



The Bukovina Society of the Americas NEWSLETTER

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Membership Dues:
Lifetime \$150.00
Annual \$25.00

SOCIETY NEWS & EVENTS

- Annual meeting of the Society was held on August 26, 2003 at the headquarters in Ellis, Ks. In attendance were: Douglas Reckmann by cell phone, Norma Lang, Eileen Goetz, Guy Windholz and Oren Windholz. Minutes of the 2022 meeting were approved. A financial report was approved. Election of board members for expired terms of Martha McClelland, Katy Schuster Luck, Rebecca Hageman and Douglas Reckmann were made for the same slate and approved. The annual meeting was followed by a board of directors meeting for election of officers for the ensuing year. Nominated and approved were: Douglas Reckmann, President, Rebecca Hageman, Vice-President, Katy Schuster Luck, Secretary, and Guy Windholz, Treasurer.
- Welcome new life members: #303 Julius Wlaschin, #304, Karla and Claude Lovell, #305, Mark Dreiling and Barbara Short, #306, Richard Stillinger, #307, Laurentiu Russo, and #308, Michelle Joubert #309.
- Major contributor Kath Garofali donated old books from the Second World War belonging to her late father Karol to the Society archives. Sue Schlichting who has catalogued all Society publication holdings added these to the list.
- A power point presentation by Kath Garofali was given for the Historical Study group meeting at the Hays Public Library. The ad hoc members gained and increased understanding of the Bukovina Germans world-wide.
- Thanks to Vernie Pritchett of the Ellis Tourism Committee for bringing nephew Pride and his wife Melody Metcalf to visit the Bukovina Society. They parked their RV camper at the Ellis Lake Side campgrounds and spent a few days looking over the area.
- Karla (Walz) Lovell and husband Claude from Olathe, Kansas visited the Society by email email to our website. Karla was aware of the Society before from her mother, the late Marguerite Walz who was a member and attended Bukovinafests many years earlier with her niece, Edith Clark. both from Oakley, Kansas. Marguerite and Edith have worked on genealogy of the Konig and Walz families in coordination with Brenda Walz from Ellis, Kansas. Karla traced her ancestors back to Christian Konig and

Carolina (Ast) Konig who were Karla's grandmother and her father was Eddie Adair Walz born in Gove County. On entering the museum they viewed the two framed photos of Christian and Carolina mounted on a wall as well as those of Frank and Henrietta (Konig) Huber. The Lovells spent a week traveling throughout Romania where Karla visited Illischestie (In the former Bukovina) where the Christian Konig family once lived.

A BUKOVINA GRANDCHILD TELLS HIS STORY

By Doug Reckmann

I was born in 1951, the son of American parents in Portland, Oregon. My father was the son of German immigrants, my mother the daughter of Swiss and Bukovina immigrants. My father's mother died in 1943, but I was in close contact as a child with my other three grandparents. My mother's grandmother was still alive.

Popsy's parents were born about five miles from one another near the town of Stade in Germany, south of the Elbe River and downstream from Hamburg. About twenty families from this area settled or homesteaded in Sherman County at the end of the 1800's. My father was born and raised in Grass Valley, a small town in that county in the eastern (high desert) half of Oregon, speaking the low German (Platt Deutsch) dialect of his parents, learning English when he went to grade school. In 1935, Grandma and Grandpa Reckmann moved to Boring, Oregon (east of Portland) because of health issues.

My mother's uncle left Switzerland as a draft dodger at the start of World War I, finding work in the many dairies around Portland. In 1920, his younger brother, my grandfather, visited and ended up staying in the US working in dairies in southern California. In 1926, when he thought that he had saved enough money to marry his childhood sweetheart, he returned to

of Bukovina. Sailing to Brazil or the United States were two options.

Schwarzthal brothers, Josef and Wenzel Tauscher emigrated to Ellis County, Kansas in 1887. In the spring of 1888, my grandmother's aunt, Anastasia Seemann, married Wenzel Tauscher, Jr., the son of Ambrose Tauscher, also a brother of Josef and Wenzel Tauscher. Ambrose, his family, and a fourth brother Franz Tauscher (along with his family), left Schwarzthal in the summer of 1888 to join Wenzel and Josef in Ellis.

Around 1890, most of the Tauscher clan headed west. Some stopped in Montana to work in the mines for a couple of years, but eventually they all ended up in Lewis County, Washington. Family lore says that Josef Tauscher moved to Lewis County but then moved back to Ellis County before 1895

Farming, forestry, and even mining jobs were plentiful in Washington. Chehalis and Centralia became the hub of a new Bukovina center in the US. Franz and Wenzel (Sr.) Tauscher remained as farmers in Lewis County, dying there in 1917 and 1905, respectively. Ambrose and his surviving sons started working for furniture manufacturing magnate, Frank Silas Doernbecher, in Chehalis, Washington. In 1900, amid woodworker union organization attempts, Doernbecher's established a manufacturing facility in Portland, Oregon. At that point, Ambrose and his family relocated to Portland as influential members of the new facility.

A Schwarzthal Visit

In 1909, Wenzel Tauscher and his wife Anastasia returned to Bukovina to visit family and recruit workers for the new Doernbecher Manufacturing Company in Portland. They had left Schwarzthal 21 years earlier with nothing, and returned as successful middle-class managers of a large manufacturing facility. My great grandmother was one year old when her oldest sister left Schwarzthal in 1888. "Big Grandma" (our term for her) did not remember ever meeting her sister. She was excited to meet her "new" sister.

Anastasia's father, Wenzel Seemann, was the mayor of Schwarzthal, but the real power was his wife, my 2nd great grandmother, Theresia Seemann geb. Winter. (Years ago, a description of her by one of her grandsons make me think of Mammy Yokum with a cigar instead of a pipe.) She did not approve of the marriage of her daughter Klara to Wenzel Jung, son of one of the poorest families in Schwarzthal. Mama said "if you marry that \$!@r*G+!, then you need to move out of Schwarzthal." The threat did not stop the marriage, nor the birth of my grandmother, born in 1909 in the last (southernmost) house on the left-hand side of the road going through Schwarzthal. After crossing the stream, a 100 feet further south, you were in the Kingdom of Romania.

Big Grandma told me that she really didn't get along with her family or siblings. When her oldest sister visited and asked her to move to Portland and start a new life, the die was cast for the relocation. In 1910, with the help of the "Tauscher" connection,

my great grandparents were able to travel by train to Bremen (3 days), board a ship to New York, take a train to Portland, and buy a tiny farm on the outskirts of East Portland. It was an immigrant neighborhood surrounded by Scandinavians, Austrians, Germans, Bohemians, Swiss, Hungarians, Poles, and Russians. The neighbors from different backgrounds supported one another building a new life, each with their own specialty. My great grandfather supplied the neighborhood with homemade wine. When he fed the leftover mash to the pigs, they got drunk and started squealing. This meant "Party in the Jung Barn."

My mother's parents married in 1928, combining Swiss and Bukovina/Bohemian German ancestry. At the marriage of the nephew of my grandmother's childhood Swiss/German friend, Bertha Moore geb. Karlin, my parents met. Bertha's two sisters, Edna and Helen Karlin, had married two Swiss/German brothers, Adolf and John Amstad, who happened to be the next-door neighbors of my father's parents. The rest is history...

Growing up knowing my German Heritage

My father was the youngest child, as was his mother. She, her parents, four siblings, cousins, and an aunt and uncle came to the US between 1885 and 1895. My father ("Popsy") was the youngest of 43 first cousins, 25 of which were here in the US. Popsy attended most of the family functions as a child. That continued as an adult after he was married and had children.

My mother was the oldest of 23 first cousins. Nine were born after she was married. When in college, I often came home for a weekend and visited Big Grandma. I asked her about everything in Bukovina. She was glad that someone was actually interested in HER life. When one of my mother's cousins (younger than me) told me that his grandparents moved to the US because of the "political situation in Europe," I asked where he got his information?

He said "from my father."

I told him that I had asked his Grandmother (my Great Grandmother) the same exact question and she told me because she couldn't get along with her siblings. (I never asked her why Great Grandpa slept in the barn...)

As a child, I already knew the names of the towns where my Grandparents were born. I knew when my Grandparents came to the US, and I knew the names of the relatives. The common language of American children whose grandparents spoke various German dialects was English. I learned German in college when I realized how much of my life was influenced by my "Germanic" family heritage. I am the only Grandchild (or Great Grandchild) on either side of my family who learned to read, write, or speak German. I knew some details and was able to ask/question family members about the "whole" picture. I became the default family historian.

The Bukovina Society Connection and Commitment

As a member of the Bukovina Society of the America, I have been very lucky to come in contact with many different people throughout the world, whose ancestors came from Bukovina. Often, these people are trying to put together a story, second- or third-hand, to make sense of their ancestry. They did not have the luxury of having a conversation with their Great Grandmother as a college graduate. They have snippets of stories, maybe some old pictures, a couple of names, or part of a place name that they can't completely remember. Sometimes the stories include life-threatening stories of escaping the "Communists" in 1912, or the harrowing near-death adventures of the winter sea voyage from Bukovina to the US around the Horn of Africa. (Look that up in a history book or on a map!)

With all of this in mind, I realize how important it is for the Bukovina Society of the Americas to help Bukovina descendants uncover their roots. Our personal handed down stories are interesting, but often, not that accurate. The information and stories are usually not entirely correct, possibly having a grain of truth. They do not have all of the names, dates, and places to expand and view the entire picture. They might have the names of a couple of relatives, but what about the relatives that they don't know about?

There were battles in two World Wars that were fought in Bukovina. Records were damaged and or destroyed. Families were separated. In 1940, some records were relocated with the groups who were being relocated. The surviving records are not complete. After WWII, many survivors felt that they were lucky to still be alive. They were "undocumented" or "displaced" citizens. Some of those survivors have documented their experience. A lot of people did not want to talk to their family about what they had experienced. For those people who have not had the luxury of talking with a living relative about their heritage, how does one start?

The Bukovina Society of the Americas will (within legal limits) make information available about our Bukovina heritage. We want to help people learn how to start their own personal adventure of discovering their Bukovina roots. We will to work to make this information and knowledge about Bukovina available via the BSA Newsletter and Website to people throughout the world who were separated and/or relocated from their families and heritage.

KATHARINENDORF

Translated by: John Losee

A typical example of newer German ancestral settlements in Bukovina.

Among the youngest ancestral settlements of our old homeland, that were for the most part founded by private initiative, are Katharinendorf (351), Alexanderdorf (180), Nikolausdorf (285), Unterstanestie (145) and Neuzadowa (915) which were "Swabian settlements", as well as Augustendorf (750) and

Dumbrawa-Kornolunze which were German Bohemian settlements. [1. The figures in parenthesis indicate the approximate population in 1935.] These settlements were established for the most part in the second half of the 19th century, and some even around 1900.

As a typical representative of this group of newer settlements in Bukovina, we want to single out Katharinendorf, and shed light on its origin and further development.

The hometown of Katharinendorf was settled in 1867 by German farmers, who originally tried settling with the Slovaks, but left after only one year, because they could gain no economic return from the swampy soil there. At the renewed call by Baron Vasilko in Berhometh in 1867, 28 Evangelical Swabians came from Galicia to settle. The promise of 16-18 yokes [the amount of land that could be cultivated by a pair of oxen] of farmland for income, and the necessary free timber and firewood in hereditary lease for 30 years each, attracted the more active Swabians who had little land available in their homeland.

Soon they had used up the small amount of cash they'd brought with them, building their houses. Then they found it difficult to raise enough food to eat from their land, so they turned also to woodworking and forestry. Agriculture was not neglected though, and the crops also thrived. As a result, they also managed to raise a good number of livestock and became reasonably prosperous.

In 1875 they established their own school, the "Evangelical Community School of Katharinendorf."

The community lived in good harmony, and were almost separated from the other German settlements, as they were surrounded on all sides by Ruthenians. However, they maintained their own German customs and manners, and in between also knew how to celebrate with a hearty festival. Along these lines, one shouldn't forget a funny incident that occurred in 1910: The wife of a farmer named Jakob Kauk gave birth to a daughter, who was to be named Elisabeth. A lavish banquet was held afterwards. The celebrant performing the baptism did not want to make the entry in the baptismal register and interrupt the banquet, so he postponed it to the next day. After drinking a lot of wine and schnapps, the christening guests went home late after midnight in a blissful mood. The next morning, the celebrant no longer remembered the baptism, or the baptismal name, and he didn't know what to enter in the baptismal register! He was ashamed to ask the child's parents; so he went to the postmaster, who was also present at the baptism, and asked: "You, Johann, do you know what we baptized last night? Was it a boy or a girl, and what was it named?" - "It was a boy," replied the postmaster after some thought. "I think we baptized him Wenzel". And so, shortly thereafter, the little daughter Elisabeth was registered as the son Wenzel. It was not until 1934 that the mishap was discovered. At that time, Elisabeth went to the registrar of the church books, Konrad Gross, and asked for a baptismal certificate to be issued, because her sweetheart didn't want to wait much longer

to get married. However, Mr. Gross did not find an Elisabeth, but only a Wenzel Kauk, who had been entered in the baptismal register in 1910. Our Konrad cousin then asked the district council to change the name, which was soon approved.

During World War I, the community of Katharinendorf - like so many others - was occupied by the Russians and burned down in 1916. When the residents returned in 1918, they found only nine undamaged farms; all the others lay in rubble and ashes. Reconstruction proceeded slowly but steadily and sped up after the men returned from the war. While the women and children mainly pursued other economic gain, the men found good earning potential in the emerging timber industry, so that they could provide for their farms and fields with everything they needed.

They were all brave, hard-working people, our Katharinendorfers; very willing and able to learn. The village had 50 houses, around 60 families, and around 350 people, with an average of 40 to 50 school-going children.

In the course of the resettlement in 1940, the Katharinendorfers were settled in eastern Upper Silesia, after four months of camp life in the communities of Wilkowitz, Blachstaedt district, Opatow and Walenzow. Here they often had to fight with Polish partisans towards the end of the war. Two Katharinendorfers (Josef Lindenbach and Georg Heuchert) lost their lives.

On January 16, 1945, around midnight, they too fled from the invading Russian hordes and, in the bitter cold, made their way across the country that was later distributed mostly to the southern federal states.

The Katharinendorfers have also proven their diligence and efficiency over the past few years. Anyone who visits the Buchenlaender settlement near Baechingen/Brenz - which

is reported on in detail elsewhere - will recognize that our Katharinendorfers, under the expert guidance of compatriot Konrad Gross, have once again built up flourishing and profitable economies from nothing, which can serve as an example for all those displaced from their homeland.

AUGUSTINE FAMILY REUNION

By: Darrell Augustine

The Augustine family reunion was held this past July 14, 15 and 16th in Ellis, Ks. The 14th consisted of golf at the Ellis Golf Course. A great day for golf until the rain came before they finished. No one complained, just happy for the rain. Saturday, the 15th the reunion started at 10 a.m. with registration, followed by brunch from 11 a.m. – 2 p.m., later drawings for kids 12 and under with the adult raffle later on in the day. A German supper was served after the 5:30 mass at St. Mary's School. Father Dana said it was nice to have a large crowd at church.

Special recognition was given to Katie Eberle for being the oldest female attending and Adolph Flax the oldest male attending. People came from as far away as Germany, Canada, Oregon, Florida and many other states with over 220 people attending. Frank Werth provided the entertainment for the evening which lasted until 11 p.m. Sunday consisted of a brunch from 10 a.m. –12 p.m.

We would like to thank everyone who supplied items for the raffle and meals, the D of I for cooking, the people who made the galushkies, all who worked at the bar, the registration table, raffle table, all those who helped set up tables and chairs and helped take them all back down –it definitely was a team effort! And also a special thank you to all who took the time to attend.