

# The Bukovina Society of the Americas NEWSLETTER

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

Vol. 19, No. 4 December 2009

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Membership Dues:  
Lifetime \$150.00  
Annual \$15.00

## BUKOVINA BRIEFS

- The Society *Newsletter* has been enhanced by the addition of Irmgard Ellingson and Rebecca Hageman as co-editors. They have both been contributors of content, as well as tireless workers for the Society, and we are pleased they have accepted new duties.
- Welcome to our newest life members, number 184, Beatrice and Virgil Taylor, Grand Junction, CO #185, Kenneth Stillinger, Omaha, NE, #186, Jack G. Shiller, M.D. Ridgefield CT, #187, Gail Tremblay, St. Charles, MO, and #188, Christine Savin, Phoenix, AZ.
- A new membership certificate has been made available to all life members and will automatically be sent to those receiving the *Newsletter* by email and to new members as they join.
- A small, but very enthusiastic group of Bukovinians gathered at the Ellis headquarters for a very interesting variety of programs during the Bukovinafest celebrating our 20th anniversary. During this time, the annual meeting of the Society was conducted. Reelected to the Board of Directors were, Becky Hageman, Shirley Kuppertz, Joe Erbert, and Eileen Goetz. Elected to fill an unexpired term was Darrell Seibel.
- Irmgard Ellingson and her husband, the Rev. Wayne Ellingson, are currently in the process of

relocating. She can be contacted at 200 Highland Drive - #2, Decorah IA 52101, by cell phone at (641) 220-3494, or by e-mail at [irmgardellingson@yahoo.com](mailto:irmgardellingson@yahoo.com). Please make the appropriate changes in your address books.

- Family stories and photos are always popular with our members. Please be assured you are welcome to submit photos and stories for publication.

## SCHUSTERS TEAM UP AT BUKOVINAFEST

by: Rebecca Hageman, Gail Tremblay and Steve Parke



Alfred Schuster, Rebecca Hageman, Steve Parke, and Gail Tremblay at the Bukovinafest.

On September 18, 2009, Bukovinafest was celebrated at the Headquarters in Ellis, Kansas. By coincidence, three of the presentations were given by Schuster cousins, covering several aspects of our ancestral origins.

First on Friday's agenda, the German Bohemian Heritage Society provided a video documenting travel to several villages in the Bohemian Forest, currently part

of the Czech Republic. Becky Hageman, of Wichita, Kansas, provided an introduction to this showing.

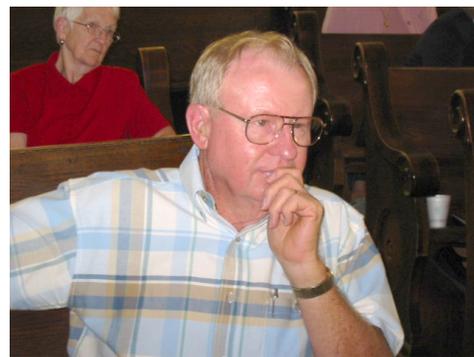
An accounting of the founding of Fürstenthal followed, presented by Becky Hageman. Our German Bohemian ancestors founded this Bukovina village in 1803. The presentation described the reasons for their relocation, the planning of a new glassworks, the long trek on foot to the Valley of the Prince (Fürstenthal), the establishment of commerce, and the growth of the village of German Bohemians. An earlier, similar presentation can be found on the website, at <http://www.bukovina-society.org/hageman-rebecca-bfest-2003-fuerstenthal.html>.

A newcomer to the Bukovina Society, life member Gail Tremblay, of St. Charles, Missouri, provided a first-hand account of her recent trip to Fürstenthal, now known as Voivodeasa, Romania. Gail and her mother, Barbara Tremblay, along with Barbara's father Alfred Schuster, and other family members, visited the area this past summer. They were excited to discover the church cemetery where so many Schuster and Aschenbrenner ancestors had been buried, and to know that they were walking in the footsteps of their forefathers.

Steve Parke, from Pueblo, Colorado, followed up with his research about the German Bohemians who settled in the Ellis/Trego County area. He was able to connect the immigrants to seven foundational family groups. The rest who followed in later years were related through either immediate family or extended family connections to these first settlers from 1887 and 1892.

Three Schuster brothers immigrated from Fürstenthal to Ellis: Joseph and wife Anna Augustine in 1892; Franz and wife Anna Pöllmann in 1901, and Ferdinand and wife Klara Baumgartner in 1904. Gail is a descendant of Franz; Steve and Becky are descendants of Ferdinand. It was amazing to realize that more than 200 years after our ancestors left the Bohemian Forest for Bukovina, and 100 years after three sons of Jakob Schuster came to America, three of Jakob's great-great grandchildren, from three different states, came together in Ellis, Kansas, for the common purpose of sharing

a fascinating heritage. Bukovinafest is always a great time get together with friends and relatives, but also to meet new friends, and sometimes, to meet new relatives!



*Van Massirer from Crawford, Texas was moderator for all of the festival activities*

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## SEASONS CD RELEASED

by: Steve Parke

Our Bukovina ancestors were musical. They had no radios and phonographs and certainly no CDs or digital downloads to rely upon for their musical listening pleasures. Instead they had to create their own music in the house, neighborhood and church. In particular our Bohemian, forested ancestors were also woodworkers and made their own instruments, not being able to turn to the local music store. It's this Old World, European musical heritage that our ancestors brought to America, a heritage that sustained itself for several generations in the New World.

In my own family if not extended family, this heritage seems to have gotten lost in the later part of the 20th century. Why I am not sure. Was it the drive for financial security that buried other aspects of cultural? Did the cumulative generational effects of immigration, the Depression and the Dust Bowl eventually negate the arts? Or did the American work ethic preclude the possibility of playful creative expression?

Whatever the case may be, I started dabbling with music in the 1st grade, strumming a guitar for a rural, one room school house Christmas program. From a familial perspective my early inspirations were unfortunately the likes of Jimmy Hendrix and Eric Clapton, not polka master Whoopee John Wilfahrt or band leader Lawrence Welk. Eventually my skills took me in the direction of a John Denver and a 70's country rock sound and it's in this evolving vein of music taste and skills that my singer songwriter album, "Seasons"

was produced.

“Seasons’ is an appropriate title for the album in that it selectively carries songs from 20 plus years of song writing, reflecting various stages of my life as well as various musical styles that I’ve enjoyed both as a listener and growing musician. Yet there are no polkas on the album. Nor will you find any techno or rap songs. Wait for the next CD!

In many ways it is hard to stray too far from one’s roots even though the packaging may appear different. This holds true for many songs on the album. “Those Old Shoes” basically reflects the view of an adolescent following his dad around on the farm, written by a 35 year old remembering his youthful days. “Then Came You” and “Cleveland” are dance hall songs in the style of “Blues Rock” and the “Oldies”, taking us back to the sounds of the 50’s and 60’s. “Montana” has a big sky, western theme and feel and could easily have been called “Kansas” except for the references to the mountains, the likes of which you will never find on the Smoky Hill or Saline Rivers running through Western Kansas. “Joe’s Vineyard” is County Gospel with a tip of the hat to a rocker of the 60’s. Other album songs reflect even more musical variety.

The unexpected pleasures of releasing the album included the reviews was the reviews of several jazz oriented musicians who liked “Kimberly” and “Darlene”, songs with some musical sophistication and surprises. I surely had some happy accidents as a song writer. Or maybe I was actually listening to Lawrence Welk’s tunes.

The most jolting aspect of making the CD was not the rigors of higher performance levels required for recording. Nor did I mind collaborating and often bowing to the demands of an arranger who had more experience and confidence than I. The biggest challenge was accepting both the refinements and sometimes manipulation of sound that comes with producing the commercial sound possible with contemporary digital sound engineering. Studio engineering makes CD’s and radio music sound different and hopefully better than live performances. In itself sound engineering is a form of

modern art. We’ve come a long way since those hand made fiddles in the forest, or have we?

The album title song, “Seasons”, reflects upon the process of change in our lives. I’ve certainly gone through a lot of changes to be able to write songs and deal with the elaborate modern process of music recording. Maybe that’s why I like the history of our migrating ancestors. Think of all the changes they went through over and over and over. The truth is that if you don’t like the losses of this year’s seasons, bide your time, spring is coming. Our losses can take us to a better place. Life’s seasons do go by.

You can listen to free 20 second clips of the songs on the internet at [www.digstation.com](http://www.digstation.com). At the web site click on the “Artists” tab and then the “S” tab. The album is listed under “Steve Parke” on about page 35 of the “S” section. Downloads are available at this web site or if you are interested in a CD, contact me at [spark7261@Q.com](mailto:spark7261@Q.com) or 719-547-1327.

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## MICHAEL AND ANNA AUGUSTINE FAMILY REUNION

by: Juanita Augustine

The Fifth Augustine Family Reunion was held on August 1 of this year celebrating 107 years since arrival in America. In attendance were 215 people, coming from as far as Germany, Canada, Florida, Missouri, Oklahoma, Nebraska and Colorado. Noon dinner was served by Bonnie Windholz with afternoon visits among the adults. Younger participants enjoyed horseshoes, washer games, and a moon walk. Special letters were read from Gene Augustine who was unable to attend and one in memory of Frank Augustine. Frank was a Board Member of the Bukovina Society and long time supporter of the Bukovina and Augustine heritage.

Door prizes were won by Darin Myers and Crystal Vincent. Raffle prizes were won by Carol Flax, Judy Augustine, Loretta Zerr, Brandon Augustine and Steve Aschenbrenner.

Michael Augustin from Germany was presented with

an Augustine Family Reunion T-Shirt. Michael has been a frequent visitor at prior reunions as well as visits with to the Ellis Augustine family.

The evening was enjoyed with dancing to the music of the Hot Spots. Many are looking forward to the next reunion.



*The Gravestone*

## A BUKOVINIAN IN A VAMPIRE'S GRAVE

by: Rebecca Hageman

The cold, foggy Saturday morning air turned into a heavy mist that hung like a shroud over the cemetery. The three of us trekked across the wet grass, still green from summer, searching for the lone concrete headstone in the portion of the cemetery that had been known as the “pauper’s graveyard.” I grasped the yellowed newspaper with the picture of the plot – and looked for the small crooked tree pictured in the photograph – the one that was said to have grown from the stake driven through the vampire’s heart...the tree that grows in the middle of the plot – perhaps through the very heart of the vampire.

Tracing through the last row of gravesites, I looked up – there it was. The tree, still not much more than a sapling, looked the same as it did in the 15 year old photograph. “I found it!” I called out. I knelt silently by the marker, in awe of the block letters that were said to have been scratched into it by the long sharp fingernail of the vampire himself. I traced the lettering with my gloved fingers, wondering about the person or persons buried there.

My husband, John, and I were visiting Fred Schuster in Aurora, Colorado, when Fred showed me the newspaper article that he had been saving since 1993. The story about the Transylvanian-born “vampire” makes interesting reading, but what really intrigued both of us was the second name on the headstone, and the fact that that person was born in Bukovina, a fact that either escaped the author of the article, or it held no significance for him. But that was the real reason Fred had saved it – there was a connection to a person from Bukovina who had died and was buried not far away, in Lafayette, in December, 1918. I was inexplicably drawn to the cemetery. I had to go and see this for myself.

There are two names on the headstone, but the newspaper article said that only one body had been buried there. How mysterious. Local lore said that the “vampire,” a Transylvanian native named Fodor Glava, had come to the Lafayette area with his wife. Was this the other name on the headstone, “Trandatir born in Parhauti Bocvina”? Bukovina maps reveal a village near Suceava named Parhauti. Could this be her birthplace?

A little research on the Internet uncovered more speculation. Maybe the name is misspelled. One site mentions that “trandafir” is a Romanian dialect word for “rose.” Maybe this was the name of Fodor Glava’s wife. Other speculation is that Trandafir was a man, a coal miner who died in the Spanish influenza epidemic, with Glava. Trandafir appears to be a fairly common last name in Romania. I prefer to believe that this stone was placed for the unfortunate Mr. Glava and his wife. But if the grave holds only one body, what happened to her?

As I write this, the Halloween season nears, and Lafayette school children will dare each other to sit on the headstone at midnight, and they will swear that they saw the vampire in his black suit, leaning against the tree, as local children have for generations. But for me, the bigger mystery is the person from Bukovina. Who was it? Who is actually buried there? What stories – what truths – lie hidden beneath the mysterious headstone, and the tree that stands in testament to the burial of the...undead?

## OUR BUKOVINA HERITAGE

By: Eileen (Rathbun) Goetz and  
Oneida Jean (Rathbun) Bollig

Our Great Great Grandparents Peter and Karoline (Scharli) Werb lived in house # 47 in Illisches-tie, Bukovina, Austria and the union produced 10 children. Four of their daughters immigrated to Ellis County. Their first son died unmarried in the military, a second son died young, and the other children remained in the homeland.



*The Kroeger family in 1914, Front from the left: William, Fred Kroeger Sr., Adolph, Bertha (Cordell), Minnie (Irion). Back row from the left: Marie (Keller), Fred Jr., Johanna (Werb) Kroeger, Ernest, Johanna (Hagen).*

Their youngest child, my Great Grandmother Johanna, was the first to come over with John Huber and family on July 4, 1886. She was single and worked at the Ellis House doing laundry for the railroad men, to pay John Huber back the money she owed him.

Johanna married Henrich Frederich Wilhelm Kroeger on Dec 19, 1887 on a bitterly cold day. It was said after they returned home from the wedding in a school house located about 10 miles north of Ellis, their cat was found frozen to death on the door step.

Great grandfather Kroeger, known as Fred, was born May 26, 1859 in Stookhausen, Lubecke, Germany. As a young man he set sail for American arriving at Nashville, Illinois 1881, where his brother Karl lived and he stayed about four years before coming to Ellis County. Fred farmed and hauled freight (drayman) from Hays to Ellis with a team of horses. They lived in a dugout north of Ellis close to the Saline River where seven of their nine children were born, then lived on a farm west of St. John's Lutheran Church. They lived a short time in Dickinson County near Enterprise, Kansas in 1909.

Fred and Johanna built a home in Ellis in 1925 across the street from the present Bukovina Society headquarters. They celebrated their 50th wedding Anniversary with their sons and daughters singing, first as quartets, then all together. After the service Fred and Johanna, along with 175 of their friends and family traveled to the farm home of their daughter and husband William Hagen north of Ellis, where they had tables set up to serve 66 people at one setting in their basement.

Christina Werb was the second of the Werb family to come to Ellis County. Wilhelm Wendling was also born in Illischestie, Bukovina, Austria, and married Christina Werb there on Nov. 21, 1882. Of the 10 children, five were born in Bukovina, the first two of which died there and the others were born in Ellis County. The family came to Ellis County in May of 1888. They lost their third child in Ellis County due to an illness from being in a water trough. They raised a foster son, Ed Adam Mai.

They lived in Ellis for a few years before moving to a farm nine miles north of Ellis. In 1920 they returned to Ellis.

Theresa was the third child to come to America. She married Frank Fries in Bukovina and they had 12 children, all born there. Four died before immigrating to western Kansas. With seven of their eight children they departed Bremen, Germany on Sept 29, 1898 on the ship Wittiehard and arrived 21 days later on Oct. 14, 1898 at Baltimore.

One daughter wrote about the voyage, and said her mother was very sick on the ship. How hard it must have been for the parents to leave the small graves of their buried children in Illischestie, and one married daughter, Katherine.

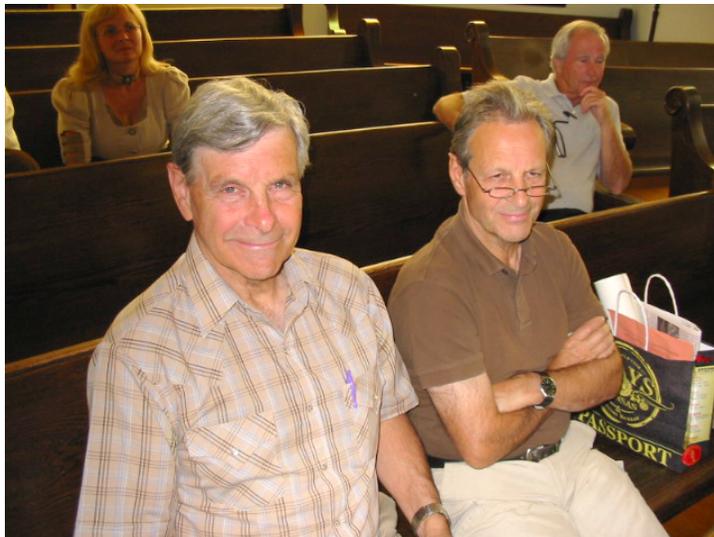
When the family arrived in New York, they realized that they had only enough money to buy tickets for some of them to travel to Ellis. Rudolph was 18 years old, and it was decided he would be left in New York until they could send money for him to join them. There were Jews aboard the ship that could speak both English and German, and may have helped Rudolph

as he spoke no English. In spite of all the handicaps, Rudolph did catch up with his family. When he first saw the Kansas land, wind blown, dusty, and brown he wanted to go back home to Austria. The family lived in crowded conditions with Theresa's sister Johanna and Fred Kroeger for three weeks. Then they were able to live at William Homburg's vacant home about five miles from the Kroeger's farm. After two years Frank was able to buy 320 acres of land and Henry Schaus built a two bedroom house for them. Katherine (daughter) and husband Mike Irion were able to join them in Ellis a year later.

Caroline was the last of the Werb sisters to come to America in July of 1904 through Ellis Island. She married Adam Schaefer on Jan 1, 1874 and had nine children in Bukovina. Adam became blind after the birth of their first child. Caroline had the task of supporting her family and caring for her husband until he died in August of 1893 in Bukovina.

Caroline married her late husband's brother; John Schaefer on Nov. 26, 1898 in Bukovina, and no children were born to this union. When her second husband died in 1907 she accepted the invitation of her daughter Adamina and husband Philipp Manz, to make her home with them. We don't know how many of her children came to America with her, four of them settled in Canada. Caroline worked at the Ellis House doing laundry. Caroline was tragically killed when struck by an auto while walking home from an evening service at the Lutheran Church. Three of the children of her brother, Jacob Werb Sr. emigrated from Bukovina. A daughter Louisa Werb married Joseph Frank Boschowitzki. Philipp Werb died at age 21 and is the only one with the Werb surname buried at St. John's Cemetery. Jacob Werb Jr. married late in life and lived in Wagoner, Oklahoma.

## Bukovina Fest Photos



*Herman and Gerhart Ottschofski (Woodland Park, CO)*



*Fred Wildfeuer and Nicole Ellis (Regensburg, Germany)*



*Gail and Barb Tremblay (St. Charles, MO)*