Keel, professor of Germanic languages & literatures, has been studying – interviewing, recording and writing about – these communities since the 1980s. He and his students have published online the Linguistic Atlas of Kansas German Dialects, where the settlements are mapped out and sound samples of native speakers are preserved.

In his article, Keel profiles the following groups, sketching their migratory history, landmarks and distinctive communal features, often involving religion:

- Saxon Lutherans in Eastern Perry County, Missouri
- North German Lutherans in Concordia, Lafayette County, Missouri
- Horseshoe Creek Lutherans in Marshall and Washington counties, Kansas
- Volga-German Catholics in Schoenchen, Ellis County, Kansas
- Herndon Hungarian-Germans in Rawlins County, Kansas

In each case, the decline in language usage followed a similar, generational pattern, until today there are only a few hundred fluent speakers of these dialects in the two states.

"There were maybe 5,000 Volga German speakers in Ellis County, Kansas, in the 1980s," Keel said. "Today, there are a few hundred."

Interestingly, Keel said, the 21st century has seen the growth of one other pocket of German-speaking immigrants – by way of Poland, Ukraine, Canada and Mexico, believe it or not – in southwest Kansas, who have been attracted by jobs in feedlots and meatpacking.

"They speak a variety of Low German called 'Plautdietsch,'" Keel said. "There are maybe 3,000 to 5,000 German-speaking Mennonites in southwest Kansas. It impacts the school system, with requirements for English as a Second Language courses. It also affects the Kansas statewide health program for farm workers."

Keel gave his "Henry Ford vs. Kaiser Bill" talk April 20 in Indianapolis as the keynote address at the 42nd Annual Symposium of the Society for German-American Studies. He is also publishing a forthcoming article about the German-speaking community of Victoria, Kansas, in an anthology on "Varieties of German Worldwide."

The University of Kansas is a major comprehensive research and teaching university. The university's mission is to lift students and society by educating leaders, building healthy communities and making discoveries that change the world. The KU News Service is the central public relations office for the Lawrence campus.