



The Bukovina Society of the Americas NEWSLETTER

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Membership Dues:
Lifetime \$150.00
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BUKOVINAFEST 22 CANCELED

- The fest scheduled for September of 2022 was very slow in producing reservations even though the announcements of presentations was among the best we could produce. The volunteers spent a lot of time and effort to bring this about. However, the continued concern of Covid and travel took a toll. The Society convention committee met via Zoom and determined in fairness for some who had planned expensive and time-consuming travel for the 16 registrants, they determined to give notice of the cancelation. Fortunately, we have considerable material made available that can and hopefully be utilized in future Newsletters and the Society website.

SOCIETY NEWS & EVENTS

- Welcome to new life members #296, Donald and Catherine Webber and #297, Neal and Janet Neuburger, and #298 Cheryl Ellsworth.
- The annual Society meeting and board meetings were held in person and via Zoom on September 13, 2022 at the Hays Public Library to accommodate personal and Zoom attendance. Election to the Board of Directors for the 2022 expiring terms was Norma Lang, Eileen Goetz, Oren Windholz and Van Massirer. The Board of Directors met following the annual meeting with the same members present. Election as officers: President Doug Reckmann, Vice President Becky Hageman, Secretary Pro-Tem Oren Windholz, Treasurer Guy Windholz.

WHAT A SMALL WORLD!

By: Doug Reckmann

On October 13th, the following message was sent to "info@bukovinasociety.org" from Ray in Pennsylvania.

My buddy, Eric "Ric" Kainz passed away last month in Portland, Oregon and his funeral is this Saturday. His grandfather, Adolf Kainz, came to Detroit according to 1912 immigration records with his birthplace listed as Kleit, Bukevena. On Adolf's WWI draft registration on June 5, 1917 his birthplace is listed as Glitt, Austria. Using your site, I believe this is (now) Clit (in Romania).

Guy Windholz had immediately replied, so by the time that I read this message, there was an additional message in response to Guy's email response.

Ray explained that his friend had died in his sleep while Ray was flying back home after a week and a half visit with his close childhood friend here in Portland. Ric's daughter is Ray's Godchild and although he was writing the eulogy for his friend, he would not be able to return for the funeral. He was asking if there was anyone from the Bukovina Society who could attend the funeral service and stand in for him?

I checked my genealogical database, and I found an Adolf Kainz, born in Glitt in 1891, who emigrated to Detroit, married Maria Geisler and had two children. A quick search on Ancestry.com verified his WWI draft registration on that date, stating his birthplace as Glitt. Ray's friend's grandfather was in the BSA genealogy database. I checked my sources. My information had come from my friend Gertrud "Traudl" Siewi geb. Rinkel in Tiefenbach bei Landshut in Bavaria.

Immediately, I started an email to Ray to let him know that I had information about his friend's family in Bukovina that I would pass it onto his friend's family at the funeral. I wanted to verify everything that I was going to pass on and noticed that ALL of the information that I had about this family had come from Traudl, and not via my own research.

My Bukovina ancestors settled Schwarzthal in 1841. Although my family came to the US in 1910, I was related to all of the people in Schwarzthal when they relocated to Germany in

1940. Traudl's paternal grandparents were born in Lichtenberg, her maternal grandparents in Glitt and Luisenthal. I wondered if the same were true here?

Using my genealogy software, I checked for a family relationship between Traudl Siewi geb. Rankel and Adolf Kainz. Bingo! Traudl's maternal grandmother, Rosa Kainz was the sister of Adolf Kainz! Traudl is the 2nd cousin of Ray's friend Eric Kainz. Not only that, via Traudl's father, Adolf Rankel, Traudl is the 3rd cousin of Eric Kainz's father.

I printed out 2 copies of the birth records of Eric's grandparents and Traudl's grandmother from the Solka Birth Book archived in Suceava, and on October 15th, I drove across town and attended the funeral.

Attending a funeral for someone I did not know made me feel a bit strange, but at the reception after the funeral, I bravely introduced myself to Ric's daughter and his sister as someone who was a close friend with a relative of their's from Germany. I explained that I had met Traudl online when she started researching the settlement of Lichtenberg. Most of the settlers of Lichtenberg were friends or relatives of the settlers of Schwarzthal. Her genealogy database started out as a copy of my database. I traveled to the Bohemian Forest with her and her husband. I visited her several times, and have stayed overnight in her house! Twice! How serendipitous to discover this Portland-Germany connection via an email from Pennsylvania to the Bukovina Society in Kansas.

Ric's relatives were somewhat overwhelmed with this new information. As someone whose family has always had contact with their German, Austrian and Swiss relatives, I was glad that I was able to help someone discover their European roots, and connect them with living relatives.

Ric's sister has a son who is currently studying in Spain, and she had been thinking about visiting him next spring. Now she has a second cousin who lives not far from München and will now probably also be visited.

What a small world!

REITMEYER CONNECTION

By: Doug Reckmann

On October 26th, the following message was sent to info@bukovinasociety.org.

I am from the Reitmeyer family that immigrated to Brazil in 1888. I am looking for Reitmeyer contacts in the USA. My father José Reitmeyer corresponded by letter with a person from the Reitmeyer family who lived at the time (around 1980-1990) in the New York or Connecticut area.

Ana Maitre (nee Reitmeyer)

She further mentioned that she and her family would be visiting the US in 2023.

Oren responded to let her know that he could help her connect with Reitmeyer family members in the Hays/Ellis area when she visited. I responded to let her know that I had some connections with people who were part of the Bukovina community in Brazil. We ended up planning a Zoom meeting on November 1st.

During the resulting Zoom meeting, Oren and I discovered that Ana had attended all of the Bukovina Festivals in Brazil. She fondly remembers meeting Sophie Welisch, PhD. when she attended the 2001 Bukovina Festival in Mafra. Ana and her family are now living in Lisbon. We promised to exchange pictures and data.

Last week, Ana sent Oren and myself several pages of genealogical data connecting her family to it's Bukovina roots, a familial connection to the Kansas Reitmajers and a descendant connection to the family in the Bohemian Forest.

Ana's father, José Reitmajer, was the son of José Reitmajer, who was the son of Josef (José) Reitmajer, a twin born in Pojana Mikuli in 1857. Family lore said that his twin, Ferdinand, emigrated to Kansas in 1889. She was excited about the possibility of meeting such close relatives in Kansas.

Most Bukovina families were rather large, often with ten, twelve or even more children. Every family had a Johann, a Josef, a Franz, a Ferdinand, a Karl, a Wenzel, an Ambros, etc. I discovered that Ana's great grandfather was a twin, but his twin, Ferdinand, died in Pojana Mikuli in 1912. His entire family remained in Bukovina, until the WWII relocation in 1940.

Josef Reitmajer, however, had a younger brother, Karl, who died in Pojana Mikuli in 1892. His widow, Minnie Rach, and their five surviving children (Johann, Franz, Regina, Philomena, and Katharina) emigrated to Ellis in 1902.

Josef also had an older brother Franz, who married Franziska Hartinger and had ten children. The fifth son, Karl Reitmajer, emigrated to Ellis in 1913, and then married Mary Schuster in Ellis in 1916.

Josef's aunt, Maria "Klara" Reitmeyer, married Adalbert Nemecek and had six children. The second son, Ambros Nemecek, married Franziska Hoffmann and had one son, Ferdinand, who married Agatha Aschenbrenner. In 1898, Ferdinand, Agatha, and 6 children emigrated to Ellis. In 1899, his mother, "Fannie," followed this family to Kansas.

Ana's great grandfather in Brazil had a sister-in-law, numerous nieces and nephews, and multiple cousins from Pojana Mikuli and Fürstenthal in Bukovina who emigrated to Ellis County in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

In December, Oren, Ana, and myself will again meet via Zoom. I am preparing a Reitmayer descendant chart that I will send to her. When she and her family visit next year, they will have a lot of Reitmayer and Nemechek relatives to visit.

AN INTERVIEW WITH ETHEL AND RAYMOND HANEKE

Transcribed by: Rebecca Hageman

As a young student of at Fort Hays University, Suzanne McDaneil conducted an interview in 1984 with Ethel and Raymond Haneke, charter members of the Bukovina Society of the Americas, comparing the educational experience in the one room schoolhouse in Ellis County in the 1920s-1930s when Ethel and Ray were students, with the 1950s, when Ethel taught in a one room schoolhouse. The following is a summarization of that interview.

Ethel began school in 1928, Ray in 1927. Both attended one room schoolhouses. There was no indoor plumbing for restrooms - they were outside.

Ray's father, along with Freddy Hamburg and Mrs. Yoi engineered the red school house, thirteen miles north of town (Ellis, Kansas).

At Ethel's school, near Black Jack, a town in eastern Kansas, her first grade teacher was paid \$36 a month. "No zeros after it." Teachers stayed with families; at Ray's school, they usually lived with the Henry Fishers a mile and a half from the school.

For both Ray and Ethel, the school day was 9:00 to 4:00, but the school year was shorter, eight months in length. It began in September after the seeding time in the fall, and was over by the second week of April at the beginning of harvest time in the spring.

Recesses were short, and games included drop the handkerchief, ring around the rosie, blind man's bluff, and races; older children would play ball games or volleyball.

At lunchtime, children packed an egg sandwich, banana, or apple; in the winter, pork or beef sandwiches. There were a lot of egg sandwiches. A "hot lunch" program existed in that children might bring an assigned item, such as a gallon of milk or potatoes, and the older children would prepare potato soup to go along with sandwiches or whatever was brought from home.

School was never canceled due to bad weather, since transportation was by buggy, horseback or walking. Ray lived 2 1/2 miles from school, and lots of times, he and his brothers would walk. Ray added that school was only canceled if the teacher couldn't get there.

Ray remembered 25 to 30 students in his classroom. He recalled, "Probably the thing that sticks in my mind is that the teacher was always right. You were sent to school and under the full authority of the teacher and she was right. You feared the teacher. Not that they were bad people but they were feared. There might have been something to this fearing the teachers. It might have been the fact that my dad was on the school board and he didn't want his children being the ones causing the teacher problems." Tricks were played on the teacher - snakes and dead mice in the desk, or tacks in chairs. Boys would sneak around the girls' outhouse.

Discipline in the one room schoolhouse in the 1920s and early 30s included a lot of spankings. Another punishment was to kneel in the corner on corn, or stand tiptoe at the blackboard with your nose in a circle drawn by the teacher, for 15, 20, or 30 minutes. Younger children might have been spanked or stood in the corner. If you got spanked at school, you got spanked at home. Ray remembered that some of the punishment was sweeping and dusting.

Ethel recalled that her classroom had 20 to 25 students at one time. Teachers were usually young girls who had graduated from high school and had six weeks training. Boys were sometimes as old as the teacher, and that caused problems. Sometimes parents would be called to come take care of the situation. Ethel added: A lot of that came from home. You were told to do what the teacher says or else. I remember I liked mine very much. And especially one of them was very musical and in the winter time instead of going outside to play we would stay in to sing during recess and noon. I really enjoyed that. It was always fun when I was younger to have the older children play with us and teach us games. I always enjoyed that, being an only child and living in the country and not having any close neighbors. And they were always helpful in teaching the younger children to play the games. In school nowadays you don't see the eighth graders going down to help the first and second graders."

Concerning educational materials - "We had our basic books and workbooks and that was it." Books were handed down in the family. Subjects taught included reading, writing, arithmetic; Kansas history, agriculture, geography, and history. There was no science taught at that time.

Students had chores at the one room schoolhouse. Ethel recalled that the older boys were responsible for helping the teacher with that. "We had a coal stove that sat in the corner. We did have assigned housekeeping duties - sweeping and dusting."

At Black Jack School, there was no water source. Ethel remembered, "We had one bucket and one dipper and when that bucket was about empty one of the older boys would go back to the (neighboring) farmer's house and bring another bucket of water." Ray also talked about the school having its own pump and that there was one bucket and one dipper.

Ray remembered that fun things were the old box supper and the plays and skits the whole school would put on before Thanksgiving and Christmas. "We would take a week out of school and practice this a week before Thanksgiving and practice your skit a week before Christmas." There was more togetherness then.

A few years later, after graduation from the University of Kansas with a Bachelor of Arts degree, Ethel was hired by a school board of 3 elected individuals to teach in a wooden, one-room school house at Beaver Bank, about four miles east of the town of Ellis from 1952-1954. The location was the one given to the township by the state when they divided the state into sections and gave each district a location to build a school.

She was paid \$3200 the first year, and \$3400 the second year, financed by taxation. Ethel, being the only teacher, reported to the county superintendent in Hays. There was no parent-teacher organization like the PTA. School supplies were provided by the school board. Unlike their teachers 20 years earlier, Ethel was married and living at home.

As you entered the school building, separate restrooms for the boys and girls were located at the front entrance, followed by a cloak room, then the large school room. A well-stocked library containing about 500 books, including up to date dictionaries, encyclopedia, and reference books, was at the south side, along with a kitchen, with an electric stove and refrigerator. Heat was provided by a furnace, and there was a well with an electric water pump. Maintenance was the responsibility of the school board members. Not only was the building utilized as a classroom, it served as a community center for 4-H clubs and social events. School yard equipment was provided for recess.

Thirteen children, starting at age 6, attended this school. These were all farm students and were clean and were well-dressed when they came to school.

All eight grades were taught in the one classroom, 9 months a year, from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Starting in September and ending in May, the school year did not have a spring break. Students usually arrived by parents' cars, none living more than 2 miles away on farms. A typical school day began with the flag salute, a patriotic song, a prayer, and then reading until recess. From recess to noon, math was taught. Reading and math were individualized.

At recess, the students played "modern games and more ball kinds of activities."

For lunch, sometimes students would bring something they liked, and have baked potatoes or a mother might bring soup for the school, but this wasn't regularly planned.

After lunch, first and second graders had more reading and language arts activities. The older groups were paired off - fourth and fifth graders together, having social studies 4th

grade level one year, 5th grade level one year, so that by the time that they graduated, the entire curriculum would have been covered.

Teaching aids were constructed by Ethel for individual students as needed. Textbooks were adopted by the county, and paid for by the families. Plenty of workbooks were available to keep the students busy. The supplies were much better than when Ethel was a student.

School parties were held at Halloween, Thanksgiving, a community Christmas program, and observances at Easter, Valentine's Day, and everyone had a birthday party. Once or twice a year, community members would arrive at the school for a basket dinner. Annual county events included spelling and music contests.

In the 1950s, canceling school in bad weather was the decision of the teacher. There was a telephone in the school, and parents would phone and ask if there was a cancelation. If the weather turned bad during the school day, Ethel would call the parents to come and get their children.

Students didn't display many discipline problems. "We set rules only when they needed to be set. And this would bring about maybe a loss of recess if there was too much visiting or talking during the school day."

Most arguments occurred at recess - when the teacher wasn't standing around - about their religious backgrounds, which was diverse - Catholics, Lutherans, and Methodists. Ethel handled the situation by talking about understanding each other's religions and trying to get them to see that there was more than one religion that might be acceptable. But their parents didn't feel this way so the children didn't feel this way.

Most of the students were from a German background. Although certain customs or traditions were not carried out in school, the children would bring information from home of things or customs that they did have in their homes.

Eighth graders had to pass a county exam to graduate. There were no graduation exercises, although sometimes the parents would have a party for their children. Of these thirteen students, all went on to graduate from high school and became upstanding citizens of the community. They went out to "various occupations which probably could be called the blue-collar kind of activities - nurses' aids and farmers and things of that kind."

As new schools were built, the one room schoolhouses went away. The schoolhouse at Beaver Bank was torn down in the later '50s.

McDaneil, Suzanne; Haneke, Ethel; and Haneke, Ray, "Interview with Ethel and Raymond Hanke" (1984). *College of Education one-Room Schoolhouse Oral Histories*. 29. <https://>

WOLVES, BEARS, POACHERS – PART TWO

Edited by: John Lossee

(A chapter from Renate Gschwendtner's book „Eisenau – ein Zipserdorf in der Bukowina“ [„Eisenau – a Village of Zipsers in Bukovina“])

Gisela Oberländer, [author's note: born in Eisenau in 1907], recalled the topic of “wolves and poachers”:

Yes, there were wolves near Eisenau. You could hear them howling at night, and in winter they came closer to the village in search of food. In the winter of 1928/29 it was so cold that for four weeks the window panes were frozen and one could not look out. Then the beasts came down from the mountains to the garden fences, and I was even more afraid of the wolves than usual. The sheep were left outside in winter. Hay was brought to their feeding place, and the wolves particularly liked to hunt there. Old Koller's house in Hurgisch, stood at the road to Kimpolung, and he kept his sheep in the back garden. They were not brought into the barn at night, because they thought the wolves would not come down so far, nor that they would break into the garden. But he was wrong about that.

Carters and farmers who traveled on sleighs in the dark in winter took burning torches to protect themselves from the wolves. It was especially dangerous on the stretch between Hurgisch and Altkimpolung, where it was said that some people had trouble keeping the wolves at bay. As soon as the horses smelled the wolves, they became restless and the driver had trouble preventing them from bolting. When one went from Eisenau to Hurgisch, there was an open stretch where the steep mountain slope bordered the road and there were no houses. Wolves also prowled there, especially near the quarry. In winter people didn't like to walk along there alone.

When I was fifteen and working as a maid for my cousin, his wife sent me into the forest with a worker to pick raspberries. While doing so, we came across a sleeping bear underneath a rock. At first we froze in fright and then ran away as fast as our legs would allow.

Many people poached in Eisenau, including men from my family and kinship. My brother-in-law, Anton Hendel, had his house searched several times. Nothing was found, but of course he was also a poacher. He first hid his gun under the doorstep and later, when that became too dangerous for him, in the forest. I don't know if he hid it in a hollow tree or buried it by a tree, I only know that a certain tree marked his hiding place. My brother Ambros Cattaneo and my brother-in-law Gustav Hennel also poached. Of these three of my relatives, I know for sure, but of others in the village I had only my suspicions. Sometimes the three of them went hunting together. Once Ambros shot a deer. It

was shortly after the death of Ambros' wife, when I was temporarily running the household for him. We pickled the meat, and afterward, often had venison for dinner. Some days my future husband, Rudi, helped Ambros with the wood work. On those occasions, he ate with us. I asked my brother whether I should serve venison or pork. Ambros thought that pork was safer. A few times before though, Rudi had noticed the scent of venison, and was offended when we served him pork. He was so offended, that he went home. Later he told me that I shouldn't think he was so stupid, that he had noticed long before what was going on, and wondered why I thought he would turn my brother in. I told him, that Ambros had been afraid that Rudi might accidentally blab, and not that he would intentionally turn him in.

Shortly after the First World War, my brother shot a twelve point buck, very close to the village, on the wooded hillside behind the cemetery. It was as big as a young cow. Those were bad times then, and meat was scarce. Ambros was already married, and living with his in-laws, the Novaks. Bet we [Ambros' parents and sisters] also received a little of the meat, and were very happy to have it. Ambros also kept the antlers.

In 1975, Claus Stephani published the book „Erfragte Wege – Zipser Texte aus der Suedbukowina“ [Inquired Ways – Zipser Texts from Southern Bukovina]. He had traveled through Bukovina and let some of the few German Zipsers who still lived there record their memories on tape.

Wilhelmine Jachmanowsky from Ludwigsdorf said that even now (i.e. in the 1970's) there are still wolves in the forest, which can be seen even during the day. And, especially in winter, many are out and about, and you can hear them howling at five or six in the morning. They come to the village at night, and in the morning, you can see their footprints in the snow.

Johann Schneider from Freudenthal remembered that his grandmother told how at night, when she was walking home from the spinning room, she was chased by a wolf, and just made it into the house. The wolf was heard scratching at the door.

Johann Schneider further told that in the old Zipser houses, the windows were so low, that the wolves looked in the windows in the winter. Already at four o'clock in the afternoon, one pack was heard howling on the Wassilberg, and another in Palamania.

Fritz Hendel, a forest ranger, met a wolf in the forest one summer, and when he tried to shoot it, his gun didn't go off. He realized he was in dire straits, but was saved when the wolf pursued a roebuck that had suddenly appeared.

There is a wolf story in the book „Die Zipser in der Bukowina“ [The Zipsers in Bukovina] by Oskar Hadbawnik. The then almost 80-year-old former village blacksmith Theiss from Luisenthal is quoted as saying, he didn't like it in Germany, because there were no wolves and bears. At home in Bukovina, he said, every winter morning at four o'clock, wolves came down from Dealul Negru, passed by his house, and ran across

the village street, and then ran over the ice of the Moldava [river] to the arseneasa ditch in the direction of Mestecani. He was always awakened on time by their howling, and didn't need an alarm clock. Here in Germany, he is always awakened on time, but by the train that runs by his house, not by wolves.

Oskar Hadbawnik told about his great-grandmother's farm dog, which was torn apart by wolves, and he also told a story he'd heard from his grandfather. It was about a hunter who was attacked by a bear. The bear stood on its hind legs and clutched the hunter with its paws. The hunter's dog bit the bear in the leg. This gave the hunter the opportunity to pull out his knife and stab the bear. Oskar Hadbawnik doubted the story a little and was reminded of the „Bjorndalsaga“ [a Novel trilogy by the Norwegian writer Trygve Gulbrandsen]. Karl May [a German adventure writer] also described a similar scene when he had Old Shatterhand [A fictional character created by German writer Karl May for his Wild West novels] stab a grizzly. If the story is not true, it's at least well invented. The Zipser people of Bukovina were talented story tellers, especially after a few caraway schnapps...

Another wolf story was told by an almost eighty-year-old Luisenthal woman. She told that after slaughtering pigs and cooking aspic, that she threw the leftover waste into the ditch. When she went out again later, two „dogs“ were wrestling

over the waste. She tried to scare them off, but to her horror, discovered they were two wolves. Fortunately, the wolves were too busy with their fight over the scraps that they didn't pay attention to her, and she was able to escape into the house.

Jakob Welisch, from Bori, mentioned wolves in his essay „Ein Buchenlanddeutscher erzahlt“ [A Bukovinan German Tells]. He recalled a trip in the winter, with a horse and sleigh. The horses had been restless while they were being harnessed to the front of the sleigh. His father tried to calm them, and told his mother there must be wolves nearby. Jakob Welisch emphasized that he wasn't exaggerating, that wolves sometimes became dangerous to people in the winter. They gathered in packs of ten to fifteen, and driven by hunger, attacked anything that got in their way. To be on the safe side, his father would lock the farm dog in the barn when the weather got very cold. Jakob Welisch also wrote that he heard that wolves came very close to the settlements in winter. One evening, he and his father looked out the kitchen window, and they could see the eyes of a pack of wolves, sparkling in the moonlight. Otherwise though, he never met any other wolves.