

The Bukovina Society of the Americas NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 1083, Hays, KS 67601 USA

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Membership Dues:
Lifetime \$150.00
Annual \$25.00

SOCIETY NEWS & EVENTS

- **ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE** The annual meeting of the Bukovina Society of the Americas, a non-profit corporation in the State of Kansas will meet early afternoon, September 14th. The purpose is to elect members to the Board of Directors, review financial reports and other matters to come before the Society. The Board will meet following to elect officers for the ensuing year.
- Welcome New Life members #314, Anne M. Kucher, #315 Andreas Brandl and #316 Penny Thwaites
- We are pleased with the volunteer input to the Society Newsletter bringing us new content. More good stories are ahead. We invite members to submit material on family, history, genealogy, travel and other information that might be of interest to the Bukovina family worldwide.
- Two of our active members suggested the idea of more photos of our ancestors and their families be available on the Society website. Initially a start would be for photos before 1950 and contain birth and death dates and villages.
- Gertrude "Trude" Klostermann was born in Montreal Canada on March 2, 1931, and died on September 3, 2023. Her husband, Ferdinand Eberwein was born in Sanktanna, Romania on March 12, 1927 and died on November 18, 1999. They first met as children in Montreal after his family immigrated to Canada. They met again as young adults, fell in love, and moved to California where their 3 daughters were born. They relocated to Colorado where they lived out their lives. Ferdinand was an artist for the Coors Beer company and was proud of his sketches for the cans. They were very proud of their heritage, being a part of the Bukovina Society and Trude donated childhood maps of the old Country to the Society.
- We learned of the death of Edith Hanus, wife of the late Willy Hanus, born in Radautz. Both were very active members and tireless volunteers in the Bukovina organizations in Augsburg. The Bukovina Institut was "the home of the Hanus family". Luzian Geier wrote a profound tribute to Edith for her work in the Sudostdeutsche. When my wife Pat and I attended the 40th annual meeting of

the Bukovina Societies in Augsburg in 1989, we met the wonderful couple on our first day and they quickly invited us to join them on a tour of historical castles and sites. We send our deepest regards to their two daughters.

New member Jim Lang, PhD, University of Toronto, has been doing genealogical work on his family for more than twenty years. He helped with the initial website for the Galizien German Descendants, years ago, which has become a source of information for many since then. <https://galziengermandescendants.org/cms/index.php/en/>

Our people emigrated from Bavaria into the Bohemian Egerland around the mid-1600s. They lived there until around 1835, when they migrated East to Galicia, where they helped to establish three villages in the foothills of the Carpathians southwest of L'viv (then, Lemberg)-Felizienthal, Annaberg and Karlsdorf. Around 1895, they began a further migration to the Zhadova-Dibrova communities of Bukovina.

Some of my ancestors had been in Bukovina for several decades at that point, but most of my elders stayed only or ten years or so, before migrating one more time to Canada-primarily-and the United States, between 1903 and 1908, approximately. My great-grandfather, Ferdinand Lang, owned and operated a flour mill in Zhadova before settling as a homesteader in what is now Saskatchewan.

I wrote a detailed novel about my ancestors' treks and adventures, entitled, "Felizienthal: Conversations with my Ancestors." It is available on Amazon. <https://www.amazon.ca/Felizienthal-Conversations-Ancestors-Jim-Lang-ebook/dp/B082T4GBRC>

In the last couple of years, I've been producing short documentaries based on my book, which I've titled, "Bohemian Sodbusters." Although the book is sold on Amazon for minimal price to cover expenses, I have no pecuniary interests in any of

this work, which I did solely to inform my family and anyone else who might be interested. If you think any of your members would find my videos or book useful, you are welcome to any of this material. I am currently working on episode seven of the video series, which includes one on our cuisine. In the video at this link, I touch on the ancestors' trek to Bukovina and ultimately to Canada. <https://youtu.be/leKoIREjQ34?si=9t0NDoEO6pWOVVwr>

All the videos could be found via this link: <https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLkza3AtQtYucKgIbpyyOad5oTGdSKsLOy&si=UjiiQa-vCjU1oIsY>

A BRAVE YOUNG MOTHER SURVIVES THE HORRORS OF WORLD WAR II. A PERSISTENT FATHER FINALLY LOCATES HIS FAMILY IN THE AFTERMATH.

By Werner Zoglauer – May 5, 2024
Bukovina Society Newsletter Part 1 of 2

This is a story about a Bukovina German family, which like many other Bukovina German families, was significantly affected by the events of World War II. It is estimated that about 60,000 of the 150,000 to 200,000 Bukovina Germans who lived in Bukovina at the start of World War II, lost their lives due to the war and almost all lost their property and most of the possessions they had before the war.

My parents, Oskar Zoglauer (born 1919) and Olimpia Rutkowski Zoglauer (born 1920), were born in Bukovina, which until the end of World War I in 1919, was a province at the northeastern corner of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. Both Oskar's and Olimpia's ancestors had migrated from Germany/Austria and German Bohemia to Bukovina in the late 1780's through 1843 in response to Austria's invitation and desire to increase the population and economic activities in the Bukovina. The growing economy also attracted many non-German families all of which contributed and benefitted from the very diverse population of Bukovina. After World War I, Bukovina became a province of Romania and in 1947, after World War II, northern Bukovina, including Czernowitz, became part of Ukraine and the Soviet Union.

In 1940, at the outbreak of World War II, a pact between Hitler and Stalin required all German ethnic people to leave Bukovina and return to Germany. Both of my parents' families were given three weeks notice to prepare for the move. Oskar, his two married older brothers, and his widowed mother, Katharine Wimmer Zoglauer (born 1887) were allowed to take only a limited number of personal items and had to leave their small Radautz farm property and other possessions behind. Likewise, Olimpia, her parents (Ferdinand Rutkowski & Pauline Neumann), one married sister, two married brothers and a younger brother were also forced to leave most of their personal

possessions behind. Both family lines had lived in Bukovina for over 100 years.

The Bukovina families were transported to a number of German/Austrian cities for German citizenship processing. The two families of my parents were both sent to Dresden, a city in Germany, 900 miles west of Bukovina and 111 miles south of Berlin. It was during this time – probably early 1941, that my parents Oskar and Olimpia met for the first time. After the completion of their lengthy citizenship processing, Katharine and her son Oskar, were provided with a small farm in Grodziec, a small village near Bendsburg, as compensation for their Radautz farm, which they were forced to abandon. Until the end of World War I, Bendsburg was a city in south-eastern “Oberschlesien” (Upper Silesia), which was until then a Province in German Prussia. Today, it is called Bedzin, Poland and Grodziec is now part of Bedzin.

In September 1941, Katharine and her sons moved to the Grodziec farm. Katharine's oldest son, Raimund was a carpenter. He and his family set up a carpenter shop in the nearby village of Dabrowa. In the summer of 1942, Olimpia also moved to Grodziec, where she and Oskar were married in October 1942. In June 1943, Oskar was drafted into the German army as an interpreter. Still angry because of his forced uprooting from his former Bukovina home and the prior interruption of his college education, Oskar was not very happy with this. Older brothers Friedrich and Raimund were also drafted into the army about the same time. This meant that there were no men to help on the farm in a still strange community.

In November 1943, I (Werner) was born on the Grodziec farm. Olimpia was 23 and Katharine was 56 years old. Oskar was in the army. Even though they were able to hire some help occasionally, both women had a difficult time making ends meet. The fighting in the war was heating up on both the Eastern and Western Fronts and that made life very difficult for the civilians.

During furlough visits with Olimpia and his mother Katharine, Oskar let them know that he strongly opposed the war and that he expected Germany to lose. Oskar advised Katharine and Olimpia that they need to be aware that the German government will suppress any news about Russian advancement towards Bendsburg because the civilians can be an obstacle to Russian military advances. Together they agreed that if there is any awareness of Russian troops approaching, Katharine, Olimpia and Werner should escape by train to Dresden, where Olimpia's parents remained after their Citizenship processing and where Olimpia's father worked as a train locomotive engineer. Dresden was also further to the west and closer to the American and British armies. As the German losses mounted in late 1944, Olimpia and Katharine shipped most of the personal family belongings to Olimpia's parents in Dresden. In mid to late January 1945, they became aware that the Russian

army was approaching. Katharine, Olympia and Werner escaped on the last train leaving Bendsburg for Dresden.

The train ride itself was very dangerous because of the Allied bombing. The train was also slowed down because of the damage to the tracks. Olympia was over eight months pregnant and I was only 14 months old at the time. This placed a large burden on my grandmother Katharine during the trip. Fortunately, we all arrived safely in Dresden at the end of January or early February 1945 at the home of Olympia's parents in the Übigau district. When Olympia arrived in Dresden, she learned from her parents that Oskar, who had been suffering from a long battle with severe ulcers, somehow managed to have himself transferred to a hospital on the outskirts of Dresden, about 4 to 5 miles east of the city center.

On Sunday, February 11th, 1945, Olympia and other family members visited Oskar in the hospital for a happy and unexpected reunion. They talked about the serious war situation. As before, Oskar's survival instincts dominated the discussion topics. Olympia's family members, who lived in downtown Dresden, emphatically stated that they felt very safe in Dresden because the city had no military targets and it had never been attacked before. Oskar, however, strongly emphasized to his wife Olympia and his mother that he does not want them to live anywhere near the city center but preferably in a very rural area. Unfortunately, at that time, Dresden and the surrounding area was flooded with several hundred thousand refugees fleeing from the quickly advancing Russian armies and therefore their choices of living locations were limited.

To the frightening surprise of Dresden's residents, the bombing attacks started Tuesday evening the 13th of February 1945. That evening, my mother Olympia, my father's mother Katharine and I were at the home of Olympia's parents at the north edge of the Elbe river, in a house in the Übigau section of Dresden. Our location was about ½ mile north of the large railroad yard, which was a primary bombing target. Living in downtown Dresden apartments were Olympia's sister Anna and two children, Olympia's brother's wife and three children and Oskar's brother Friedrich's wife and children. They all lived at or near 17 Wallstrasse, which bombing plan maps show to be at the center of the bombing attacks.

I later learned that Kurt Vonnegut, who also survived the bombing of Dresden in "Slaughter House 5", was on the south side of the Elbe river, about ½ mile east of where my family and I were during the bombing.



Allied Bombing Plan for Dresden February 13, 1945
Übigau district is at upper left across river. Red lines - city center.

Concussion bombs, followed by napalm/incendiary bombs turned the center of the city into a raging firestorm which killed not only people in their homes, but also those who sought refuge in underground bomb shelters only to have the raging fire suck all of the air from the bunkers and suffocate them. Among the first victims were Olympia's sister Anna and two children, Oskar's brother Friedrich's wife Martha and children and several other close relatives. Fortunately, the wife and three children of Olympia's brother Rudolf were in an adjacent building and survived with minor burns, including then 6-year-old Maria. During our 1993 visit to Dresden, my cousin Maria told us that she remembers the horror she felt when she saw the shriveled-up and burned bodies of her relatives sprawled on the sidewalk and street, including aunt Anna and her baby son Dieter. Maria added that during the pause in the bombing, her mother somehow managed to walk through the burning and bombed streets with Maria and two younger siblings to reach the home of Olympia's parents, in the Übigau district, on the north side of the Elbe River.

Below: Burning bodies of bombing victims to avoid spread of disease



¹In 1993 Werner Zoglauer and his children Katharine, Kristine and Werner Jr. visited Maria in Dresden and the locations pertinent to Oskar, Olympia and their families during the War.



Dresden after the February 13-15, 1945 Bombing

Olimpia, Katharine and I were more fortunate than Olimpia's and Oskar's relatives who were in downtown Dresden. Our house on Zing Street in the Übigau district, was just outside the target circle for the first bombing wave on February 13th, but shockwaves and heat from the bombing fires could be felt for many miles from the bombed areas. When I was older, my mother and grandmother often described to me how my grandmother Katharine tried to shield me from any bombs that could hit our house by laying on top of me – I was only 14 months old. I may have a vague memory of that event but cannot be sure if that memory was formed from later stories from my mother and grandmother. My mother was then 9 months pregnant and expecting to give birth any day.

Heeding Oskar's previous admonition, Katharine and Olimpia took the first opportunity during the pause in the bombing to escape away from the city. Along with Olimpia's parents (my maternal grandparents) and the other family members, we all walked over 10 miles north and uphill from the Übigau Elbe River to safety in a palace called Schloss (Castle) Moritzburg. The raging firestorm over the city lit up the sky and helped guide our way on that cold February night, but the winter snow and the chaos all over made for a very difficult and dangerous journey. I can still see my mother's tears as she told me that story in later years, about how she was able to escape but her sister and the many relatives died during the bombing.

During my 1993 visit to Maria in Dresden, she recalled how her pregnant aunt Olimpia struggled along the way to Schloss Moritzburg, but managed to hold on with the help of her parents and other family members. Maria also told me that someone had to carry me the entire way. Also, during our 1993 trip to Dresden, I learned that the house we abandoned at the Elbe River was destroyed by a direct hit during later bombing

attacks on February 14th and 15th. The controversial count of deaths is estimated to be between 30,000 to 60,000 people died from the firestorm bombing. Many of the people who were in Dresden when the bombing started were not part of the then official population count – just like our family and the many other newly arrived refugees.

At Schloss Moritzburg, on the 14th of February 1945, a frightened and exhausted Olimpia gave birth to a baby boy. Olimpia promptly named him Dieter Oskar Zoglauer, firstly in memory of her sister Anna and son Dieter, both of whom died in the Dresden firestorm the evening before and secondly in memory of Dieter's father and Olimpia's husband, Oskar, whose bombing survival status was not known to Olimpia when she gave birth to Dieter. Several weeks later, most of the bombing refugees were transported from Moritzburg to the outlying villages and farms. Olimpia, Katharine, Werner and baby Dieter found refuge in the small village of Limbach, near Oschatz, about 35 miles northwest of Dresden. At that time, Oskar was not aware if we were still alive and my mother and grandmother were not aware if Oskar was still alive.



Schloss (Castle) Moritzburg today, 10 miles north from our Zing Strasse House in the Übigau district.

Limbach was both a blessing and a new nightmare. There, Olimpia and family were relatively safe from the bombing and the continuing war battles. However, they were now among strangers, without the immediate support of the larger family, without adequate food, dependent on the local farmers for food. They had no idea where Oskar was and they did not know if Oskar survived the bombing of Dresden. As the springtime wore on, the war was coming to an end and the Russian army occupied the area. The nearby Russian army base became the source of a new nightmare, particularly for Olimpia.

The Russian soldiers roamed the countryside and preyed on the civilian population, particularly at night, when they were on the hunt for young women, especially pretty young women like 25-year-old Olimpia. At first, Olimpia was able to hide in a closet in the apartment, while grandmother Katharine, with baby in hand, answered the call of the demanding and often drunk Russian soldiers pounding on the door. Katharine, under-nourished at age 58, war-worn and with the protection of young baby Dieter in her arms and 15-month-old Werner (me) by her side, convinced the disappointed soldiers to move on,

while mother Olimpia was able to hide in the apartment closet. This ruse, however stopped working, when a less fortunate neighbor and mother of four children, looking for any means to deflect the constant, almost daily assaults by the Russians, informed the Russians that in the apartment of the old lady with the baby in her arms is a beautiful young woman more to their liking than the mother of four.



2019 picture of Limbach apartment house where Olimpia, Katharine, Werner & Dieter lived after the 1945 Dresden bombing.

Fortunately, Olimpia anticipated this betrayal and started to sleep in the rear pigsty or the farm-fields at night. Years after the war, Olimpia would finally talk about those terrible nights in the pigsty and fields. While she crouched in fear of discovery and shivered in the cold nights in the pigsty and in the fields, her thoughts and worries about the safety of Katharine and the boys were frequently interrupted by the sounds and noises made by the mostly fearless, large rats, especially in the pigsty where she woke up one night when a rat was crawling on her. Finally, as mid-summer 1945 approached, the Russian troops were brought under control and Olimpia could again sleep in her apartment. During the day, Olimpia and Katharine worked odd jobs for the farmers to obtain food. Fortunately, the farmers were generous in allowing them to glean the fields after the harvest.



2019 picture of Limbach pigsty where Olimpia hid at night to avoid assault by Russian soldiers.

In the meantime, Oskar's experience since the February 1945 bombing was equally traumatic and personally dangerous to him. During the bombing, he lay in a bed in the hospital basement. The hospital was hit by some incendiary bombs, but he was not injured. Oskar's Soldier book shows he remained in the hospital at least until March 31, 1945. Thinking his family had perished, Oskar then made his way west towards the American troops, almost becoming their prisoner. In fact, Oskar often stated that he was an American prisoner and escaped, but I do not remember the details of that. Towards the end of the war on May 8, 1945, Oskar managed to work his way back east towards Dresden in order to either locate Olimpia and Katharine, or to locate someone who may know our location or our fate. Towards the end of August 1945, Oskar's search finally brought him to the city of Gera, about 60 miles southeast of Oschatz. He often told us the story of how he was standing at the Gera train station one evening, reading the missing, killed and search notices left by thousands of people who were also searching for their families. As he was reading the notices, he suddenly heard what he thought was a familiar voice yelling very loud from a slowly moving train; "Oskar, Oskar, your family is in Limbach, near Oschatz". (Afterwards, Oskar often talked about that moment. He said he did not see the lady's face, but he thinks he knew her in Radautz and recognized her voice.)

Part 2 will be included in the September 2024 Newsletter

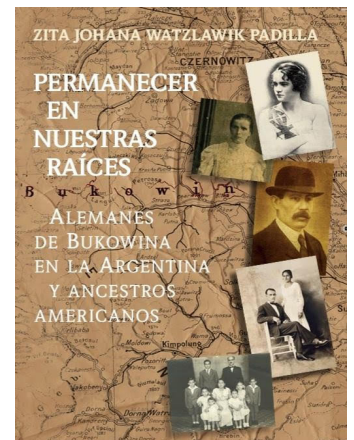
1. Oskar finds his family 6 months after the Dresden Bombing
2. Escape from Communist East Germany to West Germany

A BOOK RELEASE BY ZITA WATZLAWIK

Doug Reckmann

On April 22nd, I received an email from Life Member Zita Watzlawik. "It is my pleasure to inform you that my book 'Permanecer en Nuestras Raíces: Alemanes de Bukowina en la Argentina y Ancestros Americanos' [Stay in our Roots: Bukovina Germans in Argentina and American Ancestors] has been published in Buenos Aires; 208 pages, 140 photos and document copies, of course written in Spanish."

The book is a history of Zita's paternal grandparents, Johann Watzlawik/Waclawik and Petronella Tolkan, and their search for a better economic situation than the one available in Czernowitz and Augustendorf in North Bukovina. They decided to emigrate to Buenos Aires, Argentina with their 5 surviving children. The entire odyssey



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spanned over two decades, in four different ships, in four different years. Some members were already in Buenos Aires when the First World War, 1914-1918, separated the family. At the time, they did not know if they would ever again be reunited.

Zita's father, Ludwig, was the youngest of the eight children of Johann and Petronella. He was 16 years old when he arrived at the port of Buenos Aires in 1924 with his parents finally reuniting the family. He was amazed by the modern city. He quickly got a job doing form-work for reinforced concrete in the building construction industry in the center of Buenos Aires. He earned well and was able to save money. He wanted to travel and explore South America. The rest of the family, especially his older sister Albina, did not want the family to ever again be separated.

In 1932, when Ludwig was 24 years old and despite the family disapproval, he began an adventure through South America, visiting Paraguay, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Brazil. He ended up in a jungle area in Peru, in sight of the mighty Amazon River. "Sitting in the market on the Malecón in Inquitos, Peru, he was served savory delicacies of jungle food by Maria Padilla. They fell in love, married in 1933, and had 7 children." Zita's book also includes information about her mother's parents, Gustavo Padilla and Resurrección Cruz. It was only in 1950, when Zita was 10 years old, that her family finally returned to Buenos Aires to again reunite the family.

Zita's family relocated to the USA in 2000. Her son, Hernan Gonzalez Watzlawik, was a soldier in the US Army, serving in Kuwait and Iraq. On June 16th, 2005 he emailed her with exciting news: he had discovered "The Bukovina Society of the Americas" in Ellis, Kansas. Zita she would now be able to



L>R, Isaac Dan (grandson), Sandra Zita Gonzaley (daughter), Noa (g-granddaughter), Zita, Giovanna Dan (granddaughter)

discover her roots. This genealogical journey had started 10 years earlier when she discovered that there were no records in Argentina to document her family's origin: they were from Bukovina, but were they German, or Austrian, or Romanian?

Zita is very proud of her BSA Lifetime Membership (#192, 2010) and expressed her thanks to Oren Windholz and myself for our help and encouragement in her endeavor. Last winter, I was able to find her grandfather's birth in Banilla, and his baptism in Althütte. I was then able to tie into other records, and eventually find her family's roots in Bohemia.

Zita's nephew, Nestor Ginart, has organized an event in Buenos Aires on June 14th to present the book to relatives, German organizations, and cultural organizations. When Zita returns to the US, she will also have a presentation in LA. And possibly also a presentation in Lima, Peru. I will attempt to keep the BSA members informed.