



The Bukovina Society of the Americas NEWSLETTER

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

Vol. 15 No. 2 June 2005

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BUKOVINA PEOPLE AND EVENTS

- Bukovina Society members Joe Erbert (Ellis, KS) and Oren Windholz participated in the German Heritage Days held in Hays, KS on April 1-2, 2005. This is the third year that the Ellis County Historical Society, along with other local businesses, has sponsored this event, which focuses on seminars on the German Heritage of Ellis County and the State of Kansas. Joe gave a talk on the history and design of the hammered dulcimer followed by a demonstration. In his spare time Joe builds these instruments. Those attending past Bukovinafests will undoubtedly recall his musical renditions, which delighted all. Oren spoke of the similarities and differences between the Volga Germans and the Bukovina Germans. Basing his presentation on information gleaned from interviews and research as well as from his own family ties both to the Volga and the Bukovina Germans, Oren expanded on themes relevant to both groups.
- Doris Rennert Hochman (West Palm Beach, NY) sent an email to the Society after discovering our website from a man in Denmark who had information on her Rennert family. She informs us that her father, Max Rennert, emigrated with his family from Bukovina to the United States in 1920, settling in Manhattan. Here he along with his family and friends joined a Bukovina Society, which has long since disbanded.
- International Board member Doug Reckmann is proud of the mature beech tree in his yard in Portland OR. Many volunteer trees have popped up in his garden, so he has made an offer to anyone willing to transplant them. Recently he sent a batch to the Bukovina Society. The seedlings have been placed in a nursery for later planting at the Bukovina Society headquarters.
- LAST CALL for members to return the planning survey mailed with the last Newsletter. Please forward your responses to Steve Parke at PO Box 7261, Pueblo West, CO, 81007, or to the Bukovina Society, PO Box 81 Ellis, KS 67637. For more information, you may contact Steve at 719-547-1327 or e-mail him at sparke@pcisys.net
- The Grayson and District History Book, a 900 page hardcover book with 900 pictures will be the centerpiece of the 100th anniversary of the founding of Grayson, Canada. There is a brief history of the immigration of the many Grayson people to Saskatchewan. Bukovina immigrants were the predominant group and their family stories in the book give a unique perspective of their history. The book is available only by prepayment with a deadline of September 1, 2005 for \$90.00 (Canadian) and \$15.00

(Canadian) for mailing, made payable to Grayson History Book. Order from: Grayson & District History Book, Box 6, Grayson, SK S0A 1E0, Canada. An email copy of the brochure is available from: lbisch@sasktel.net

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

by Steve Parke (Pueblo West, CO)

The project "Remembering Our History and Envisioning Our Future" has revealed some interesting statistics on membership. A full report of this survey will be presented and discussed at the Society's annual membership meeting in Ellis, KS on July 28, 2005. All members are invited and welcome to attend.

The following statistics have been compiled based on a current membership of 343:

- 41 members or 12% reside in Ellis County of whom 59% are life members.
 - 42 members or another 12% reside in other Kansas localities outside of Ellis County of whom 57% are life members.
 - 183 members or 53% live in states in the USA outside of Kansas of whom 38% are life members.
 - 52 members or 15% live in Canada of whom 27% are life members.
 - 19 members or about 5.5% live in Germany of whom 26% are life members.
 - 7 members with one each from Australia, Austria, Brazil, Germany, Israel, Sweden, and the United Kingdom account for 2% of the total membership.
- Overall: 25% of the members reside in Kansas with 53% elsewhere in the USA and the remaining 22% outside its borders.

BUKOVINA SOCIETY WEBSITE UPDATE

by Werner Zoglauer (Naperville, IL)

Three years ago, on May 1, 2002 our new website at www.bukovinasociety.org went public with the goal of becoming the premier internet location for information about our German speaking Bukovina ancestors and their descendents, worldwide. Since then the site has grown its content to over 200 pages of Culture, History and Genealogy related articles, mostly in English, but some articles also in

German and Portuguese (Brazilian). Additional popular features include our online store for purchasing Bukovina related books, maps and souvenirs and a very active Guest Book, which has enabled the reunion of several long lost cousins.

Our most recent addition of an enhanced Genealogy Database Server, has allowed us to make available to our members, a collection of over 215,000 names related to Bukovina ancestors and their descendents. These names are maintained by several dedicated Bukovina Genealogists who freely share the results of their hard work with our members. This part of the website has become very popular and has attracted many new members from the USA, Canada, Germany, Austria, Australia, Brazil, Israel, Poland, Romania and Sweden.

We greatly appreciate the support of our website contributors, whose dedication and hard work fills our website with very informative content. Of course, also a big thank you to the many website visitors who have communicated to us their appreciation for the Bukovina Society's website.

THE FOUNDING OF THE ZIPSER VILLAGE OF JAKOBENY

by Claus Stephani

Published under the title, "Perg- Ont Hittnoabeta: Zur Entstehung der Gemeinde Jakobeny im Buchenland," (Miner – and Foundry Worker: The Founding of the Community of Jakobeny in Bukovina) in Neuer Weg (Bucharest), trans. Sophie A. Welisch, Vol. 30, No. 9203, December 19, 1978), p.6.

According to Zipser tradition Jakobeny derives its name from a Romanian shepherd, Iacoban. This Iacoban reputedly came from the village of Valea Putnei (Putnathal). One day he drove his flock along the Moldava River to the Golden Bistriz. Here in the lovely Bistriz Valley he built a log cabin and lived there until he died.

When in 1785 the first eight German families from the Zips (Slovakia) – Schröder, Mieslinger, Stark, Schneider, Knobloch, Wahnsiedel, Hoffmann and Theiss – settled here, Iacoban, according to oral reports – was already an old man with a long white beard.

In 1937 The Bukovina folklorist Franz Lang described the family history of a Jakobeny miner in the old melodic Zipser dialect: "My great grandfather immigrated from the Zips and was a miner and foundry worker. The Arschtzberg mine produced manganese. In the mountains one can still see the smelter as evidence, which the Zipsers had built. The foundry and machine tools are still in use.

It is a fact that as early as 1783 masons and carpenters from a Transylvanian military unit had started work on the construction of a smelter – the first installation of this kind in southern Bukovina; thus in 1784 arose the settlement of Fundu Fieru (Eisenthal) on the Eisenbach, a tributary of the Golden Bistriz. The first settlers included the Zipser families of Weisshaupt, Brier, Klein, Scheike, Henig (also Hönig) and Stark. The oldest house supposedly was located "under the cliff"; it belonged to Johann Klein.

After Karl Manz , Knight of Mariensee, acquired the iron works in 1796, another forty German families from the Zips, responding to his offer, migrated to Jakobeny in the first decade of the nineteenth century. Among them, according to a report of the Bukovina Chamber of Commerce, we find the names of the following heads of families: Hoffmann (mining judicial replacement), Mieslinger (master foundry man), Schröder (?), Stark (manager), and Gleisner from Freudenthal (mining administrator).

With the later immigration of German specialists from the Zips and also from Upper Silesia, e.g., the forebears of the families of Jalowsky, Gaschinsky, Nikelsky, Zawetzky, Gorsky, Schirosky, Ottschowsky, Terschansky and others, Jakobeny emerged as the oldest Zipser settlement of Bukovina and as significant large community, which in the 1930s counted over 3000 inhabitants.

In Jakobeny organized education in the German language existed as early as 1808. The first teacher Christian Leiser, was a "master shoemaker" by trade. He taught school in order that "the children should become smarter than their parents," as the forester Franz Gotsch noted in his memoirs. The teacher Leiser was compensated for his important work by the families Steiner, Krieger, Lang, Muhm, Gärtner, Gotsch, Sapadi, Kollarek and by the previously-named families, who built "an attractive large school with two rooms" and paid the teacher a monthly wage. This "schoolhouse" was demolished around the turn of the century under the leadership of Carl Frankendorfer, who came from the Hungarian city of Modra (Modern); it was replaced by two new school buildings, which are still extant today.

In its layout Jakobeny, in contrast with other Zipser towns, is a characteristic ribbon development with mostly wide, well-tended streets: Haaschgasse, Krötengasse, Fuhrmanngasse, Obere Gasse, Manzenthalergasse, Schwegelbadgasse, Tschudinagasse, Androjagasse, Eisenthalgasse, and finally Kälbergasse ("Am Kloppoarsch," [dialect: hit rear end]), since here live the hit-rear-end Zipsers, who sat in front of their houses in the evening and whacked the passing cattle with sticks in order to hasten their movement. The inhabitants of the Kälbergasse, rightly or wrongly, were the butt of many jokes. They were ambitious and friendly people, only they had the misfortune of living on Kälbergasse.

In 1900 the first Zipser worker, Reinhold Kappel relocated from Jakobeny to the Nösner Land toward Birgäu (Burgau); there followed in the spring of 1901 Levinus Hennel, and in the fall Michael Knobloch, both from Jakobeny. Between 1901 and 1924 a further thirty-two Jakobeny families: Altzenauer, Ellschläger, Maitner, Gaschinsky, Bernhard, Klein, Krieger, Wenzel and others moved to the Nösner Land and settled in Livezile (Jaad, where "Am Lahmrich" there is a Zipser row), Unirea (Wallendorf), Craimimăt (Baierdorf), Budacul de Jos (Deutsch-Budak), Rodna Veche (Altrodna), Ilva (Illau) and Bistriz.

BORI REMEMBERED

by Sophie A. Welisch, Ph.D. (Congers, NY)



Wayside Shrine in Bori (Photo: 1995)

This essay is based in large part on the introduction (pp. 1-7) of *The Bori Story: Genealogies of the German-Bohemian Families Who in 1835 Founded Bori in Bukovina* (Now in Romania) with History of the Village and Its People published privately by Maria Lang Becker, Larry R. Jensen and Sophie A. Welisch in 1996.

June 2005 marks the 170th anniversary of the founding of the village of Bori in southern Bukovina. Now incorporated into the neighboring town of Gurahumora and populated by ethnic Romanians, Bori once

provided a home for a group of Germans whose forebears had left the Bohemian Forest in 1835 in search of a better livelihood. After annexing Bukovina in 1774 the Austrian government devised measures to settle the region and sent its representatives throughout the realm and beyond in search of viable candidates. Inducements such as free land, exemption from taxation for a definite period of time and exemption from military service were the red flags, which brought several German thousand colonists to Bukovina.

While government-subsidized immigration to Austria's easternmost region had begun in the late 18th century with colonists from the Rhineland and the Palatinate, it was not until the early to mid-19th century that Germans from Bohemia responded in greater numbers to the Emperor's invitation. Eventually the German-Bohemians would become the most numerous of the German colonists in Bukovina, exceeding the Palatines and the Zipsers. They founded numerous villages, many of which centered on glass production, farming and lumbering: Althütte (1793), Putna (1797), Karlsberg and Fürstenthal (1803), Neuhütte (1815), Lichtenberg (1835), Pojana Mikuli/Buchenhain and Schwarztal (1841), Glitt (1843) and Augustendorf (1850). According to Hugo Weczerka, (*Die Deutschen im Buchenland, Holzner-Verlag, Würzburg/Main, 1955, p. 20*) the total number German-Bohemian colonists, including those who were state-subsidized or who came on their own initiative, numbered between 1100-1330. Reasons for emigration include among others: population explosion, scarcity of land, no opportunity in the service professions, widespread poverty, poor harvest and famines, and the arbitrariness of military service.

Our immediate concern, however, is Bori and its inhabitants. Traveling in a group of fifty-four families, thirty of whom would be to be settled in Bori and the balance in Lichtenberg, their odyssey began in Budweis (Moravia) on May 8, 1835 with officially designated stops at Brünn, Olmütz, Wadowitz, Bochnia, Tarnow, Przemyśl, Sambor and Kolomea. Lacking horses, they conveyed their meager possessions in dog-drawn carts or pulled the carts themselves on a journey of some 600 miles. On June 10 they arrived in Czernowitz and six days later reported to the government office in Solka to register for the promised land allotments.

Across the Humor Stream from Gurahumora, the colonial families received land from the state but only after years of hassling with the authorities. Before it could be farmed, the land first had to be cleared, a process which took almost four years. During that time the colonists sustained themselves by plying their crafts (e.g., that of carpenter, blacksmith, mason, butcher, wheelwright) and working as day-wage laborers in Gurahumora.

Who were these colonists and from whence did they hail? Alfred Klug (*Die Besiedlung von Bori, Czernowitz, 1935, pp. 30-32*) identifies them as indicated below, whereas their origin (italicized) in the Bohemian Forest has been partially gleaned from contemporary genealogical research. According to 1835 house numbers, the colonists included: (1) Josef Hoffmann (Seewiesen) with Barbara Mirwald, (2) Josef Schaffhauser with Katharina Hartinger, (3) Franz Rippel (Seewiesen) with Eva Wellisch (Seewiesen), (4) Johann Stauber with Katharina Koller, (5) Wenzel Hilgarth with Katharina Löffelmann (Köppeln), (6) Veit Seidl (Rehberg) with Franziska Hawlik (Rehberg), (7) Xaver Kraus (Seewiesen) with Barbara Wellisch (Seewiesen), (8) Josef Günthner (Seewiesen) with Katharina Wiesenbauer, (9) Josef Hollaczek with Anna Joachim, (10) Johann Lang with Katharina Weigel (Seewiesen), (11) Josef Brandl (Seewiesen) with Maria Theresia Denk (Seewiesen), (12) Johann Joachimsthaler (Rehberg) with Theresia Zimmermann, (13) Michael Lang with Franziska Häussler, (14) Johann Schafaczek (Seewiesen) with Anna Maria Joachim, (15) Jakob Gerhardt (Rehberg) with Katharina Brandl, (16) Johann Haas with Katharina Straub, (17) Johann Lang

(Mittelkörnalsz) with Katharina Schaffhauser (Hirschenstein), (18) Franz Klostermann with Julianna Haas, (20) Franz Brandl (Seewiesen) with Rosina Weber (Rotseifen), (21) Georg Brandl (Seewiesen) with Katharina Wellisch (Seewiesen), (22) Peter Hoffmann with Anna Szeszavny, (23) Wenzel Hilgarth with Anna Szeszavny after death of her first husband, Peter Hoffmann, (24) Sebastian Wellisch (Seewiesen) with Barbara Rückl (Seewiesen), (25) Wenzel Pilsner (Bergreichenstein) with Margaretha Rab, after her death: Theresia Brandl (Seewiesen), (26) Georg Hellinger (Seewiesen) with Anna Maria Denk (Swina); (27) Lorenz Haas with Barbara Hartinger, (28) Anton Schaffhauser with Anna Marie Brandl (Seewiesen), (29) Christof Reichhardt with Barbara Joachimsthaler (Sattelberg), after her death: Magdalena Kohlruss, (30) Jakob Koller (Hohestock) with Barbara Treppel.

The first years proved difficult ones for the colonists. Aside from the disputes with government authorities over the fulfillment of the terms of the settlement contract, they endured famine and cholera in 1848-49 and again in 1866. A communal spirit and strong family cohesiveness helped them to survive. Usually one or two among them had rudimentary medical skills and could set bones, pull teeth, cauterize wounds, and understood the healing properties of plants.

From the very beginning Bori had its own school, the colonist Johann Schafaczek serving as its first teacher. But for church services the villagers of Bori had to attend the Church of the Holy Trinity in Gurahumora. To save their footwear, it was not unusual for them to walk barefooted to Gurahumora and put on their shoes shortly before entering the church.

Bori had no markets or industry and only late in the interwar period did it have a small grocery. But Tuesday was market day in Gurahumora and it was here the Boriers brought their excess farm produce and bought the supplies they needed. Their main occupations remained small-scale farming, which they plied along with a trade, which usually involved Bukovina's forest. Lumbering, the transport of lumber, carpentry and cabinet making were high on the list of occupations.

Upward mobility was difficult but not impossible with land ownership the primary outward sign of wealth. Those who could afford to do so sent their children, primarily their sons, for a secondary school education at the Gymnasium in Gurahumora. A select few continued at the University of Czernowitz, where they could pursue law, language and literature or philosophy. For a son of daughter to enter religious life was a great honor and brought distinction to the family. Usually lacking funds for the higher education required for the priesthood, talented young men of modest means could sometimes receive a scholarship through the Church to pursue their studies for the priesthood. Until 1919 seminarians from Bukovina usually studied theology at the University of Lemberg (Lviv) in neighboring Galicia.

After an elementary school education most young men sought an apprenticeship in the trades. Upon successful completion of the apprenticeship and a period as journeyman, the aspirant qualified as a master craftsman (Meister), could open his own shop, and take apprentices. Opportunities for women were more limited. Bori women might become seamstresses, laundress, cooks or go into domestic service. Marriage was a given, so from childhood females were trained in homemaking, cooking and child care.

But the village could not develop in peace. World War I wreaked havoc among the inhabitants of Bori. Not only were its young men called to serve on the Russian and Italian fronts, but their village and province came under Russian military occupation for three years. Subjected to plunder, impressments for manual labor and quartering of troops, the Boriers rejoiced at the war's end although they faced an

uncertain future. Their wartime sacrifices in men and materiel had been in vain. With the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1919 Bukovina passed under Romanian sovereignty by virtue of the Treaty of Trianon, which brought major readjustments in the lives of its German minority.

Under Austrian rule (1774-1918) German was the official language and Catholicism the state religion. Speaking a dialect of German similar to that current in Bavaria and Upper Austria and overwhelmingly Catholic, their ethnic identity and exercise of religion had been assured under the Habsburgs. However, with the cession of Bukovina to Romania after World War I the tables were turned: German lost its official status and Romanian Orthodoxy became the state religion. Aside from the Romanization measures of Bucharest during the interwar period, the Bukovina villagers also suffered the effects of the worldwide depression.

The Austrian census of 1900 based on national identity recorded 298 inhabitants of Bori in 1900, of whom 297 were German (Norbert Zimmer, *Die deutschen Siedlungen im Buchenland [Bukowina]*, [Verlag Günther Wolff/Plauen im Vogtland, 1930], p. 33). By 1930 the figure stood at 305 (Erwin Massier, Josef Talsky, and B.C. Grigorowicz, eds., *Bukowina: Heimat von Gestern*, [Karlsruhe, 1956], p. 305). Given the prolific birth rate among the German Bohemians of that era, which averaged perhaps seven - eight children per family, one must seek to explain this negligible population increase over a three-decade period. Where did the surplus population go?

The descendancy charts in *The Bori Story*, encompassing over 7000 names, also indicate population movements. Descendants of the thirty families who settled in Bori may today be found in twenty-seven countries and on all continents. The reasons for the decision to leave the Bohemian Forest 170 years ago continued to be operative with lack of economic opportunity strongly in the forefront. By the 1880s land again had become scarce and younger sons began to look elsewhere for their survival. Some relocated to other towns and villages in Bukovina; others settled in Bosnia after its annexation by Austria in 1908 while wave after wave crossed the Atlantic to Brazil, Canada and the United States.

But here and there a cause for rejoicing presented itself in Bori, for example the 1935 centennial celebration of its founding. On this occasion an estimated 3000 people participated in the ceremonies with guests in attendance from Germany as well as from Staffelsein in Bohemia. Deacon Schüttler praised the Boriers for remaining faithful to the practices and traditions of the forefathers; Captain Apostolescu directed songs by the Catholic German youth clubs accompanied by a military band. As the *Czernowitzer Deutsche Tagespost* reported on July 23:

The entire village was adorned with flags. Triumphal arches with German and Romanian inscriptions greeted the guests . . . In a long column the festive procession began its march from Gurahumora at about 9:00 a.m. in order to participate in the open air mass in Bori. In the vanguard came the military band, then the happy youth with their pennants and banners, the representatives of the other clubs followed by some 500 adolescent boys and girls, and finally the adults. A festively decorated altar had been constructed, whose cross, visible from afar, loomed large against the distant horizon.

It was the Right Reverend Anastasius Sonntag of Augustendorf who delivered the ceremonial address. In a moving speech he traced the lot of the villagers, their struggles, deprivations and disappointments, the illness and death which some colonists had sustained en route, the difficult circumstances under which they had cultivated the land. Pater Sonntag concluded by praising the Boriers for their most precious legacy: loyalty to their faith and to their German language.

But this celebratory mood was short-lived. With the outbreak of war in 1939 a long shadow descended over Eastern Europe, which soon became a battlefield. Along with their Bukovinian co-nationals, the Bori inhabitants opted for transfer to Germany and in the fall of 1940 abandoned the land they had called home for over a century. In the path of the advancing Soviet armies in 1944, Bori suffered devastation and the loss of many of its original colonial homes. In some cases houses were demolished for their wood, which was used as fuel. After the war Bori was incorporated into neighboring Gurahumora, which today is a fair-sized town with a population of 25,000.

Walking down its unpaved street today, the visitor in Bori still finds evidence that Germans once lived there. Small wayside chapels inscribed with "Gelobt sei Jesus Christus" (praised be Jesus Christ) are still extant. Moreover, the architecture of the houses and gates stand in sharp contrast to that of the Romanians. Bori today has electrification. The school built by the colonists continues to serve about 30-35 pupils each academic year. Grades 1-2 are combined into one classroom and grades 3-4 in another, after which the pupils continue their elementary education in neighboring Gurahumora. German is no longer taught; nor does one hear it in the street. But one still finds in Bori the hospitality of bygone days. As we strolled along its main road, ladies greeted us with smiles and flowers they had just picked for us in their gardens. Despite the language barrier, we knew we were welcome.

OUR FAMILY HISTORY

by Gertrud Siewi, née Rankel (Tiefenbach, Germany)
translated by Sophie A. Welisch

Emigration from Bohemia. The reasons leading to emigration from the homeland, are varied: overpopulation, shortage of land, no prospects in certain occupational fields, widespread poverty, poor harvests and hunger, regulations and the implementation of military service.

Excessive rainfall in 1770 led to a poor harvest, followed by a raising of prices in 1771 and the onset of a severe famine. In 1772 the population, already weakened by hunger, was subjected to typhus, which claimed many lives, leading to many properties changing hands.

The adverse effects of the decline of earlier German settlements in the eastern Austrian Empire became obvious in time. To counter this development and to strengthen its rule and cultivate the barren districts the Habsburgs as early as during the reign of Charles VI (d. 1740) recruited numerous settlers for its eastern lands.

The great eastern colonization, begun under his successor Maria Theresia and continued by Joseph II and Francis II, finally offered the inhabitants of the Bohemian Forest a chance to establish a new livelihood far from their homeland in other territories of the Empire including Bukovina.

Bukovina. In a document dated 1412 a forested region between the Hungarian border and the upper source of the Sereth (River) appears as great Bukovina, another on the Pruth (River) as small Bukovina. This area, annexed in 1774 from the Ottoman Empire by Austria after the Russo-Turkish War (1768-1772), was designated as Bukovina/Buchenland. It was a barren, desolate land. Even its capital of Czernowitz was merely a pitiful village of some 200 mud huts, which did not even have well water. Conditions in the countryside were more than primitive. But the sparsely settled region offered sufficient fertile land for population settlement.

The first wave of immigration to Bukovina resulted purely through private initiative in the year 1793. Glass production plants were founded in Krasna, in the forest near Putna. In 1803 settlers from the

central Bohemian Forest also established another glass production plant in Fürstenthal near Mardzina.

But the glass installations in Bukovina failed to yield the expected results and were sooner or later abandoned. A large number of workers in the glass installations and lumbermen remained in their respective villages as artisans and small farmers. Many of their sons later settled in communities founded by German Bohemians elsewhere in Bukovina.

The second wave of immigration. Since Bukovina needed stalwart farmers and capable artisans, the Austrian government issued an "imperial travel pass" to recruit German settlers. Germans from three distinct regions responded to the Emperor's appeals for colonization in Bukovina. The southwest Germans, called "Swabians," settled in the east. Zipsers from the High Tatra Mountains (today in Slovakia) established themselves in the hilly southwest. The German Bohemians, recruited as glass workers and lumbermen between 1793-1817, found a home in the foothills of the Carpathians, while those arriving between 1835-1850 took up residence as farmers in central and southern areas of Bukovina. Only in the 1830s can one speak of a wave of German migration to Bukovina. Their villages of origin were in the central Bohemian Forest (e.g., Neuhurkenthal, Hurkenthal, Althurkenthal). In most cases we are dealing here with very poor and prolific families. The average age of the males ranged between 30 - 45 years.

Since the list of inhabitants of Hurkenthal includes the name of Rankl, one can conclude that our great-great grandfather, Franz Rankel, born in 1791 (birthplace unknown) presumably emigrated from the Bohemian Forest to Bukovina as a colonist in 1830. He married Theresia Hasenkopf from Weide, in Bohemia, and died in Lichtenberg, Bukovina in 1864.

In preparation for the long trip of over 1000 kilometers from their home to the east, the lumbermen sold everything, which they could not take with them. They loaded the bare necessities into a small wagon, which in most cases they had to pull themselves. With tearful faces and always a return glance they abandoned their beloved Bohemian Forest. The journey took them directly through Bohemia and Moravia, to Budweis, Iglau, Brünn, Olmütz, and Teschen. In Bukovina they temporarily stayed in Radautz, Glitt, Solka, Karlsberg and Fürstenthal while awaiting their promised land allotments. During this time mud huts or caves provided shelter and they "earned" their living as day wage laborers.

The colonists had to wait many months, indeed years, until they were granted land. Of the promised 30 Jochs of property, they received only 5 Jochs (1 Austrian Joch - 0.5755 hectares, 1 hectare = 2.5 acres). More importantly, they were not allotted arable fields and pastures but rather untamed wooded hilly land, which first laboriously had to be cleared. 1835 witnessed the founding of the first German Bohemian agricultural village of Bori. That same year a second group from the Bohemian Forest founded Lichtenberg on the imperial road between Mardzina and Glitt, a region infamous for banditry.

The Bukovina Germans remained true to their ethnic traditions albeit they were far from their original homeland, living in the mist of people of other religious beliefs and speech. Assimilation with the indigenous population or those with a different mother tongue occurred only rarely.

Only under the influence of the German farmers did a systematic agricultural economy develop in Bukovina. In place of the uncultivated virgin forests, there arose in time abundant pasturelands and fields of wheat, rye, barley, clover and potatoes. Previously only corn, flax and hemp had been farmed. The good German plow, drawn by horses, was even in later times viewed by the indigenous population as a work of

wonder, which the Germans had obtained from the devil's workshop. The villages resembled horseshoe-shaped or double-rowed settlements as e.g., in Lichtenberg.

However, the Germans not only advanced material culture but contributed significantly to its cultural development. Before its annexation by Austria, Bukovina had virtually no schools; in time over 500 elementary schools had opened throughout the land. In 1909 seventy-six elementary schools were conducted exclusively in German. German remained the official language until 1918.

The upheavals of World War I resulted in Romania's doubling its size. The population rose from 7 million to 16 million, of whom 28 percent were minorities. But the rights guaranteed the minorities [by the Treaty of St. Germain] were not respected. More importantly, a systematic Romanization of the schools and public administration were carried out as was land reform. Between 1919-1925 the number of German schools had been reduced to twenty-two.

In June 1940 the Soviet Union issued an ultimatum to Romania, demanding the annexation of Bessarabia as well as northern Bukovina. On the recommendation of Germany and Italy, Romania yielded to Soviet demands. It was this event, which triggered the transfer to the Reich of the Germans living in these areas.

On September 5 the Soviet Union and Germany "agreed to resettlement in Germany of the people of German descent from the areas of Bessarabia and northern Bukovina." This agreement detailed specific conditions, as, among others, who qualified for resettlement. Everyone who could document at least one German grandparent was considered German and therefore eligible for resettlement. On September 15, 1940 the Resettlement Commission for north Bukovina with its headquarters in Czernowitz, began its work. On September 27 the first rail transport with 1000 evacuees arrived in Germany. On November 17, 1940 the last transport crossed the border, as per agreement. The luggage per person could not exceed 50 kilograms. [A similar agreement between Germany and Romania provided for the transfer of the German population in south Bukovina.—SW]

We were prepared to leave a land which overnight had become alien to us. It was no longer our homeland and could offer us no protection. It was conceivable that German-Soviet relations would so deteriorate that even before a resettlement to Germany, there would be a deportation to Siberia.

And indeed in 1941, in the wake of the German attack on the Soviet Union, some 400,000 Volga Germans, 50,000 Germans from the Caucasus, and 40,000 Crimean Germans as well as some from Volhynia and the Black Sea region were deported to Siberia.

In 1940 a total of 95,700 Germans were transferred to Germany with only 7,295 remaining in Bukovina. The older people, in particular, found it hard to leave the land, which their forebears had made arable by the sweat of their brow and by their bare hands. The younger generation, more easily influenced, accepted the guarantees of the SS troopers about the resettlement. Equipped with documents of prospective farmsteads four times the size of those they owned [in Bukovina] which they would receive after a 4-6 week stay in a [transition] camp, they left their homeland. Upon their arrival in Germany the evacuees were classified into two categories: A and O cases. These classifications were based on ethnic ancestry. If, for example, an individual had only one German grandparent, he was placed in the A group [A = Altreich, i.e., old empire, and destined for settlement in the kernel German areas—SW]. Those classified as O, on the other hand, were deemed of purely German ancestry and settled in the newly conquered territories of East Upper Silesia, the Warthe (Warte) District or West Prussia. [In the first instance (A cases) the people were to be Germanized; in the

second instance (O cases), the people were to Germanize the territory.—SW]

But settlement often took as long as eighteen months. After their arrival in Germany the transferees were sent to various camps. From there the men and adolescent boys were inducted into the army, the Waffen-SS or into the labor service. They also played their part in the history of World War II.

Camps at which the family of Adolf Rankel stayed:

- Linzdorf (Techonin) Nov. 25, 1940 –May 3, 1941
- Rokitnitz May 3, 1941-June 12, 1941
(Rokynice v. Orlickych Horach)
- Schreckenstein (Stekov) June 12, 1941-Nov. 27, 1941
- Aussig (Usti nad Labem) Nov. 27, 1941-Mar. 14, 1942
- Schreckenstein Mar. 14, 1942-Nov. 5, 1942
- Nestomitz (Nestemice) Nov. 5, 1942-Dec. 14, 1942
- Loben (Lobodno) Dec. 14, 1942-Mar. 23, 1943

On November 25 the Rankel Family arrived in camp No. 47 in Linsdorf. Everyone was assigned one straw mattress and one pillow. Each person also received a weekly stipend of 4 RM [Reich Marks]. On March 30, 1941 my mother got one article of clothing, namely an apron. Work details, e.g., eight days of shoveling snow, repairing the railroad and the like, were entered as “work status” on a weekly basis.

On March 24, 1943 Adolf and Maria Rankel were assigned farmstead No. II with living quarters No. 29a in Klein-Wrenczia, District of Blachstädt (see below). The family of Josef Rankel was settled a few kilometers further in Gruszewina. Each person received 60 Reich Marks as transition money from the Welfare Office of the NSDAP [National Socialist German Workers’ Party].



According to the official staff sources, this represented only a temporary measure. The final resettlement was not to take place until after the war.

These farmsteads were not bad although they were constantly being overrun and robbed by Polish partisans. The settlers were absolutely defenseless, since almost all the men had been inducted into military service. The satisfaction at having finally having one’s own farmstead, although plagued by partisan attacks, was nonetheless of short duration. Early in 1945, as the advance of the Soviet army appeared imminent, the settlers had to flee their homes.

Those who remained were either deported or died a miserable death. On their westward flight to Bavaria and Austria the treks traveled through the Sudetenland, some refugees traversing the places of origin of their forebears in the Bohemian Forest. Today the Bukovina Germans are scattered throughout Germany.

Of the six children of Ludwig Rankel, Franz immigrated to America in 1929. Ludwig Rankel was a POW in France. Marika Rankel, who married a Baumgartner, decided to go with her family to Mecklenburg in Hither Pomerania. Eduard Rankel found a new home with his family in Seehausen/Brandenburg. Josef Rankel with his family and Adolf Rankel (he had been separated from his family until May 1947) came via Aue/Saxony (stayed there between January 1, 1945 – April 1, 1945) to Lower Bavaria. Arriving at the railroad station in Neufahrn, Lower Bavaria they stayed one week in the waiting room of the railroad station until being assigned temporary living quarters. They were then sent to the camp in Inkofen, in the district of Rottenburg/Laber. The dance hall of the Miesslinger Hotel was made available for the refugees.

In September 1946 the Rankels in Laber, house No. 1 were quartered with the siblings Kathl and Hans Wagensonner (farmers in Laber).

It was not easy for the local population to accept the waves of refugees. It was even harder for the refugees who were forced to start from scratch. As conditions returned somewhat to normal, one began to revive the old traditions from the homeland. The women, especially, could now do their own thing at their “own” stove. The slaughtering of a pig was an especial event. Barley sausages were made. The children were asked to take the sausage soup to the neighborhood. “Galuschte” (Krautwickler, stuffed cabbage), the coveted “G’ston’a” (Sulz, jellied meat), “Totschn” (Reiberdatschi, baked grated potatoes) with roast pork were and still today remain a delicacy. The same can be said for “Mamaliga mit Bierlagnantsch” (Maismehl mit Wasser abgerührt dazu Erdberren mit Rahm, corn meal much with strawberries and cream).

“Our people” succeeded in participating in Germany’s general economic resurgence, enabling them again to own their own homes and to gain respect.

