



The Bukovina Society of the Americas NEWSLETTER

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

Vol. 32, No. 2 June 2022

Board of Directors

O. M. Windholz, President/
Newsletter Publisher
Martha McClelland, Vice President
Erin Rogers, Secretary
Guy Windholz, Treasurer
Douglas Reckmann, Website/IT Chair
Tim Flax, IT Volunteer
Eileen Goetz

Rebecca Hageman
Shirley Kuppetz
Norma Lang
Van Massirer
Darrell Seibel
Jeff Seibel
Joe Erbert (Emeritus)

Email: info@bukovinasociety.org Website Volunteer: Doug Reckmann, Chair

Web Site: www.bukovinasociety.org



Membership Dues:
Lifetime \$150.00
Annual \$25.00

SOCIETY NEWS & EVENTS

- Welcome to our newest life members: 285 Mark & Rosanne Rixon, 286 Kevin & Donna Augustine, 287 Schuyler Augustine, 288 Lloyd J. Lipinski, 289 Hartmut Gnad, 290 Beate Rose, 291 Jeff Jeworski
- Annual meeting: The Bukovina Society of the Americas, inc., a Kansas non-profit corporation will conduct the annual meeting during Bukovinafest 2022, Saturday, September 17th, 2022 at 4:00 p.m. at The Venue 2704 Vine St., Hays, Kansas. Agenda includes election of board of directors for expiring terms, financial reports, and other business that may come before the membership.
- The Germans from Russia Heritage Society has an exchange relationship with BSA and their latest newsletter announced the 51st Annual International Convention July 14-16, 2022. They will offer Virtual Programs for those not able to attend. For information see the website home page at: www.grhs.org. At the site, click the blue lighted "Conventions", then click "Virtual Attendance Only" for the registration form.
- Andreas Rössler, the son of Traudl Rössler, has informed Michael Augustin that his mother had passed away. She was the youngest daughter of Josef Wild and Elisabet Augustin, who was born in Ellis, Kansas before her parents Jakob Augustin and Johanna Straub returned to Bukovina. In 1982, together with other authors, Josef published the homeland book about Fürstenthal,
- Two ladies from Minnesota who recently visited the museum while touring by auto, found a connection they never imagined. They live near New Ulm, MN, which is largely a Bohemian German Catholic community. Some one half of the Bukovina Germans in the Ellis, KS area have Bohemian German origin.
- Bukovina Society Library Update: Submitted by Susan Schlichting, Family History Researcher Over the past couple months, Patty Nicholas, retired FHSU Special Collections Librarian and I have worked to catalog all the books that have been donated to the Bukovina Society over the years. Patty created a Library Thing account for the Bukovina Society's use in keeping track of all the books in the

organization's collection.

There is a rich collection of family histories, documentary records, community histories and background information on the Bukovina region on hand at the museum. There are a number of great publications available for purchase as well as all of the great books accessible for onsite museum review and research. Following this project, the Society will inform members on access to the information.

- Future Newsletter articles will include the final installment in the series on Mrs. Gaschler and a new series: Wolves, Bears and Poachers, a chapter from Renate Gschwendtner's book Eisenau (A village of Zipsers in Bukovina)
- Pursuing YOUR Past: Submitted by Susan Schlichting, Family History Researcher
- Researching in German records is something I get excited about! While my ancestors aren't from the Bukovina region, I've had the opportunity to work with both Lutheran and Catholic church records in Bukovina and other Germanic lands. Pursuing YOUR Past is here to help you answer questions about your family's history. Whether you'd like to have a family history documented for you, or if you'd rather explore the records yourself, I can coach you through the process. There are so many fascinating stories to be uncovered and shared with future generations. Now's the time to get started. Learn more about our family history research and related services at <https://pursuingyourpast.com/>
- BUKOVINAFEST 22, September 15-17, 2022. Volunteers have worked toward a nice variety of presentations. Updates will be on the website. No cost/no obligation registration at: bukofest-2022@bukovinasociety.org This will help planning for room and food services. Rooms are within walking distance of THE VENUE, at Quality Inn, 2810 Vine (US183) Hays, Ks 67601 Phone: 785.628.8088, a full service motel. Uber and several taxi services are available at the airport and throughout Hays. FRIDAY Genealogy Workshop register at: genealogy@bukovinasociety.org

LUDWIKA GASCHLER'S LIFE

Translated from video interview

By: Becky Hageman and Anni and Klaus Häusler

1. Overview
 0. Located in Hays, with Wi-Fi available.
 1. ADA accessible.
 2. Bring your Laptop and USB Storage Device, Sharing is encouraged.
2. Content:
 0. Bukovina specific information will be available:
 0. Knowledge
 1. Tips
 2. Suggestions
 3. Advice
 1. Genealogy Programs
 0. Personal vs. Online Programs
 2. Bukovina Resources:
 0. Online
 0. Free vs. Paid Content
 1. Sources vs. Data
 2. Family Trees
 1. Archives
 0. Online vs. Onsite Visitation
 2. Private
 0. Books
 1. Family Trees
 3. Verification
 4. Documentation
 5. Places
 6. Names
 7. Languages
 8. Alphabets & Scripts
 0. Printed vs. Hand Written
 3. Recapitulation
 0. Genealogical Research in Bukovina will differ depending upon:
 0. The Location
 1. The Ethnicity
 2. The Denomination
 3. The Language



A bus tour with 35 descendants of Joseph and Rosa (Schuster) Fuerch included in their annual family reunion a visit to the Bukovina museum and sites of local interest. Guests were from California, Texas, Alaska and various cities in Kansas.

Installment # 2 - Poland

From part 1 - Fürstenthal is no longer safe from the war. Many families have pulled up roots and are being relocated to a camp in Neu Ulm, then to Poland to be near relatives. The year is about 1942. We pick up Frau Gaschler's memories there:

So we came to Poland and were assigned a farm with a wood and coal shop. My father was a merchant and had a lot to do with wood.

This farm was in Zychlin, Kutnow district. Opposite the giant yard were a summerhouse for the children and large horse stables and a large barn with giant machines for cutting lumber. There was also an office building and a multi-story house in which we had a huge apartment. A lot of things I can still remember, some things I remember through my parents' stories. As I said, I remember the huge courtyard, piles of coal, huge machines on which boards, etc. were cut to size.

One employee was called Walla; we were often with her downstairs. There were also two Polish employees. As far as I can remember, there were 2 Polish employees on the farm. One of them, I think, was called Kowalewsky. He had a bicycle which he always rode to work. The second was a little older. He took care of the horses. We had two carriages that took people to the station when they wanted to go to Kutnow.

In the back was a huge garden. We spent most of our time there and on the farm. I don't remember the place Zychlin itself. I went to school there.

During the vacations we often stayed with our maternal and paternal grandparents. They all had farms. That was the Warthegau. Some of the farms were much neglected. (Editor's note: Warthegau was a Nazi German subdivision formed from parts of Polish territory annexed in 1939.) The Germans had started to spruce things up. We spent many weekends and vacations there. I remember that at my paternal grandmother's house we got freshly baked bread and homemade butter. That's a taste I remember so well to this day.

We also did enough mischief. I must have been a very adventurous child back then. Someone once told me that I had a slight tendency towards recklessness. Once I got a tub from the laundry room and put my two siblings in it, then we rowed around on the pond. I must have moved the thing with my hands. There must have been fish in the pond; I caught two. I don't remember how. My grandmother later told me that she had come from the field and saw light smoke rising from the chimney. "For God's sake, I didn't even start a fire," she said. When she came into the kitchen, I stood there, having chopped off the heads of the two fish, gutted them and put them on

the pan. Then I fried those two critters. My grandmother was beside herself with worry, she told me again and again later. I could have burned down the whole place.

Our father then joined the Wehrmacht (German military) so our mother had to carry on alone. We got along well with the employees. Two dogs ran around the yard at night and guarded everything, because there was a lot of stealing.

My father came from the Wehrmacht on leave. We had a car. I am surprised that I still remember this. It was square and quite large. My father cut boards with our Polish co-workers, which were assembled into a square and repeatedly placed on this wagon to see if they would fit. I never got an answer to my questions about what the point of it all was. One day this rack was on the wagon, bolted down, and all the time it was hidden in the shed in a corner. That was our getaway vehicle afterwards.

I still remember that we had a lot of guests from the estates and large farms to pick up their wood and coal for the winter. They always brought us poultry and game. Steffi could always cook very well and then we sat at our big table. Our mother had then prepared the poultry for all of us. We children were there and always had great fun and really enjoyed it.

Then I remember wanting a musical instrument, a schifferklavier (accordion) so badly for Christmas. That's what I got. I was blessed. We then also took that with us. But I never found it again. And that's something I missed a little bit when I was a kid. No matter with what, but I would have loved to make music.

Then dad was on vacation again. I wondered why he always had so much vacation. He was probably already talking to everyone back then. All of a sudden he said that the Russians were only 100 km from Warsaw. I overheard that. He said, "Now we'll pack our bags and I'll take you to Potsdam." In Potsdam he had a friend, a Mr. Hilz. This family Hilz was always with us in Zychlin with their son Jürgen during the vacations. Dad said, "I'll have my vacation extended."

Until then, the Russians had not come. Suitcases were packed and mattresses were put on this car. In the middle, I remember that quite clearly, stood a small coal stove. We had enough coal and wood. It was toasty warm in this car, with the chimney sticking out at the top.

The car was packed full. We then said goodbye to the people on the farm. I can still see them all standing. The one Polish employee who was responsible for the horses went along. He said, "Boss, I'm going to ride with you for a little bit so you don't have to do the whole ride by yourselves." And so we drove away.

I don't know after how many hours we arrived at my uncle's farm. Uncle Ambros and Aunt Rosi lived in the Harz Mountains. We entered an empty village. A man was walking around to meet us and said that there was no one left in the

village. The bridge was to be blown up and within hours the whole village had to be abandoned. All of them have packed their cars.

I remember from my parents that there was a note on the table that said, "Dear Josef, Dear Steffi, should you come by, take what you can still take with you." There was still fire in the stove, and food from noon was still there that we could eat.

The one man who stayed in the village went around feeding the cattle. We heard the cows roaring because they wanted to be milked. And then my father slaughtered a small pig with the Pole - I think - at night. They salted it properly in a pot and took it with them. Our mother had slaughtered some more poultry. They were hung outside on the car, always frozen stiff.

The next morning, everyone overslept. My father was horrified. Our Polish coworker had gone, which was understandable. He wanted to go home again. I wonder how he got back home.

With lightning speed we left with our car and arrived at the bridge. This bridge should have been blown up long ago. It led across the Warthe River, from where the Warthegau got its name. The soldiers were standing there and said: "You can't cross this bridge anymore, because detonators are already in place. The bridge will be blown up within a short time." My father just said, "I can't stay here, as a soldier I'll be shot on the spot. And what about my family?" We were the only ones left at that bridge. I can still see that today. And that's when my father beat the horses, and we drove over the bridge at full speed. Everyone was yelling behind us. Then when we had crossed the bridge and had driven a bit, we heard the blast of the bridge being blown up.

When we later met my grandmother in the Harz Mountains, I was surprised to see a picture of us there. My grandmother told me that she was told that we all perished on that bridge. I wonder how this message could have come about. This has been a nightmare for me. My father later said, "Either we all go down or we come through." We only had the two options. I have remembered these words about the two possibilities forever. You only have two options in life.

We encountered a boy, about 14/15 years old, who had lost his parents. We delivered him to the Red Cross and then came to Potsdam.

Installment #3 - Potsdam

I can still remember this city, how big it seemed to me. We rode the horse-drawn wagon along the army road until we arrived on the spot. In Potsdam we stayed with an aunt of the Hilz family, where we lived a bit cramped. I remember that it was on the Havel River. We children explored everything.

My father sold the horse and cart. He then had to return to the Wehrmacht (German military). Later I learned that he had been sent to the Baltic States, from where he was taken into Russian captivity.

In Potsdam, we did quite well at first. From January onwards, however, Berlin was bombed and it was said that no planes were coming to Potsdam. But soon the air raids started here too and we had to go to the huge cellar in the evening.

Soon we were helping with the firefighting efforts. And that was day after day, it actually got worse and worse. A second cellar was put into operation. One day the landlord said to my mother, "Why don't you take the children to the new cellar? They will sit a little more comfortably there; we have a sofa. Mom said, "No. We'll stay here together on this old sofa."

A few days later, the new cellar was buried. Our cellar had remained intact, the one next door had been buried. They were somehow dug out. From then on, of course, one was afraid in the cellar. During the day we lived in the cellar. We no longer had a home, we had nothing. But in the evening we went to the park, sat down on a bench, covered ourselves with dark clothes and always waited until the all-clear came.

These bombings actually got worse and worse. I can remember that once again, the three of us kids were sitting in the park when the siren wailed. We thought it was over and Mom said to us, "For heaven's sake stay seated. I'll go see if Aunt Handche survived in the cellar." That is probably still the fear of fire for me today. We three children sat together in the park, and it was as if the siren was wailing. Our mother went off and she didn't come back for so long. For us kids, it was an eternity. So I said to the little ones: "You sit here, I'm going to look for Mom." And then I ran through the burning Potsdam. I can remember that I had wet feet. I wondered why I was wet.

But they had already extinguished the fire. Suddenly the siren sounded again. It must have been stragglers who then dropped bombs. Suddenly a fireman was standing in front of me; for me, this man was huge. He had a helmet on and yelled at me, "For God's sake, what are you doing here?" No one was on the street. I howled, of course, and said, "I'm looking for my mommy." At that moment my mother came out of the cellar. She was horrified! For heaven's sake! The little ones were still sitting in the park. I just said they're all alive. We then ran back. The two little ones sat on the bench and from then on we never went to the cellar, nor in the park.

Every evening we walked across the Kliniker Bridge into the forest. On a small handcart we took my little brother Erich and waited there until it was quiet. When I see the bridge today, I know exactly where I was in the forest. I still remember it very clearly.

And then one day our landlord came and I heard him say: "Mrs. Gaschler, the Russians are not far from Berlin. I'm taking a couple of families out of Potsdam here tonight. Don't you want to go with your kids?" After all, we didn't have anything left. Each had only one small suitcase. He loaded us onto his truck in the evening and took us out of Potsdam. I don't know where, either it was Belitz or Gartu. I don't know exactly.

Then we walked a little bit. An elderly couple was standing by the road and saw us coming. They said to our mother: "Don't you want to just rest with us for two days? We have no children and space in the house. You can stay with us." And so we stayed with them for two or three nights. That's when our clothes were washed.

All three of us wore dark blue wool coats and white angora hats. Then we moved on by foot, or if we were lucky, the soldiers gave us a ride in their wagons. They were not allowed to do that. Often our mother walked alongside and the soldiers loaded us up in the wagon and covered us with blankets. When there were patrols, they lifted the tarpaulin, looked in at us, no one inside. We were quiet as mice; the tarpaulin came down and so it went on. We walked and we got a lift.

It was April, and I can remember that the sun was shining. A carriage arrived; the commander said to us that a hay wagon would soon appear. And so it was. He had loaded hay for the horses. The coachman helped us onto the wagon. We lay on top of the hay.

I don't remember how long it lasted when the coachman suddenly shouted, "Low flyer!" We ran across the meadow, beautiful sunshine, and blossoming fruit trees under which we threw ourselves. I saw the pilot in the plane, flying an arc so low overhead, firing at the road, over and over again away from us. I could still cry today when I remember it.

Then after some time this scare was over. The soldier crawled out from under the wagon and said, "Come back up, you can ride again." We climbed back on the wagon and rode along for a bit. And so we got closer and closer to the Elbe. We didn't even know where we were going. We simply followed these soldiers, this platoon. And that's how we ended up on the Elbe.

I can't remember exactly. I was the oldest. Martha was not allowed to let go of my hand because children had been lost. My brother Erich was usually carried. After all, he was only three years old.

So we came to the Elbe. I only saw people and a destroyed bridge nearby. Then there was constant shelling. The soldiers had dug trenches, and we were in the trenches with the soldiers. Horses that the soldiers had untied were running around frantically.

It must have been the 7th or the 8th of May. Small fires were burning. Things were burned. It was said that at night at 12 o'clock is the end of the war. And then there were rows of soldiers who all wanted to cross this bridge. I don't know now exactly how the soldiers were able to cross the bridge. I only ever saw soldiers crossing that bridge.

The families, the women and children, have placed themselves between the soldiers, because we also wanted to cross over. I remember that the soldiers took us children by the hand and held us. Suddenly a soldier came and yelled: "Women and

children must leave the ranks; only soldiers can cross the bridge, because the Americans or English are over there already.”

And that’s when I saw such an uproar, because the women said they’re not leaving. They shouted, “We’ll stop here. We don’t want to stay with the Russians. We want to come over with you.”

Then the soldier had disappeared. Suddenly he came again and then shouted: “Women and children down to the Elbe.” I don’t know whether it was the English or the Americans who sent boats to fetch women and children across. We then queued at the bottom, we came across on the second boat. The boats had only ropes on the side, like assault boats. I was quite frightened.

On the other side was a small embankment on which there was a whole pile of valuables, especially many watches I can remember. Along the small embankment stood soldiers, Englishmen or Americans.

We were taken to a huge Red Cross barn where our names were recorded. Then we were given food and stayed in this barn for a few days. That was probably then near Tangermünde, which I only heard later.

We were very scared. As I said, when you are lying in the trench and when these bullets came and the soldiers bent over us children - you don’t forget that. Enough!

I remember that a nurse came up to us in the barn and said to us, “You were in the trench with a soldier. This man had been captured and left a note with an address. His mother has a house in Magdeburg and we should go there. There we would be in good hands for the time being. Of course, my mother didn’t do that.

After a few days, the families were divided. We came on ladder trucks. I think there were always three or four families that were taken to the surrounding villages. It was in Saxony-Anhalt, between Salzwedel and Stendal. Our village was called Packebusch.

SCHOOL MATES AT MUSEUM

By: Guy Windholz

A grade school classmate Mark Dreiling and his wife Barbara were back in Hays to visit with his mother Mrs. Donna Jean Dreiling. Mark called to visit the Society museum. We met for lunch on his last visit. Time flies when you think meeting friends was just a short time ago and turns out to be four years. In 2018 I had the pleasure to welcome Mark’s sister Jan, their mother Donna and husband David Schuster, related to the Shuster families of Ellis. Donna’s husband, the late attorney Norbert Dreiling, was an author and dedicated supporter of his Volga German heritage, but always had an interest and knowledge of the Ellis Bukovina Germans.

After touring the exhibits and a pizza lunch, the afternoon was filled with laughter and fun stories of our youth and hanging around as a trio with our late friend Judge Tom Toepfer.

Barbara and Mark showed a keen interest in the Society books. They have traveled overseas and visited numerous museums of natural and historical significance. It warmed my heart when he complimented our collections for preserving the “human side of people and their life.” He added, “The Society must continue to preserve and maintain these stories.’



Barbara and Mark Dreiling



Museum restoration progress

BUKOVINA SOCIETY
P.O. Box 81
Ellis, KS 67637